

The Isle of Man TT Races

The Isle of Man TT Races:
Motorcycling, Society and Identity

By

Simon Vaukins

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In memory of Jeffrey Vaukins

Historian, Manxman and Sportsman

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

—Theodore Roosevelt, “The Man in the Arena”

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My family has not always understood why I have pursued this work; they perhaps understand less why I choose to relax by running marathons. But, they have always afforded me the time and space to complete both and for this I am grateful.

The Isle of Man TT Course



Source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isle_of_Man_TT_Course_\(OpenStreetMap\).png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isle_of_Man_TT_Course_(OpenStreetMap).png)

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INTRODUCTION

THE ISLE OF MAN TOURIST TROPHY RACES

The Isle of Man is home to the most unique and perhaps the most controversial motor racing event in the world. It is an event that places a small island, situated in the heart of the Irish Sea, firmly on the world map. The Isle of Man is thirteen and a half miles wide and 32.5 miles long, home to a population of approximately 80,000 people and is situated at the very heart of the British Isles, but despite its size and location the island maintains a distinctive and diverse sense of identity. It has its own unique system of government, the more than 1000 years old Tynwald assembly. There is a well-developed and internationally renowned heritage industry, an established film industry and, of course, an abundance of outstanding natural beauty. However, if you were to ask any Briton, European or indeed any world citizen if they know the location of the Isle of Man, you might receive the reply “is that the home of the TT races?” or be met with quizzical expressions. This might be an exaggerated claim, but, nonetheless, over the past 100 years or so the Tourist Trophy (TT) motorcycle races, held annually on the Isle of Man, have helped this small island stand out on the world map.

The start of the summer on the Isle of Man is signaled by the roaring of thousands of motorcycles disembarking at Douglas harbour from one of the ferries that serve the island. Coming to the island via Liverpool and Heysham, motorcyclists travel from all corners of the world to make what could be described as a pilgrimage to what they regard as one of the most outstanding events on the motorcycling calendar. Interest in participation in the event is massive. By way of illustration, in 1994 there were 620 entries in eight events involving 572 competitors, from 20 countries ranging from the USA to New Zealand. Racers completed 4,137 laps, totaling 156,089 miles in practicing and racing.¹ In 2007 the TT celebrated

¹ TT media pack issued by the Isle of Man Department of Tourism in 1995, as cited in R. Faragher, ‘Cultural History: Motor Sport’ in J. Belchem (ed.) *A New History of the Isle of Man Volume V: The Modern Period 1830-1999*, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp.410-14.

its centenary and the popularity of the event was unabated, with an estimated 60,000 people visiting the Isle of Man during TT week, generating revenue of £48,000,000. As the *Guardian* stated in 2005: “every year 40,000 leather clad bikers make their pilgrimage to what they describe as the best festival of their sport. It is about celebrating fraternity and a way of life.”²

The Isle of Man TT course is composed of 37 and three quarter miles of public roads, stretching across much of the northern half of the island and passing through the island’s two largest towns, Douglas and Ramsey and through small, sleepy villages like Glen Vine and Kirk Michael. The course has long, fast straights and sharp bends flanked by stonewalls or, on the mountain section, by sheer drops. The stern test of riding skill and sharpness of reflex has, to date, taken the lives of 240 riders. At points around the course are memorials to riders who have made their name at the TT: Birkin’s bends, Handley’s corner, and, the Guthrie memorial.³ These are continued reminders of the immense challenge posed by the course. In one lap the competitors will pass through areas of outstanding natural beauty, past sites of historic interest and within touching distance of residents’ doorsteps at speeds of up to 180 miles per hour, in front of spectators lining the hedgerows to witness the event. It is an event that like no other, places the modern firmly alongside the traditional. The riders’ ultimate goal is to make it to the end of this historic course. At the time of writing, the current lap speed record held by Morecambe’s John McGuiness stands at 131.617 miles per hour (mph).

It might be considered odd that, in the modern day, such an event is permitted to take place. But, there has never been any organised protest against the continuation of the TT races on the Isle of Man; or none that I have uncovered during the course of my research. This is despite the inconvenience caused by road closures, the fatalities in the event and the racing of motorcycles at high speeds around the island’s roads. Another, similar motorcycle race does take place in Northern Ireland but on a much smaller scale. Similarly, Formula One cars also race annually around the streets of Monaco, and in France public roads are also closed for the Tour De France Bicycle race. No event, however, is quite the same as the Isle of Man TT. The event presents an obvious inconvenience to Manx residents, but also the location of the TT, on an island in the Irish Sea, remains an inconvenience for competitors and overseas spectators alike. Yet motorcycle

² *Guardian*, 4 June 2005.

³ A further, and more extensive discussion of memorialisation at the TT can be found in: ‘The Island of Blood’: death and commemoration at the Isle of Man TT Races, *World Archaeology*, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2012.

manufacturers, motorcyclists and fans still travel to the Isle of Man every year to compete in the event, watch the races and participate in the festival that surrounds the TT. This is partly the result of the spectacle provided by the races, but also perhaps because ordinary riders, not competitors as such, are able to test themselves against the course on what has become popularly known as “Mad Sunday”. “Tomorrow they will open up their throttles and ride the circuit themselves on a day called Mad Sunday”, observed the *Guardian*, and “they do it in the full knowledge that it can be carnage, with riders falling off all over the course.”⁴

Moreover, and somewhat remarkably, the TT also continues despite the deaths and injuries caused not only to competitors but also to spectators and those policing the course. This has not deterred fans from turning up or motorcycle racers from entering the TT, which is unsurprising when it is considered that one report from the 1970s claimed that “all the competitors … were fascinated by the race.” One rider declared that the TT was “the finest road race in the world unconditionally”, whilst a Yorkshire rider suggested more crudely that he rode in the race “because I’m a bloody twat, that’s why. It’s self-inflicted pissin’ torture.”⁵ The danger inherent in the event appears to secure the TT’s place as the best motorcycle race in the world. The TT, of course, still draws criticism. A 2003 article in *Sports Illustrated* questioned the purpose of the event when it asked “is there a sporting event more perilous than the Tourist Trophy races in the Isle of Man?” It was vigorously stated, “this festival of speed is how boosters on this tiny Irish Sea island bill its mad scramble of mopeds, motorcycles and motor scooters. Dead is how participants often wind up.”⁶ Yet despite the dangers presented by the course and the criticism of the event, the TT still continues today. In a 2013 article the *Independent* described this as a race that “defies the nanny state.”⁷

Jeffrey Hill, in his wide-ranging work *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain* suggests that sport may be regarded as a process “shaped” by economic, political, demographic or intellectual forces. Hill suggests that this helps to “understand how the process of modernization affected sport, but it stops short of affording any autonomous agency to sport itself. The history of sport becomes a ‘window’ through which to study developments in other areas of society.”⁸

⁴ *Guardian*, 4 June 2005.

⁵ R. Mutch, *The Last of the Great Road Races*, pp. 12-13.

⁶ F. Lidz, ‘38 Miles of Terror’, *Sports Illustrated*, 9 (2003), p. 16.

⁷ *The Independent*, 9 June 2013.

⁸ J. Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain*, (Hampshire, Palgrave, 2002), p. 2.

Taking influence from the above, this book is *not* intended to be a history of winners and losers in the TT and nor will it discuss the events of specific races or the breaking of lap records; it will show how the Isle of Man TT can be used as a means by which to examine the links between sport, society and national identity, and to show how sport can illuminate the political, economic, social and cultural history of a particular locality. For this reason it examines *how* and *why* the Isle of Man has become internationally associated with motorcycle road racing and the consequences of this association. Over the course of this book we will see a change from a small-scale “domestic” event into an internationally known competition. This analysis is based around the discussion of the growth of political support for the TT on the Isle of Man; the evaluation of the economic commitment to the TT by the Manx and motorcycle manufacturers; and, it will show that as a result of the growing economic and political commitment the TT has become ingrained in constructions of a Manx identity over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The themes of politics and economics are easily understood. Under the broader heading of politics falls an examination of how the TT races were established and sustained on the Isle of Man alongside changes to the structure and practice of government on the island. The economic, or capitalist theme explores the way that the TT races were exploited by the Manx government in advertising the island and further the way the TT was an event used by motorcycle manufacturers in selling their products. The most contestable of these themes is that of national identity. National identity is a term that is necessarily multi-dimensional. Any definition of national identity might encompass such aspects as a common language, a common political structure, a shared history and a common culture. These are all factors present on the Isle of Man. It is the plurality of identity that will be explored throughout this book. It will ask whether the different ingredients employed in the construction of Manx identity throughout the twentieth century, which included the TT races, clashed as might be expected, or if they existed harmoniously alongside each other. Together, the themes of politics, economics and national identity begin to answer how and why the TT has been sustained over the past 100 years or so.

It is, however, difficult to judge how far the TT races have become part of an insular Manx identity and just how far the Manx people associate themselves with motorcycle racing. That is to say that the Manx people are aware that this event takes place every year and they attach themselves to

the opportunities presented by the event.⁹ For example, as a result of the TT taking place on the island, residents will set up campsites away from the course where spectators and competitors can rest; they even open their homes to these visitors. They attach themselves to the opportunity for prosperity that is presented every year. Faragher comments that the races are “a salient part of Manx consciousness.”¹⁰ The TT races are not consciously flagged in the Manx press, and they are not constantly flagged in the Isle of Man. The subconscious reminding, and the reason that the Manx people readily accept the disruption caused by the TT races each year, is because they are continually reminded that the event will take place annually as the public roads on the island form part of the race course; the grandstand is a reminder which is present all year round; and, there are countless reminders around the course. So commonplace are these symbols and so familiar are the TT races to the Manx, that it was not until I left the Isle of Man that I realised the importance and indeed the enormity of the event.

⁹ In his work *Banal Nationalism*, Michael Billig suggests that nationalism is not merely an intense political spectacle, but is omnipresent and commonplace and there are certain ‘flags’, which subconsciously assert a national identity. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not the flag being waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging outside the public building. See, M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London, Sage Publications, 1995).

¹⁰ Faragher, ‘Cultural History: Motorcycle Road Racing’, p. 410.

PART I

1904-1914

Whatever the Gordon Bennett Cup did, or did not, achieve, it certainly introduced motor racing to the Isle of Man. Indirectly it also introduced motorcycle racing, for the Act passed through the House of Keys, the Island's Parliament, in 1904 to authorize the British eliminating trials provided a precedent for the whole succession of motorcycling events held there since”

—Lord Montagu of Beaulieu

Lord Raglan had prosecuted me; Lord Raglan had presided over the Court which sentenced me to prison; Lord Raglan alone was now capable, according to the Home Secretary of giving me my release. The Lord High Executioner in the ‘Mikado’ was a novice in authority and official status compared with the Lieutenant Governor. He was Caesar in the Isle of Man.

—Samuel Norris, *Manx Movements and Memories*

CHAPTER ONE

ON THE STARTING LINE: THE ORIGINS OF THE TT RACES

When the first motorcycle Tourist Trophy (TT) race took place on the Isle of Man in the summer of 1907, motor racing was still relatively new to the island.¹ Despite this, it has been claimed that the island's reputation as a venue for such events had already begun to spread worldwide. Robert Kelly suggests, somewhat spuriously, that the motor-mad Emir of Afghanistan believed "that the Isle of Man [was] such a splendid place" and asked "would the British consider an exchange – his kingdom and wives for the Isle of Man."² The Isle of Man was not the UK's to exchange, but this was a nice sentiment. Even in the modern day the Isle of Man is an odd location for a motor race. It must be considered an even stranger location at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1904 the island was not easy to access and it was costly to travel to; it is, after all, separated from mainland Britain by the often-hostile Irish Sea. There were other more accessible locations that might have been used for motor racing. If the automobile club had in mind hills and twisting roads for the early reliability trials then they might have made use of the roads in the Chilterns, in North Wales or in the Lake District.

There was, however, *no* chance of a motorcar race being held on public roads in England, or Britain at this time. This was due to restrictive legislation and the negative opinion of some MPs towards the motorcar in the pre-war period. Historically, motorcars and motorcycles had been "vociferously opposed by the carriage-owning classes and the many railway directors in Parliament."³ UK legislation reflected this. In 1865 the "Red Flag" Act had restricted cars to four miles per hour (mph) in the countryside and two mph in urban areas. Moreover, legislation also

¹ 'Tourist' in Tourist Trophy, should be taken to mean the everyday motorcyclist who did not use their motorcycle for racing but for making trips for pleasure or commuting to work.

² R. Kelly, *TT Pioneers*, (Douglas, The Manx Experience, 1996), p.91.

³ H. Perkin, *Age of the Automobile*, (London, Quartet Books, 1976), p.35.

required automobiles to have three attendants, including one to carry a red flag sixty yards in front of the vehicle. Even more restrictive were rules that prohibited the sounding of a whistle by the driver of a motor vehicle and those allowing any person on horseback or in a horse-drawn carriage to demand that the motorcar be stopped while they passed. Local authorities could even regulate the time at which motorcars could pass through towns and villages. Motorcar drivers were permitted few liberties, and it has been suggested that the development of the motorcar in Britain came to a halt as a result of such restrictive legislation.⁴ However, legislation was amended in 1878 making it possible for local authorities to repeal red flag restrictions, but they were not repealed all together. The most significant breakthrough came in 1896 when the Locomotives on the Highway Act raised the permissible maximum speed limit to fourteen mph. This legislation and the improvement in conditions for motorists were celebrated on “emancipation” day, 14 November 1896, with a demonstration run of motorcars between London and Brighton. But, racing on public roads was still prohibited, and although further legislation – the Motor Car Act 1903 – raised the speed limit to twenty mph, the prohibition of racing on public roads was not repealed.⁵

Early motorcars were very much the preserve of the wealthy enthusiast, as the first motorcars were costly to purchase and to run. Sir Robert Ensor has suggested that at this time “only rich men could afford them; and as they dashed along the narrow untarred carriage ways, frightening the passer by on their approach and drenching him in dust as the receded, they seemed visible symbols of the selfishness of arrogant wealth.”⁶ This negativity towards motorcars was also demonstrated in a House of Commons debate over the speed of such vehicles, in June 1903. Cathcart Wason, MP for Orkney and Shetland, was typical of the voice that spoke out in opposition to motorcars. In his opinion “a few people [claimed] the right to drive the public off the roads. Harmless men, women and children, dogs and cattle, have all got to fly for their lives at the bidding of these slaughtering, stinking engines of iniquity.”⁷ Although Wason’s opinion was based in his experiences outside Shetland and Orkney, and he admitted there was not a single car in his constituency, he assured MPs that irritation had begun to occur in the countryside because cars were beginning to monopolise public roads. Wason believed that

⁴ Perkin, *Age of the Automobile*, p. 35.

⁵ S. O’Connell, *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring 1896-1939*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press 1998), p. 13.

⁶ R.C.K Ensor, *England 1870-1914*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936), p.510.

⁷ *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 11 June 1903, (4th Series), Vol. 123, col 698.

motorcar owners had the right to amuse themselves and gratify a “satiated and vitiated palate” by coming into close contact with death, but he did not agree with them doing it at the expense of the general public.⁸ Clearly this was an argument against motor racing on public roads.

The general attitude towards the motorcar and motor racing in Britain was not representative of the feeling across Europe. Motor racing was becoming increasingly popular on the continent at the beginning of the twentieth century and a number of races were held on the European mainland, such as the International Gordon Bennett Race between 1900 and 1905 and town-to-town races such as the much-maligned 1903 Paris to Madrid race. American newspaperman Gordon Bennett had established the International Gordon Bennett Race in 1900.⁹ As a result of British success in the 1902 International Gordon Bennett race, the 1903 event was to be held in England. As there was no chance of a race in England because of legal restrictions, the 1903 Gordon Bennett race was staged in Ireland in July of that year. A lack of success for the British team in this event led to the first motorcar race being held on the Isle of Man under the provisions of the Highways (Light Locomotives) Act 1904 – a trial for the 1904 Gordon Bennett Race. What took place in Ireland in 1903, therefore, set the precedent for later events in the Isle of Man.

The Irish Precedent

When the English driver Selwyn F. Edge had won the 1902 Gordon Bennett race held in France, he had given the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland a difficult decision to make. After exploring a number of different possibilities, their eyes inevitably fell on Ireland. Why did a motor race on public roads take place in Ireland in 1903, when legislation prohibited such events in Britain? The answer seems to be fairly simple: Ireland was far enough on the periphery for this not to be a problem.

In contrast to the opinions of the majority who believed that motorcars were an outrage, the Automobile Club believed that the Gordon Bennett Cup and motorcar racing generally were beneficial to the development of the motorcar. It was the opinion of the Automobile Club that prolonged

⁸ *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 11 June 1903, (4th Series), Vol. 123, col 699.

⁹ The Gordon Bennett Cup had been designed by American newspaperman James Gordon Bennett who had come to Paris to found the continental edition of the *New York Herald*. He was keen on sport and became a founder member of the French Automobile Club. The Gordon Bennett Race was proposed in 1900 as a ‘regularised international motor race to evidence the advance of the nations in motor car construction’, as quoted in Holliday, *Racing Round the Island*, p. 11.

races on public roads had led to great improvements in motorcar design and construction.¹⁰ It was also believed that the Gordon Bennett Cup was to motor racing what the America Cup was to yachting: an opportunity for nations to pit themselves against each other in competition and at the same time test new technology.¹¹ Evidence for this, argued the Automobile Club, was provided by the French supremacy in the motorcar industry that, it was claimed, was the result of the French authorities providing their manufacturers with the chance to test cars at high speeds along public roads. The French motor industry was far ahead of the British. In 1898, for example, the French had produced 1,850 vehicles and exported seven per cent of these to Britain. By 1904 Britain was selling two cars per month in France and importing 400 in return.¹² A Gordon Bennett Cup race in the UK would add impetus to the British motor car industry, suggested the Automobile Club, and would further educate the public in the value of these vehicles.

Further to this, the relationship between motor car racing and the manufacture of vehicles for domestic use was also highlighted in a letter to *The Times* by Scott Montagu who argued that the modern racing machine had no purpose and “the rules of motor racing ought now to be altered, not only in the interests of the public and the competitors, but for the eventual advantage of manufacturers as well.”¹³ O’Connell in *The Car in British Society*, suggests that in order to redress this balance, the British manufacturers had to demonstrate the benefits of the motor car to the public, convincing them that it would carry them securely from A to B; it was for this reason that part of the marketing of the motor car revolved around road races and reliability trials.¹⁴ If the Gordon Bennett race were transferred to France, as would be the case if a suitable venue were not found in Britain, a valuable opportunity to improve the manufacture of British motorcars would be lost and the technological gap between the British and the French would widen. Members of the political elite, whose negative opinion was discussed earlier, would need to be convinced.

The Automobile Club had then settled on the idea of racing in Ireland, but it was still necessary to first pass legislation that would permit the

¹⁰ *Petition for Racing to be held in Ireland 1903*, (Churchill College Archives, Cambridge).

¹¹ *Petition for Racing to be held in Ireland 1903*.

¹² K. Richardson, *The British Motor Industry 1896-1939*, (London, MacMillan Press, 1997), p. 53. See also D.G. Rhys, *The Motor Industry: An Economic Survey*, (London, Butterworths, 1972), p.9.

¹³ *The Times*, 27 May 1903, p.12.

¹⁴ O’Connell, *The Car in British Society*, p.14.

closing of public roads for motorcar racing. In January 1903 the *Autocar* carried a message in its editorial advocating this. If legislation were not passed the race in Ireland would: “not only be illegal, but, further to that, would almost be certain to be stopped at an early stage, and this would be grossly unfair to the competitors and especially to those who came from abroad. If the race cannot legally and openly be held, it will not take place in this country [Ireland].”¹⁵ Members of the motoring community thus realised the need for legislation. Contrary to this, however, one Irish columnist believed that “the English [were] far too law-abiding altogether, we are prepared to hold the race, official approval or not!”¹⁶ Additionally there was also a feeling that such legislation would bring a sense of unity to the Irish. Commenting on the passing of legislation to permit the race, the ultra-Orange publication *Northern Whig* reported, “we see a wonderful blending of the Orange and Green. There is about this a matter of unanimity of which some people considered Irishmen to be incapable.”¹⁷ Irish MPs such as Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Irish Unionists, and John Redmond, leader of the Irish Nationalist Party would support this legislation. They were fiercely divided politically, but were brought together by the promise of motor racing in Ireland.

The Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill was given its first reading in the House of Commons on 20 February 1903, received its second reading on 26 February and was considered in committee and given its third reading and passed on 2 March. Nothing was said against the passage of the bill.¹⁸ The bill was passed onto the Lords and received its first reading on 3 March, the second reading on 16 March and was passed on 24 March.¹⁹ Once again nothing was said in protest. Despite minimal debate over the legislation the notion, or at least promise, of unity was expressed. In the House of Lords Earl Spencer found it “gratifying and a new sensation ... to find a Bill dealing with Ireland on which all sides, both in the other House and in this are united.”²⁰ His opinion was echoed in the Commons by Saunderston, MP for Armagh North, who asked “is his Majesty’s Government aware that this is a rare occasion on which the whole of the

¹⁵ *Autocar*, 4 January 1903.

¹⁶ As quoted in B. Lynch, *Triumph of the Red Devil*, (Dublin, Portobello Publishing, 2002), p.38.

¹⁷ As quoted in Lynch, *Triumph of the Red Devil*, p.39.

¹⁸ See *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 20 Feb. 1903 (4th Series), Vol. 118, col 404; 26 Feb. 1903, col. 1004; 2 Mar. 1903, col. 1216.

¹⁹ See *Parliamentary Debates (Lords)*, 3 Mar. 1903, (4th Series), Vol. 118, col. 1220; 16 Mar. 1903, col. 818; 24 Mar. 1903 (4th Series), Vol. 120, cols 3 and 66.

²⁰ *Parliamentary Debates (Lords)*, 16 Mar. 1903 (4th Series), Vol. 119, col. 820.

Irish people are at one? Taking this fact into consideration, will his Majesty's Government give a favourable reply?"²¹ This was a comment that was met by laughter in the House, suggesting that the question of holding a motor race in Ireland was viewed as a light-hearted matter. Whyndham, Chief Secretary for Ireland, was confident that legislation would be passed and did "not like to contemplate the possibility of other members of the Commons opposing this measure" and believed further that "no one can be opposed to it."²² Politicians at Westminster then praised the unity inspired by the proposal of a motor race in Ireland; they were not, it seems, put off by the danger and inconvenience posed by such an event. There was no intention of passing legislation to allow motor racing in England (or in Scotland or Wales) but it was accepted without demur as fair to allow motor racing to take place in Ireland. The Light Locomotives (Ireland) Act received the Royal Assent on 27 March 1903, having had its first reading in the Commons only a month earlier, on 20 February.²³

It was not left up to MPs alone to put forward the benefits of a motor race in Ireland. Whilst legislation was being debated at Westminster the Automobile Club embarked on a direct mail campaign, designed to foster support for a motor race in Ireland. Letters were sent mostly to members of the Irish elite, but were also sent to some who it was believed would benefit from the staging of a motor race in Ireland, for example, railway companies and hoteliers. All in all, letters were sent to 102 Irish MPs, 300 newspapers, 34 chairmen of county and district councils, 34 county secretaries, 26 mayors, 90 Irish peers, 41 railway companies, 460 hoteliers, 13 parish priests and to the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.²⁴ The letter stressed the benefits that the Gordon Bennett race would supposedly bring locally and suggested that the event would benefit the Irish economy to the tune of £20,000. It is unclear how this figure was reached, but it would have included revenue generated by visitors who would travel to Ireland exclusively for the race. This was, after all, an international competition. The letters also promised that rigorous safety measures

²¹ *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 23 Feb. 1903, (4th Series), Vol. 118, col. 510.

²² *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 23 Feb. 1903, (4th Series), Vol. 118, col. 511.

²³ Montagu states in *The Gordon Bennett Races* that the bill passed through in record time 'receiving the Royal Assent on 27 March 1903, a bare seven days after it first reading in the Commons' (p.65). Since the bill was read first time in the Commons on 20 February 1903 this assessment is incorrect. See *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, 20 Feb. 1903 (4th Series), Vol. 118, col. 404.

²⁴ Montagu and Sedgwick, *The Gordon Bennett Races*, p. 63. See also copy of the petition held at RAC Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge.

would be taken and assurances were given by the Automobile Club that the race would not be held on a Sunday but on a weekday, thus winning over the influential Catholic Church. To avoid interference with local businesses, the race would be held on a public holiday.²⁵

Reaction to the letters was positive and members of the Automobile Club reported that they had met little opposition whilst touring the Irish countryside. The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin it was suggested had declared himself to be an ardent advocate of the race.²⁶ County councils, who would be responsible for making necessary arrangements for the race in Ireland, unanimously approved the plans especially after they learned that they would not foot the bill for preliminary road repairs.²⁷ The race then was an attractive proposition. Potentially roadways could be approved at no cost to the local council. Although a softening up process was taking place, it must be remembered that legislation was being passed by Westminster, not by an Irish parliament and it was the Irish periphery that was being softened up. It may have been considered insensitive for the Automobile Club to see legislation passed and then simply turn up and race. Although this would not be impossible, the Automobile Club wanted to be seen to do the right thing in terms of gauging public opinion.

Legislation had been passed, and, selectively, public opinion seemed to be in favour of the event. However, there still existed the need to construct a course. Before deciding to hold the event in Ireland, the Automobile Club had pursued various other ideas in their ambition to hold races on home soil. These included the construction of a course over the flat land of Lincolnshire, building a course in Surrey and even the suggestion of holding the race in Scotland, as was proposed by the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*.²⁸ Richard Mecredy, proprietor of the *Motor News* magazine, was asked if he could suggest a suitable course, after which it was proposed that the Irish race be held over closed public roads.²⁹ It was on Mecredy's instigation that a reconnaissance party from the Automobile Club was sent to Ireland in November 1902 and inspected the areas to the South and West of Dublin. One racing enthusiast has gone as far as to suggest that this reconnaissance party displayed "a rare unity of Saxon energy and Celtic ardour as English and Irish officials inspected

²⁵ Montagu and Sedgwick, *The Gordon Bennett Races*, p. 63.

²⁶ Montagu and Sedgwick, *The Gordon Bennett Races*, p. 63.

²⁷ Members of the Lords believed this to be the case. See *Parliamentary Debates (Lords)*, 16 March 1903, p. 819.

²⁸ Montagu and Sedgwick, *The Gordon Bennett Races*, pp. 59-60.

²⁹ Montagu and Sedgwick, *The Gordon Bennett Races*, pp. 59-60.

nominated areas.³⁰ The party found potential to close roads and construct a course in the Kildare-Naas area. This area was well served by railways and roads out of Dublin, reducing the problem of transporting spectators, competitors and racing machines. The area was also thinly populated, with the exception of the main towns – Carlow, Kildare and Athy – which meant that the number of controls, and subsequently costs, could be kept to a minimum, showing that those in charge of organizing the race realised the inconvenience that would be caused to the public by the necessary road closures.

Everything appeared to be going along smoothly, but the Automobile Club de France (ACF) was not enthusiastic about the idea of a closed course race. They disliked the shortness of the proposed course and hoped that legislation would not be passed to allow the race to go ahead. It was in the interest of the French to not see racing go ahead, as the race would be held in France. However, this sentiment was not shared by *Le France Automobile* who attempted to placate the ACF, reminding them that they had been losers in 1902 and “a little indulgence would not be misplaced.”³¹ The Automobile Club was quick to respond to this, arguing that the French were scared of British ascendancy in world matters or at least in the French-dominated automobile industry. Dublin’s *Evening Mail* also spoke out against the opinion of the ACF remarking that “we are not aware that they do things better in France - witness the Paris-Madrid motor race disaster.”³² A more positive opinion was offered by one of the competitors, the American Percy Owen. He commented that “we couldn’t have better roads. They are marvelous, nothing in America can compare, and they are as good as any in France, though not so wide.”³³

The organisers then faced one further problem: the Paris-Madrid motor race held in May 1903. A large number of fatalities in the race had seen the event ended at Bordeaux. There were now doubts over the safety of the Irish race. The attitude of MPs at the time, as we have seen above, was that motorcars were unsafe and motorcar races were unnecessary. This town-to-town race did little to prove the safety of motor racing and did little to quell the debate against the motorcar. In fact, English writer S.C.H Davies was compelled to comment that “for a while it seemed as thought [sic] racing might be stopped for good and all, and that made one sick at

³⁰ Lynch, *The Triumph of the Red Devil*, p. 37.

³¹ Montagu and Sedgwick, *The Gordon Bennett Races*, p. 60.

³² *Evening Mail* as quoted in Lynch, *Triumph of the Red Devil*, p. 46.

³³ Lynch, *Triumph of the Red Devil*, p. 37.

heart.”³⁴ *The Times* reported that “an examination of yesterday’s incidents seems to prove pretty conclusively that it is well nigh impossible to escape serious accidents in such races on the public roads under existing conditions.”³⁵ Concerns over the events of the Paris-Madrid race were also raised in the House of Commons, and worries were expressed over the safety of the proposed Irish race. It was emphasised, by its supporters that the race would be held under entirely different circumstances and that vigorous safety measures would be put in place by members of the Irish constabulary and the military, supplemented by stewards supplied by the Automobile club.

The Paris-Madrid race did not deter the members of the motoring community from showing their support for racing. *The Times* published a letter from John Scott Montagu who argued that fatalities that had occurred in the Paris-Madrid race had no bearing on the future of motor car racing, or indeed a proposed Gordon Bennett race in Ireland. The two races, he claimed, would be entirely different and he argued that negative opinion caused by the events in France was entirely unreasonable. In his opinion motor racing was no more dangerous than other sports: “every year people are killed and injured in the following sports:- football, at cricket (a few), steeplechasing, polo, hunting, shooting, yachting; and yet no one clamours for the abolition of these contests.”³⁶ For Montagu, motor racing was just another sport, not matter how dangerous it was. In short the Paris-Madrid race had done little to reduce the enthusiasm for motor racing among the elite. Despite the reaction in England to the events on the Paris-Madrid race, the Irish Gordon Bennett race was still scheduled to go ahead.

The race took place at the beginning of July 1903. On the day before the race *The Times* reported that there was a good deal of support for the race in Ireland, stating that “the hotels here [Naas] and in all the other towns on the route are packed to overflowing and the sides of the course were lined this evening with thousands of tents ... It is quite certain that a really enormous crowd of spectators from all nations will witness the Gordon Bennett race tomorrow.”³⁷ The so-called “Red Devil” Camille Jenatzy won the race and his victory was reported alongside the “bad-luck” experienced by English drivers. The *Irish Times*, however, reported that “there is no parallel in Irish history for the scenes which were

³⁴ As quoted in B. Montgomery, *The Irish Gordon Bennett 1903*, (Tankardsdown, Dreoilin Specialist Publications Ltd., 1999), p. 12.

³⁵ *The Times*, 26 May 1903, p. 5.

³⁶ *The Times*, 27 May 1903, p. 12.

³⁷ *The Times*, 1 July 1903, p. 11.

witnessed yesterday along the course traversed by the competitors for the Gordon Bennett Cup”, and commented further that “the event was unique so far as this country is concerned and engendered an amount of public excitement which it would be impossible to portray.”³⁸ Despite the success, only one Gordon Bennett race would be held in Ireland. It might be assumed that the lack of achievement by British drivers, coupled with the tardiness of members of the Automobile Club in seeking to have legislation renewed after the 1903 race, as suggested by *The Times*, contributed to trials for the 1904 Gordon Bennett race not being held in Ireland.³⁹

In 1904 the Automobile Club were therefore faced with a problem: where to hold trials for the 1904 Gordon Bennett Race if not in Ireland. This race was to be held in Germany and was billed as a race that

with its accompanying automobile amenities has drawn the nations together on a common sporting ground as no other pastime, industry or interest has ever before ...in effect such an international camaraderie of sport is an unsigned treaty of peace and good fellowship.⁴⁰

The German Gordon Bennett race was advertised as an extremely important sporting event, in fact an event that could be likened, in regard to the latter description, with the Olympic Games, which had been revived in their modern form in 1896. The British participants were determined to be successful and keen to make up for their lack of achievement in the 1903 Gordon Bennett Race. A British team could not be selected using the same illegal and rushed trials such as those held on the London to Oxford road before the 1903 race, and since other competing nations were holding their own trials, it was important that the British team did the same.⁴¹ The Automobile Club had only the possibility of racing in Ireland under legislation passed in 1903. However, in May 1904 *The Times* commented that “it was thought that there would hardly be time to renew or extend the Act passed last year [1903] permitting racing in Ireland.”⁴² This meant that the obvious solution - to hold trials in Ireland - did not happen. But, the unobvious, racing in the Isle of Man, did happen with Irish legislation setting a precedent for Manx legislation.

³⁸ *Irish Times*, 1 July 1903, p. 7.

³⁹ *The Times*, 10 May 1904, p. 13.

⁴⁰ From Julian Orde’s copy of the book *Offizieller Gordon Bennett Führer 1904*, published to mark the occasion of the Gordon Bennett race in Germany 1904.

⁴¹ Kelly, *TT Pioneers*, p. 15.

⁴² *The Times*, 10 May 1904, p. 13.

Structure and Practice of Government on the Isle of Man

In 1904 the Manx government consisted of the lieutenant governor, the Legislative Council and the House of Keys and the two chambers met in Tynwald Court, a practice maintained throughout the period of this study. Boards of Tynwald consisting of Members of the Legislative Council (MLC) and Members of the House of Keys (MHK) directed other administrative duties.

Lord Raglan was appointed to the post of lieutenant governor in 1902, and would enjoy considerable personal authority during his time in office (1902-1919). He had the power to summon and adjourn the Manx parliament and veto expenditure. He was also president of the Local Government Board and head of the police. In fact, such was the power maintained by Raglan between 1902 and 1919 that Hall Caine, a prominent figure on the island, was compelled to compare him with the Tsar of Russia, and Spencer Leigh Hughes commented in *Reynolds Newspaper* in 1911 that “Raglan has more power than the Kaiser.”⁴³ Samuel Norris, a prominent reformist, suggested that the lieutenant governor was “his own Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary.”⁴⁴ The British Crown appointed the lieutenant governor and only the British Crown could remove him from the position.

Yet, despite his considerable power over Manx affairs, Raglan was described in his obituary in the *Manx Quarterly* as intensely companionable, and it was claimed that no one could deliver speeches more gracefully, wittily and pithily.⁴⁵ This would indeed be evident in his advocacy of motor races on the island. Even Samuel Norris, one of Raglan’s sternest critics and founder of the Manx National Reform League in 1903, conceded that no charitable event lacked his presence or that of his wife.⁴⁶ Deemster Callow, a member of the Legislative Council and thus by association a supporter of Raglan, also wrote that Raglan “knew the Island intimately from the Point of Ayre to the Calf [of Man]; he took

⁴³ *Reynolds Newspaper*, Feb. 1911 as cited in J. Vaukins, ‘The Manx Struggle for Reform’, unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Lancaster, 1984, p. 17. Chapter One includes a discussion of the structure of government, laying out the respective roles of the lieutenant governor, the Legislative Council, the House of Keys and Tynwald, see pp. 11-20.

⁴⁴ *Liverpool Weekly Mercury*, May 1903 as cited in J. Vaukins, ‘The Manx Struggle for Reform’, p. 18.

⁴⁵ *Manx Quarterly*, 7 (1922), pp. 44 – 47.

⁴⁶ S. Norris, *Manx Memories and Movements*, (3rd edition, Douglas, Manx Heritage Foundation, 1994).

the deepest interest in the Island's antiquities, its ancient constitution, its social life and its agriculture.⁴⁷ However, Raglan was a strong believer in his acquired authoritarian power. Kermode argues, "Raglan interpreted his role firmly in the colonial tradition. He believed in the superiority of the colonial administration and had a jaundiced view of the ability of the elected members of the Keys."⁴⁸ What the passing of legislation in 1904 suggests, however, is that Raglan was closely in touch with the Manx elite, represented especially in his Legislative Council. He knew little and cared less about the Manx people as a whole.

Despite the considerable personal authority enjoyed by the lieutenant governor, it must be remembered that he had to receive the consent of the Legislative Council and the House of Keys before legislation could be passed on the island. In 1904, when legislation for motor racing was introduced into the Legislative Council, the Council consisted of eight members who were appointed for life by the lieutenant governor. These were the bishop, the archdeacon, the vicar general, the clerk of the rolls, two deemsters (judges), the attorney general and the receiver general. The lieutenant governor presided over the Council. It has been suggested that the Legislative Council therefore offered a "formidable obstacle to any notion of reform" that might have been proposed by members of the Keys.⁴⁹ Reformists on the island were suspicious of the power of the Legislative Council, and believed that Westminster saw it as a vehicle through which to manipulate Manx affairs. It was also believed that meetings of legislative councillors to discuss proposed legislation were often unofficially held in private, with the lieutenant governor acting as chairman and exercising the casting vote. If this were the case, the lieutenant governor would have had the chance to acquaint the Council with proposed legislation before formal debate and thereby avoid any possible dispute between himself and the Legislative Council.⁵⁰ This demonstrates the authority maintained by Raglan over the Manx legislature and also helps explain how legislation for road racing was so swiftly passed in 1904 and 1905, as we will see later.

The House of Keys had become an elected House as a result of the House of Keys Election Act 1866, and was composed of the elected

⁴⁷ *Manx Quarterly*, 7 (1922), p. 45.

⁴⁸ D.G. Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics: The Constitutional and Political Development of the Isle of Man in the Twentieth Century*, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. 39.

⁴⁹ Vaukins, 'The Manx Struggle for Reform', p. 17.

⁵⁰ Vaukins, 'The Manx Struggle for Reform', pp. 16-17.

representatives of the Manx people.⁵¹ The Keys contained twenty-four members, usually wealthy businessmen, rich landowners, and tenant farmers, who were elected from the island's sheadings and constituencies. The Keys' purpose was to examine proposed legislation, after it had been passed in the Legislative Council, and reject it if deemed necessary. However, before 1903 – when some members of the Keys started a concerted movement for reform – the interests of the Keys and the Legislative Council were so similar that the Keys was largely ineffectual as a check on government and the lieutenant governor and the Legislative Council dominated law-making. Again this is demonstrated in the passage of legislation for motor racing in 1904 and 1905.

The two chambers of the Manx parliament sat together in Tynwald Court. The lieutenant governor could not vote in Tynwald, but he was able to address the meeting. In order for bills to be passed, they had to be ratified by both the Legislative Council and the Keys, with each body voting separately. However, a disparity existed in this arrangement due to the fact that the Legislative Council could vote if three of its members and the lieutenant governor were present. The Keys could only reject or pass a bill if thirteen of its members were for or against the proposal. This meant that only three members of the Legislative Council could defeat a bill. Therefore, the lieutenant governor and the Legislative Council maintained a large amount of power.⁵²

The administration of the island was, however, delegated to representatives of Tynwald by the Tynwald's board system, although these boards of Tynwald were still answerable to the lieutenant governor. This system of administration established itself between 1872 and 1894. Before then only the Highway Board had existed (established 1836) and this was the only example of Tynwald members being involved in the administration of the island. The period between 1872 and 1894 saw the establishment of eight bodies, which involved both MLCs and MHKs in the administration of the island. These boards were the Harbour Commissioners, Board of Education, Highways Board, Board of Fishery Conservators, the Asylum Board, Fisheries Committee, Local Government Board, and an Advertising Committee, which would later become the Board of Advertising, a state-funded body to advertise the island and promote it as a tourist destination.⁵³ MLCs chaired all but one of these

⁵¹ For further discussion of this Act see D. Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, pp. 21-23.

⁵² Vaukins, 'The Manx Struggle for Reform', pp. 19-20.

⁵³ Blackpool also had a municipally funded Advertising Committee, see J. K. Walton, 'Municipal Government and the Holiday Industry in Blackpool', in J.K.

bodies between 1902 and 1914, further increasing their administrative power. MHKs gained little control over boards of Tynwald until after World War One.⁵⁴

1904: Gordon Bennett Trials in the Isle of Man

As we saw earlier, after rejecting Ireland as a venue for their trials, the Automobile Club's glances had turned towards the Isle of Man. Julian Orde, the secretary of the Automobile Club was sent to the Isle of Man to explore the possibility of racing there.⁵⁵ Lord Raglan, Orde's cousin, was the island's lieutenant governor. This, however, was only one powerful ingredient in the mix. Tynwald, the island's parliament, was able to pass legislation legalising the closing of public roads without reference to Whitehall or Westminster and, as we have seen above, the lieutenant governor exerted considerable power over the legislative process. Raglan was also a member of the Automobile Club.⁵⁶

In February 1904 and before the legislative process began, Orde visited the island to assess the potential for racing there. After Orde's successful visit - he had been accompanied around the island by Raglan to plan a course - it was left to the Manx government to pass the necessary legislation. Closer examination of the legislative process demonstrates that the legislation was imposed on both the Manx legislature and the islanders. There was no "softening up" process as had taken place in Ireland, or any poll of residents' opinions. On 15 March 1904, the Highway (Light Locomotives) Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by Raglan. He had drawn the bill up along the lines of the Light Locomotives (Ireland) Act 1903. Indeed, members of the Isle of Man Highway Board, constituting officials of Tynwald from both the House of

Walton and J. Walvin (eds.), *Leisure in Britain 1780 – 1939*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1983), pp. 159-186. For further discussion of the island's Board of Advertising and its formation, see J. Beckerson, 'Advertising the Island: The Isle of Man Official Board of Advertising 1894-1914', unpublished BA thesis, University of East Anglia, 1996.

⁵⁴ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁵ In his obituary, *The Times* described Orde as possessing 'exceptional organising ability which he devoted to the service of motoring and the Royal Automobile Club'. The obituary went on to state that 'by promoting numerous practical trials and races, [he] took a leading part in the modern development of motoring'. *The Times*, 19 June 1929.

⁵⁶ This was noted as significant by E. H. Stenning in his discussion of the origins of the TT in the 1962 TT programme.

Keys and Legislative Council, instructed the secretary of the board to write to Ireland's Local Government Board to request a copy of the regulations and orders in connection with the 1903 race.⁵⁷ The passing of this piece of radical legislation broke records. It received its three readings in the Legislative Council on the morning of 15 March and was received by the House of Keys later that afternoon. It passed through its three readings in the Keys that day. It was then signed in Tynwald the following morning.⁵⁸

The debate, or lack of debate, surrounding the bill has been overlooked in literature concerning the history of TT races, and may have been taken as a sign of enthusiasm, from both members of the Manx legislature and the islanders themselves, for the holding of a motor race on the island. Raglan was evidently determined that this legislation would pass, and he made his views on the matter clear in the Legislative Council. Raglan anticipated little difficulty in passing the bill through its stages.⁵⁹ He argued that regulations were required to guarantee the safety of both those involved in motor races and the spectators. Although it was doubtful that the Gordon Bennett trials would have a significant impact on the tourist industry, Raglan claimed that benefits would accrue if the trials were held on the Isle of Man. He even suggested that there was considerable public opinion in favour of the trials taking place on the Isle of Man; this suggestion is somewhat spurious. It is unclear where this public support for the trials came from. Raglan had toured the island with Orde in February 1904, but it is unlikely that he managed to gain a great deal of public support at this time, or even sought it. It could well be argued that Raglan's confidence arose not from the support of the Manx people but as the result of the Legislative Council being filled entirely with Crown appointees on whose support he could rely. This then is also an issue of class. Members of the Manx elite, who were inclined to support Raglan on all matters, were imposing the races on the Manx people. At this stage legislation for motor racing on the Isle of Man was a Raglan-led imposition.

Subsequent debate after the introduction of the bill in the Legislative Council was minimal. There was not even a printed text of the bill to examine and what debate there was hinged on two main issues: the safety of the races and the cost of the races. Whilst the safety of the trials was considered and the period set aside for racing fixed at three days for this

⁵⁷ *Highway Board Minutes*, March 1904, p. 196.

⁵⁸ See Highway (Light Locomotives) Act 1904, *Statutes of the Isle of Man*, Vol. 7, (Victoria Press, Douglas), pp. 468-469. Hereafter *Statutes*.

⁵⁹ *Manx Debates*, Vol. 21, 15 Mar. 1904, p. 401. Hereafter *Debates*.

reason, the cost of the trials was discussed more extensively. It was felt that ample funds must be made available for meeting the costs of policing the event.⁶⁰ The Irish authorities - county councils - had been wary of footing the bill for racing in 1903 and, so it seems, was the Manx Legislative Council in 1904. The Council suggested that funds for racing might come from the organisers of the event, in this case the Automobile Club and maybe even from interest groups such as the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and hoteliers. As a result of this the 1904 legislation made it clear that "applicants" were to pay for the costs incurred by racing on the island.⁶¹

The bill, still only in draft and not yet returned from the printers, was passed to the Keys in the afternoon and rather more of a debate ensued. Even so, most disquiet in the Keys concerned the speed with which the legislation was being passed and not the proposal itself. After the Keys had been asked to offer an opinion on a bill which had not yet been received from the printers, W. T. Crennell, MHK for the rural constituency of Kirk Michael commented that the Bill, which was rapidly being passed through the necessary channels, was not a matter of "such extreme urgency...that we should in the face of all precedent read the Bill first, second and third times – because that is what is intended – a Bill we have never seen, *it is really making ourselves a laughing stock*" [Emphasis added].⁶² Raglan had expected that there would be little difficulty in passing the bill and that the Legislative Council and Keys would swiftly push the legislation through. This anticipated speed in the legislature was the Keys' main objection. Raglan's expectations highlight his authoritarian interpretation of his role, believing that the usual legislative procedures could be by-passed to make motor racing a reality. Some members of the Keys, however, would not accept this without some squeaks of protest, and this was fair since the bill had not been seen in its entirety, or even in its printed form, and yet members of the Keys were expected to subscribe to it.

The fact that the two opposing opinions on the merits of the bill from Crennell and Radcliffe, were offered by members whose sheadings would be affected differently by the races, is also noticeable. Crennell's sheading, Kirk Michael, was on the intended route of the course and therefore the trials were likely to cause disruption to his constituents. However, the race would largely bypass Radcliffe's constituency, the sheading of Ayre and it

⁶⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 21, 15 Mar. 1904, pp. 400-403.

⁶¹ Highway (Light Locomotives) Act 1904, *Statutes*, Vol. 7, pp. 468-469.

⁶² *Debates*, Vol. 21, 15 Mar. 1904, p. 453.

would, therefore, be easier for Radcliffe to ignore the disruptive effects of holding a motor race on the island, as he would be distanced from the race. It can also be argued that MHKs would have little idea of the nature of the activity they were being asked to sanction, and therefore of the benefits it might generate. Unsurprisingly, Crennell's objections were not given any support by other members of the Keys. Members of the Keys showed their weakness in the face of the lieutenant governor. The demands of the opposition in the Keys fell on deaf ears, and in sum, and due to Raglan's attitude, the debate was lost before it had begun.

The lack of debate or serious engagement with the bill made it clear that the idea of motor racing - or at least the idea of passing legislation for motor racing at such a fast pace - was not seriously opposed by the representatives of the Manx people. The unprinted bill was passed by a Legislative Council and a House of Keys that usually did the lieutenant governor's bidding. Between them, they had only ventured to express concern about the speed of the legislation and the safety and cost of the trials. This was also the only time that unprinted legislation was passed by Tynwald, demonstrating the way in which Raglan exercised his power, the willingness of the Legislative Council to do what Raglan suggested, and the weakness of the Keys in the face of the lieutenant governor. After this minimal debate, the legislation was signed in Tynwald the next morning.

The Highway (Light Locomotives) Act 1904 allowed the Highway Board to close public roads for the purpose of racing, from "time to time." However, this excluded Sundays (for religious reasons) and racing could only take place for three days in the year. The Act also allowed for a £20 fine to be imposed on anyone in breach of the rules of the law. These were rules that were put in place to reduce speed in populated areas and protect spectators. The legislation was to expire on 31 December 1904.⁶³ It is fair to conclude that no one involved with the legislation or the trials expected this to be more than a one-off, a point that could partly explain Raglan's confidence in the bill being successful and the apparent submission of the Legislative Council and the Keys when asked to pass a piece of unseen legislation. This also helps account for no discussion on the possible economic benefits of the Gordon Bennett trials to the island. Fittingly, in order to pass the Act officially, a special ceremony was held at Tynwald on 5 May 1904, once again showing that Raglan was prepared to compromise Manx political procedures. The Act was passed not on 5 July, the Manx national day, when it was usual for new Manx laws to be promulgated. This was because of the need to hold trials before the

⁶³ Highway (Light Locomotives) Act 1904, *Statutes*, Vol. 7, pp. 468-469.

Gordon Bennett race. It was reported in the Manx press that a special convoy of motorcars was arranged to carry members of the Manx legislature to Tynwald Hill.⁶⁴ This was arranged by Julian Orde, and might be seen as a final move to seal the “deal” between Raglan, elite members of the Manx legislature, and the Automobile Club.

There has been a large amount of comment on the origins of the TT. For example, Robert Kelly argues that “the start of motorsport in the Isle of Man was a mixture of farce and melodrama”,⁶⁵ and this further examination of the origins of the races would appear to substantiate this, with legislation being imposed by the lieutenant governor. Kermode, on the other hand, suggests that there is a link between the Highways (Light Locomotives) Act passed by Tynwald in 1904 and tourism, stating that “tourism which benefited from much of the general enabling and regulatory activity was also the focus of specific legislation. The Highways (Light Locomotives) Act 1904 provided for the Island’s first motor racing on public roads.”⁶⁶ That the TT was originally established as a boost to the island’s tourist industry is an opinion also expressed in much of the enthusiasts’ literature, alongside the suggestion that motor racing was widely welcomed by islanders. Further to this, enthusiasts’ literature also suggests that Raglan was a motoring enthusiast himself and that he might have spotted the potential of the Manx road system for road racing.⁶⁷ It is also argued, insubstantially with little evidence, that enthusiasm for racing permeated through all strata of Manx society and that some Manx people wanted to offer the motor industry a home and the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland a place to hold an eliminating trial, for the 1904 Gordon Bennett race.⁶⁸ This is barely believable, as is the contrary claim that Orde instead faced the task of awaking this “Rip van Winkle Island” and stimulating interest in motor racing.⁶⁹

Legislation passed in 1904 was only designed to last until 31 December that year, and Manx politicians expected no obvious effects on the tourist trade. This legislation was not aimed at boosting the tourist trade, but rather pandered to a wealthy elite. It was imposed on the Manx people and, therefore, there was no need to create an interest in motor

⁶⁴ *Mona's Herald*, 19 March 1904.

⁶⁵ Kelly, *TT Pioneers*, p. 39.

⁶⁶ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, p. 71.

⁶⁷ P. Beighton and A. Douglas, *Steve Hislop's “You Couldn't do it Now”* (Great Britain, Mannin, 1993), p. 10.

⁶⁸ Beighton and Douglas, “*You Couldn't do it Now*”, p. 10.

⁶⁹ Holliday, *Racing Round the Island*, p. 14.

racing amongst islanders for this one-off event. One motor sport historian claims that at the time of Orde's visit there were only two motor vehicles on the island.⁷⁰ If so, the Isle of Man would hardly be the home of enthusiasts urging this race upon the Manx. Roads would have to be closed and the routine of some Manx people would be disrupted. If racing took place in the autumn, the work of farmers would be disrupted. Harvesting crops would have been a much more difficult task if roads were closed and motorcars were racing along them. Closing public roads for motorcar races was an unprecedented inconvenience, yet an inconvenience Raglan believed would be tolerated by the Manx people.

In 1904 then, in order to allow motoring enthusiasts, all of whom were members of the elite from mainland Britain, to race on the Isle of Man, the Legislative Council and to some extent the House of Keys, driven on by Raglan, were prepared to suspend domestic motoring rules and regulations for three days of the year, albeit for one year only. They were also prepared to speed up necessary legislative procedures. As a consequence of this, what should have taken weeks to be read and considered in a first, a second and third reading was crammed into just one day. This also resulted in very little debate being produced in each chamber, which is reflected in the trivial number of pages dedicated to the subject in the printed debates, the *House of Keys Journal* and the *Legislative Council Minutes*.⁷¹ It is no wonder that Crennell believed that the Keys were making a laughing stock of themselves. True, prohibiting racing on a Sunday protected the interests of the religious community on the island. Keeping racing to three days a year protected the interests of the rural community. Insisting that the organisers of the race cover the expense of such an event protected the Manx from having to use their own money to pay for the enthusiasm of a few members of the British elite. That, however, was all about which the legislators chose to show concern.

1905: The Motorcycle TT precedent

The Highways (Light Locomotive) Act expired on 31 December 1904, and it was therefore necessary to consider new legislation when in 1905 the Automobile Club approached the island for the purpose of racing once

⁷⁰ Holliday, *Racing Round the Island*, p. 14. This point is also supported by Manx registration and licensing records. See Register of Motor Cars 1906 – 1922 (1 Vol.) and Register of Driving Licence Holders 1906 – 1921 (1 Vol.).

⁷¹ See *House of Keys Journal* 1900 - 1906, (1 Volume), and *Legislative Council Minutes*, 1892 – 1908.

again, this time for further trials and for their newly conceived idea of a “Tourist Trophy” race. The Manx authorities were therefore given an early opportunity to stop all further motor racing on the Isle of Man, but this did not happen. Indeed the opportunity to prevent a repeat of the trials was given little consideration by Raglan, the Legislative Council or the House of Keys. In 1905 Raglan did not have to rely on Irish legislation to convince the Council and the Keys to hold racing on the island once again; there was now Manx legislation from 1904 that could be renewed. Those sanctioning motor racing on the island would also have a clearer idea of the type of activity they were allowing.

In early 1905 legislation was once again introduced in the Legislative Council by Raglan. This new bill closely followed the 1904 Act, but with a couple of significant amendments. The Act did not specify an expiry date, as was the case in 1904, but did include a clause which stated that “the powers of the [Highway] Board shall not be exercised after the expiration of one year from the promulgation of this Act, unless the Tynwald court shall, by resolution, expressly authorize [sic] the exercise of the same.”⁷² This clause meant legislation had to be annually renewed by Tynwald, giving them power to refuse permission for motor racing on the island if they so wished. Moreover, the three days previously allowed for motor racing were replaced by six, authorising three days to be set aside in May and three days in September for motor racing.⁷³ The Highways (Motor Car) Bill unsurprisingly again produced very little comment in the Legislative Council and this lack of questioning is again reflected in the limited account in the printed debates.⁷⁴

However, in contrast to this and unlike the rushed debate in 1904, the Keys in 1905 were at least given more time to consider the bill, though discussion was once again limited. Issues raised in this debate indicated some antagonism between farming and the visiting industry, or between urban and rural interests. Racing, if it were to take place in September, would cause some disruption to the farming community, and this immediately caused disquiet amongst the rural section of the Keys. E. M. Gawne (Rushen) voiced his concerns, arguing: “we are not going to let people say that the visiting industry is the paramount industry, and that alone is to be studied. I maintain that farming is the chief industry we have on the Island.”⁷⁵ At the heart of this matter was the concern, albeit misplaced, that agriculture was suffering as a result of investment in the

⁷² See Highways (Motor Car) Act 1905, *Statutes*, Vol. 7, pp. 569-571.

⁷³ Highways (Motor Car) Act 1905, *Statutes*, Vol. 7, pp. 569-571.

⁷⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 22, 1905, p. 545.

⁷⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 22, 1905, p. 501.

development of the tourist industry. Rural MHKs were eager to see that the interests of the farming community were not compromised.

Whilst Gawne believed that motor racing would be detrimental to the rural Manx, Joseph Qualtrough (Rushen) on the other hand urged the House to take a wider view. He claimed that racing would cause little disruption to the public and he went on to state that he believed that where racing was concerned the welfare of the Manx would come first and the welfare of the visitors second.⁷⁶ It is difficult to believe that this would be the case, as motor racing was once again being imposed on the Manx people. Qualtrough then offered very ambivalent support for the races stating that:

I am not at all favourable to the Motor Car Bill; I have no great sympathy towards it. I don't know really whether if I was put to the test of my own feelings I would vote for it at all. But I believe it will advertise the Isle of Man, and if that is so, I believe every member should consider whether we cannot secure that benefit, and for that purpose the Bill has my sympathy, and for that only.⁷⁷

Qualtrough believed the races could publicise the island, but at this point it would have been more a case of publicity being the good word of mouth of those who attended the motor races. It can certainly be argued that there would be much immediate monetary benefit to the Manx economy.

Despite Qualtrough's comments and despite legislation being made permanent in 1905, there was still very little indication that the races would have a big impact in the future. Furthermore, the 1905 legislation had again been imposed on the Manx. The passage of the legislation again shows the power wielded by Raglan, who was once more pandering to the wishes of members of the British elite. There were minor differences in 1905, which included the fact that more time was taken to consider the legislation, but no opportunity was given to rehearse objections and it was still inevitable that this new legislation would be passed. Once again, in 1905, motor racing was imposed on the island. With legislation being made permanent, the Automobile Club now arguably had a racetrack on the Isle of Man.

In 1907 the first motorcycle TT race was held on the Isle of Man, organised by the Auto Cycle Union (ACU). Both the Highways (Light Locomotive) Act 1904 and the Highways (Motor Car) Act had provided

⁷⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 22, 1905, p. 501.

⁷⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 22, 1905, pp. 506 -507.

for “races with light locomotives”⁷⁸ and also that “public roads within this island may be used for races with motor cars.”⁷⁹ This therefore enabled the first motorcycle TT race to be held on the Isle of Man over a newly designed course, in the west of the island, with apparently no change being made to the legislation. The ease with which the motorcycle TT was established suggests a further imposition, and no discussion over the holding of this motorcycle race has been found in the printed debates. However, minute books recording meetings of the Isle of Man Highway Board reveal that the ACU did write to the Highway Board to apply for permission to hold a motorcycle race on 28 May 1907. This letter was read in a meeting on 15 May, with the Highway Board granting permission for this race.⁸⁰

The origins of the motorcycle TT races are a matter of some debate between motor sport enthusiasts, although it is usually accepted that they are as follows. In 1906 the Auto Cycle Club (ACC) came to the conclusion that to encourage the development of motorcycles the motorcycle industry needed a similar race to the motorcar TT races established in 1905. By 1907, Julian Orde, secretary of the Automobile Club, who had been instrumental in bringing motor racing to the island, helped to arrange this and persuaded Raglan to designate for racing an eighteen-mile circuit in the west of the island.⁸¹ This is one shortened version of events. Another suggests that the TT races were the brainchild of the editor of the *Motor Cycle* magazine and that the concept was first proposed at the annual ACC dinner on 17 January 1907. The reason for this proposal had much to do with disenchantment with the International Cup race for motorcycles that had been held in Europe since 1904. There is little primary material available from which to ascertain a real version of events. However, it might be argued that Orde had a hand in the establishment of this race, given his involvement in 1904 and his relationship with Raglan. It also cannot be stated with certainty that these races were an imposition as had been the case with motor car races, but the little evidence found might suggest that this is likely. The origins of the motorcycle TT therefore lie firmly in the origins of motorcar racing on the Isle of Man.

⁷⁸ Highway (Light Locomotives) Act 1904, *Statutes* pp. 468-469.

⁷⁹ Highways (Motor Car) Act 1905, *Statutes*, vol. VII, pp. 569-571.

⁸⁰ *Highway Board Minutes*, 15 May 1907.

⁸¹ Kelly, *TT Pioneers*, p. 91.

1912: Threats to the motorcycle TT

In 1904, 1905 and indeed 1907, the establishment of motor racing on the Isle of Man was the result of the imposition of legislation by the lieutenant governor and members of the Manx legislature, namely members of the Legislative Council. Legislation was renewed annually by Tynwald, in conjunction with the lieutenant governor, and permission granted to the RAC and indeed the ACU to organise motor car and motorcycle races to take place on the Isle of Man.⁸² However, a boycott led by motorcycle manufacturers in 1912 threatened the continuation of the motorcycle TT and caused Tynwald to reassess the importance of staging the event on the Isle of Man.

In January 1912 the vicar general, a member of the Legislative Council and chairman of the Highway Board, put forward a resolution in Tynwald to permit the extension of the 1905 legislation for a further year. It will be recalled that this annual renewal of legislation by Tynwald had been a stipulation of the 1905 legislation, thus allowing motorcycle races to take place annually up to 1912.⁸³ After the vicar general had put forward the resolution and in the same sitting of Tynwald, Raglan introduced a letter he had received from the Manufacturers' Union.⁸⁴ Deemster Moore read the letter to members of Tynwald, making them aware of the attitude of the Manufacturers' Union towards the TT and the Union's proposal to boycott the event. It was pointed out that in the opinion of members of the Manufacturers' Union, it was "contrary to public interests that such road races should be held in future."⁸⁵ This conclusion had been reached for the following reasons:

1. Experience has proved that personal accidents, sometimes fatal, as you know, are inseparable from such events.
2. The public require [sic] no further demonstration of the extraordinary speed at which the modern motor bicycle may be driven.
3. If the utmost speed of which the motor-cycle is capable is required to be demonstrated, it can be done without undue risk, and without any public inconvenience, on an enclosed and specially constructed track, such as exists at Brooklands.

⁸² The Automobile received Royal patronage in 1908 and thus changed its title to the Royal Automobile Club (RAC). The Auto Cycle Club (ACC) also renamed itself the Auto Cycle Union (ACU) in the same year.

⁸³ *Debates*, Vol., 23 Jan. 1912, pp. 186-196.

⁸⁴ This was the British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers' and Traders' Union, which will be referred to as the Manufacturers' Union throughout.

⁸⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 186.

4. It is contrary to public prejudice to associate the word “tourist” with a speed of nearly 60 miles an hour.
5. Young and heedless men in all parts of the country, hearing of the speed attained under special circumstances in the Isle of Man, are tempted to emulate that speed on ordinary roads, with the result that all other users of the highroads suffer considerably.⁸⁶

The reasons why this letter was sent to Raglan are unclear. What is clear, however, is that the Manufacturers’ Union was becoming unsure that the motorcycle TT races served any purpose to manufacturers. The Manufacturers’ Union had presented Tynwald with an opportunity to stop the TT at this early stage.

Members of the Manx legislature did not share the opinions of the Manufacturers’ Union. Instead they were actually keen to see the continuation of the TT on the island. Kerruish, MHK for South Douglas, suggested that the Union’s letter should be ignored, stating that “I have some experience of that Society, and I know what it is, and I think we may disregard it absolutely.”⁸⁷ Quite what this comment referred to is unclear. In further discussion of the resolution MHKs and MLCs voiced both support and objections towards the continuation of the TT on the island, suggesting that a more open debate was permitted, but also that members of Tynwald on the whole were by then accepting the lieutenant governor’s imposition.

The vicar general had earlier made his support clear when introducing the resolution. He pointed out that, “the [Highway] Board recognise that there is a considerable body of opinion throughout the Island probably against holding these competitions” but this was not important as “on the other hand, they [the Highway Board] are fully aware that there is a strong body of opinion in favour of these races, and they also recognise that these competitions are of very great benefit to the people of the Island in one way or other.”⁸⁸ The vicar general was confident that, in asking for the TT to be continued on the island and in asking that roads be closed at some inconvenience to some islanders, he still had the support of at least the majority of the island’s residents.

The attorney general and Deemster Moore, both members of the Legislative Council, and Crennell and Clucas from the House of Keys, raised objections to the continuation of the TT. The attorney general did not support the TT because he believed the Isle of Man was being

⁸⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 186.

⁸⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 190.

⁸⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 187.

exploited as a result of the refusal of the British government to permit road racing in England. The organisers of these races had taken advantage of the island's constitutional position. He also believed that a great deal of inconvenience was caused by the holding of the TT on the island. His objections were that the debate, which in his opinion had sunk to the "most sordid level possible to imagine", took into account the financial gain that could be made from the races but did not consider the inconvenience the races caused to the island's residents. He also argued that "it is not a matter of right or wrong, or consideration for the comfort of the people of the Island, but a mere matter of getting a little money. It is the principle that supports Monte Carlo, because it pays all the rates at the expense of vice."⁸⁹ We can clearly see that, in the mind of the attorney general at least, the Isle of Man was gaining a reputation for doing things differently, for seeking to be distinctive. By staging the TT the Manx held an event that would not be permitted elsewhere. The attorney general, however, was not prepared to support the TT simply because of the belief that the event might advertise the island.

MHKs Crennell and Clucas had their own reasons for not supporting the continuation of the TT. Crennell was confused by the actions of the Highway Board, stating that "one thing which [he had] not been able to understand is the mysterious way in which the Highway Board moves, in that it allows, and did allow last year, a race for motor cycles but prohibited a race for motor cars."⁹⁰ Crennell went on to argue that, in his opinion, and as far as residents along the road were concerned, "the motorcyclist [was] infinitely more objectionable than the motor car-ist [sic], and so far as experience in this Island goes for anything, racing by motor cycle seems to be more dangerous than racing by motor car."⁹¹ The Highway Board, it might be suggested, were pursuing an agenda that would see motorcycle racing maintained on the island. The Board did not have the support of all MHKs, and this was not forthcoming because motor races on the island were deemed to be an inconvenience to some.

In 1912 there was a more open and transparent debate over the future of the TT, and we can see much greater discussion over the future of racing on the Isle of Man than had been the case in 1904, 1905 and 1907. There was active support for the continuation of the TT by members of Tynwald, although objections were put forward most notably by the attorney general, a member of the Legislative Council. The event's

⁸⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 188.

⁹⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, pp. 193-194.

⁹¹ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 188.

continuation was not in doubt. Such objections were not persuasive enough when a vote was taken on the question of the TT's future. The resolution for legislation to be renewed for a further year, had not received unanimous support in Tynwald, but it was only the attorney general and Deemster Moore from the Legislative Council who objected, and the Keys' majority when a vote was taken at the end of the debate was secured by fourteen votes to two, with Clucas, representative of the rural sheading of Rushen, and Crennell, representative for Ramsey, objecting.⁹² We can see that MLCs and MHKs in 1912 were largely supportive of what had been imposed in 1904. Support for the races was voiced strongly by Kerruish, MHK for South Douglas, and his advocacy offers the first hint of a division between rural and urban interests in the TT in Tynwald. Majority endorsement on this occasion does not imply that the TT had become firmly accepted politically although, as we shall see in the next chapter, some members were beginning to stress the economic benefits that the Isle of Man might derive from a continuation of the sport.

⁹² *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 196.

CHAPTER TWO

PICKING UP SPEED: ECONOMICS AND IDENTITY

At the beginning of the twentieth century tourism was beginning to establish itself as the island's largest source of income. From around 1896 the Manx economy entered a period of specialisation, a phase that saw the growing dependence of the Manx economy on tourism as a result of the decline of primary and secondary industries such as mining, manufacturing and fishing. For example, in 1826 the Manx fishing fleet had consisted of 250 boats and employed 2,500 men.¹ However, during the mid-1880s the fishing industry entered a period of steady decline and, Kinvig states, by 1911 the number employed in the fishing industry had fallen to 1000, although statistics taken from the 1901 and 1911 censuses show that there were only 864 and 525 people employed in this industry respectively (see table 2-1). Indeed, Kinvig also notes that in 1914 the Manx fishing fleet was made up of only 57 boats.² There was, then, a considerable decline in the island's fishing industry.

This decline was joined by the decline of numbers employed in mining, an industry that had been prosperous during the mid-nineteenth century. During the 1870s and 1880s Laxey mines recorded their highest production figures for lead, zinc and silver. The value of the ore shipped from Laxey in this period has been estimated as £90,915, and the annual value of production in the Foxdale mines was £40,000.³ It has also been estimated that the mining industry as a whole, between 1855 and 1880, employed almost 1000 men.⁴ These levels of prosperity were not maintained. The Foxdale mines closed in 1911 by which date Laxey mines

¹ R.H. Kinvig, *A Social, Cultural and Political History of the Isle of Man*, (3rd ed., Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1975), p. 145.

² Kinvig, *Social, Cultural and Political History*, p. 145.

³ Kinvig, *Social, Cultural and Political History*, p. 149.

⁴ Kinvig, *Social, Cultural and Political History*, p. 149.

were only employing 200 miners.⁵ The Manx economy was beginning to lose another industry and potential source of income from exports. Census data also shows that the number of people employed in mining or related industries was also declining. In 1901 a total of 769 people were employed in this sector of the economy, but this number had fallen to 522 in 1911. By the beginning of the twentieth century mining no longer employed a significant number of the island's workforce (see table 2-1).

The development of the island's tourist industry was facilitated by the financial reforms of 1866, under the Customs, Harbours and Public Purposes Act passed on the instigation of Lieutenant Governor Loch. This allowed for government investment in harbour works and the opening up of the island to larger numbers of tourists from the north of England.⁶ In contrast to the fortunes of other industries on the Isle of Man, tourism underwent a rapid expansion during the period between 1900 and 1914, and the Isle of Man became a popular tourist destination, alongside the development of English seaside resorts such as Blackpool.⁷ The boarding houses in Douglas are described by Walton as being noted for "informality and easy mixing, [...] the impressive boarding houses along the Loch promenade took in between 50 – 100 visitors at a time", which was in sharp contrast to "the usual middle class concern for privacy and exclusiveness."⁸ Indeed, such was this growth of tourism during the latter part of the nineteenth century that the Commission on Local Industry, reporting in 1900, concluded that the visiting industry had grown so much that it was becoming increasingly difficult to employ those involved in the industry during the off-season.⁹ This report also noted, "owing to the great demand for labour with the successful visiting industry, the extension of

⁵ J.W. Birch, *The Isle of Man: A Study in Economic Geography*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 26.

⁶ See D. Winterbottom, 'Economic History', in J. Belchem (ed.), *A New History of the Isle of Man Volume V: The Modern Period 1830-1999*, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 219-221.

⁷ See Cooper and Jackson, 'Tourism in the Isle of Man: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Problems', *Manchester Geographer* 3 (1982) and 'Destination Life-Cycle: The Isle of Man Case Study', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 16 (1989); J. K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750 – 1914*, (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1983).

⁸ J.K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750 – 1914*, (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1983) p. 91. See also Walton, *Blackpool*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

⁹ *Commission on Local Industries*, 26 March 1900.

the present industries of the island is impracticable.”¹⁰ We can see tourism becoming the dominant industry on the Isle of Man.

The rise in recorded visitor numbers substantiates this. Total visitor numbers show that in 1900 the island received 351,238 visitors, which increased to a record number of 634,512 in 1913, the highest recorded total between 1900 and 1960. Between 1900 and 1914 tourist figures did not fall below 350,000.¹¹ Census data also demonstrates the development of this industry, showing a rise in those employed in occupations loosely termed under the heading food, tobacco, drink and lodging, from 2,729 in 1901 to 3,801 in 1911 (see table 2-1).¹² This is a rise of 1000 people providing such services on the Isle of Man during a period when visitor figures were steadily rising suggesting that during the pre-war period, the island’s economy was becoming concentrated on tourism. Also interesting to note is that in the printed record of visitor figures for the period 1887 – 2003, the years 1904, 1905 and 1907 are pointed out as significant dates, because of the establishment and holding of motor races on the island. However, the statistics show that visitor figures were already increasing after 1900, regardless of motor races, and so the motor races held in these years had little role in boosting tourist figures, although the origins of the TT have been closely associated, by some scholars, with the development of the island’s tourist industry.¹³

Manx Economic Interests

The lack of debate around the passage of legislation in 1904 and 1905 meant that very few capitalist interests in holding motor races on the island were recognised by members of Tynwald. It must also be remembered that legislation passed in 1904 was only valid until 31 December that year. Few if any economic benefits would be had from, holding motor races on the Isle of Man in one year, and it is not unreasonable to expect these not to be considered by members of Tynwald. It should therefore be asked whether or not, in 1904 and 1905 members

¹⁰ *Commission on Local Industries*, 26 March 1900.

¹¹ *Isle of Man Summer Passenger Arrivals 1887 – Present*, (Douglas, Economic Affairs Division; Isle of Man Government, 2007).

¹² *Census 1901: Islands in the British Seas: Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey and Adjacent Islands*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1903); *Census 1911: Islands in the British Seas: Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey and Adjacent Islands*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1913).

¹³ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, p. 71.

Table 2-1: Occupations of males and females (10 years +) 1901-1911

Occupation	1901			1911		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
General or Local Government	245	21	266	306	62	368
Defence of Country	48	0	48	40	0	40
Professional Occupations	554	461	1015	572	449	1021
Domestic offices or services	252	2797	3049	298	2704	3002
Commercial occupations	534	31	565	534	47	581
Conveyance of men, goods and messages	1809	50	1859	1901	34	1935
Agriculture	3336	320	3656	3622	614	4236
Fishing	864	0	864	525	0	525
In and about, and dealing in the products of mines and quarries	765	4	769	522	0	522
Metals, machines, implements and conveyances	686	9	695	733	18	751
Precious metals, jewels, watches, instruments and games	110	4	114	68	20	88
Building and works of construction	1940	0	1940	1753	2	1755
Wood, furniture, fittings and decorations	205	4	209	158	8	166
Brick, cement, pottery and glass	31	8	39	21	13	34
Chemicals, Oil, Grease, Soap, Resin etc.	75	3	78	90	10	100
Skins, Leather, Hair and Feathers	42	0	42	36	1	37
Paper, Print, Books and Stationary	161	38	199	149	70	219
Textile Fabrics	358	162	520	256	134	390
Dress	627	1124	1751	623	1042	1665
Food, Tobacco, Drink and Lodging	1581	1148	2729	1696	2105	3801
Gas, Water, Electricity Supply and Sanitary Services	88	0	88	94	0	94
Other General and Undefined Workers and Dealers	1166	75	1241	1011	141	1152
Without specified occupations or unoccupied	4375	17319	21694	4136	15981	20117

Source: Isle of Man Census Data 1901 and 1911

of Tynwald identified any economic value to the island in motor racing, and further whether these interests developed up to 1914.

As discussed above, the Highways (Light Locomotives) Act 1904 was passed in one day, and with little debate in the Legislative Council or House of Keys. Legislation was imposed on the Manx legislature, and the speed with which the legislation was passed and the lack of open debate make it clear that there was little time to consider the contribution, if any, the event might make to the Manx economy. In 1904 Radcliffe, representative for Ayre did claim that the bill was a matter of great importance to the island believing that it would be “a means of bringing over a class of visitor that will be of very great benefit.”¹⁴ This is not, however, a statement from which we can deduce that Radcliffe was encouraging the use of motor sport in publicising the island. Equally it cannot be argued that, in 1904, there was any belief amongst members of Tynwald that such an event would help attract visitors to the island. This motor race was only a trial for the Gordon Bennett Race. It was therefore not an international race such as had been held in Ireland in 1903. It should also be noted that this was an opinion voiced only by one member of the Keys. It provides little evidence that the passing of legislation and the holding of a motor race on the island were geared towards the development of the tourist trade, as suggested by Kermode who claims that the 1904 legislation facilitated the development of the island’s tourist industry,¹⁵ and by Kelly who argues that the Manx government had approached the 1904 trials with “an eagerness for new tourist business but an uncertainty over what to expect.”¹⁶

There was more open debate over the passing of legislation in 1905, and this allowed MLCs and MHKs to voice their opinions. It must be remembered, however, that motor racing had only once taken place on the Isle of Man before the suggestion that further legislation be passed in 1905. Gawne (Rushen) had expressed concerns over the impact of motor races on rural communities, especially since they were to be held in September in 1905. As already reported, Gawne had argued, “we are not going to let people say that the visiting industry is the paramount industry, and that alone is to be studied. I maintain that farming is the chief industry we have on the Island.”¹⁷ Contrary to Gawne’s opinion, Qualtrough urged the House to take a wider view, pointing out that whilst he was not favourable to the Motor Car Bill, he believed that it “would advertise the

¹⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 21 15 March 1904, p. 453.

¹⁵ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, p. 71.

¹⁶ Kelly, *TT Pioneers*, p. 39.

¹⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 22, 1905, p. 501.

Isle of Man, and if that is so, I believe every member should consider whether we can secure that benefit.”¹⁸

Both Qualtrough and Gawne’s opinions echoed the conflicting views of the Commission on Local Industry’s enquiry, which had reported in 1900. The report stressed that the tourist industry had reached such a point that the demand for labour in connection with this industry made it difficult to obtain labour in other areas of the economy. The Commission also judged that there was no way in which the mass of unskilled workers that faced unemployment at the end of the tourist season could be employed in the winter.¹⁹ The tourist industry was indeed becoming the chief industry on the island, but this was not necessarily a welcome development. Statistics in the 1901 and 1911 censuses show that there were almost twice the number of people employed in “food, tobacco, drink and lodging” than in the fishing industry (see table 2-1). It might therefore be argued that motor racing may have been geared towards the enrichment of this industry, but very little was said so positively in the debate.

The Highways (Motor Car) Act 1905 was renewed each year with the consent of Tynwald and the lieutenant governor, and allowed motor car races, and after 1907 motorcycle races, to take place on the Isle of Man each year. As there was little debate over the renewal of legislation and the continuation of motor racing on the Isle of Man, it is difficult to trace how far members of Tynwald discerned an economic value in the continuation of these events. It can, however, be noted that there was no effort made on behalf of the Manx government to advertise the TT alongside the island’s other attractions during this period. This was a step that would not be taken until 1922.²⁰ In 1912, however, the Manx legislature was faced by the possible termination of the motorcycle TT, and there was an open debate to consider this matter in Tynwald. On this occasion members were quick to point out the economic benefits of continuing to hold the motorcycle TT on the island, which by then had still only been running for five years.

Surprisingly, when the origins of motor racing on the Isle of Man are considered, it was not just members of the Legislative Council who offered their support for the TT in 1912. The majority of MHKs present in the debate also supported the continuation of the event. In 1910, Kerruish (South Douglas) put forward a proposal in Tynwald, without the consent of the lieutenant governor that the Board of Advertising’s budget should

¹⁸ *Debates*, Vol., 22, 1905, p. 501.

¹⁹ *Commission on Local Industries Report*, 26 March 1900.

²⁰ Pre-war Board of Advertising Minute Books makes no reference to the TT races.

be raised from £750 to £1,750 per year, showing his keenness to see the island well-advertised.²¹ Now, in 1912, he stated that "I think that the whole Court will agree that, from a financial point of view, and from an advertising point of view, nothing better has happened to the Isle of Man than these motor and cycle races which his Excellency was fortunate to secure for us in the first instance."²² Kerruish was here offering a retrospective endorsement of what Raglan had imposed in 1904. He claimed that the event brought a large amount of revenue to the island. He admitted that:

It is impossible to say with any exactness how many people were brought [to the island], but it is easy to get the minimum computation. There were 150 competitors at least; each of those competitors involved a party of six, which makes 900 people directly interested in the races. They were here for six weeks, but putting them down at 10 – 12 days, each one of them would spend 15s or £1 a day. There you have £10,000 spent in the Isle of Man. Now, put that alongside of what you, farmers, get extra for a calf from a premium bull, and where are you? [Laughter].²³

Kerruish's comment, which was met with light-hearted agreement in Tynwald, shows an early division between rural and urban interests in Tynwald. It was implied that more money could be made from holding motor racing events on the island than could be made from farming. Kerruish viewed the £10,000 spent by those who came to the island to take part in the TT as a good enough reason for the races to continue. This was not as large a sum as would be generated by the races in future years, but the money would be spent in Douglas and it is therefore reasonable to assume that it would largely benefit Kerruish's constituents. The TT was then, in Kerruish's opinion, far more profitable than agriculture. Kerruish was not alone by 1912 in stressing the potential economic value of the TT for the Isle of Man. The vicar general, for example, argued that:

I do not say that they [the TT races] do not cause some noise and discomfort; but, speaking from a financial point of view, there can be no doubt that benefit is derived from the large number of persons coming over here and from the money expended in connection with this competition.²⁴

²¹ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, p. 71.

²² *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 January 1912, p. 189.

²³ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 January 1912, p. 189.

²⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 187.

Even though the TT races were still a small affair, it was being claimed that the economic benefits to be had from the TT outweighed the discomfort caused to residents. We might also suggest that the money spent in connection with the competition would mostly be retained by businesses located in Douglas the island's largest town (Fig. 2-1). This localised advantage was certainly picked up on by some critics. Clucas opposed the TT's continuation, and his objections were based partly on the exploitation of the Isle of Man by the ACU and the Automobile Club, but also because he reckoned the races benefited only Douglas, and no other areas of the island:

I never could see why this Island should be made the playground of these people, either the Automobile Society or the Auto Cycle Society, or that manufacturers or traders should use it as a ground for testing their machines. The hon. member for South Douglas states that a great deal of money is spent on the Island as a result of this race. I have no doubt that as far as that applies to Douglas, it is right; but of the other parts of the Island even this cannot be said in their favour and people along the route of the race have to suffer the inconvenience.²⁵

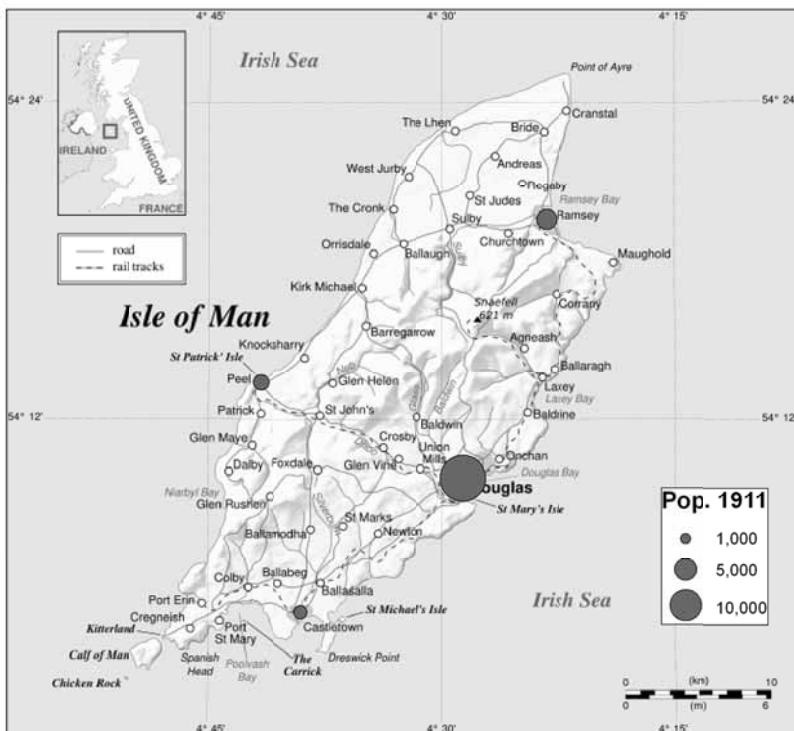
Nevertheless, the TT was supported because, in the view of most members of Tynwald, they were profitable for the island and therefore necessary. In the words of the Vicar General, "we [the Manx] live entirely by our attractions, and by obtaining whatever prominence we can get for the attractions that we have to offer. We are really an entertaining place, and we depend for our livelihood on our power to attract visitors."²⁶ Kerruish had relayed on a rumour that the French were keen to run the event and that the corporation of Dieppe was even prepared to subsidise a TT race to the amount of £4,000. He argued that "I do not know how far that this statement is true, but at any rate they [the French] are extremely anxious to take our leavings, if we are saucy enough to reject this event."²⁷ Accordingly, Tynwald endorsed the holding of the TT races again in the summer of 1912.

²⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 192.

²⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 194.

²⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, p. 192.

Fig. 2-1: Population distribution on the Isle of Man, 1911



Source: *Census 1911: Islands in the British Seas: Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey and Adjacent Islands*.

Total Population: 52,016.

Manufacturers' interests in the motorcycle TT

Motorcar races took place on the island each year between 1904 and 1914. Initially these were trials for the International Gordon Bennett race and, after the demise of this event in 1905, they were Tourist Trophy Races organised by the Automobile Club of Great Britain. The Tourist Trophy races focused on improving the design and reliability of the motorcar, with the exception of the four-inch race in 1908 in which speed became an important concern. Advertisements in *The Times* show that

success in the motorcar Tourist Trophy race was used by manufacturers such as Rover and Rolls Royce to promote their machines.²⁸ Indeed, evidence can also be found of manufacturers of accessories, such as Dunlop drawing on success in early Tourist Trophy races.

Between 1904 and 1906, motorcyclists had raced in their own “little Gordon Bennett”, the International Cup Race, the first of which took place on 25 September 1904, organised by the Moto Cycle Club de France. The 1905 International Cup Race at Dourdon was won by the Austrian rider Wondrick, and this gave Austria the right to stage the 1906 race. The problem faced by the Auto Cycle Club (ACC) in Britain was finding a venue to hold trials for this forthcoming race; the Automobile Club had faced a similar problem for motor races in 1904.²⁹ These trials could not be held alongside the motor car Tourist Trophy race, as had been the case in 1905, because the car races were not due to be held until September 1906 and trials earlier in this year were needed. The ACC did not have the funds to organise its own race on the Isle of Man, a possible location because of the legislation that had been passed in 1904 and 1905. Their problem was solved by the Hon Arthur Stanley, the Club’s president, who arranged for a short speed course to be laid out in the grounds of Knowsley Hall. The team was selected at these trials, and travelled to Austria, but it enjoyed little success. The Austrian course was poor and complaints were made that the Austrian riders had received unauthorised outside assistance. Subsequently, “just as the Gordon Bennett Trophy had done, the International Cup disappeared into limbo.”³⁰ The Gordon Bennett motorcar races had given way to the Tourist Trophy car races in 1905 and, as we have seen, in 1907 the International Cup was replaced by the motorcycle Tourist Trophy (TT) race, held on the Isle of Man. The interest of manufacturers in organising this race now needs to be explained.

The dissatisfaction with the International Cup and the desire of motorcycle enthusiasts to hold a race of their own led Freddie Straight, secretary of the ACC, and the Marquis de Mouzilly St. Mars, who provided a trophy for the event, to work hard to organise the first TT race

²⁸ Such advertisements can be found in *The Times* from the beginning of the motorcar Tourist Trophy in 1905 up to 1914. These advertisements are too detailed to be included in the text but clearly show that success in this race was used by motorcar manufacturers to sell their machines.

²⁹ Holliday, *Racing Around the Island*, p. 66.

³⁰ Holliday, *Racing Round the Island*, p.66. It is also suggested in this text that the uproar caused by this race is yet to be resolved and the whereabouts of the trophy remain a mystery.

on the island on 28 May 1907. At this time the membership of the ACC numbered 350 and the annual subscription was £1. It was hoped then that the entry fees for the TT along with donations would cover the cost of running it. The rules for the races caused several arguments between organisers and competitors, but they were all concerned with improving the motorcycle as a mode of transport. Questions were asked about such matters as the length of the course, engine capacities, weight limits and even the size of mudguards. Eventually it was agreed that the deciding factor in the race would be fuel consumption; a far cry from the modern race which focuses on speed. An agreement was reached which divided the race into two classes; the first for single-cylinder machines and the second for multi-cylinder machine. It was also decided that the prize for this event would be £25 for each of the winners and £15 and £10 for the runners up.

On this basis the motorcycle TT took place each year between 1907 and 1911, and attracted teams put together by prominent manufacturers. Judging only from the list of prize winners, many of the famous (and some less famous) motorcycle manufacturers shared the honours: Norton, Matchless, Triumph and Indian taking most spots, but also making their mark were Vindec, Rex, D.O.T, B.A.T, F.N, Humber and Forward. Riders had successfully navigated a twisting and hilly course of over 150 miles in races lasting initially over five hours and at average speeds which over a mere five years considerably increased.³¹ In 1911, *The Motor Cycle* confirmed the purpose of the races when it argued that “it is generally conceded that the TT racer of today possesses features which are embodied eventually in the flexible roadster of a year or two later...That being the case, there is, of course, more *raison d'être* for the race than appears at first sight.” It was also claimed “what has placed the British motor industry in its premier position is nothing more or less than first-class reliable workmanship, assisted by competitions such as the TT races, the 1,000 miles trials, and other events.”³²

However, in August 1911, at a meeting of the motorcycle section of the Manufacturers’ Union, a proposal was put forward that motorcycle manufacturers should boycott the TT, despite the existence of a report that admitted that the 1911 TT had been well organised and that invaluable assistance had been given to the organisers by local residents, “cheerfully

³¹ It has to be conceded that the list on results does not indicate whether the winning machines were entered by private owners or manufacturers: either was allowed.

³² *Motor Cycle*, 7 September 1911, p.922.

and conscientiously.”³³ There were a number of reasons for this dissatisfaction, which were discussed by the Manufacturers’ Union and in the motorcycle press. First, the TT did not continue to serve its intended purpose that, as we have seen earlier, was to improve the design of the motorcycle. The report of the Manufacturers’ Union on the 1911 TT, stated that this had been run as a race which from a mechanical point of view was in fact not a race that sought to improve the “touring” motorcycle but a “race to destruction”, which demonstrated the weakest part of a machine “under extravagant conditions, not met by any tourist.”³⁴ Indeed, an article in *The Motor Cycle* reported that “the members of the Manufacturers’ Union who are prepared to abstain are not antagonistic towards racing, but they are of the opinion that the conditions of the Isle of Man races are not conducive to the best results, i.e., the perfection of a tourist mount”, and for this reason it was declared that the title ‘tourist trophy’ was a “farcical misnomer.”³⁵ Evidently, the consequences of failure for the many outweighed the virtues of success for the few. Dissatisfaction with a race preoccupied with speed was also expressed in the letter sent by manufacturers to Raglan in 1912 (see above), which had regretted the emphasis that was placed on speed and which concluded that the TT was a bad influence on young consumers. It was also pointed out that motorcycle manufacturers were not getting as much publicity from the event as they might have hoped for: “The average newspaper report” it was stated was “most inadequate, frequently inaccurate and particularly uninteresting”. Usually two lines is sufficient to report the race but a whole column is devoted to hair-breadth scrapes and fatal accidents.”³⁶

Second, there was also some indication in the motorcycle press that the costs involved in preparing for the TT were also becoming prohibitive. The cost of travelling to the island was considerable in comparison to competing at a track such as Brooklands. These expenses included transporting and housing teams in boarding houses on the island during the one or two weeks of racing and shipping motorcycles, spare parts, tools and other “impedimentia” [sic] across the water. If the race were to be held at Brooklands, expenditure would be less, even if the teams had to set up their base there for a week or so.³⁷ Furthermore, it was not just the cost that was prohibitive but also the opportunities for debauchery presented in

³³ *Report of the Secretary of Motor Cycle Section of Manufacturers’ Union*, Minutes Book 1909-1912.

³⁴ *Report of the Secretary of Motor Cycle Section of Manufacturers’ Union*.

³⁵ *Motor Cycle*, 19 Oct. 1911, p. 1132.

³⁶ *Report of the Secretary of Motor Cycle Section of Manufacturers’ Union*.

³⁷ *Motor Cycle*, 7 Sept. 1911, p. 922.

Douglas. It was reported in *The Motor Cycle* that the Manufacturers' Union believed that "the general holiday surroundings at a sea-side resort like Douglas are not conducive to that thorough training and self-restraint which a severe contest like the TT race imposes on those who take part in it."³⁸ It was argued that, whilst no one could object to a little harmless amusement during TT week, some forms of amusement did not promote the health and sobriety of the competitors. It was felt therefore that a few riders who could not resist temptation "instead of coming to the starting post with clear heads and strong nerves, are physically unfit to take part in any strenuous form of competition."³⁹ Tension existed between manufacturers who saw the TT as a test bed for their machines and those, the riders, who liked to enjoy their stay on the island. Here then was a boycott, which threatened the continuation of the TT, even though, as we have seen, the Manx legislature endorsed its continuation.

This state of affairs was not maintained for long. Early in 1912, on the instigation of a representative from Triumph, the manufacturers who had signed the original bond were released from it.⁴⁰ However, manufacturers were not released from the bond early enough to participate in the 1912 TT. It is clear from the discussion above that motorcycle manufacturers viewed the TT as a test bed for their machines. Evidently they would not commit themselves to the event when speed was the only issue to be tested. The 1912 boycott, however, was only a minor disagreement with the purpose of the race. Manufacturers returned in 1913 and 1914 to race on the Isle of Man, and there was the presence of Indian, Sunbeam, AJS and Royal Enfield. Clearly the commercial benefits associated with the TT were too good to reject.

We can also see that motorcycle manufacturers were keen to stage a race in which the design and reliability of the motorcycle would be tested, and the motorcycle press, motorcycle manufacturers and the Manufacturers' Union also believed that this was the purpose of the TT race. By 1912, however, it was believed that the TT had become a test of speed. The manufacturers' boycott of the TT in 1912 highlights their reluctance to accept the TT as a test bed merely for speed. However, the entry of teams by several manufacturers in 1913 and 1914 suggest that they were finding the TT irresistible as a showcase for their machines.

³⁸ *Motor Cycle*, 26 Oct. 1911, p.1132.

³⁹ *Motor Cycle*, 26 Oct. 1911, p.1132.

⁴⁰ Meeting of Motor Cycle Section, Feb. 21 1921, *Manufacturers' Union Minute Book 1909-1912*.

Manx identity and the TT

It will be suggested later that two rival place-myths emerged on the Isle of Man, as the TT became a distinctive ingredient in Manx identity.⁴¹ However, as the TT remained a small affair during the pre-war years, the event did not yet come to form part of the island's place-myth, or feature significantly in the way the island was represented culturally by people outside or inside the Isle of Man.⁴² The discussion here will draw on the key components of Manx identity during this period, drawing most significantly on the concept of "consumed" national identity, that is the "consumption" rather than the "embodiment" of sport in national identity,⁴³ looking most specifically on incidents that took place in 1908 and 1912.⁴⁴ It will be shown first that, up to a point, the island's Celtic and Norse culture was most celebrated during this period, but also that motor racing on the island was defended by some Manx spokespersons because holding such events highlighted the island's independence from the UK. Paradoxically, motor racing was opposed for precisely the same reason. In either case motor racing was not judged as a sporting event or even as an economic opportunity but as indicative, one way or another, of Manx distinctiveness and separation from the UK. It will also be shown that by 1914 only in the motorcycle press, and, to a lesser extent in some of the national UK press was the Isle of Man recognised as being peculiarly the home of motor races.

First of all, it must be pointed out that motor racing historians have casually assumed that holding competitive motorcycle races on the Isle of Man from 1907 was not a problem for the Manx people. They were, it is said, "starting to get used to the idea of their homeland becoming the world centre for motor sport", presumably because motorcar races had been held on the island since 1904. Apparently "road closures, barricades, ambulance stations and marshals were considered the norm, not in the least inconvenient and a small price to pay, particularly if it meant putting the Island on the map for the, by now, improving visitor arrivals."⁴⁴ There is, however, no robust evidence to support such claims, though it is

⁴¹ John Urry puts forward the idea that tourist destinations are marketed in a particular way. See J. Urry, *Consuming Places*, (London, Routledge, 1995); J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, (London, Sage, 2002).

⁴² See Urry, *Consuming Places*; Urry, *Tourist Gaze*.

⁴³ This concept is discussed in J. Tuck, 'Making Sense of Emerald Commotion: Rugby Union, National Identity and Ireland', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 10, (2003), pp. 495-515.

⁴⁴ Beighton and Douglas, "You Couldn't do it Now", p. 34.

plausible that repetition and experience did make vested interests in the Isle of Man more welcoming and the body of the Manx public more tolerant of an event that had been imposed on them. However, when we look more closely at the way the island's Board of Advertising marketed the Isle of Man and at the Celtic renaissance that took place on the island during the pre-war years, it became less credible that the Manx people "welcomed" the TT races, despite the island's growing association with mass tourism.⁴⁵

The 1898 Isle of Man Official Guide introduced the island in the following way. It stated that:

The beauty-loving Italians of the South have a proverb – ‘See Naples, and die’ ... It is the Manxman, who, beyond question, dwells in one of the loveliest lands on the earth’s wide surface. He, too, can boast of a country whose scenery is so uniquely beautiful, so diversified in aspect, so rich in historical associations and in the memories of a greater past, that we can sympathise with the patriotic Italian, and echo his proud boast – ‘See Manxland, or you have missed one of the brightest spots on earth’⁴⁶

We can immediately see here the construction of the Isle of Man as a place that had great natural beauty and a distinctive history, and these were promoted as reasons to visit the island. This construction was maintained in a 1902 Board of Advertising lecture entitled "Picturesque Mona." In the booklet that accompanied this lecture it was stated, "Of all places in the United Kingdom there is none more adapted for the enjoyment of a Summer Holiday than this picturesque Island. Here every taste may be gratified." It went on to describe further the natural attractions of the island, pointing out that "the Artist will find, in its well-rounded mountains, its rolling landscape and charming glens, ample inspiration for his pencil." The naturalist and botanist, it was noted, would find ample scope for their studies, the geologist would find a wide range of interesting features, and the archaeologist could take pleasure in the island's druidical circles and runic remains. The Island was also "unrivalled for yachting and rowing; river, bay and deep sea fishing; bathing, coaching, cycling,

⁴⁵ Further comment on the reaction of some in the island to the development of mass tourism can be found in J. Belchem, "'The Playground of Northern England': The Isle of Man, Manxness and the Northern Working Class', in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000), pp. 71 – 86.

⁴⁶ *Isle of Man Official Guide 1898*, issued by the Board of Advertising.

golfing, cricketing and mountaineering.”⁴⁷ We can see a construction of the Isle of Man, before motor racing was introduced that focuses on history and natural beauty. Indeed, this remained unchanged even after 1904. Official guides published annually during the pre-war years always focused on the more traditional aspects of the island, with no reference at all to motor racing or specifically to the TT in the pre-war decade.⁴⁸

The pre-war years also saw the first phase of the Manx renaissance. (The second and third phases took place during the inter-war and post-war periods).⁴⁹ Efforts were made to revive the Manx language and other more “traditional” aspects of Manx culture. This was partly a reaction to the island’s development as a working-class tourist destination, and partly as a result of the Manx elite’s desire to engage in the wider Celtic revival taking place in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁰ This “renaissance” might have attracted a better class of visitor by bringing the more traditional attractions of the island to the forefront, ahead of the dancing halls and drinking establishments frequented by the working-class tourist. This would have defined the island’s difference to resorts such as Blackpool and Morecambe, which could not boast of a Celtic and Norse past.⁵¹ As Belchem puts it:

Without abandoning ‘high’ and polite cosmopolitan norms, the gentlemanly antiquarians of the ‘Manx renaissance’ of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries girded themselves against cultural anglicisation through assertion of ethnic Celticism, a project which tended to downgrade Norse contributions to the island’s past.⁵²

⁴⁷ “‘Picturesque Mona’: Some Beauty Spots on the Isle of Man”, (Isle of Man Board of Advertising, 1902), p.3-4.

⁴⁸ See *Isle of Man Official Guides 1900 – 1914*.

⁴⁹ These phases are pointed to in G. Broderick, ‘Revived Manx’, in M.J. Ball and J. Fife (eds.), *The Celtic Languages*, (London, Routledge, 1993), pp. 655 – 663. See also, G. Broderick, ‘Under the “Three-Legged Swastika”: Celtic Studies and the Celtic Revival in the Isle of Man in the context of the “National Socialist Idea”, a paper delivered at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (1998).

⁵⁰ For further comment on this revival see for example M.G.H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999). For further analysis of the Manx renaissance see Belchem, ‘The Playground of Northern England’; J. Belchem, ‘The Little Manx Nation: Antiquarianism, Ethnic Identity, and Home Rule Politics in the Isle of Man, 1880 – 1918’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 39 (2000), pp. 217 – 240.

⁵¹ For an outline of the development of Blackpool see Walton, *Blackpool*.

⁵² Belchem, *A New History of the Isle of Man*, p. 311.

The Manx renaissance focused heavily on the promotion of the island's Celtic Heritage. One way in which these gentlemanly antiquarians, such as A.W. Moore, protected themselves against "anglicanisation" was through the establishment of the Manx Language Society, Yn Cheshaght Gailckagh (YCG).⁵³ Broderick suggests that the establishment of the Manx Language Society, with A.W. Moore as its chairman, marked the first phase in the revival of the Manx language.⁵⁴ The establishment of this society was influenced by the wider Celtic revival emanating from Ireland in the late nineteenth century. The aims of YCG were to preserve Manx as the national language of the Isle of Man and to study existing Gaelic literature and cultivate modern Manx literature. YCG also sought to have Manx taught in schools, to promote Manx music and songs and to collect relevant oral literature from the Manx people. *The Isle of Man Examiner* also promoted the Manx language, printing a column in Manx and including material on Manx folklore.⁵⁵ However, there was a gradual decline in enthusiasm for the Manx language, epitomised by the folding of the journal *Mannin* in 1917, which had been published by YCG since 1913, after the death of its editor Sophia Morrison.⁵⁶ This journal had included reports of the Manx language society, and articles commenting on Manx culture and traditions.

YCG in seeking to revive the Manx language failed to recognise the fact that the majority of the island's population had abandoned the Manx language in favour of English in order to grasp the economic opportunities presented by tourism.⁵⁷ Indeed, census data supports this. From this we can see that of a total population of 51,409 (over the age of three years) in 1901 only 59 spoke Manx only, 4,598 Manx and English, and 46,699 only English. In Douglas, the island's largest urban area, there were 17,068

⁵³ A.W. Moore (1853 - 1909) was an historian and Manx scholar. He published a large amount of work concerning the history, culture and traditions of the Isle of Man, including his two volumes work *A History of the Isle of Man*. For further details see A.M. Harrison, 'Moore, Arthur William (1853 – 1909)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35087>, accessed 17 Oct. 2008]; 'Arthur William Moore', *Manx Quarterly*, 7 (1909); Belchem, 'The Little Manx Nation', pp. 220 – 222.

⁵⁴ Broderick, 'Manx', *Celtic Languages*, p. 655.

⁵⁵ Broderick, 'Manx', *Celtic Languages*, p. 655.

⁵⁶ Morrison has been referred to as 'a cultural fieldworker in the Isle of Man and a campaigner for the Manx national language. See B. Maddrell, 'Morrison, Sophia (1859–1917)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69929>, accessed 14 Oct. 2008].

⁵⁷ Belchem, 'Playground of Northern England'.

English only speakers.⁵⁸ No language data was collected for 1911, but by the time of the 1921 census we can see a further decline in numbers speaking only Manx to 19, and those speaking English and Manx to a mere 896, and a rise in English speakers to 56,943.⁵⁹ As a result, in the view of some Irish nationalists who were instrumental in the wider Celtic revival, the Isle of Man was simply “a piece of Lancashire which had gone adrift.”⁶⁰

Even after the Manx “renaissance”, as Belchem points out there were “absences in the cultural repertoire.”⁶¹ There was no Manx national dress and no national musical instrument. There was no equivalent of the Gaelic Athletic Association, which had been established in Ireland in 1884 by Michael Cusack who was convinced that the spread of English sport in Ireland was damaging national morale.⁶² Even A.W. Moore admitted in *The Folk-Lore of the Isle of Man* that “there is nothing peculiar about the outdoor games of either young or grown-up Manxmen and Manxwomen, and they are, therefore, of little interest from the Folk-Lorist’s point of view.”⁶³ There was no folk dancing on the island either.⁶⁴ It might have been expected that, alongside the revival of the Manx language, there was the revival or establishment of other societies, but that did not happen.⁶⁵

Despite the rather gloomy picture that has been painted above, there were ingredients that made the Isle of Man distinctive. It had its own history and the importance of this was exemplified in the work of A.W.

⁵⁸ *Census 1901: Islands of the British Isles: Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey and Adjacent Islands*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1903).

⁵⁹ *Census 1921: Isle of Man*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1924).

⁶⁰ I. Finn, ‘Language and Nationality in the Isle of Man’, *Irish Freedom*, January 1914, reprinted in *Celtic History Review*, 2 1996, pp. 10-11.

⁶¹ Belchem, ‘Little Manx Nation’, p. 232.

⁶² S. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 212.

⁶³ A. W. Moore, *The Folk-Lore of the Isle of Man* (Douglas and London, 1891), as quoted in Belchem, ‘Little Manx Nation’, p. 232.

⁶⁴ Belchem, ‘Little Manx Nation’, p. 232.

⁶⁵ Language is often referred to as an important characteristic of a country’s ‘national identity’. See for instance A.D. Smith, *National Identity*, (London, Penguin, 1991); D. Miller, *On Nationality*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997); S. Barbour and C. Carmichael (eds.), *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000). Contrary to this, however, Ernest Renan argues that language is one aspect that does not define a nation, citing the example of Switzerland’s multi-lingual society, E. Renan, ‘What is a nation?’, in H.K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, (London, Routledge, 1990).

Moore.⁶⁶ The island was also full of natural beauty and natural history as was noted in the Isle of Man Guidebooks and advertising for the island. Of course there was also a distinctive Manx polity. The Isle of Man was home to and indeed very proud of Tynwald its Norse Parliament, which had met continuously for over 900 years by now. The Tynwald ceremony was carried out annually on 5 July, where new legislation was read to the Manx people. These elements provided the ingredients by which identity was constructed during the pre-war years, and it was the Tynwald parliament that made the Isle of Man especially distinctive, and this legislative independence was very important, as episodes in 1908 and 1912 reveal.

The “Isle of Manslaughter”

In 1908 the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) promoted a motor car race where speed was most important and fuel consumption did not matter. The 1908 TT race for motorcars, which became known as the “four-inch race” as a result of cars with more powerful four-inch cylinder engines being raced, was scheduled to take place in September 1908. However, on 12 August 1908, *Motoring Illustrated* reported that racing at the Brooklands racetrack in Surrey had been marred by fatalities and also on the same day at the Dieppe circuit in France. This had a bearing on the TT race that, in the opinion of *Motoring Illustrated*, “could not be passed over in silence.”⁶⁷ The race at Brooklands had also seen the 5.8 litre Napier, “Little Dorrit”, achieve speeds of up to 83 mph. As the 1908 race was to be run without any limitations being put on motor cars, save those on cylinder dimensions, the “four inch race” would be all about speed, rather than reliability or fuel consumption as had been the case in the past. As this was the case, it was estimated that speeds of over 60 mph had to be achieved to even contemplate winning. Nor could it be claimed that what was being raced were models subsequently to be commercially available. *Motoring Illustrated* believed that the organisers of the event, the RAC, had to take responsibility for anything that might happen to the competitors or the spectators.⁶⁸ This provided the background for demands, made by *The Times* for racing to be stopped on the Isle of Man.

⁶⁶ See A.W. Moore, *A History of the Isle of Man Volume I*, (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1900; reprinted by Manx Museum and National Trust 1977) and A.W. Moore, *A History of the Isle of Man Volume II*, (London, T. Fisher and Unwin, 1900; reprinted by Manx Museum and National Trust 1977).

⁶⁷ *Motoring Illustrated*, 337, August 1908, p. 371.

⁶⁸ *Motoring Illustrated*, 337, August 1908, p. 371.

The Times' campaign was the result of the focus placed on speed. *The Times* felt that a motor race in which cars could attain speeds of 80 mph was of considerable danger. However, it was acknowledged that there was no easy way to bring about its cancellation.⁶⁹ First, the UK authorities did not constitutionally have the power to prohibit the race in the Isle of Man since the island was not part of the UK. *The Times* suggested that even if they did have the power they would not exercise it. The Home Office was unlikely to get involved in an event that took place on the Isle of Man, and was the enthusiasm of a wealthy sporting elite. Moreover, the programme of racing had already been arranged with the sanction of the island's lieutenant governor and the Isle of Man Highway Board. *The Times* indicated that these authorities would have a natural reluctance to reverse their decisions. Furthermore, *The Times* believed that the races had regrettably come to be supported by at least some of the Manx people. After all "catering for strangers is one of the most important of Manx industries and the inhabitants rely largely upon the harvest they reap from the summer visitors."⁷⁰ The Steam Packet Company benefited from transporting people to the races; hotels and boarding houses put them up. *The Times* estimated the amount of money spent in the island as a result of the races was £5000. "The question arises what reason is there for summarily putting an end to an event from which the people derive so much pleasure and profit?"⁷¹ The answer was that despite the profits made from the races by the Isle of Man, if indeed this was the case, the four-inch race was not aimed at the development of the motor car, but rather at a few members of an elite group getting around the Isle of Man as fast as they could putting themselves and others at risk.

Interestingly *The Times* also insisted that motor racing was becoming embedded in a Manx sense-of-self. It was reported that the view of the Manx people towards the cancellation of the race would be one of "almost universal opposition ... A few carping critics here and there may be found to raise objections to the races but by the vast majority of the Manx population the races are looked forward to with the greatest interest."⁷² Evidently *The Times* believed that most of the Manx wished to see the races go ahead, yet there is little evidence to suggest that the Manx people were strongly in favour of motor racing. Certainly the possible cancellation of the four-inch race was rarely mentioned in Tynwald or in the Manx press. However, two letters were published in *The Isle of Man*

⁶⁹ *The Times*, 24 August 1908, p. 9.

⁷⁰ *The Times*, 22 August 1908, p. 9.

⁷¹ *The Times*, 24 August 1908, p. 6.

⁷² *The Times*, 24 August 1908, p. 6.

Weekly Times, which indicated some support for motor races on the island. Both were attributed to “a dweller beside the motor track.” The first letter stated the absurdity of cancelling the races in 1908:

The idea of stopping the motor race is too absurd to be given consideration for a moment. The whole island is on the lookout for them, on the *Qui Vive* as some would say ... I am totally against pandering to England. The servile following of precedents, a failure of the present day, making what Horace calls a servile pecus – a servile horde following England in place of leading her, as well I know to have been the case in by-gone days, and a greater mistake was never made, proved by the fact that when in the Island costs of living and other things differed, retired officers and their families came to live there; but ... when the tendency is to make all as much alike as possible none will come. ... Vindicate your home rule! Stop following Englishmen and have your motor races and any others you like!⁷³

The second letter commented on the issue of safety surrounding the four-inch race. Once again support for the races was offered, but in rather more macabre terms:

The English papers seem to lay great stress upon the dangers of the motor races. If men avoided all danger, they would never go to battle, or ride a hunt or a race or go out to sea on a rough day or go up in a balloon. The point is to keep the public out of danger and if that is properly done, no one should mind if the races only get some spills as men do in the hunting fields or the race field. Should most unfortunately death befall, man is but mortal: and how often in the train on shore or the ship in the sea does death take place suddenly and unexpectedly. Still people go in them.⁷⁴

From these letters it is apparent that the continuation of the race was important to some of those living on the island. The first highlights the sense that the presence of this motor race on the island made the Isle of Man unique. Moreover, because the races aggravated the English, this alone seemed justification enough for them to go ahead. Even the potential for fatalities, the subject of the second letter, as a result of increased speed, had little effect on the desire of some of the Manx to see motor racing take place on the island once again in 1908. It is therefore possible to argue from this evidence that what had been imposed by Raglan in 1904 was now being accepted by some of the islanders. Indeed, this can be taken further to suggest that already some of the Manx were defending *their*

⁷³ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 12 September 1908, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 12 September 1908, p. 4.

races as part of *their* independent identity. It seems that in this instance “Home Rule” might be taken to mean anything including motor racing that might irritate the English.

This was, however, far from an acceptance of motor racing as such by the Manx people, rather it was a further insistence on difference from the UK. The events of 1908 show more than the fact that the TT had been given the new dimension of speed. They also show that only four years after racing had been imposed on the island, the Isle of Man was slowly becoming associated, externally, with motor racing. While the Manx public or even the Manx authorities were not yet consciously promoting motor racing as part of their identity, it may be argued that the two letters published in *The Weekly Times* show that a minority of the Manx were beginning to defend the races, as a distinguishing feature of Manx identity and the product of its separate history.

When the Manx legislature sought to defend the continuation of the event in 1912, issues of independence and identity were again raised. Even the attorney general, who objected to the TT in 1912, accepted that the TT attracted some local support because it made the island distinctive. However, his opposition was similarly based on the notion that the Isle of Man was independent and special. The TT was “so objectionable, so dangerous, not only to the people who engage in it but to the public, and so disturbing to the reasonable comfort of the people, that the British Parliament will not listen to it, and the only chance is to come to the Isle of Man, the opinion formed of us being ‘Oh, you will get anything there as long as it advertises the Island’.”⁷⁵ This was an objection not merely to motorcycle racing on the Isle of Man but to the implicit degradation of the Manx implied in tolerating an intrusion from outside that was not acceptable on the mainland. He did not defend the motorcycle TT as a distinguishing Manx event to be defended against external critics.

As we have seen, although manufacturers boycotted the 1912 TT it was decided by the ACU to hold the races subject to them being given permission by the island authorities. *The Motor Cycle* felt little reason to doubt that this permission would be granted “as the hospitable little island is only too glad to welcome the ACU and the attendant crowd of motorcyclists which follows”,⁷⁶ once again highlighting, as *The Times* had in 1908, the TT’s growing association with the tourist industry. Further indication of the island’s external association with motorcycle racing is given in the following statement printed in *The Motor Cycle*:

⁷⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 29, 23 Jan. 1912, pp. 193-194.

⁷⁶ *Motor Cycle*, 9 November 1911, p. 1165.

The Union would not be fulfilling its duty if it allowed such a magnificent event as the Tourist Trophy to sink into oblivion. This event, which is looked forward to with the greatest interest by practically every motorcyclist in the United Kingdom and the British dominions beyond the seas, is the only road race we are allowed to have. It is a test for man and machine which can be obtained in no other way, and beside it a long-distance race on Brooklands is dreary, tame and boresome to a degree.⁷⁷

Clearly, this “magnificent event” was beginning to have a bearing on the way outsiders, especially motorcycle enthusiasts, viewed the Isle of Man. This was not as yet an internally projected viewpoint; Manx opinion on the TT as an expression of their community remained ambivalent. Certainly the Manx authorities were not yet promoting the island as the home of motorcycle racing, although this was the way that motor cycling enthusiasts viewed the Isle of Man. What this does show is that what had been imposed in 1904 had now become an externally recognised part of Manx identity, in the motorcycling community at least.

Conclusion to Part One

In 1907 an arrangement of “Mylecharaine”, the most popular and versatile of Manx songs, was adopted as the Manx National Anthem – “O land of our birth, O gem of God’s earth, O Island so strong and so fair; Built as firm as Barrule, thy throne of Home Rule.”⁷⁸ The line “thy throne of Home Rule” may be seen as a reference to the desire of reformists to maintain their independence from the UK parliament. Those Manx scholars involved with the Manx renaissance during the early twentieth century sought to highlight the island’s distinctiveness by promoting its traditional Gaelic language and culture. Yet it was Tynwald, the Manx legislature and the focal point of the island’s Norse identity, which met every year on 5 July to promulgate Manx laws in a perpetuation of an ancient Norse ceremony that with very little effort brought the island’s separateness to the foreground by passing legislation for motor racing on the island, in one day, in 1904. This decision would, unintentionally affect constructions of Manx identity during the following century more strongly, it might be argued, than language or culture.

⁷⁷ *Motor Cycle*, 9 November 1911, p. 1165.

⁷⁸ F. Bazin, “‘Mylecharaine’: A Forgotten Call to Nationhood”, (paper presented at the Folksong Tradition and Revival Conference, Sheffield, 10 – 12 July 1998), as cited in Belchem, ‘Little Manx Nation’, p. 227.

A social elite that consisted of Lord Raglan, his intimates on the Legislative Council and in the Automobile Club, imposed motor racing on the Isle of Man. Although a couple of objections were raised to the passage of legislation in both 1904 and 1905, members of the Legislative Council and the Keys chose to do little to stop the legislation being passed. It should also be noted that A.W. Moore, who was involved in the Manx renaissance and who actively sought to promote the island's history and folklore, was speaker of the House of Keys (1898 – 1909), and yet even he did little to obstruct motor racing on the Isle of Man. Moreover, by 1912 there were members of Tynwald who were prepared to support the continuation of the TT and this support was offered for economic reasons; it was their belief that the TT would bring prosperity to the island. This support was not unanimous and there were dissenting voices, and these were not confined to the Keys but were also heard in the Legislative Council. Nevertheless, politically, between 1904 and 1914, at least on the question of the TT races, what had begun as an imposition was gradually becoming subject to a more open debate in Tynwald. But these issues were set-aside during World War One. In 1914 the ACU wrote to the Highway Board "as a consequence of the war the committee had decided not to hold the proposed Cycle Cup races on 24 September."⁷⁹ It remained to be seen whether, why and with what effects the TT races were resumed after the war.

⁷⁹ *Highway Board Minutes*, 23 September 1914.

PART II

BETWEEN THE WARS, 1919-1939

We do not know any ground on which the public can be deprived of the use of the highway for such a purpose [motor-cycle racing] in any part of the country – the Isle of Man has put itself in this respect beyond the pale of civilisation.

—*Solicitors' Journal*, 12 July 1924

These races are a splendid advertisement for the Island and no better advertisement could be had. I am quite in favour of it, and wish it every success.

—*Manx Debates*, November 1921

CHAPTER THREE

THE ACCELERATION OF DOMESTIC SUPPORT

The TT races took place during the summer of 1914, but the outbreak of World War One later that year inevitably disrupted the continuation of the event, and there was no TT between 1915 and 1919. This gap in racing might have led to the end of the races if there had been no political support for their resumption after World War One or if there had been doubts about the potential economic value of the races for motorcycle manufacturers and the Manx economy, even if the TT had not yet become an ingredient of Manx identity. Although there were a number of reasons why the TT might not have been held again on the Isle of Man after World War One –inconvenience to the Manx, the expense and questionable benefits to manufacturers – there was a body of people, both in the motorcycling community and on the Isle of Man, who wished to see the TT resumed. This chapter will ask how politically the races came to be restarted in 1920 and how they were sustained until 1939. Were they politically imposed as had been the case in 1904 or were they the result of a greater political consensus in their favour? Was increased political debate the product of a consensual political commitment and was the defence of the TT by members of the Manx legislature a further demonstration of their importance politically? Here focus is placed on the mechanics of political decision-making in support of resumption and continuation of the TT.

Structure and Practice of Government

First, it must be asked whether the revival of the TT races and their subsequent development were due to a further authoritarian imposition or if they reflected a greater degree of political support by other elements of the Manx government – the lieutenant governor, Legislative Council and the House of Keys working together and collectively agreeing on resumption and continuation. The changing practice of the Manx legislature is one factor that substantiates the argument that the revival of

the TT in 1920 and its subsequent continuation were largely due to a political consensus in favour rather than being yet again an imposition.

The resignation of Lieutenant Governor Raglan in 1919 “came as a thunderbolt to his immediate friends and caused consternation to some of his associates in the Legislature”, but in other quarters it gave “the liveliest satisfaction, and raised hopes of progress which had long smouldered in the political and public life of the Island.”¹ Samuel Norris, a prominent radical, was quick thereafter to seize the opportunity to press for reform.² In a letter to the home secretary, Edward Shortt, Norris expressed “the fervent hope that [the next lieutenant-governor] will be appointed only for a term of years, as unanimously recommended by the Home Office Departmental Committee in 1911.”³ Norris went on to ask that

the occupant, during his Governorship, may revert to the high traditions of the British Civil Service as shown by Governors Loch, Walpole and Ridgeway; and that he may be instructed to associate the representatives of the people of the Island in his Government, and carry out, forthwith, those constitutional, judicial and social reforms, so long promised to the people of the Island and so long postponed.⁴

Raglan was replaced by Major-General Sir William Fry and would stay in the post until 1926. The home secretary reportedly told Fry that “the state of affairs in the Island was not satisfactory; and he expected the new Governor to take early steps to bring about a greater measure of contentment.”⁵

This greater measure of contentment was to be brought about by the implementation of reforms recommended by the MacDonnell Committee

¹ S. Norris, *Manx Memories and Movements: A Journalist's Recollections*, (Reprint of 3rd edition 1941, Manx Heritage Foundation, Isle of Man, 1994), p. 329. First edition published 1938.

² Norris had organised the Manx Reform League in 1903 and made constitutional and financial reform his main political goal. Norris was elected to the House of Keys in 1919, becoming a prominent member of the House of Keys and later Chairman of the Board of Advertising.

³ Norris, *Manx Memories and Movements*, p. 329. Norris's reference to the Home Office Departmental Committee refers to the MacDonnell Committee 1911 that was appointed to examine the possibility of reform of the Manx constitution.

⁴ Norris, *Manx Memories and Movements*, p. 329.

⁵ Norris, *Manx Memories and Movements*, p. 336. No National Archive records have been found for the appointment of Fry.

in their 1911 report.⁶ Raglan was judged by many reformers to be the main obstacle to change, and it was his obduracy that had caused a constitutional crisis in 1911.⁷ Thus, the period before World War One had been marked by agitation for constitutional, fiscal and social reform in the Isle of Man. Raglan had defined his role in the colonial tradition, but the lieutenant governors of the inter-war period were by comparison “liberal in outlook, sympathetic to the interests of the Island and more willing to be advised by the elected representatives of the Manx people.”⁸ After the replacement of Raglan by Sir William Fry, constitutional change looked more likely to take place. It has been further suggested that in this period “a new Lieutenant-Governor, a reform-minded House of Keys and a reconstituted Legislative Council co-operated to deliver a package of social and economic reforms that were to transform the role of the state in Manx society.”⁹ It is not the transformation of the role of the state that is important here, but the suggestion that the new lieutenant governors were, unlike Raglan, sympathetic to and willing to co-operate with the different sections of the legislature.

The formal structure of the Manx legislature remained the same – lieutenant governor, Legislative Council, House of Keys and Tynwald – but from 1919 the practice of government changed.¹⁰ The lieutenant governor was now only to be appointed for a fixed term of seven years, as recommended by the MacDonnell Committee. He remained head of the executive, but further changes between the wars required more cooperation between the elements of the constitution. For example, Fry supported the passage through the Legislative Council of the Isle of Man Judicature (Amendment) Act 1921. This removed him from the High Court of Justice, thus creating an independent judiciary and limiting the lieutenant governor’s power – a step that would have been out of character

⁶ *Report of the Departmental Committee on the Constitution of the Isle of Man*, 31 August 1911, (H.M.S.O., 1911).

⁷ J. Vaukins, ‘The Manx Struggle for Reform’, unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Lancaster, 1984, p. 163.

⁸ D.G. Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics: The Constitutional and Political Development of the Isle of Man in the Twentieth Century*, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. 81.

⁹ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, p. 81.

¹⁰ Lieutenant governors of the Isle of Man during this period were; Major General Sir William Fry (1919 – 1926), Sir Claude Hill (1926 – 1933), Sir Montagu Butler (1933 – 1937), Vice Admiral William Leveson - Gower / Earl Granville (1937 – 1945). For further details see D. Winterbottom, *The Governors of the Isle of Man Since 1765*, (Douglas, Manx Heritage Foundation, 1999).

for Raglan. In 1927, Hill even invited the Keys to form a consultative committee. This was an unofficial committee of five members, which he would consult on matters relating to the governing of the island. This went some way to reducing demands from the House of Keys for an official executive council to advise the lieutenant governor. Hill's opinion was that the reliance merely on "irregular and informal consultations" which had been the case previously, had left "a good deal to be desired."¹¹

The Legislative Council was also reformed according to the suggestions of the MacDonnell Committee. This meant that the Council would come to be composed of ten members, with the lieutenant governor continuing to preside. Members would include two deemsters, the bishop, the attorney general and two nominees of the lieutenant governor. However, four members were to be elected by the House of Keys from the membership of the House. These reforms meant that the archdeacon, the vicar general – who had previously supported the continuation of the TT in 1912 – one of the deemsters and the receiver general, would lose their seats. This meant a reduction in the members appointed *ex officio* by the lieutenant governor and, therefore, of potential support for Hill, or any future lieutenant governor.

On meeting the House of Keys in 1919, Deemster Moore commented that this was the fifth cohort of members whom he had welcomed into the House of Keys, and he "remembered no House in which he had seen so many new faces."¹² Indeed, the 1919 election, and the four by-elections held as a result of the election of the four members of the Keys to the Legislative Council, produced a radically changed membership in the House of Keys. Of the 24 members, there was a new speaker, fifteen new members and a further six members who had served only one term. Fredrick Clucas, who was elected to the position of Speaker of the House of Keys (he held this position between 1919 and 1937), Samuel Norris, newly elected to the Keys, and Richard Cain had all been associated with the Manx reform movement since 1903. Such a composition of the Keys would make it less likely that the new lieutenant governor could merely impose motor racing on the island like his predecessor. Subsequent elections to the Keys in 1924, 1929 and 1934 saw little change in the Keys' membership.

Tynwald's board system also developed during this period. During the pre-war years it was primarily members of the Legislative Council who acted as chairs of boards, thus limiting the opportunities for members of

¹¹ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, p. 88.

¹² Norris, *Manx Memories and Movements*, p. 338.

the House of Keys to participate in the administration of the island.¹³ The boards operated alongside other committees and commissions that were appointed by the lieutenant governor or Tynwald. During the inter-war period, the number of boards increased from eight to thirteen, and the practice was that each member of Tynwald would serve on two and sometimes on as many as four boards. MHKs also took on greater responsibility for providing chairs for these boards. Deemsters were also no longer involved with the work of the boards, further reducing the influence of the lieutenant governor's appointees in this system. The Highway Board chose W.C. Southward (South Douglas), an elected member of the Legislative Council, to act as chairman throughout the inter-war period, and he would offer strong support for the continuation of the TT races.

We can see therefore that although the lieutenant governor retained his executive authority, where the day-to-day administration of the island was concerned greater co-operation was required between himself and members of Tynwald. Also, a newly elected House of Keys and reformed Legislative Council that now included elected members, meant the need for greater co-operation between the lieutenant governor and these legislative bodies. Therefore there would be a much-reduced chance of a further imposition of motor racing by the lieutenant governor after World War One. Indeed, the political decisions taken by the Manx in respect of the TT during the inter-war period would require a much greater consensus of opinion. An important part in these developments, however, was that there was no Raglan. Although his imposition had given the Manx the TT races, it was left to a new generation of politicians in the Keys and the Legislative Council to decide on the TT's future.

1920 – 1922: Revival of the TT

The 1905 Highways (Motor Car) Act had stipulated that the Highway Board had the authority to close public roads for races by both motorcars and motorcycles on the application of any person or club. The Act had also made these powers exercisable only for one year, unless renewed by a resolution in Tynwald. During the pre-war period the ACU had applied each year to the Highway Board for permission to hold the TT and in each case this permission had been granted by the lieutenant governor and in effect with the automatic approval of Tynwald.¹⁴ Similarly, after a brief

¹³ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, pp. 56-57.

¹⁴ See *Highway Board Minutes for Pre-War Period*.

discussion in Tynwald in May and December 1920, the provisions of the 1905 Act were again extended to allow the first inter-war TT races to take place. However, on this occasion the views of the elected representatives were heard, but those present raised little objection.

In supporting the resolution for the 1920 TT, Drinkwater, who had previously been an MHK but by 1920 was an appointed member of the Legislative Council, argued, “a certain amount of inconvenience will be caused by the closing of the roads, but the Manx people are sufficiently good natured enough to waive any trouble of that sort.”¹⁵ Callister, MHK for the rural sheading of Glenfaba, supported Drinkwater, arguing, “considerable inconvenience is caused to the country people; but we are a long suffering people and we will put up with the inconvenience.”¹⁶ The opinions of these two members of Tynwald suggest that the revival of the TT races was more important than the inconvenience that would be caused to some Manx people, especially in rural areas, by the closing of public roads for motorcycle racing, and this inconvenience was not regarded as significant. It also shows that debate and formal approval by Tynwald along with greater articulation of opinion, and not just by the will of the lieutenant governor, now characterised the decision-making process where the TT was concerned.

In November 1921, W.C. Southward, in his role as chairman of the Highway Board, introduced a resolution into Tynwald that would again extend the powers of the Highway Board for a further year, allowing it to close roads for motorcycle racing, and for permission to be granted to the ACU and RAC for motor car and motorcycle races to be held in 1922. However, in proposing this resolution Southward pointed out that the 1905 legislation had expired on 5 July 1921, and therefore a new bill had to be submitted to the legislature “at an early date, provided the Court approves of this resolution”, again demonstrating the need for consensus.¹⁷ Callister, a member of the Highway Board, who in 1920 had pointed out the inconvenience of the TT to the Manx people, summed up his feelings on the matter further in this debate. His point of view was that:

Personally I would say, ‘No’. But I am not going to vote against the resolution, although I know right well that more people are dead against having them here than the Court is aware of. It is all very well for the towns to demand this, because they benefit by it, but there is another side to be considered. There are people living all along these roads who are

¹⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 37, 11 May 1920, p. 622.

¹⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 37, 11 May 1920, p. 622.

¹⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 1 Nov. 1921, p. 37.

roused at four o'clock in the morning for four or five weeks on end – working people, who are right up against the road ... However, if the majority of the people want it, I am not going to vote against it.¹⁸

Callister's attitude reflects the stance that would be taken by other members of Tynwald in respect of the TT during the inter-war period. He recognised that the island's towns, especially Douglas, would principally benefit from the TT and that those living in rural areas or on the circuit would suffer some inconvenience. The majority of the visitors for the TT, and indeed the TT riders and others associated with the races, would stay in hotels and boarding houses in Douglas. Those living on the TT course would not be able to carry out their usual business when the roads were closed, and would, allegedly, be woken early in the morning by practising motorcycles. However, rather than vote against holding further races on the island, Callister argued that if the majority of people – or at least the majority of Tynwald – wanted these races, he would not vote against them. The point must also be made that Callister was able to express his opinion on the TT and could choose not to endorse its taking place. However, what can be seen is that even those who objected to the event endorsed its continuation.

The resolution to extend the powers of the Highway Board was further discussed in Tynwald on 8 November 1921. Cain proposed an amendment to the original resolution. This proposal would lift the restrictions preventing racing motorcycles from going on the roads on a Sunday, presumably for the purposes of further practices. At this time roads were not closed for practices to take place. Cain, in proposing the amendment, stated:

I don't want to raise anything of a controversial nature in this motion, but I want it to be understood by the court that unless it is carried, there is a possibility that the ACU will not come to the Island and the race will not take place.¹⁹

The point was also made that the ACU were looking for alternative locations to hold the TT, which in the minds of some members of Tynwald posed a serious threat to the continuation of the TT on the Isle of Man. The question of moving the event was indeed occasionally discussed in the motorcycle press during the 1920s, citing the expense of travelling to the

¹⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 1 Nov. 1921, p. 43.

¹⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 8 Nov. 1921, p. 104.

Isle of Man and the inconvenience of its location.²⁰ Cain went on to point out that “unless they [the ACU] know that these restrictions are to be removed, they may go down to Belgium, where the authorities are ready to welcome them, and are doing all they can to induce them to come.”²¹ Although it is unclear how likely it was that the races might move away from the island, the fear that the Isle of Man might lose the TT was enough for some members of Tynwald to speak in favour of sustaining the event. Cain believed that the lifting of restrictions would help to continue to attract the ACU. He argued that “we, as representatives of the people of the Island, should not do anything which will, next year, prevent people coming to this Island.”²² Clearly, the resumption of the TT after World War One was not an imposition by the lieutenant governor but was urged, or at least endorsed, by members of Tynwald, and ostensibly in the interests of the Manx public.

Of course, concerns were raised about the lifting of Sunday restrictions, but openly by elected members, which is again indicative of the transparency of the process. Closing roads on Sunday to ordinary traffic while allowing racing motorcycles to practise on the course would have an impact domestically. It had been suggested by one MHK that a compromise might be reached if the roads were to be closed to all other traffic before nine o’clock and opened afterwards. However, closing the roads to domestic vehicles would be a great inconvenience, and Norris (North Douglas) asked “how can people get to the other side of the Island if they cannot cross the course?”²³ Norris was referring to the fact that the TT course covered much of the island. Callister had earlier commented, “I think we ought to have a little consideration for the people who live along the course.”²⁴ However, Alfred Teare (South Douglas) argued that keeping restrictions in place would help increase safety around the course. Voicing his experience of the races, he stated that:

I was at Kirk Michael on the Sunday of the year before restrictions were imposed, and a most dangerous state of affairs existed, as racing machines went around dangerous corners, where there were a number of children

²⁰ Such reports can be found in issues of *Motor Cycle and Motor Cycling* during the inter-war years, with the impression being that there was some desire to see the TT moved to England. This, however, was unlikely to happen, as will be discussed later.

²¹ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 8 Nov. 1921, p. 104.

²² *Debates*, Vol. 39, 8 Nov. 1921, p. 104.

²³ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 8 Nov. 1921, p. 104.

²⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 8 Nov. 1921, p. 104.

about, at a speed that was to the peril of life and limb. The present motion, however, deals with this difficulty because it provides that no racing car or machine be on the road.²⁵

Despite the concerns of some MHKs, the amendment, which would have lifted the restrictions placed on motorcycles on a Sunday, was not included in the final Act in 1922, being lost by six votes to twelve in the Keys. Only the receiver general and W.C. Southward voted for it in the Legislative Council. What is striking here is that the objections were to closing the roads for practising on a Sunday, and not to racing as such. The open debate still concluded by endorsing the continuation of the main event, the TT races.

After the resolution was passed in November and Tynwald had demonstrated their support for the continuation of the TT, it was necessary to pass new legislation to extend the 1905 law. The Highways (Closing Order) Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by the attorney general on 12 January 1922. It was subsequently read three times and passed in the Council, with little further discussion.²⁶ The bill was then passed to the House of Keys and was given its first reading on 17 January. When the bill was read for the second time on 24 January, Gill, MHK for Middle, the constituency surrounding Douglas, explained that the bill was necessary for motor races to take place on the island in the summer of 1922, and for any races that were “likely” to occur in the future. He went further to argue that “it is not a very contentious Bill, and I hope it will pass without discussion. It is necessary that it should be done quickly.”²⁷ The matter was urgent because it would take two months for the bill to receive the royal assent and the TT was to be held in four months’ time. The resolution in favour of the bill was seconded by Alfred Teare (the South Douglas MHK) and no further objections were raised nor were any further expressions of support voiced, and the bill was passed and signed in Tynwald on 7 March 1922.²⁸ Here too we can see that the opportunity for Tynwald to object and block the legislation necessary to sustain the TT races was constitutionally open to members, but they opted not to protest but, rather, willingly to support the legislation.

There was a further sign in the passage of the Highways (Closing Order) Act 1922 that the TT races were no longer an intrusion imposed by

²⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 8 Nov. 1921, p. 105.

²⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 13 Jan. 1922, pp. 329 and 335.

²⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 39, 24 Jan. 1922, p. 381.

²⁸ See also *House of Keys Journal*, Vol. 14 1920 – 1922, which states that this bill was carried in the Keys and notes no opposition.

the lieutenant governor.²⁹ Section Two of the 1905 law was amended so that the words “acting with the Governor” were removed from the original clause, which had stated “‘the board’ shall mean the Highway Board acting with the Governor.”³⁰ Instead, it was left to the Highway Board alone, with the approval of Tynwald, to take responsibility for the closing of roads and the suspension of highways legislation to allow road races to take place on the island. Moreover, this Act was renewed annually thereafter with the approval of Tynwald, with minimal debate, thus allowing the TT to continue. However, in 1927 a motorcyclist was killed when practising on open roads. This was another occasion when a political brake might have been applied and the TT races ended.

1928: Responses to a Fatality

The original legislation for road racing on the island had made no provision for the closing of roads for practising, and as we have seen a proposal to introduce such a condition had been rejected in 1921. The death of Archie Birkin in 1927, after swerving to avoid a fish cart on a practice ride, therefore was unsettling.³¹ However, it prompted a call not to terminate the TT but only for legislation to protect both Manx residents and motorcyclists by further road closures. The Highways Amendment Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by the lieutenant governor on 14 February 1928, before being introduced into and passed in the House of Keys in March and finally passed in Tynwald on 24 April. This legalised the closing of roads not just for racing but also for practising before the main event took place.

When the attorney general introduced the first reading of the bill in the Legislative Council, he was obviously not seeking to deter racing or even to make racing more difficult for riders. Rather, his intention was to make racing safer by imposing more restrictions on the Manx people. Remarkably, and indicative of the political support which by 1928 the TT races had attracted in the Isle of Man, no opposition in either section of the Manx legislature was expressed to continuing the race after the fatality. Instead further road closures were accepted to provide more security for riders whilst practising. The attorney general argued that “if we invite

²⁹ *Statutes of the Isle of Man*, Vol. XI 1921 – 1924, hereafter *Statutes*.

³⁰ See *Highways (Motor Car) Act 1905*, in *Statutes*, Vol. VII 1896 – 1905.

³¹ J. Curwen Clague, ‘What the Island Does’, in G.S. Davison (ed.), *The TT Races: Behind the Scenes*, (W.W. Curtis Ltd., Coventry, 1949), p. 100. Curwen Clague was a journalist for the *Isle of Man Examiner*. Also mentioned in a news story in 2007, [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/6670313.stm>], accessed 1 June 2007].

them [the ACU/ TT racers] to come to the Island for these races, we should make it safe for them to practise, and not let them run the risk of meeting a fish cart on the road with the risk of injury and death.”³² This opinion was shared by Daniel Teare, whose constituency, Ayre, was on the route but well away from Douglas. When introducing the bill into the Keys for its second reading, he argued that:

I think we ought to make the roads safe, if possible, for these cyclists, that is, if we are going to retain the motor cycle races. If the motor cycle races are of any use to the Island, I think it is our duty to see these men take no unnecessary risks. We know that last year a regrettable accident took place, and I think it is our duty to see that the roads during practice time are kept free from traffic.³³

Daniel Teare and the attorney general were aware of the importance of improving safety if the Manx were to continue hosting motorcycle races on the island, and to do this it was becoming increasingly necessary to close roads for practising. Evidently both the attorney general and Daniel Teare wanted to see the TT take place and this proposal would make the staging of the event on the island more attractive to the ACU. Moreover, whilst the attorney general had little to lose by supporting the races – he was an appointed member of the Legislative Council – Teare represented the rural sheading of Ayre and was elected to the Keys, and yet he endorsed a proposal that had the potential to add to the inconvenience caused by the TT to his constituents.

Within this debate there is no indication at all that Birkin’s death might be a reason to stop the TT races. The focus was entirely placed on protecting the TT and continuing to attract the ACU to the Isle of Man. However, support for the bill was not unanimous. It was largely representatives of rural sheadings who voiced objections. Shimmin, MHK for Peel, disagreed with the stance taken by many MLCs and MHKs. His objection was that:

I think there is a great deal too much time spent by grown up people playing with adult mechanical toys; and a great many young men spending their time riding to nowhere and back simply for the fun of riding, and I think they could be much better employed.³⁴

³² *Debates*, Vol. 45, 14 Feb. 1928, p. 455.

³³ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 617.

³⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 619.

Shimmin did not participate in the collective endorsement of the races by members of Tynwald, and his objections were pretty much a call for the TT to be stopped. He might even have been expressing the resentment of Peel's constituents towards the continuation of the TT. However, other objections to this bill did not call for the races to be stopped, but rather pointed out the considerable inconvenience caused to the rural community by the running of the event. Whilst Gill (Middle) argued that as a result of Birkin's death the legislative changes were worth making and that there was "nothing outrageous in it at all"³⁵ other MHKs pointed out that the closing of roads in the early morning would interfere with the delivery of the milk from farms to towns and with traffic to and from the fishing port of Peel in the west of the island. This was a point conceded even by Daniel Teare (Ayre) in the House of Keys. Pointing out the potential for factions to form between members representing rural and urban constituencies, he argued that "there is a certain amount of opposition to closing the roads in the morning, especially by farmers, also by a few men whose business it is to go to Peel to buy fish."³⁶ Southward, who was keen on the races, even argued that closing roads for practising would make it an offence to carry out one's business. This opinion was shared by J.D. Clucas, previously MHK for largely rural Rushen but by now a member of the Legislative Council. He argued that "it will be a great inconvenience to the users of the roads who wish to come in from [Kirk] Michael for the early market."³⁷ Kirk Michael was in a rural area, and the TT course ran through the centre of the village, thus causing inconvenience.

Support for the continuation of the TT was articulated most strongly in terms of the benefits to Douglas. Those supporting the bill emphasised the fact that inconvenience caused to the rural community was a small price to pay if Douglas, the island's largest town, benefited from the continuation of the TT. This attitude was, surprisingly, articulated even by W.C. Clucas, representative for rural Glenfaba, who pointed out that:

It must be remembered that Douglas reaps nearly all the benefit [of the TT]. Seven o'clock in the morning is the time the fish market starts at Peel. Many buyers come in from the country, and it means they will have to go in many hours earlier or later. It will affect Peel more than any other town; still, *if it is going to benefit Douglas and the Island, we are not going to be against it.* [Emphasis added]³⁸

³⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 619.

³⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 617.

³⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 14 Feb. 1928, p. 455.

³⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 618.

Peel was situated in the sheading of Glenfaba, a largely rural area and it can therefore be expected that Clucas would have a good idea of the inconvenience caused to local businesses and especially the fish market. Cowell (Middle) in support of Clucas similarly stated that the TT “is a big inconvenience, but as long as it does good to Douglas, I am not going to oppose it. I think, however, we should protect those who have to make a livelihood by getting produce to Douglas.”³⁹ There was recognition of interests outside Douglas, but there was no suggestion of how these interests could be protected.

Ultimately, it seems that objectors conceded to the “greater good”, which were not Manx economic interests as such, but rather the economic interests of Douglas. However, in order for the TT to continue a compromise had to be reached. Daniel Teare had indeed suggested that “I think if we are to retain these races we ought to make a little bit of sacrifice.”⁴⁰ In Teare’s mind, the TT, which was becoming an international event, came before some local business interests. Closing public roads and increasing safety primarily for the racers and secondarily the residents would mean a compromise had to be made between urban and rural interest groups, but this was a compromise that was not taken. Instead the interests of the ACU, who wanted to hold the TT on the island, and the interests of urban areas, more explicitly Douglas, were protected. For example, Moore, a tenant farmer, made objections. He pointed out the difficulties that would be incurred by further road closures; he had spoken to residents who had voiced their opinions. His attitude towards the TT was that:

Personally, I do not object to the races at all, but, as I said, I have met several people who complain. A man said, ‘I pay my licence to go on the high road, and I have a right at all times of the year to go on the roads, and you have no legal right to stop me’. That is just one instance. It is not in my own constituency. I have met people from Ramsey and Douglas, whose business takes them from Peel to Ramsey. They say ‘We are being tyrannised in the Isle of Man’. There are three whole weeks that people cannot go on with their ordinary businesses.⁴¹

The simplest way to solve this problem was to end the TT races. However, the continuing support for the TT by members of the Legislative Council, and indeed of the House of Keys, made this politically impossible. If the

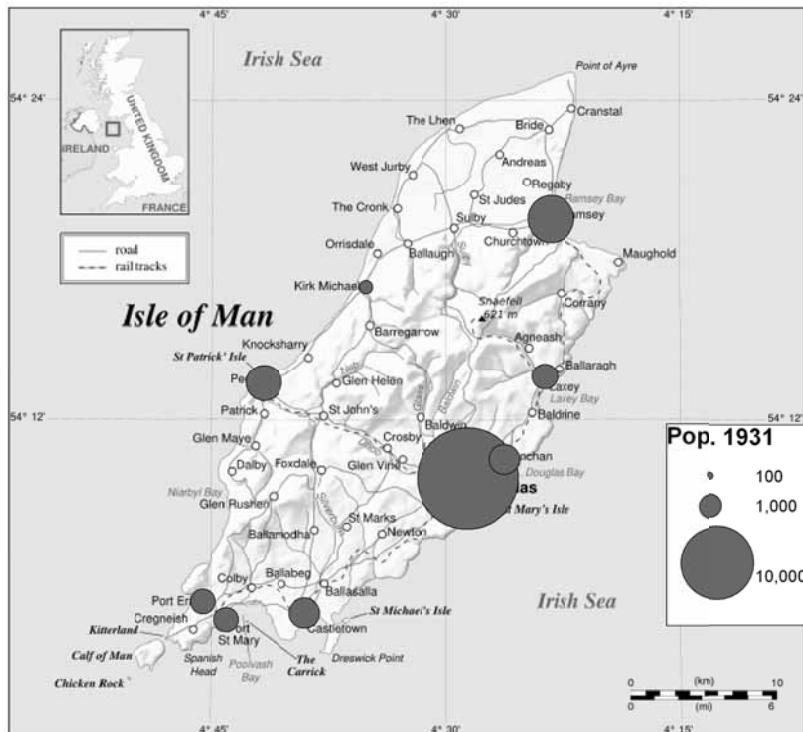
³⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 618.

⁴⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 617.

⁴¹ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 6 March 1928, p. 623.

attitude of the Manx people had been correctly interpreted by Moore then it shows that members of the Manx legislature, more than some of their constituents, were in favour of the races and therefore the closing of roads was required to increase safety. MLCs and MHKs took a wider view than some of their constituents, not wishing to stop the TT but to reconcile the conflicting interests of the ACU, the Manx government and the Manx people, their constituents.

Fig. 3-1 Population distribution on the Isle of Man 1931



Source: *Census 1931: Isle of Man*

Total Population: 49,308

This debate also shows that there was more open decision-making, more transparent discussion, and that the TT races and the facilities for the races were not merely enforced by the lieutenant governor as was the case in 1904 and 1905. However, it is revealing that Manx representatives were

prepared to amend legislation to improve the safety of the races and close roads to allow practices to take place, whilst largely ignoring the effects of these road closures on the rural community as long as Douglas, the island's capital and most heavily populated urban area benefited from the event's continuation. It shows that members of both the Legislative Council and the House of Keys were prepared to support the continuation of the TT and wished to continue to attract the ACU to the island. The debate also shows that the further endorsement of the TT in 1928 was not the result of a further imposition of legislation by the lieutenant governor. What was happening was the imposition of legislation by Tynwald on the Manx people. The move was supported, surprisingly, not just by the representatives of Douglas, but also by representatives of rural constituencies, with varying degrees of reluctance, because the TT was judged to be good for Douglas and that seemed to be enough.

1929-1937: Financial Endorsement

In 1926 Fry was replaced by Sir Claude Hill as the island's lieutenant governor. It was following Hill's initiative in 1929 that the first financial contribution was made by the Manx legislature to the ACU for the purpose of maintaining the TT races. It has been suggested that Hill's awareness of the importance of the tourist industry to the island and his enthusiasm for the TT led to the proposal. The ACU welcomed this grant, and looking back in 1945 the secretary of the ACU, T.W. Loughborough, concluded that there was "no better man for the future of the TT races."⁴² Loughborough believed that Hill had realised that TT entrants would not continue to support the races unless there were substantial rewards on offer, and that it was as much in the interests of the Isle of Man as the ACU that the TT should continue. In 1949 a Manx journalist, commenting on Hill's initiative, pointed out that "whilst at the time there was no real fear that the T.T. would be taken from the Island, this [financial contribution] was a method of ensuring the continuation of the meeting on its 'native soil'."⁴³ Hill's initiative would have been unlikely in 1921, but financial support for the TT was more likely in 1928, with the event by now receiving greater support politically. It was approved by the Manx

⁴² T. W. Loughborough, 'Organisation of the TT Races: From 1912-1939, in G.S. Davison (ed.), *The TT Races*, p.12. Loughborough was secretary of the ACU from 1912-1945.

⁴³ Curwen Clague, 'What the Island Does', in Davison (ed.), *The TT Races*, p. 103.

legislature in 1929, and the first grant was provided in time for the 1930 TT.

At a sitting of Tynwald Court in October 1929, presided over by the Speaker of the House of Keys, G.F. Clucas, the suspension of Tynwald's standing orders was suggested so that Hill's proposal could be considered for the provision of a grant to assist the ACU in holding the TT races on the Isle of Man. A letter from the lieutenant governor contained in the *House of Keys Journal* suggests that this resolution had actually been agreed upon before it entered Tynwald. The letter asked members of the Keys and the Legislative Council to meet Hill in private "to consider what steps (if any) should be taken to ensure the continuance of the Tourist Trophy Races in the Island."⁴⁴ This was a sign that Hill believed that the TT was a valuable asset for the Isle of Man, and the response to his initiative shows that others agreed. The standing orders were suspended and a resolution in favour was carried unanimously in Tynwald. The Speaker of the House of Keys introduced the resolution in what was described as an "exhaustive way", and Corrin (Rushen) seconded the resolution. These were the only two members of the House who voiced their opinions, suggesting that by this point there was a ready acceptance by members of the Manx legislature that the TT would and should continue. If there had been any objections to the resolution, they would seem to have been dealt with privately. The resolution, which fell under the title "help for the races", read:

The Manx Legislature is desirous of contributing its aid, however small, to the cause of international good-will and the spirit of mutual understanding and the will to peace and believing that International sports contests are a factor in the furtherance of such causes. Resolved – that in the estimates for the financial years 1930 – 31, provision should be made for the expenditure of a sum of £5,000 from the general revenue to enable (1) a grant of £1,500 to be paid to the Auto-Cycle Union for the provision of cash prizes to successful competitors in the Tourist Trophy races to be held in the Isle of Man in June, 1930, and (2) a grant of £3,500 to enable the Auto-Cycle Union so to reduce the expenses of competitors from the British Empire overseas and from foreign countries that such competitors can enter for the 1930 Tourist Trophy on more equal terms with competitors from the British Isles.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ This letter was contained in the *House of Keys Journal* (Vol. 15 1922-1929).

⁴⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 46, 4 October 1929, p. 1202; *Tynwald Court Journal* 1929 -1934 also shows that there was no opposition to the bill.

In proposing this resolution in Tynwald the Speaker had put forward a very grandiose claim. Indeed with the TT becoming a more internationally known event, its role in promoting international goodwill might appear justifiable. As a new Keys was going to be elected, the Speaker believed that “it would be a fine thing … if we should end our career on a large note like this.”⁴⁶ Whilst there was no explicit reference to the proposal being Hill’s initiative, there is no other place this proposal could have come from, especially given the evidence of the prior private meeting between the lieutenant governor and members of the legislature. In proposing the resolution the Speaker made reference to the gratitude of Tynwald to the lieutenant governor for showing that “you were very much alive to our interests, and in passing this vote, we shall show that even if we are moribund, there is still some life left in us.”⁴⁷ Corrin, in seconding the motion, went on to suggest that “he is a brave man who feels in a sportive mood at the point of death, and I think that the House of Keys is to be complimented on being in a sportive mood at the time of dissolution.”⁴⁸ This was once again a moment where the Keys had the power to reject supportive legislation for the TT and obstruct the development and the continuation of the event. However, members chose to follow the lead of the Speaker, and endorsed the proposal before their membership of the House ended. Evidently, the House of Keys had become comfortable politically with the TT and by 1929 viewed it as something that was worthy of political support by Manx taxpayers.

The TT was politically endorsed and continuation not threatened during the early 1930s. Members of Tynwald voted annually to renew the grant, and so the Manx government continued to provide the ACU with financial support for the TT. True, some of this grant was later redirected to motorcar races. Even so, throughout the 1930s the Manx government maintained a financial interest in the TT races. Members of Tynwald, with little debate, voted for financial help for the TT and indeed the continuation of the TT and other motor races on the Isle of Man annually.

However, objections to financial assistance for motor racing on the Isle of Man were raised in 1937, but these were not challenges to the continuation of motorcycle racing on the island as such, but to the way the grant was distributed. The attorney general put forward a resolution in Tynwald for the continuation of the £5,000 grant but only £3,500 would go to the ACU.⁴⁹ The £5,000 would cover the cost of all races on the

⁴⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 46, 4 October 1929, p. 1203.

⁴⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 46, 4 October 1929, p. 1203.

⁴⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 46, 4 October 1929, p. 1202.

⁴⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 54, 6 July 1937, p. 424.

island in 1937. These included the TT races, the Manx Grand Prix motorcycle races – which had taken place since 1923 - and car races taking place in Douglas, as well as a pedal cycle race around the TT course and an aeroplane race. Although the attorney general saw this as the “customary appropriation of £5,000”, he also made the suggestion that a committee be appointed to assist the government treasurer in the proper allocation of the grant, and this proposal was adopted. This committee was the Tynwald Motor Races Committee.⁵⁰

Objections raised in this discussion were not towards the provision of the grant and so not towards the continuation of the TT. Questions were raised, rather, concerning the division of the grant between different races on the Isle of Man, since many believed that the TT was the most important motor sport event on the island. Alfred Teare asked:

Does this mean the Court commits itself to motor car racing next year? I don't feel disposed to do that. I consider the experience we have had in the past of the races is that they are not fulfilling expectations from the point of view of the publicity value or encouraging visitors to our shores during the period of the races. Regarding the experience of the motor-cycle races, we know from our experience that they are an attraction to the young men of the country who can afford a motor-cycle. They come to see the performance of the various machines here, and upon the result choose the particular type of machine they are going to purchase to tour the country. In regard to the motor car races, I consider nothing of that kind enters into it at all.⁵¹

The Manx, or members of Tynwald, wanted especially the TT races to continue to be held on the Isle of Man and for this reason they were willing to make a monetary contribution to the ACU. This grant was believed to be reasonable because it would allow the TT races to continue on the Isle of Man, sustaining a unique attraction and, as will be discussed below, putting extra money into the Manx economy. This would not be done by the promotion of motorcar races, which were considered a much smaller affair.

In the opinion of the Motor Races Committee, which had been appointed after the 1937 TT, the contribution made to the ACU was fully justified as it went towards maintaining the TT races on the Isle of Man. The committee's report concluded that “we regard the Races as of great value to the Island in the early part of the season, and we recommend that

⁵⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 54, 6 July 1937, p. 425.

⁵¹ *Debates*, Vol. 54, 6 July 1937, p. 425.

the expenditure of £3,500 which has now been paid for some years should be continued.” It stated further that “bearing in mind the undoubted publicity which results from the TT Races and the expense involved by the Auto Cycle Union in carrying them out, it would seem that this is not an unreasonable figure.”⁵² It is clear that the members of Tynwald who made up the committee believed that the TT was an asset to the Isle of Man, and that they wanted to see the races continue.

The committee’s report stressed the economic benefits of holding the races on the island, and by allowing the continuation of the grant to the ACU the Tynwald Motor Races Committee argued that this money would be easily recouped. Alfred Teare, as we have seen a strong supporter of the TT, had pointed mostly to the economic benefits to be derived from the motorcycle TT in Tynwald when the committee, of which he was a member, was appointed.⁵³ The silence of other members of Tynwald suggests an agreement with the conclusions of the report. In 1938, a resolution was passed once again to give the grant to the ACU, once more indicating that the benefits of continuing to hold the TT on the Isle of Man were realised in Tynwald. When proposing the continuation of this grant, Deemster Cowley felt “sure that members will recognise the enormous publicity value of the races to the Island and I have confidence in asking Tynwald to continue similar grants next year.”⁵⁴ The TT races thus continued to be supported both politically and financially, and by the end of the inter-war period there was little doubt about their continuation. It is the belief, shared by members of Tynwald, that the TT would publicise advantageously the Isle of Man and the growing commitment of motorcycle manufacturers to the event, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁵² *Report of the Committee of Tynwald Appointed to Examine the Whole Question of Motor Car and Other Races*, (Douglas, Norris Modern Press, 1937), pp. 4-5.

⁵³ *Debates*, Vol. 54, 6 July 1937, p. 424.

⁵⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 55, 6 July 1938, p. 693.

CHAPTER FOUR

MOVING THROUGH THE GEARS: CAPITALIST INTERESTS IN THE TT

During the inter-war period the TT developed as part of the way the Manx authorities marketed, or branded, the island. In the years before World War One there was an increasing reorientation of the Manx economy, which had been the direct result of the growth of the island's tourist industry. This trend continued through the inter-war period, and we can see the further decline of fishing, mining, agriculture and other manufacturing industries as measured by occupation (see table 4-1).¹ The decline of the island's primary and secondary industries was marked in 1929 by the complete closure of the Laxey mines, which had once been the leading extractors of zinc and lead ore in the British Isles.² Also, by 1931 the number of fishermen on the island had fallen from 410 recorded in the 1921 census to 186 as recorded in the 1931 census.³ Winterbottom notes that by 1937 there were only 47 fishing boats on the Isle of Man crewed by 128 men and boys, and further that 80 per cent of the herring for sale on the island in 1937 was caught by boats registered elsewhere.⁴ This was a decline of 75 per cent from the 864 fishermen recorded in the 1901 census.⁵ Numbers employed in the fishing and mining industries during the inter-war years were therefore much reduced and there was even a discernible decline in the numbers engaged in agriculture. The decline of primary and secondary industries on the island meant there was a growing reliance on tourism

¹ Birch, *The Isle of Man: A Study in Economic Geography*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964).

² D. Winterbottom, 'Economic History, 1830 – 1996', in J. Belchem (ed.), *A New History of the Isle of Man Volume V: The Modern Period 1830 – 1999*, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 249.

³ *Census 1931: Isle of Man*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1924), pp. 15-22.

⁴ Winterbottom, 'Economic History', p. 249.

⁵ *Census 1901: Islands in the British Seas: Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey and Adjacent Islands*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1903), pp. 9 -12.

Annual tourist numbers during the inter-war period remained mostly around the 500,000 mark, with the exception of 384,705 passengers recorded in 1926, the result of unemployment, economic recession and the general strike in Britain. This was the lowest recorded number during the inter-war period.⁶ However, the inter-war period saw the widening of the Loch Promenade Douglas, which began in 1929 and took six years to complete,⁷ and also the building of the King Edward VIII Pier in 1936. Other improvements included the building of cinemas, such as The Picture House (1921), the Royal and Regal cinemas and the 2000-seat Crescent “Super” Cinema (1930). Facilities in boarding houses were also improved by the installation of electric light, hot and cold running water, and more comfortable furnishings.⁸ This was in contrast to the poor facilities available before World War One.⁹ However, staying in Douglas was still seen to be expensive, the cost varying from between five shillings to seven or eight shillings a day.¹⁰ In comparison to the “better end” of Blackpool which cost between seven and ten shillings per day, the cost on the Isle of Man was nevertheless reasonable.¹¹ The TT should therefore be seen in the context of this development of tourism.

Manx Economic Interests in the TT

During the inter-war period members of Tynwald began to share in the belief that the TT might play a part in publicising the Isle of Man. Moreover, unlike in the pre-war years, the Manx legislature was prepared to pay to advertise the TT races as one of the island’s attractions. Beckerson notes: “by the 1920s the races were an established part of the season and proved ever more successful in attracting June crowds at a time

⁶ *Isle of Man Summer Passenger Arrivals 1887 – Present*, (Douglas, Economic Affairs Division; Isle of Man Government, 2007).

⁷ G.N. Kniveton, R.E. Forster, R. Kelly, S. Slack, and F. Cowin, *Douglas Centenary 1896 – 1996*, (Douglas, 1996), p. 93.

⁸ Birch, *The Isle of Man*, p. 37; D. Winterbottom, p. 247; Kniveton *et al.*, *Douglas Centenary*, p. 103.

⁹ L.S. Garrad, T.A. Bawden, J.K. Qualtrough and W. J. Scatchard, *Industrial Archaeology of the Isle of Man*, (Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1972), pp. 103-11.

¹⁰ Kniveton *et al.*, *Douglas Centenary*, (Douglas, 1996), p. 103.

¹¹ These figures have been taken from advertisements in the United Kingdom Holiday Guide, reproduced in J.K. Walton, *Blackpool*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 131.

when there was plenty of room to accommodate them.”¹² More importantly, however, he also suggests that “the ability of the Manx government to take steps to boost tourism by road closures and the enthusiasm of the local authorities (*once they realised that there was money to be made*) was vital” [emphasis added] for boarding house keepers and for extending the season into June.¹³ How strong the belief was, amongst members of the Manx legislature, that the TT would publicise the island, will now be explored.

First, however, it was not just the members of Tynwald who were quick to point out the publicity value of the TT after World War One. The *Isle of Man Weekly Times* argued in May 1922 that:

Some idea of the publicity which these races give the Island can be gathered from the fact that the two trade motor papers “Motor-cycle” and “Motor Cycling” have directed this week practically their entire issue to the Isle of Man. In the “Daily Mail” last night there was a full column on the races, an invaluable advertisement ... On Monday, some 30 to 40 representatives of the greatest papers in the country are coming to this Island. *There is absolutely nothing to compare with the motor races as an advertisement.* [Emphasis added].¹⁴

The date of this comment is significant. In May 1922 there had only been one TT event after World War One, and we cannot say that there was an inevitability that the TT would continue at this point. *The Isle of Man Weekly Times* was clearly of the opinion that the TT races could become a good source of revenue for the island. The newspaper believed that mention of the TT in the English press was publicity enough. The races had begun to attract people from across the world even by the early 1920s, and this would mean more money for the Manx economy.

The statement above, however, was just one opinion from the Manx press. The view of some members of Tynwald was also that the TT would help publicise the island, and therefore help the island’s tourist trade recover after World War One. Before the outbreak of World War One there had been minimal recognition of the publicity value of the TT by members of Tynwald, although in 1912 this issue was touched upon. After World War One, possibly because the Manx government was keen to see

¹² J. Beckerson, *Holiday Isle: The Golden Era of the Manx Boarding House from the 1870s to the 1970s*, (Douglas, Manx Heritage Foundation, 2007), p. 164.

¹³ Beckerson, *Holiday Isle*, p. 164.

¹⁴ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 27 May 1922.

visitors returning to the island, the revival and continuation of the TT was viewed as a bonus to the island's portfolio of attractions.

Somewhat surprisingly, when the 1905 legislation was extended by resolution in Tynwald in 1920, we can see that some members of Tynwald believed that the TT could play an important role in the marketing of the island. This was an important argument in favour of the restart of the TT. During the discussion concerning the extension of the highways legislation, Southward, when asked if the races should be restarted in 1920, answered: "I do not think that it is necessary to labour this question, as I think that it is the wish of the people in the Isle of Man in general, and of the people in towns in particular, [that] permission should be granted to hold the races." We might assume that Southward is here referring to the financial benefits that some of the islanders could gain from the TT, especially those living in Douglas and running businesses.

Southward went on to make two further points. First, he believed that the TT could be used to advertise the Isle of Man. The event had proven to attract visitors. The result of this publicity, argued Southward, would be extra revenue for the Manx economy.¹⁵ He went on to claim "the last cycle races were the means of bringing a large number of people to the Island", possibly referring to the last pre-war races and that "the Island largely benefits by these people."¹⁶ In particular he believed that the holding of the TT benefited those involved with tourism, especially boarding house keepers.¹⁷ Southward's claim was fairly obvious. It is clear that boarding house keepers and hoteliers would benefit from the continuation of the TT. Those involved with the event and those just watching the TT would need somewhere to stay on the island. The 1921 census recorded that 1,313 out of a total of 1,897 lodging and boarding house keepers, approximately 75 per cent, were employed in Douglas (see table 4-1), since this was where visitors disembarked from the ferry, there was the potential for Douglas to profit considerably from the continuation of the TT.

However, despite there being a large amount of support for the TT in Tynwald, not all members shared Southward's opinion that the event was an obvious boost to the island's economy and a viable means of re-establishing the island's tourist trade, or even as a way of extending the island's tourist season into June. Callister, who earlier in the discussion had commented on the inconvenience caused by the TT, was "not convinced that the granting of these facilities to this particular club [the ACU] [was] of

¹⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 38, 4 May 1920, p. 581.

¹⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 38, 21 Dec. 1920, p. 239.

¹⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 38, 21 Dec. 1920, p. 239.

Table 4-1: Occupations of males and females in the Isle of Man by area, 1921

Occupation	Isle of Man		Douglas		Ramsey		Peel	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Fishing	410	1	53	1	87	0	159	0
Agricultural Occupations	3387	268	202	10	38	1	32	1
Personal Service	865	5049	576	2821	56	426	21	172
Lodging and Boarding House Keepers	187	1710	147	1166	9	115	2	66
Inn, Hotel Keepers, Publicans, Beer Sellers	170	141	93	67	13	21	5	4

Source: Census 1921: Report on Isle of Man

great benefit to the Island.”¹⁸ He argued “the competitions do not bring a great number of people. Last [summer’s] returns showed there were far more people the week after the races than the week in which they were held.”¹⁹ Although he was willing to acknowledge that some boarding houses benefited, the profits made by businesses operating primarily in Douglas were “outweighed by the annoyance caused on the public roads and to the people who use them.” In Callister’s opinion, the attraction of the Isle of Man was for “a quiet holiday, and not for the noise and annoyance of the

¹⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 38, 21 Dec. 1920, p. 239.

¹⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 38, 21 Dec. 1920, p. 239.

races.”²⁰ In Callister’s mind at least, not by 1914 nor by 1920 had the TT become an appropriate advertising “banner” for the Isle of Man.

Table 4-2: Occupations of males and females in the Isle of Man by area 1931

Occupation	Isle of Man		Douglas		Ramsey		Peel	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Fishing	186	0	31	0	46	0	65	0
Agricultural Occupations	2,905	167	141	2	32	0	27	2
Mining and Quarrying	193	0	22	0	15	0	21	0
Personal Service	741	3895	456	2105	44	354	22	127
Lodging and Boarding House Keepers	209	1095	168	750	7	83	1	38
Inn, Hotel Keepers, Publicans, Beer Sellers	112	95	48	45	11	13	5	3

Source: Census 1931: Report on Isle of Man

Although Southward claimed as early as 1920 that the continuation of the TT would publicise the Isle of Man, it was not until 1922 that the Isle of Man’s Board of Advertising, a board of Tynwald consisting of members of the Manx legislature, began actively to promote the races on their posters, in newspapers, in advertising literature, at train stations in

²⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 38, 21 Dec. 1920, p. 239.

Britain and at their permanent offices in London and Manchester.²¹ It was then that active promotion of the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races was being projected outside the island by the Manx government. The Board's promotion of the event was instigated after a meeting with a deputation from the Manx Motor Cycle Club in January 1922. This was a demonstration of a smaller group with interest in the TT putting forward an agenda for the Board of Advertising. The deputation pointed out the need for more advertising of the TT in the mainland press, as, in their opinion, the TT was growing in popularity and therefore had the potential to advertise the island; or at least the TT should be advertised as one of the island's diverse attractions.²² The Board promised consideration of this matter and, after deliberation, made the decision to print and distribute 10,000 leaflets advertising the TT, and they also invited cinema firms to the Isle of Man to film the races. The Board of Advertising continued to promote the TT during the 1920s on their posters and in promotional literature as one of the island's most important attractions, alongside the Tynwald ceremony and the Highland games. For example in a 1934 advertisement promoting the "Isle of Man for Happy Holidays", motor sports, the "unique open air parliament" and highland games were considered equally good reasons to visit the island. This meant that by 1928 when the future of the TT was re-considered, the Manx legislature and certainly the Board of Advertising had made a commitment to the promotion of the TT races.

The inter-war period also saw legislation passed that changed the way the TT was organised and in doing so supported the event's continuation. In 1927 Birkin's death did not put an end to the TT, but rather instigated the closing of roads for practising, which would cause further inconvenience to island residents; an inconvenience that was on balance supported by the Manx legislature because of the publicity value of the TT. As already noted, Daniel Teare (Ayre) supported this legislation because the TT races "[were] established in the Island, and we look on them as the event of the summer season."²³ He acknowledged "I know very well that there are hardships, but if we work for the common good and put up with these grievances, we shall bring the Island to prosperity."²⁴ Johnson (North Douglas), naturally speaking for the island's premier town, believed that the races were "of great benefit to the Island as a visiting resort, and I should have thought that they were, at the most,

²¹ *Board of Advertising Minute Books*, 1921-1937.

²² *Board of Advertising Minute Books*, 9 Oct. 1922.

²³ *Debates*, Vol. 45, March 1928, p. 618.

²⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 45, March 1928, p. 622.

only a trifling inconvenience to the people in the country districts.”²⁵ We can see once again the sectional divisions, a divide between rural and urban interests on the Isle of Man. However, suggestions were made that the whole island would come to prosperity if the TT were continued, and indeed in an island that was geographically small the economic impact of the TT might be felt across the Isle of Man. However, Douglas, and the businesses situated there were bound to benefit in particular from the continuation of the TT. Once again we can see a disregard of the disruption caused to those living in rural areas, because the continuation of the TT would allow Douglas in particular to prosper.

These were not the only voices noting the publicity value of the TT. Curphey argued that the event was “making the Island known throughout the season” and further “what you find [is] the Isle of Man brought before the public through the races, and that is all to our good. It is an advertisement, and it is a good thing to have them here.”²⁶ Despite the dangers of the TT, emphasised by Birkin’s death, this MHK saw the races as a good thing because they publicised the island and put money into the Manx economy, or at least into the economy of Douglas. Curphey only saw the benefits to be had from publicity. The increasing danger of the races, and the adverse press comment that might result from further casualties in the TT, were not pointed out.

It is clear that members of Tynwald supported the TT because they believed it publicised the island in a positive way. As noted above, Tynwald in 1929 passed a resolution to allow a grant of £5,000 to be made to the ACU, increasing the attractiveness of staging the TT on the island. This grant would come out of the island’s general revenue.²⁷ Annual government expenditure in the financial year ending 31 March 1930 totalled £430,451 and on 31 March 1931 totalled £463,082.²⁸ Thus, £5,000 equalled approximately one per cent of the total expenditure of the island; a small amount given the estimated number of people visiting the Isle of Man and spending money there. Government expenditure naturally included large amounts spent on highways and education, each averaging approximately £60,000 between 1926 and 1937. However, we can also see that the government granted £7,000 for the purpose of advertising the island, £6,000 for legislative expenses and £4,000 for the improvement of

²⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 45, March 1928, p. 620.

²⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 45, March 1928, p. 620.

²⁷ *Accounts of Government Treasurer*, 1926 - 1940 (Douglas, Isle of Man).

²⁸ Central Government Expenditure, table included in Kermode, p. 125, see also *Accounts of Government Treasurer*.

harbours (see table 4-3), and therefore the £5,000 grant to the ACU, a non-Manx organisation, after 1930, was not inconsiderable.

Table 4-3: Selected items of government expenditure 1926 – 1937.

Year	1926 (£)	1929 (£)	1931 (£)	1934 (£)	1937 (£)
Legislature	6,075	5,924	5,663	5,032	5,292
Harbours	3,677	5,467	12,800	12,644	9,558
Public Education	54, 005	56,963	52,830	54,958	59,400
Board of Advertising	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	10,000
Highway Board	54,646	58,906	52,709	47,000	50,750
TT Races	-	-	5,000	5,000	5,000

Source: Accounts of Government Treasurer, 1926 – 1940, (Douglas, Isle of Man).

The Speaker of the House of Keys, when proposing this annual grant in 1929 reiterated the belief that the TT races would bring revenue into the Manx economy. He argued “these races have been held for many years in the Isle of Man. They have been a source of great interest and amusement to our visitors, and we must be quite frank and say that they are a pecuniary benefit to the Island.”²⁹

We should therefore look upon this grant of £5,000 to the ACU for encouragement of the TT’s continuation as a reasonable amount to secure additional publicity for the Isle of Man, especially when the number of people visiting the island is taken into consideration. In 1928, 550,472 people visited the Isle of Man and in 1929, 555,211. More specifically, visitor arrivals for May 1928 were 28,569 whereas June’s number totalled 82,598.³⁰ *The Isle of Man Examiner*, on 8 June 1928, reported the arrival of between 15,000 and 16,000 people between the Saturday and Monday preceding Senior TT race and also anticipated the arrival of 11,000 people for the Senior TT taking place on 9 June.³¹ If there were between 20,000 and 30,000 people in the Isle of Man during race week, and this might be considered a conservative estimate, and each visitor spent five pounds during their stay on the island, between £100,000 and £150,000 would be brought into the Manx economy. Despite the fact that money from visitors

²⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 4 Oct. 1929, p. 1203.

³⁰ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 25 Oct. 1929.

³¹ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 8 June 1928.

would not go directly to the government, but would enter local businesses, an investment of £5,000 by the government for a return of £100,000 to £150,000 to the economy would be good for the island. It might also be suggested that some of this income might be top-sliced by taxation to cover the cost of the Highway Board's expenditure on improving the island's roads and even the budget of the Board of Advertising, both bodies involved in the organisation and promotion of the TT. We can see therefore that members of Tynwald wanted to see the TT continue because it had the potential to publicise the island alongside other events that took place in the Isle of Man and boost the economy and government revenue.

Further to this, it was not only the Manx government that was committed financially to the continuation of the TT during the inter-war years. 1929 also saw the first financial contribution made to the ACU by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company.³² The decision to make an annual contribution was made on 22 May 1929, and continued for the rest of the inter-war period. The company gave £100 to the ACU towards expenses incurred in running the TT on the Isle of Man. By giving financial assistance to the ACU, and indeed in liaising with the Isle of Man Highway Board and the ACU over the dates of each TT race so that extra sailings could be provided, the Steam Packet were furthering their own interests by assisting the continuation of the TT. Clearly the belief existed that the TT attracted visitors to the island, and the Isle of Man Steam Packet provided the only service by which to get a motorcycle to the island. This was in evidence in an entry in the minute book for 1933, which, commenting on the decrease of 6,714 visitors to the island between 29 April and 14 June 1933 stated, "this deficiency would be considerably reduced when arrivals for this year's Senior T.T. Motor Cycle Races are ascertained."³³

The Manx economy was becoming increasingly reliant on the tourist industry as its main source of income. It has been shown that during the inter-war period there was a decline in the traditional primary and secondary industries of fishing, farming and manufacturing, and that tourist figures remained steadily around 500,000. Second, it has been shown that members of Tynwald believed strongly that the TT races were an asset that could be used to advertise the Isle of Man, and hence their support for the legislation authorising and assisting the TT races. Last, we can once again see some evidence of a division between rural and urban interests in the TT. References have been made to the appeal of the TT

³² *Isle of Man Steam Packet Minute Book*, 1 Jan. 1926-1 Dec. 1932

³³ *Isle of Man Steam Packet Minutes Book*, 5 Jan. 1933-19 April 1937.

especially for those working in Douglas, where the largest number of boarding houses, hotels, inns and the largest section of the Manx population were situated.

Not surprisingly, some hoteliers and boarding house keepers used the TT to advertise their businesses, particularly those sited close to the TT course. For example, an advertisement for the Manningham Private Hotel in the island's 1934 official guide used a photograph of hotel staff and guests lined up outside the premises, alongside two motorcycles and a number of trophies.³⁴ Indeed, writing in 1949, and covering the inter-war period, Manx journalist Curwen Clague noted that "as the years have gone by, many hotels and [boarding] houses have become the recognised H.Q. of certain teams and personalities; there is the group whose hostess is 'Kanie' of Falcon Cliff and latterly Howstrake fame; the Pevril houses Race H.Q of the A.C.U. and the staff of The T.T. Special; 'Dickie' Davies and others are always to be found at the Sefton; the B.B.C. are not far away at the Falcon."³⁵ However, the TT would not continue and the event would provide no publicity for the Isle of Man unless motorcycle manufacturers continued to compete in the TT.

The British Motorcycle Industry

It must now be considered why motorcycle manufacturers wanted to come back to the Isle of Man and race on a circuit, which was inconveniently located and not designed for racing. Three areas will be explored. First, the growing popularity of the motorcycle with consumers will be discussed. Second, the role that manufacturers and the motorcycle press claimed the TT might and eventually did play in the development of motorcycles, which even so between the wars and in comparison to the motorcar remained "technologically stagnant and continued to demand more of their riders."³⁶ This involves examining what they said about the

³⁴ It has not been possible to examine closely the profits which boarding house keepers and hoteliers on the Isle of Man could expect to make from the TT, because little material exists to do this. There is no comparable work to that of Walton's *Blackpool Landlady*, which examines the social history of Blackpool and its development as a seaside resort. Beckerson's *Holiday Isle: The Golden Age of the Manx Boarding House from the 1870s to the 1970s* is based largely on interviews with boarding house keepers and hoteliers situated on the island and provides no information on incomes and makes scant mention of the TT race.

³⁵ Curwen Clague, 'What the Island Does', p. 107.

³⁶ S. Koerner, 'The British Motor-cycle Industry During the 1930s', *Journal of Transport History*, 16 (1) 1995, p. 62.

advantages and disadvantages of competing in the TT. Third, the advertisements produced by motorcycle and other manufacturers - of spark plugs, brakes, tyres, and magnetos – will be examined, to see if success or even mere participation in the TT was used to promote their products.

The end of war did not signify an immediate revival of the TT. Although it might be expected that members of the motorcycling community would be keen to bring back the TT as soon as possible, it was not viable to hold an event in 1919. Despite this *The Motor Cycle* that year eagerly anticipated the revival of the TT, feeling that World War One had speeded up the development of the motorcycle and that “most engine designers will have learnt more during that time than any other before.” Further it argued: “the next TT race [was] likely to surpass all others on the point of interest.”³⁷ However, the decision to revive the races did not lie wholly in the sanctioning of the races by Manx politicians, or with the readers of *The Motor Cycle*; there was also the question of manufacturers getting back on track.³⁸ *The Motor Cycle* realised this fact, stating “though we know readers would like to see a race in 1919 – we recognise that in view of the exceptional circumstances which prevail at the present time, the financial decision must rest with the trade.”³⁹ It was argued further that “the sporting motorcyclist would doubtless vote unanimously for the resumption of the races next summer – but it is improbable that the trade would be able to direct energies to racing and satisfy numerous customers.”⁴⁰ This comment suggests that at this time satisfying the market demand for motorcycles came before the luxury of motorcycle racing. However, motorcycle racing would not remain on the sidelines. Whilst there was no TT in 1919 and the 1920 TT received minimal entries, by 1921 manufacturers were once again entering teams into the TT.

The popularity of the motorcycle increased greatly during the inter-war years. Stevenson argues that for better off young men sports cars were an attractive form of transportation, but further down the social scale:

³⁷ *Motor Cycle*, 3 April 1919.

³⁸ Two magazines dominated the popular motorcycle press market between the wars, *Motor Cycling* and *The Motor Cycle*. These journals had a close relationship with the motorcycle industry, and it was not uncommon for their editors to be invited to important British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers’ and Traders’ Union meetings, and it was not unusual for members of the industry to move into the press or back again. For example, Graham Walker was an executive with Rudge-Whitworth Motorcycle Company before becoming editor of *Motor Cycling*. See Koerner, ‘The British Motor-cycle Industry’, p. 60.

³⁹ *Motor Cycle*, 20 Feb. 1919.

⁴⁰ *Motor Cycle*, 20 Feb. 1919.

motor-cycles offered a cheaper alternative, both for travel to and from work and for leisure. The Great War had expanded production of motor-cycles and greatly increased knowledge of them, particularly amongst servicemen. In 1920 there were more motor-cycles than cars, and numbers reached a peak in 1930.⁴¹

Although numbers of registered motorcycles decreased after 1930, there was still a substantial number in Britain. Perkin also describes the same trend in the popularity of the motorcycle, with statistics showing that “between 1919 and 1939 the number of motor vehicles on the roads increased nearly ten-fold, from 330,518 to 3,148,600. Cars increased nearly twentyfold from 109,715 to 2,034,000. The rest were made up chiefly by motor-cycles, which rose from about a quarter of a million to a peak of nearly three quarters of a million in 1930 and then fell back to half a million.”⁴² During the inter-war years the British motorcycle gained supremacy in world markets. The *Daily Telegraph* stated in 1927 “on the Continent ... everywhere the British motor-cycle is upon the roads, and the foreigner willingly concedes its superiority. In design, lightness and efficiency it beats everything.”⁴³ The dominance of the British motorcycle industry is backed up by export figures, which show that 530,000 motorcycles were exported worldwide between 1924 and 1940, in comparison to just 169,000 exported by the USA, its closest competitor over the same period. During the 1920s and 1930s British motorcycle manufacturers were market leaders.⁴⁴

Moreover in 1928 *The Daily Mail* suggested that the TT had made a large contribution to the success of the British motorcycle industry: “the British manufacturer is maintaining, indeed increasing, the ascendancy which he has secured in this type of vehicle”, and this was the result of “such tests as those provided by the annual Tourist Trophy races.”⁴⁵ *Motor Cycling* admitted in 1930 that British supremacy in the motorcycle industry was being challenged by foreign machines, but insisted that at the TT races British motorcycles could not be beaten:

⁴¹ J. Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain: British Society 1914 – 45*, (Penguin, 1984), p. 391.

⁴² H. Perkin, *The Age of the Automobile*, (Quartet Books, 1976), p. 129.

⁴³ *Daily Telegraph*, 22 August 1927.

⁴⁴ Export statistics contained in the Motor Cycle Association collection, Modern Records Office, Warwick University. Koerner also provides production and export figures in ‘The British Motor-cycle Industry During the 1930s’.

⁴⁵ *Daily Mail*, 5 June 1928.

At present that supremacy is being seriously challenged by more than one Continental country, but overseas manufacturers have yet to prove, with one or two exceptions, that their machines are a match for our own on the Isle of Man. The eyes of the whole motorcycling world are fixed upon these races each year, and so long as British machines continue to win them it would be definitely bad business policy to discontinue [the TT races].⁴⁶

A 1934 issue of *Motor Cycling* suggested that there were a number of ways that this supremacy could be measured. First, British motorcycle companies were producing more than anyone else; second, British motorcycles were superior in design and workmanship; and, third, British products were winning race after race on both home and foreign tracks.⁴⁷ Considerable success was enjoyed in the TT in the case of manufacturers such as Norton. Race results show Norton achieved a large number of victories in the TT especially during the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁴⁸ As the 1930s progressed, British motorcycles would face competition from foreign machines such as BMW and Moto Guzzi, and so entry into the TT races would become more important to the British motorcycle industry in maintaining its superiority.⁴⁹

The Isle of Man was still an inconvenient location for a motorcycle race, despite the development of an infrastructure which supported its tourist industry and thus saw improved transport links, and despite the political and financial support offered for the continuation of the TT by Tynwald and indeed such organisations as the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. In 1924, the problems faced by manufacturers as a result of the inconvenience of the island's location were addressed in a private members' bill in Westminster, proposing the legalisation of road races in England. This was presented in the House of Commons on 6 March 1924 when Colonel Moore-Brabazon put forward the Motor Cycle Races Bill.⁵⁰ Moore-Brabazon was a keen aviator, one time mechanic for C.S. Rolls of

⁴⁶ *Motor Cycling*, 25 June 1930.

⁴⁷ S. Koerner, 'The British Motor-cycle Industry', p. 55.

⁴⁸ See Appendix One, p. 313.

⁴⁹ S. Disko, 'The Image of the "Tourist Trophy" and British Motorcycling in the Weimar Republic', *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, November 2007. BMW would win the Senior TT in 1939, the last before the outbreak of the Second World War. An account of the 1939 event can be found in: R. Willis, *The Nazi TT: Hitler's 1939 Propaganda Victory on the Isle of Man*, (Motobusiness, Peel, 2009).

⁵⁰ *Hansard Debates Commons*, Vol. 170, 6 March 1924, 1605-1606.

Rolls Royce fame and had been an international racing driver.⁵¹ His proposal was supported most significantly by Sir Edward Illiffe, a newspaperman involved with Iliffe and Sons publishers who were responsible for publishing magazines such as *The Cyclist* (1878), *Autocar* (1895) and *Flight* (1909), but most importantly *The Motor Cycle* (1903).⁵² Brabazon and his supporters, and possibly motorcycle manufacturers, deemed the bill to be important, as it would authorise road racing in England such as was possible in other European countries. It was noted by Brabazon when proposing the bill's second reading, that British motorcycles were superior to those of any other country, but also that the motorcycle industry suffered because "the great races, which are such an enormous advertisement to [the] industry, must be held outside this country instead of in it."⁵³ In an article in *The Motor Cycle* in 1925, Moore-Brabazon expressed confidence that the bill would be passed, even claiming on the inevitability of its passage through Westminster.⁵⁴

However, the majority inside or outside Westminster did not share Brabazon's views, and this was demonstrated in a lack of support for the legislation, and indeed the progress of the bill cannot be further traced through the printed debates. An article in the *Solicitors' Journal* in 1924 pointed out that the Manx authorities were ignoring UK legislation by holding motorcycle races on public roads. It even claimed that a bill before parliament to legalise the use of public roads for motorcycling was "very much as if some member introduced a Bill to legalise homicide and theft. We do not know any ground on which the public can be deprived of the use of the highway for such a purpose in any part of the country – the Isle of Man has put itself in this respect outside the pale of civilisation." This article commented further that if there were to be any change in the law it should be in the direction of the strict enforcement of the present very liberal speed limit, which then stood at twenty miles per hour.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Kenneth Rose, 'Brabazon, John Theodore Cuthbert Moore-, first Baron Brabazon of Tara (1884–1964)', rev., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32018>, accessed 15 Oct. 2008].

⁵² Adrian Smith, 'Iliffe, Edward Mauger, first Baron Iliffe (1877–1960)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34091>, accessed, 15 Oct. 2008].

⁵³ *Hansard Debates Commons*, Volume 171, 1 April 1924, Col. 2119 – 2120.

⁵⁴ *Motor Cycle*, 15 Jan. 1925, p. 77.

⁵⁵ 'The Motor Peril and Nuisance', *Solicitors' Journal*, 68 (1924), 766 – 7, see also 'The Motor Peril', *Solicitors' Journal*, 67, (1923), p. 872.

A Ministry of Transport memorandum, written as a comment on the bill, was of a similar opinion. It suggested, rather obviously, that the bill had probably been influenced by the legislation passed on the Isle of Man in 1904. It was also asserted, incorrectly, that the Manx had established the TT for the purpose of prolonging the holiday season. Further and rather ignorant criticism of the Manx followed:

Roads were made for getting from one place to another and not for racing, and considerations which may have weight in the Isle of Man have none in this country. The Island is a pleasure resort and the principal use of the roads is to accommodate the visiting traffic. Roads in England are in continuous use by commercial and private traffic and it is difficult to imagine any roads near populous centres where great inconvenience and danger would not be caused by persons practising for races, let alone by the races themselves.⁵⁶

Manx legislation definitely did not set a precedent for legislation in Westminster. In the opinion of the Ministry of Transport, the inconvenience caused by the TT to islanders was unimportant as they were used to their roads being used primarily by visitors. It would therefore matter little if these roads were closed for the purpose of motorcycle racing. It was more important to prevent racing on public roads in England than it was to stop such an event taking place on the Isle of Man. With the bill receiving little support, the proposal that motor races could take place on public roads in England remained wildly optimistic.

The greatest benefit of a race in England would be the reduction in costs to the motorcycle manufacturer. The fact that the TT continued to take place on the Isle of Man meant that these costs were large. *The Motor Cycle* in 1929 reckoned it “cannot be estimated, but is always enormous.”⁵⁷ Manufacturers had to get their motorcycles from the Midlands, where the majority of the motorcycle industry was based, to the Isle of Man. There was the cost of transport to the island, which would involve the carriage of motorcycles, spare parts and personnel plus accommodation costs on the Isle of Man for riders, mechanics and other team members. There was also the cost of preparing a motorcycle, or motorcycles, for the TT and the cost of employing a rider, or riders, to take the motorcycle(s) successfully around the TT course. An article in *The Motor Cycle* in 1924 suggested that a manufacturer might invest a sum of

⁵⁶ Home Office File HO45/17413, Motor, Motor Cycle and Cycle race on Public Roads and Foreshores March 1924 – October 1929, TNA.

⁵⁷ *Motor Cycle*, 27 June 1929, p. 1042.

£20,000 in putting together a team for the TT, a race which, it was estimated, might be watched by approximately 100,000 spectators but of whom only 900 were motorcycle owners. However, if this TT were held on "home soil" the initial cost would be reduced, and an estimated 250,000 spectators, of whom 20,000 would be motorcyclists, would watch the event.⁵⁸ This would be the result of the races not being held in an isolated area – the Isle of Man. Certainly, the figures might be spurious but the argument was plausible. Racing on a circuit in England, maybe in the Midlands, would significantly reduce costs of transport and lodgings, and potentially increase publicity for manufacturers. After all, the TT was an event geared towards the production of the most reliable motorcycle, but they also provided publicity.

There was also the growing feeling that the TT was beginning to lose its original *raison d'être*, which had been to assist in the development of production line motorcycles of the kind sold to ordinary customers. This can be seen in the rules laid down for the 1907 TT races (see above). The TT was becoming a contest between highly skilled riders, riding specially prepared motorcycles. It was therefore less a test bed for the "everyday" machine, the kind of motorcycle that might be ridden to and from work or for trips from urban areas into the countryside where speed was not such an important concern. *The Motor Cycle* reported on the TT races in 1924 that

This summer the Triumph and Sunbeam factories were represented by only single private entries. The Rudge, Indian and Matchless machines – all famous winners of the past – were completely absent. Scotts only sent two machines, one of them privately owned. On the home going boats the remark, 'We shall never compete again!' is a hardy annual, and need not be taken too seriously; but it acquires fresh significance when so many firms already stand aloof, and it was heard this year with more frequency and emphasis than usual.⁵⁹

That these manufacturers stayed away from the TT suggests that they believed that it had little purpose. The TT was becoming more and more a race in which specialist bikes and highly skilled riders competed against each other and so the technical benefits to be had were said to be limited. There were also some humorous representations of the TT's failings. For instance, cartoons in *The Motor Cycle and Motor Cycling* identified the wide range of specialist motorcycles that were entered into the races, and

⁵⁸ *Motor Cycle*, 17 July 1924, p. 82.

⁵⁹ *Motor Cycle*, 17 July 1924, p. 82.

suggested that the races should be changed to suit the demands of the tourist and so brought back in line with the original rules, by bringing in a fuel stop and a lunch break. New ways to make the TT more interesting now that speed had acquired importance were also proposed including, interestingly, making competitors wear their national costume. These illustrations are intended to be comic, but yet they comment amply on the situation.

So, the TT was seen by some to have become a test of speed, which would require specially designed machines. In the late 1920s Edward Turner, chief designer and general manager of Triumph, had this to say:

I am often asked, why Triumph don't [sic] show interest in the T.T. races. The answer is that racing is no longer an attractive proposition for manufacturers. In 1926 or 1927 the position was different, because at least 60 per cent of a racing machine was then based on the standard model. Today, racing machines are special from wheel to wheel, and there is nothing that can be translated into production. I don't say that the T.T. should be abolished, just that there should be stock-machine races, and for our part we should be prepared to support such events. I believe other makers would do so, too.⁶⁰

Evidently, the chief designer at Triumph believed that the races were not advantageous to the company because they did not set out to improve the production motorcycle; they only served to make manufacturers produce a specially built motorcycle for racing on the island. BSA also proved that attendance at the TT was not necessary to improve the production of their motorcycles. BSA "had made two attempts to take part in major speed events; in the TT races of 1913 and 1921. In the former, a team of six 500s was entered, with only a single finisher in 7th place", and further that "the 1921 attempt was a total and most spectacular disaster"⁶¹ BSA did not enter the TT races again until after World War Two. Despite this lack of success, however, BSA was the market leader during the 1920s, producing 12,000 to 18,000 machines per year for much of the decade, which equated to 20 – 25 per cent of the total output of the British motorcycle industry.⁶²

We can see then that it was not entirely necessary for a motorcycle manufacturer to enter the TT races, as has been shown in the opinion of

⁶⁰ H. Louis and B. Currie, *The Story of Triumph Motor Cycles*, (Cambridge, Patrick Stevens Ltd., 1975), p. 16.

⁶¹ B. Ryerson, *The Giants of Small Heath: The History of BSA*, (Yeovil, Haynes, 1980), p. 48.

⁶² Koerner, 'The British Motor-cycle Industry', p. 58.

the managing director of Triumph and BSA's success after failing in the TT in the years either side of World War One. The cost of entering the TT was also large, and while attempts were made to try and reduce this, there was little or even no chance that a motorcycle race would be held on public roads in England. This meant that if manufacturers wanted to test their machines against those produced by other manufacturers, the best and indeed only place to do so was on the Isle of Man.

The legislation proposed by Moore-Brabazon failed, and so there was no chance of a motorcycle road race, taking place in England. This meant that despite the obvious disadvantages of racing on the Isle of Man, most manufacturers were tempted still to participate. Evidently there were advantages to be had from competing on the island. The location of the TT course might have been inconvenient, but the course, tried and tested in the past, provided a unique examination of a motorcycle's reliability, with hills, tight corners and long straights testing its all-round performance. The tourist, most manufacturers argued, wanted a motorcycle that was reliable and easily maintained. The TT races were the ultimate test of reliability. An anonymous article in *The Evening News* in 1922 argued that there were certain areas of motorcycle design that were exposed by races such as the TT:

The hidden weakness in the gearbox, the latent fault in lubrication – these and a thousand other faults are infallibly brought to light by the test of such races as the Tourist Trophy and the annual 500 mile event at Brooklands. It is to these that we owe the efficiency and reliability of our medium-powered motor-cycle, attributes now so well known that the transfer of a classic British maker is as much respected in the farthest corner of the world as the hall mark on gold.⁶³

It was also acknowledged that specific advances in the development of motorcycle engineering also resulted from entry into the TT. An article in *Motor Cycling* in 1930, reported Rudge's TT success, using a new engine design that consisted of a "semi-spherical combustion chamber and four valves, all mutually inclined with the sparking plug in the middle." This engine had been specifically tested in the TT, and whilst the difficulties in designing such an engine had deterred other manufacturers, "the Rudge designers have produced a TT machine with this seemingly ideal arrangement and, what is more, it has proved itself good enough to take

⁶³ *Evening News*, 17 June 1922. Contained in book of press cuttings of the Manufacturers' Union, MSS.204/10/1/1, Modern Records Centre (MRC), University of Warwick.

the first three junior places.⁶⁴ Rudge, it seems, had achieved success with new designs tested at the TT.

Also important was that both the ACU and the Manufacturers' Union were keen to uphold the original purpose of the TT races as competitive trials, and this was another reason why motorcycle manufacturers sent teams to the TT. In a meeting of the Competitions Committee of the Manufacturers' Union in 1922, it was decided that teams competing in the TT should specify to the ACU at the beginning of a race the type of fuel and oil used by their motorcycles, and that the ACU should be responsible for publishing this information afterwards. It was believed that "the public should be acquainted with such details."⁶⁵ This shows recognition of the power of the races to influence the buying public, assuming that the fuel and oil used were commercially available. The question of the type of fuel to be used in the TT was again raised in 1926 in a further meeting between the Competitions Committee of the ACU and the Manufacturers' Union. A press release concerning the rules for the 1926 TT races stated that:

The Competition Committee of the ACU and the British Cycle and Motorcycle Manufacturers' and Traders' Union Ltd., met at the R.A.C, London, to-day to discuss the question of the fuels which should be used by competitors in the Tourist Trophy Races this year. The Motorcycle Manufacturers asked that no fuel should be used which is not commercially obtainable, their opinion being that the use of non-commercial fuels in the Races conveys impressions to the public that the machines used bear no resemblance to those supplied to the public, and are not obtainable, even in a modified form for touring purposes.

Whilst the Auto Cycle Union is firmly convinced that no restrictions should be embodied in the regulations which would deprive the T.T. Races of their value as a testing ground, not only for the machines themselves, but for every accessory used in connection with them, the arguments advanced by the manufacturers in regard to the use of commercial fuels in this year's Races were of such value to the riding public that the Auto Cycle Union decided to accede to the Manufacturers' request. For 1926, therefore, no fuels other than those which are at present commonly commercially obtainable will be permitted.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *Motor Cycling*, 25 June 1930, pp. 227-228.

⁶⁵ Competitions Committee Meeting, 15 December 1922, Manufacturers' Union minutes 1922 – 1924, p. 646, MRC, MSS.204/1/1/5.

⁶⁶ Communication issued to press after conference between Manufacturers' Union and ACU, 22 Jan. 1926, Manufacturer's Union minutes 1924 – 1926, p. 920, MRC, MSS.204/1/1/6.

The most significant parts of this statement are the emphases that were placed on commercially obtainable fuel and that the TT was used as a testing ground for motorcycle accessories as well as the machines themselves. From this it is clear that the Manufacturers' Union and the ACU were keen to see the TT reflect the products available for the consumer, if not now then later. The commitment of these organisations to see the TT serve the purpose of improving design was therefore another reason why many manufacturers entered the TT, because they had the encouragement of their governing bodies.

There were also financial incentives. In 1930, when the first grant was provided to the ACU, the reasons for which were discussed earlier, the Manx government provided a further reason for manufacturers to continue coming to the Isle of Man. It was decided, in an agreement between the ACU and the Manufacturers' Union that the initial grant of £5,000 would be used for prize money and to assist foreign competitors to participate. £1,000 was set aside to encourage international entries of six to eight competitors from Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. A further £1,500 was set aside to secure first-class riders from other Continental countries. This would increase the international nature of the TT. The remaining £2,500 was allocated to a prize fund for winning manufacturers, which would include rewards for up to sixth position in each race: a further incentive to race on the Isle of Man.⁶⁷

This grant was redistributed in 1932 with the purpose of giving greater incentives to manufacturers to enter the TT, "for it was recognised that the manufacturers' support of the event was imperative to the Island."⁶⁸ The grant was redistributed so that teams entered by British manufacturers, not exceeding four in each race, were free of all expenses and also so that riders appearing as the manufacturer's entrant were paid an appearance fee of £20. Once again, international entries were considered. It was agreed that official invitations to riders in the dominions should be reduced to one per dominion – but each entry would only be accepted after the British motorcycle manufacturer had signalled his intention to support the entrant. £50 would then be given to the manufacturer to cover the cost of the professional assistance given to the rider. The balance of the £5,000 would be used to subsidise foreign riders, and if riding a British machine a £50 subsidy would be payable to the manufacturer. Thus we can see that from

⁶⁷ Competitions Committee, Manufacturers' Union, 7 Nov. 1930, Manufacturers' Union minutes 1930 – 31, pp. 1525 - 26, MRC, MSS.204/1/1/9.

⁶⁸ Notes of conference between representatives of Manufacturers' Union and ACU 20 July 1932, Manufacturer's Union minutes 1931 – 1933, p. 1769, MRO, MSS.204/1/1/10A.

1930 financial incentives encouraged entry into the TT races, which may have had the effect of attracting more British and also foreign manufacturers to the event and even attracting a more international entry in the TT. Foreign manufacturers would also have sought to use the TT to test their machines, especially against machines produced by British manufacturers, who were seen as the leaders in the industry.⁶⁹

Advertising and the TT

During the inter-war years advertising in general became a more organised and effective business. Nevett argues that the inter-war period was “the golden age of advertising” during which new media were used to improve the precision and effectiveness of advertising.⁷⁰ Elliot, in *A History of English Advertising*, also highlights the increasing organisation of advertising that took place during the inter-war years.⁷¹ Both texts offer useful comment on developments of advertising techniques and on the people and personalities behind the organisation of the advertising industry, but this is not important to this section. What is important to note is that advertising began to play a much more significant role in the development of the consumer society.

The inter-war period also saw a rise in the consumption of sport. More money was spent on watching sport and gambling on sport and there was greater coverage of sport in national newspapers. For example, between 1937 and 1939 *The Times* devoted 21 per cent of news space to the coverage of sport, *The Daily Mail* 36 per cent and *The Daily Mirror* 36 per cent.⁷² Benson considers the major changes that took place nationally in the consumption of sport during the inter-war years, and also the

⁶⁹ H. Braun and C. Panzer, ‘The Expansion of the Motor-Cycle Industry in Germany and in Great Britain (1918 until 1932)’, *Journal of European Economic History*, 32 (2003), pp. 25-59 ; S. Disko, ‘The Image of the “Tourist Trophy” and British Motorcycling in the Weimar Republic’, *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, November 2007:

http://ijms.nova.edu/November2007TT/IJMS_Artcl.Disko.html.

⁷⁰ T. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History*, (London, Heinemann, 1982), p. 145; ‘Advertising: The Magic System’, in R. Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays*, (London, Verso, 1980).

⁷¹ B. N. Elliot, *A History of English Advertising*, (London, Business Publication Ltd., 1962), pp. 197 – 200.

⁷² Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society 1880 – 1980*, (London, Longman, 1994), p. 116.

experiences of those consuming sport.⁷³ The rise in the consumption of sport shows that more people were attending sports events, and it follows that using sporting success in advertising would be a good way to improve sales. If more people were watching sport then there would be much greater knowledge of sporting events among consumers. The TT was a sporting event that was growing in significance during the inter-war period.

The motorcycle industry began to advertise their products more extensively, and one angle that was taken was the emphasis on success in racing, especially in the Isle of Man TT. If the decision were made to race on the Isle of Man, and if a manufacturer's team enjoyed success in a particular race – finishing either first, second or third – this achievement could be used to sell their machines. Despite the limited advertising before World War One, by 1921 there was extensive use of achievements in the TT in advertisements produced not only by motorcycle manufacturers but also by sellers of spare parts and even independent garages to advertise their products and services, especially in the motorcycle press where such advertisements would be expected to appear.

Despite the view of one letter written to the editor of *Motor Cycling*, which suggested that too many advertisements drawing on TT success produced confusion as to who the winner of a race was, there were advantages to be derived from a victory in the TT.⁷⁴ One technical journal, *The Automobile Engineer*, noted in 1928 that there were "undoubted commercial advantages that follow upon success in this [the TT] and other trials of a sports character", and indeed it was judged a "ruling factor."⁷⁵ Emphasis on sporting events was again endorsed in 1937 as "a useful device in breaking down sales resistance."⁷⁶ It was claimed that a firm whose motorcycles did well at the TT was almost certain to enjoy improved sales shortly afterwards. "Many chaps of quite high standing", claimed J.M. West in an interview with Koerner, who confided to him that his choice of a new machine was dependant on the outcome of the TT races, decided: "I'm going to buy whatever wins the TT."⁷⁷

We can see also that Triumph, whose chief designer allegedly argued against participation in the TT races, placed a TT mark on some of their motorcycles. Triumph had produced a 500 c.c. model between 1909 and

⁷³ Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society*, p. 110.

⁷⁴ *Motor Cycling*, 6 July 1921.

⁷⁵ 'Motor cycles', *The Automobile Engineer*, August 1928, p. 273.

⁷⁶ 'Motor Cycle Sport', *The Export Trader*, July 1937, p. 231.

⁷⁷ As quoted in Koerner, 'The British Motor Cycle Industry, 1935 – 1975', p. 22.

1914, a mark which appeared again in 1927 and 1928.⁷⁸ These were production motorcycles for the public market. Triumph was using their earlier experience of the TT to develop the design of their motorcycles, and evidently judged that the existence of the TT mark on the motorcycle would make it more attractive to Triumph's customers. Gilbert Smith, managing director of Norton – a brand which became synonymous with the TT during this period – looked back on the success of Norton motorcycles in the TT during the inter-war years and made it clear that “undoubtedly an Isle of Man win means that the winning make of machine is publicised in every important newspaper in the world: this is valuable publicity and would normally cost far more than any motor-cycle manufacturer could spend.”⁷⁹

It was not just motorcycle manufacturers who benefited from achievements in the TT. Examples of advertising from the period demonstrate independent garages and manufacturers of accessories drawing on success in the TT to advertise their services. For example, in an advertisement for Renold Chains it is stated that they were fitted to the first, second and third placed machines in the 1921 Junior and Senior TT races. The implication is that if this accessory were fitted to a production motorcycle the customer would be benefiting “by the experience of the men who know.” Indeed, Renold Chains was a well-established business by 1921, having been founded in 1879.⁸⁰ In this instance the TT was being used to publicise the business of Hans Renold Limited, Manchester, and also to signify product reliability. Further advertisements from *Motor Cycling* again draw on achievements in the TT, the promoting, for example, the reliability of AMAC carburettors that were fitted to TT machines and to independent garages selling AJS motorcycles, which had beaten Indian to first place in the Senior TT race. Such promotion, it was assumed, would make AJS motorcycles more attractive to the average motorcyclist or tourist. He would be buying a motorcycle with proven success on the racetrack and, as a result, reliability.

There was further exploitation of success in the TT by firms selling oil, tyres and magnetos. Miracle Oil exploits the victory of Tom Sheard, the first Manx born TT winner. Dunlop is also shown to have promoted their sequence of victories in the TT since 1907 to advertise the quality of

⁷⁸ A list of models between 1902 and 1981 can be found in H. Louis and B. Currie, *The Story of Triumph Motor Cycles*, pp. 126 – 141.

⁷⁹ G. Gilbert Smith, ‘The Manufacturer’s Side: Inner History’, in G.S. Davison (ed.), *The TT Races: Behind the Scenes*, p. 35.

⁸⁰ B.H. Tripp, *Renold Chains: A History of the Company and the Rise of the Precision Chain Industry 1879 - 1955*, (London, George Allan and Unwin, 1956).

Dunlop tyres,⁸¹ whilst Bosch Magneto draws on eight years of TT triumphs in making known their victory in the 1923 experimental side car race. In each of these advertisements there evidently is no need to stipulate that these products had been tested on the Isle of Man and indeed in very few advertisements is the Isle of Man referred to. The advertisements simply list achievements under terms such as "Senior TT", "Lightweight TT" or "Junior TT." TT and Isle of Man had become merged in a single brand or identity.

A further development in advertising during the inter-war period saw advertising agencies brought under tighter legal control. They were no longer allowed to use people's names without their consent as if they were endorsing a product. Such misconduct was exemplified in the case of amateur golfer Cyril Tolley in 1928, whose name Fry's used without his permission. Ultimately Tolley brought an action against Fry's for libel, in which he was awarded £1,000 damages. This case set a precedent and advertisers could no longer get away with using any person they chose to endorse their products.⁸² It is interesting therefore that motorcycle manufacturers also used the success of TT riders to promote a particular machine. We can see instances where victories of specific riders are drawn on to promote both motorcycles and motorcycle accessories, providing early examples of a celebrity culture attached to TT victors. A Hutchinson tyre advertisement from 1922, for example, drew on the success of Tom Sheard, as noted earlier the first Manxman to win a TT race:

A T.T. winner is Tom Sheard –
(Heavens! How the natives cheered!)
Now Manx cats have a 'Tail' to tell –
The 'Tyre with nine lives' did so well.⁸³

Norton's publicity similarly draws on the triumphs of Jimmy Guthrie and Stanley Woods, two prominent riders of the period.⁸⁴ Riders such as

⁸¹ The history of the development of Dunlop can be seen in R. Storrs, *Dunlop in War and Peace*, (London, Hutchinson and Co., 1946).

⁸² Nevett, *Advertising in Britain*, p. 165.

⁸³ Hutchinson Tyre Advertisement 1922, as cited in R. Sheard, *T.M. Sheard the Modest Manxman: An Isle of Man TT Legend*, (Isle of Man, Premier Print, 2006), p. 72.

⁸⁴ Jimmy Guthrie was a prominent TT rider between 1923 and his death in 1937. He won six TT races riding Matchless, AJS and Norton machines. He was killed competing in the 1937 German Grand Prix, and is commemorated by the Guthrie Memorial situated on the mountain section of the TT circuit. A statue was also erected in his memory in Hawick, Scotland. Stanley Woods competed in the TT

Guthrie, Woods and even Walter Hanley were not representative of the average “tourist” and their motorcycles were not representative of the average motorcycle, but if the everyday rider believed a firm was victorious in the Isle of Man TT and could even put a name on this success, the attractiveness of the machine would be increased. Whether these riders had given permission for their names to be used is unclear, but they were racing for manufacturers’ teams and were not amateur riders, so the association between their success and a particular brand of machine could be made.

Indeed, even during the inter-war period there was some recognition of the celebrity of TT riders in the British press, with the *Daily Express* for example commenting in 1927 that in the TT “heroes of the continent compete side by side with the men whose names are household words in England.”⁸⁵ The *Bolton Evening News* claimed that “not the most brilliant Derby favourite can inspire such raptures of hero worship as those that are lavished each year in the Isle of Man on him who has covered those break neck miles on the flanks of Snaefell at record speed.”⁸⁶ Even during the inter-war period it was realised that celebrity sold products, and recognition that those racing in the TT were highly skilled and worthy of “celebrity” status.

The examples of Triumph and BSA show that success in the TT was not essential in order to become a profitable motorcycle manufacturer. However, even if entry and success in the Isle of Man were not essential during the inter-war period, they probably helped. Most motorcycle manufacturers continued to attend the TT races, despite the obvious deterrents of cost and inconvenience. If a particular machine, be it AJS or Norton, achieved anything from first to even fourth or fifth place this “success” could be advertised: the machine on sale had proven TT quality.

Manufacturers continued to enter teams because the TT was a test of reliability and the Isle of Man provided an arena where machines could be tested in competition. Without the participation of manufacturers teams there would be no TT race. If there were no TT, there would be no testing ground for new machines and accessories and there would not be an internationally known event to use in their publicity. Furthermore, as a result of the continued support of manufacturers for the TT, not only did

from 1923 - 1939. He joined Norton in 1926 winning a number of races, but also rode successfully for foreign manufacturers Guzzi and Husqvarna. Information taken from *History of the TT Races 1907 – 1960*, (Norwich, Jarrold and Sons Ltd for Shell Mex B.P. Ltd, 1960).

⁸⁵ *Daily Express*, 25 June 1927.

⁸⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 June 1928.

the event continue to be recognised outside the Isle of Man but also the Manx, or at least a section of the Manx population, began to recognise the importance of the TT in constructing their own “national identity.”

CHAPTER FIVE

CHEERING ON THE RACERS: THE TT AND MANX IDENTITY

A “national identity” is “multidimensional” and a particular identity difficult to define. We might suggest that the TT became part of a Manx identity in the minds of Manx politicians, but not necessarily in the minds of the entire population. It has also been shown that the TT was supported by motorcycle manufacturers, and by offering their support they too played a part in the development of the TT as an ingredient of Manx identity by increasing the external representation of the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races. This chapter looks at the construction of identity both outside and inside of the island during the inter-war period. It will take as its theme the work of Urry, especially such literature as *The Tourist Gaze* and *Consuming Places*. Urry suggests that the “Tourist Gaze”, which describes the development of a sense-of-place or place-myth, is central to the consumption of tourist services. He suggests several key elements that go towards constructing this “gaze”, and explains the need for such a construction.¹ Urry argues that tourism can be defined as a leisure activity that is organised and regulated. The greater movement of people to other destinations outside normal places of residence and work means an increase in numbers choosing to engage in tourist practices, therefore increasing new socialised forms of provision in order to cope with the mass character of the “tourist gaze.” Tourists thus anticipate that their chosen destination will provide pleasures, distinctiveness and difference from their place of residence. This anticipation is constructed and sustained, suggests Urry, through “non-tourist” practices such as film, newspapers, TV programmes, magazines, records and videos and is enhanced by particular signs or familiar sights. Urry points out that:

¹ J. Urry, *Consuming Places*, (London, Routledge, 1995), p. 133; J. Urry, *Tourist Gaze*, (London, Sage, 1990), p. 11.

When for example tourists see two people kissing in Paris what they are gazing upon is ‘timeless, romantic Paris’; when a small village in England is seen, tourists think they are gazing upon the ‘real (merrie) England.’²

It will be suggested that during the inter-war period the Isle of Man became so intrinsically bound up with the TT races that people travelled to the Isle of Man in anticipation of seeing this event or at least the home of this event; in a similar way tourists commonly travelled to the Lake District in expectation of visiting Wordsworth’s home in Grasmere.³ It was the growth and absorption of the TT as a part of the Isle of Man’s identity that led to the ingraining of the TT races in external representations of the island. It is this “place-myth” that will be examined. The premise of this chapter is that there were in fact two rival place myths on the island during the inter-war period. One, based on heritage, nature and history and the other based on speed, danger and modern technology. This chapter will also re-introduce the idea of a “consumed” national identity. In relation to this work, this is the consumption of the TT races in the press, in race reports, in film and in other literature about the Isle of Man, because no team, certainly not one from the Isle of Man, “represented” a nation. The Isle of Man’s status lay as a venue for the event. In that way the TT came to be consumed as a representation of the Isle of Man.

Further to this, this chapter will also address the idea that the TT races became ingrained in “Manx identity” and thereby became intensely familiar to the islanders. It is clear that, internally, the present day TT races form part of the island’s “banal nationalism”, being a familiar symbol of Manx identity to residents. Most specifically my analysis is influenced by Billig’s conclusion that nationhood is flagged, unobtrusively, throughout the nation. Symbols act as reminders of nationality, and as Billig states, “the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging outside the public building.”⁴ It is this constant reminding that not only allows nationalist movements to be motivated in times of national crisis but that also draws people together as part of a community. The TT races, it is suggested, came to play such a role on the Isle of Man

² Urry, *Consuming Places*, p. 133.

³ For an analysis of the development of a ‘sense-of-place’ generated in the Lake District during the inter-war period see C. O’Neill, ‘Visions of Lakeland: Tourism, Preservation and the Development of the Lake District 1919 – 1939, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Lancaster, 2000.

⁴ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 8.

between the wars. This sense of community, suggests Billig, is also achieved by the “homeland deixis”, the use of words such as “we”, “us” and “our” in newspapers, speeches and other literature.⁵

Billig’s work is also used as a central interpretative device in an article by Hill.⁶ “The Cup Final”, suggests Hill, “though a more elaborate affair than the symbols studied by Billig, is nonetheless a part of the ‘banal’ construction of nationhood. Its familiarity serves to mask its flagging function.”⁷ I have similarly sought to demonstrate the “banal” aspects of the TT in an article in the *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, in which I suggest that the TT races have become so familiar to the Manx people, because the presence of the course, the grandstand and other symbols of the TT all year round perform similar flagging functions, that they are prepared to waive the inconvenience caused by the event. It has also become part of who they believe they are as a “nation.” This article also made an early attempt to employ the homeland deixis to reports of the TT races, in which the familiarity of the Manx with the TT and the belief that the “nation” welcomed the event each year were endorsed by the language used in such reports.⁸

External Constructions of Manx Identity

During the inter-war period the outside definition of the Isle of Man was joined by the island’s growing fame as the home of the TT races. Rather than collide these two representations came to exist harmoniously alongside each other. Indeed, in 1925 it was suggested, in an article in *Sunday at Home* that on the Isle of Man “in striking juxtaposition you will find the ancient and the modern … These things do not blend and clash. They are merely there, and you make your choice.”⁹ This diversity might

⁵ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 11.

⁶ J. Hill, ‘Cocks, Cats, Caps and Cups: A Semiotic Approach to Sport and National Identity’, *Culture, Sport, Society*, 2 (1999).

⁷ J. Hill, ‘Cocks, Cats, Caps and Cups’, p. 3.

⁸ S. Vaukins, ‘The Isle of Man TT Races: Politics, Economic and National Identity’, *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, November 2007 [http://ijms.nova.edu/November2007TT/IJMS_Artcl.Vaukins.html].

⁹ *Sunday at Home*, June 1925, p. 534 as cited in J. Belchem, “‘The Playground of Northern England’: The Isle of Man, Manxness and the Northern Working Class’, in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of ‘The North’ and ‘Northernness’*, (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), p. 77.

be one aspect that helped set the island apart from other holiday destinations such as Blackpool.¹⁰

In tourist literature, the Isle of Man was often not promoted as the venue for the TT. One example of such literature is Radcliffe's 1925 book *The Isle of Man*.¹¹ One of a series of "little guides", which included guides to each English county, the book gave a good survey of the island but it represented the Isle of Man in a particular way, a way which highlighted the more traditional aspects of island life. Hall Caine praised the guide in the preface, stating that:

...I think the first thing [the book] will reveal is that the Isle of Man is very beautiful ... It is lovely, with a loveliness that is perhaps all its own, and it is due partly to its littleness, so many features being packed into a small space.¹²

Radcliffe describes in detail the "situation, extent and physical features" of the Isle of Man, examining its geographical situation, geology and its climate. He goes on to consider the island's flora and fauna and its scenery, all of interest to the naturalist. There are brief summaries of the island's industries, communications with the mainland, and ways of travelling around the island, looking most specifically at the island's roads and railways. Further to this there are descriptions of the island's antiquities, Celtic crosses, prehistoric tools and pottery and ancient churches. This section moves on to a concise narrative of the island's history up to the twentieth century, including the changing control of the island, from Celts to Vikings to the English. It discusses such island celebrities as Hall Caine, T.E. Brown, A.W. Moore and the artist Archibald Knox. Radcliffe's is a small book, but it contains a broad survey of the Isle of Man. There is, however, no mention of the TT or indeed of any sport on the Isle of Man.¹³

Like Radcliffe's book, other inter-war guidebooks also focused on the many attractions of the Isle of Man but ignored the TT. Such literature includes *Black's Guide to the Isle of Man* and *Abel Heywood and Sons Illustrated Guide to the Isle of Man*, both published outside of the island. These too take on the structure of describing the island town by town and constructing a sense of place that focuses on the natural or the

¹⁰ See J.K. Walton, *Blackpool*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

¹¹ W. Radcliffe, *The Isle of Man*, (London, Methuen, 1925).

¹² Radcliffe, *Isle of Man*, p. x.

¹³ Radcliffe, *Isle of Man*, pp. 1-42.

traditional.¹⁴ The Midland and Scottish Railway guide described the Isle of Man in 1929 as “an Island that is unlike any other Island ... There are few places in the British Isles which could rival the Isle of Man in displaying within a little space a great variety of scenes.”¹⁵ The island, it was pointed out, contained:

All the elements of a complete national life: ports and harbours, rivers and glens, hills that attain at times almost to the dignity of mountains, towns and villages, and a continuous and interesting history that can be traced back for centuries; a sturdy native stock pursuing native industries. It has even succeeded in breeding its own brand of cat! That cat is symptomatic. It is nearly like other cats – but not quite.¹⁶

There was no mention of motorcycle races in this description of the island. The main attractions of the island were said to be its scenery, with so much crammed into a small space, plus history or the quaint. There was also the recognition that the Isle of Man was not quite like any other place. A special issue of *The Humorist* (1934) almost neglected to mention the TT, with the author stating, “personally, I cannot see all the need for the hurry of the TT. The Island possesses quite a good little electric railway to get about on.”¹⁷ This suggested that there were many other reasons to visit the Isle of Man. The tourist need not visit the island during the TT period.

The Isle of Man could be therefore still represented in rather traditional ways. Moreover, it was not only travel literature that highlighted the island’s natural scenery, history and heritage as reasons to visit the island. Even the motorcycle press recognised the diversity on offer in the Isle of Man in articles that made suggestions for places to visit when not watching the TT races. Such articles include “The Mysteries of Mona” which attempted to explain the development of some Manx customs,¹⁸ “Manxland for potters” which proposed places to visit on the island

¹⁴ See for example, *Black's Guide to the Isle of Man*, 1919; *Abel Heywood and Sons Illustrated Guide to the Isle of Man*, (Manchester, 1919/1932); Midland and Scottish Railway Company, *The Isle of Man: Pleasure Island*, (1929).

¹⁵ Midland and Scottish Railway Company, *The Isle of Man: Pleasure Island*, (1929).

¹⁶ Midland and Scottish Railway Company, *The Isle of Man: Pleasure Island*, (1929).

¹⁷ *The Humorist*, 23 June 1934.

¹⁸ *Motor Cycling*, 24 June 1931, pp. 248-249.

when there were no motorcycle races to watch,¹⁹ and “Curiosities of the Isle of Man: Interesting Oddities about the Land of Road Racing.”²⁰

However, although we might say that one particular construction of the Isle of Man was being presented - one that focused on more traditional aspects - the TT helped create a rival place-myth for the Isle of Man. The TT was representative of the Manx identity not because it was Celtic or Norse but because it was modern. It imposed itself on the island’s natural scenery and was in some accounts juxtaposed with the island’s historic sites. In fact and as one would expect the motorcycle press, since the TT’s inception in 1907, had always regarded the Isle of Man as principally the home of the TT, and had always eagerly anticipated the event. According to the motorcycle press, the Isle of Man largely if not exclusively existed for motorcycle racing. The island’s biggest attraction was the TT. In 1928, Staxton, a correspondent for *Motor Cycling*, described his island impressions, focusing strongly on the importance of the TT. His opinion was that:

To be the complete motorist, one must have seen at least one Tourist Trophy meeting. The races must be seen and the atmosphere of the Island sampled before one can claim to know all the joys that are attached to this wonderful sport of ours.

The “Magic Island” has about it during T.T. week an atmosphere that is unique; it becomes for the time being the motorcyclist’s paradise. He and his machine are welcomed; his pet sport is the one and only topic of the hour – and what could the keen rider want more?

Certainly this year’s [TT] saw no diminution of T.T. fever. Once again a record number of visitors arrived in the Island, with a record number of motor-cycles and cars. Once again these visitors formed themselves into huge crowds around the course; once again these crowds displayed an enthusiasm that neither pen nor camera can, somehow, get quite fully into print.

Everybody, too, seemed to be having *the* time of their lives. Whether they came over for the Senior only, by one of the *Motor Cycling* steamers, or whether they did the thing in de luxe manner by booking a room for a week or two in the “Fort Anne.” The visitors seemed bent on enjoying themselves ... the good Manx folk were more than kind to them; the Manx police were forbearing to a point that at times became almost alarming, and

¹⁹ *Motor Cycling*, 13 June 1933, pp. 170-171.

²⁰ *Motor Cycling*, 16 June 1937, p. 243.

only the Manx weather at times failed to smile. As a holiday the week could not be beaten.²¹

By suggesting that to be the complete motorist one must have seen the TT, Staxton brought together the motorcyclist, motorcycle racing and the Isle of Man. He did this further by referring to the Isle of Man as the “Magic Isle” and as the “motorcyclist’s paradise.” Staxton also creates an image of the Isle of Man being populated, albeit for a certain part of the year, by a large number of motorcyclists.

Although Staxton’s description of the island focused heavily on the TT, it was not as extreme a description as offered by a columnist in a 1935 edition of *TT Special* who admitted that, as a school-boy, he had “no desire to learn anything more than was considered necessary”, but, amusingly, he did “learn something which was not included in the curriculum. [He] learned that the Island had at least one road that formed a 37 $\frac{1}{4}$ mile circuit. The highest mountain was Snaefell; the principal industry was racing and its inhabitants were all motorcyclists. To a schoolboy that sounded like utopia.”²² There is an overemphasis on the importance of the TT in this description since the Manx were obviously not all motorcyclists. However, many travelled to the Isle of Man in June because the island was the home of the TT, albeit only for two or three weeks of the year. Indeed, *A Guide to the Sporting Facilities on the Isle of Man*, published in Dundee in 1932, noted, “The greatest sporting event now held in the island is, of course, the great Tourist Trophy Races.” It went on to point out that the TT attracted “more visitors than any other single event … As the events are held in June, which is before the big rush of visitors for the July and August holidays, there is ample accommodation for visitors.”²³ The 1935 volume of this publication went further to point out that “the T.T. races and the Grand Prix are sure to be held in the Isle of Man for several years to come, and the fact that the Legislature now offers a sum of £5,000 for the purpose of inducing and assisting foreigners and colonials to compete has made the T.T. races more international than ever before.”²⁴

However, it was not only the motorcycle press and publications that specifically considered the development of sport on the Isle of Man that

²¹ *Motor Cycling*, 20 June 1928.

²² *TT Special*, 12 June 1935.

²³ Simmath Press Ltd., *Sports in Manxland: A Guide to the Sporting Facilities on the Isle of Man*, (Dundee, Simmath Press, 1932), p. 7.

²⁴ Simmath Press Ltd., *Sports in Manxland: A Guide to the Sporting Facilities on the Isle of Man*, (Dundee, Simmath Press, 1935), p. 7.

recognised the Isle of Man as the home of the TT. The British daily press also commented on the races, particularly on the aspects of speed and danger that brought fame or infamy to the Isle of Man, and also in recognition of the event's vast importance to the motorcycling community. In 1928 the *Daily Express*, noting the popularity of the event, reported that "tens of thousands travel to the Isle of Man each year to see the blue riband of motor cycling, the Tourist Trophy Races."²⁵ An article in the *Bolton Evening News* highlighted both the prestigious nature of the TT and the potential dangers and thrills when it suggested that in the TT "man is pitted against man, and the qualities that count are courage, steadiness of nerve, coolness of head."²⁶ The dangers of the course could be overcome by steadiness of nerve, and those who won the races were lavished with the spoils of victory.

Not all comments in the British press were comfortable with the purpose of the TT. A letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in 1931 questioned whether the event should continue. It read:

When one reads of a rider killed and five others more or less seriously injured in one day's motor-cycle racing in the Isle of Man one cannot help asking whether the game is really worth the candle ... There are two things to be said for such contests as the Tourist Trophy races. The first is that they provide the most exacting test possible for engines and appliances. The second – and perhaps this is to do more with their popularity – they are extremely spectacular ... They draw so many people to watch them that the Manx Government finds it worth while to turn the whole island upside down for them every year.²⁷

The letter might have started off by questioning the value of the TT races, but it moved on to highlight the efforts made by the Manx to make it possible for the races to take place on the island. For one enthusiast, and indeed for those who read the *Manchester Guardian*, the impression was that the Manx authorities were prepared to do whatever they could to make the continuation of the TT possible, despite the danger associated with the TT. This was an early example of criticism being aimed at the races. It also shows, however, that the belief existed outside the island that the Manx wanted to see the TT continue.

During the inter-war period the TT certainly helped to define the position of the Isle of Man and likewise the purpose of the island's

²⁵ *Daily Express*, 25 June 1927.

²⁶ *Bolton Evening News*, 4 June 1928.

²⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 20 June 1931.

inhabitants; the Isle of Man was for TT racing, the island's residents were occupied in catering for visitors. Yet the Isle of Man was still viewed as a place that maintained its history, heritage and natural scenery. There was much to do on the Isle of Man besides participate in motorcycle races.

In the mid-1930s these rival place myths were firmly set down in celluloid. In 1935, the Isle of Man Board of Advertising allowed the filming of Monty Banks' film *No Limit*, starring George Formby and with a story set at the TT races.²⁸ This film had originally been planned to show Formby visiting the island's many attractions.²⁹ *No Limit* follows the success of George Shuttleworth riding his homemade "Shuttleworth Snap." It follows his transformation from the "lone hand", whose mother stole from his grandfather the money to pay for the trip, to him becoming an official rider for Rainbow motorcycles (a fictional motorcycle manufacturer). The film played a crucial role in helping to reinforce an external perception of the Isle of Man. In the film we see shots of the Isle of Man TT races, of the rivalry between the professional and amateur motorcycle riders, of Douglas beach crowded with tourists, and of the island's range of other attractions.

The fact that this film was made at all, and also that it was Formby's most popular film, demonstrates the popularity of the TT externally.³⁰ It is particularly noticeable that throughout the film the Isle of Man was referred to without any explanation of where the island was or why a motorcycle race was being held there. It was assumed that an external audience would be familiar with both. It is fair to assume that the island's growing dependence on mass tourism – with visitors being drawn mostly from the northern working class – meant that the majority of viewers would be familiar with the Isle of Man and the TT races before seeing the film. In this sense there is an implied familiarity between the audience and the Isle of Man and between the audience and the TT races; the audience knows the location of the Isle of Man and they knew TT races took place there annually. Viewers might have holidayed in the island and may or may not have seen the TT races. This film also reflected the style of newsreels at the time, demonstrating the popularity of the races in scenes showing the bustling grandstands, crowds of spectators around the course,

²⁸ *No Limit*, (1935).

²⁹ *Board of Advertising Minutes*, 13 March 1935.

³⁰ Further discussion of *No Limit* and indeed Formby's other films can be found in, for example, D. Bret, *George Formby: A Troubled Genius*, (London, Robson Books, 2001); J. Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain 1930 – 1939*, (London, Routledge, 1984).

and indeed advertising around the route.³¹ The sense of familiarity with the Isle of Man and the TT races portrayed by this film forms part of an external construction of the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races. There was no need for any explanation of why a keen motorcyclist from Wigan would want to enter a motorcycle race held on the Isle of Man.

Reviews of *No Limit* were also favourable, further representing the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races. *Picturegoer Weekly* described the film as a “breezy, happy-go-lucky farce, which culminates in an exhilarating piece of slapstick spectacle”, but most importantly “it includes cut-in shots of the Isle of Man T.T. races.”³² The *Pontefract Advertiser* in a review of *No Limit* suggested that:

Whitsuntide, the Isle of Man and the TT races make a delectable combination for the holiday period, and for those who like the idea, but find it impracticable, there is solace at the Alexandra Cinema, Pontefract. *No Limit* which is booked for presentation throughout the week abounds with fast moving and powerful scenes, many of which show actual sequences from the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy races.³³

No Limit further cemented the representation of the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races, and the presentation of the film to a large audience increased the perpetuation of this particular aspect of the island’s place myth. The races were eagerly anticipated by the motorcycle community and the success of *No Limit* suggests that the TT races were familiar to and popular with a wider audience. By the end of the inter-war period, the TT races had therefore become a secure part of the external representation of the Isle of Man. The next section will go on to ask how far the TT became part of the way the Manx represented themselves during the inter-war years.

³¹ Examples of these newsreels can be found online at www.britishpathe.com and www.movietone.com. See bibliography for specific titles of newsreels. See also, for further comment on the media and sport during the inter-war years M. Huggins, ‘BBC Radio and Sport 1922 – 1939’, *Contemporary British History*, 21 (2007), pp. 491-515; Huggins, ‘Projecting the Visual: British Newsreels, Soccer and Popular Culture 1918-1939’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 24 (2007), pp. 80-102; Huggins, “And Now, Something for the Ladies”: Representations of Women’s Sport in Cinema Newsreels 1918-1939’, *Women’s History Review*, 16 (2007), pp. 681-700.

³² *Picturegoer Weekly*, 19 Nov. 1938.

³³ *Pontefract Advertiser*, 29 May 1936.

Internal Constructions of Manx Identity

In 1921 Hall Caine, author of a number of novels based on the people and the culture of the Isle of Man,³⁴ described the island, in an article for the *New York Times*:

All that is generally known about the island is that it is a health and holiday resort for the people of the northern counties of England and Ireland and the Southern ones of Scotland, but I think that it has claims that rise higher than that. It lies anchored out in the middle of the Irish Sea and as you approach it from the mainland it looks like a bird sitting on her nest. The majority of its human habitations are such as are to be found in other seaside resorts for summer visitors, with a few ivy covered and turreted mansions of moderate size and a number of thatched and whitewashed cottages which stand with their sides and back to the highroads and are usually screened by the thick foliage of the tammon [sic] tree, or the scarlet droppings of the fuchsia.

But it bears to the closer observer a hint of ancient history, of legend, of poetry, and of the struggles of [races], in the ruins of old churches, the remains of at least one abbey and of a large Elizabethan castle, a number of runic crosses, and (above all historical interest) a circular turf mound which is probably the only visible relic in the world of the ancient Althing, the open air parliament of the Norse Republic.³⁵

In 1904, motor car racing had been imposed on this idyllic scene but, as discussed earlier, even by 1914 motor racing had not yet begun to be ingrained within a Manx sense-of-self, something which is well demonstrated in Caine's description of the island. However, the inter-war

³⁴ Sir Hall Caine (1853 – 1931) was not born on the Isle of Man, and did not take up residence there until 1894. He did, however, spend time on the island in his youth and wrote a number of books on the society and culture of the island. These included novels such as *The Deemster*, 1887, *The Manxman*, 1894 and *The Master of Man*, 1921. His last book, *The Woman of Knockaloe: A Parable*, was published in 1923. Caine was also the author of *Little Man Island* (1894), a handbook for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and also gave three lectures titled 'Little Manx Nation' at the Royal Institution in 1891. For further details see V. Allen, *Hall Caine: Portrait of a Victorian Romancer*, (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic, 1997); S. Norris, *Two Men of Manxland*, (Douglas, Norris Modern Press, 1947); Vivien Allen, 'Caine, Sir (Thomas Henry) Hall (1853–1931)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32237>] accessed 14 Oct. 2008.

³⁵ *New York Times*, 17 July 1921.

years saw the TT races become more firmly embedded in Manx identity. The races came to be a familiar and accepted part of what it meant to be Manx. This period also saw further attempts to raise the profile of the Manx language and other aspects of the Manx culture.

The premise here is further to suggest that the old and the new existed peacefully alongside each other in the Isle of Man. However, in 1921 Dorothy Eyre, in an article in *Manx Quarterly*, launched an attack against what she perceived as the ugliness of mass tourism on the Isle of Man. She asked:

How ugly are all imported things in the midst of the natural loveliness of this country [sic]. Everywhere the visitor brings devastation with him. This, in a way, means a good amount of well-being to the Islander, and in consequence may be partly over-looked. But the visitor seldom brings anything worthy of imitation, and rarely anything that Manxland would do well to permanently maintain.³⁶

Eyre clearly showed displeasure with the island's growing dependence on the attraction of tourists. The article went on to state further that the "invader arrives, and from that moment begins his habitual all-conquering offensiveness with a widespread distribution of largesse." It was pointed out "for him [the visitor] they [the Manx] build hotels and hydros, and lose their identity ... for him they build music-halls and picture-dromes, and lose their intelligence."³⁷ The article concluded: "the screaming hectic hurly burly is the price the Manxman pays for the desecration of his land."³⁸ These comments are filled with condemnation for the continuation of mass tourism on the Isle of Man. In Eyre's opinion, then, the promotion of mass tourism equalled assimilation with England. In 1908 a "dweller beside the motor course" had called on the Manx to celebrate their separateness by holding motor races, but Eyre called on the Manx to celebrate their own history, language and the natural attractions that the island had to offer. These two contrasting opinions both asserted the island's distinctiveness, but for very different reasons.

Caine celebrated the "traditional" characteristics of the island and Eyre condemned the island's reliance on mass tourism. Further constructions of traditional Manxness can be seen in the continuation of the Manx renaissance. One aspect of this was the attempted resurrection of the Manx language, which had received attention in the years before World War

³⁶ D. Eyre, 'The Isle of Man for the Manx', *Manx Quarterly*, 6 (1921), p. 123.

³⁷ D. Eyre, 'The Isle of Man', *Manx Quarterly*, p. 123.

³⁸ D. Eyre, 'The Isle of Man', *Manx Quarterly*, p. 123.

One. For the Manx, or more clearly for the small section involved in the Manx renaissance, the continued pursuit of a Manx language revival meant setting the island apart from England and denying the anglicisation of the island which was the result of mass tourism.³⁹ However, in 1932 W.W. Gill, author of three volumes of *A Manx Scrapbook*, was compelled to admit that "Manx is not even losing ground, languishing, or on the verge of extinction. As a means of communication it is dead, and has been dead for a generation."⁴⁰ By asserting that the Manx language was dead, Gill removed one defining characteristic of the island's Celtic identity. After taking Gill's comments into consideration, we might be led to believe that Manx was unimportant as a means of communication and that attempts at its revival had been unsuccessful. However, Broderick suggests that the Manx language underwent a second phase in its revival during the 1930s.⁴¹ Broderick associates this second phase with J. J. Kneen and Mona Douglas. Kneen compiled a six-volume work on Manx place names, a Manx grammar and a work on Manx personal names.⁴² Kneen's *Grammar of the Manx Language* had been completed in 1910, but it was not published until the late 1920s when the Trustees of the Manx Museum recognised its importance.⁴³ Mona Douglas, who it must be pointed out was not born on the Isle of Man, was active in collecting folklore and folksongs from the last surviving bearers of this tradition on the island.⁴⁴ She founded the Manx youth movement Aeglagh Vannin in 1932 and was also active in Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh (YCG), the Manx Gaelic Society, and the Celtic Congress up until World War Two. However, such

³⁹ Language is often referred to as an important characteristic of a country's 'national identity'. Literature referring to this was cited in Chapter Two, p. 90.

⁴⁰ W. W. Gill, *A Second Manx Scrapbook*, (London, Arrowsmith, 1932), p. 3

⁴¹ G. Broderick, 'Revived Manx', in M. Ball and G. Fife (eds.), *The Celtic Languages*, (London, Routledge, 1993), pp. 655-663.

⁴² See J.J. Kneen, *The Place Names of the Isle of Man: With Their Origins and History*, (Douglas, The Manx Society, 1925 – 1929); J. J. Kneen, *A Grammar of the Manx Language*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1931); J.J. Kneen, *The Personal Names of the Isle of Man*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1937). Both the *Grammar of the Manx Language* and *Personal Names of the Isle of Man* were published 'under the auspices of Tynwald by the Manx Museum and Ancient Monuments Trustees'.

⁴³ 'In Memoriam: John Joseph Kneen', *Journal of the Manx Museum*, 4 (1939), pp. 91- 94.

⁴⁴ Fenella Crowe Bazin, 'Douglas, (Constance) Mona (1898–1987)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/72898], accessed 14 Oct. 2008.

activities as the publication of Manx language texts do not constitute a revival of the Manx language, nor even an increased awareness.

As noted earlier, census data shows there were very few Manx speakers on the island by 1921, and there were even fewer by 1931. Only a very small proportion of the island's population spoke only Manx or Manx and English in 1921 and 1931, and thus the island's dominant language was English. In 1921 of a total population (aged over three years) of 57,849 there were only nineteen speakers of Manx alone, 896 speakers of Manx and English but 56,943 English only speakers.⁴⁵ By 1931 of a population (aged over three years) of 47,408 there were no Manx only speakers, only 529 speakers of English and Manx, and 46,879 English only speakers.⁴⁶ Even with the disproportionately high population figure recorded in 1921, as a result of the census being taken in June that year when tourists were present and therefore an increased number of solely English speakers on the island we can see that the Manx language was indeed dying as a means of communication. Indeed, it could no longer be used to construct Manx identity.

The attempts to increase awareness of the Manx language might have been unsuccessful, but the inter-war period did see important developments in the promotion of the island's heritage. In 1922 the Manx Museum was given permanent premises, 36 years after the Museum and Ancient Monuments Act (1886) had provided for the establishment of an insular museum and better protection of ancient monuments. The museum's curators during the inter-war years, Philip Moore Callow Kermode (1922 - 1932) and William Cubbon (1932 - 1940), sought to preserve aspects of the island's Celtic history. Kermode's focus concerned archaeological work, such as the preservation of Manx crosses and excavations at Maughold (1926) and Knock-e-Doonee (1927). Cubbon was responsible for compiling the two volumes of the *Bibliography of the Literature of the Isle of Man* (1933 and 1939).⁴⁷ He also edited the *Journal of the Manx Museum* (1924 – 1939) and was responsible for the opening of Harry Kelly's cottage at Cregneash, the Manx National Folk Museum. These were efforts to sustain the more traditional parts of a Manx identity.

Constructions of a traditional Manx identity were also embodied in promotional literature produced by the Board of Advertising in their Isle

⁴⁵ *Census 1921: Isle of Man*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1924).

⁴⁶ *Census 1931: Isle of Man*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1934).

⁴⁷ W. Cubbon, *A Bibliographical Account of Works Relating to the Isle of Man: Volume 1*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1933); W. Cubbon, *A Bibliographical Account of Works Relating to the Isle of Man: Volume 2*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1939).

of Man handbooks and official guides. The Board printed these for external consumption and they were structured to promote the island and indicate the attractions on offer to the tourist in the different areas of the Isle of Man. The guidebooks were given names such as "Pleasure Island" (1925) and "Playground of the British Isles" (1926).⁴⁸ The prevailing image created by these guidebooks was that the Isle of Man was a holiday resort and there was much for visitors to do. These mostly excluded watching the TT races. One indication of this can be seen in the type of newspaper comment chosen in these books to be representative of the island. These were examples of external opinion selected for use by the Manx Board of Advertising in internally produced promotional literature. The examples chosen are indicative. In 1926, the *Leicester Advertiser* suggested that "Just one big playground" was as apt a description of the Isle of Man as one can give, and there is probably no place in the British Islands where the traveller is more deeply and effectively catered for."⁴⁹ This was a point of view that was reflected in the *Aberdeen Press*, which pointed out that "Pleasure Island" is certainly no misnomer. How to cater for visitors is the Isle of Man's chief end ... The Island is full of beauty spots, the roads are ideal, and everywhere the holiday maker is the first consideration."⁵⁰ Nevertheless, in this instance the TT races were then mentioned as another attraction. A paragraph to this effect was contained in the 1936 official guide. It stated:

The prevailing impression among those who have never been to the Island seems to be that T.T. racers dash madly through dense crowds of people, and that any spare ground unoccupied by the holiday makers is taken up by tailless cats. The exquisite and varied beauty of the Island scenery; its age old traditions; its gracious hospitality; and above all the possibility of finding miles of cliff and mountain paths, are seldom realised, and although secure in the affections of its visitors, Manxland finds difficulty in combating the too general opinion that it is over run with visitors and completely given over to noisy pastimes.⁵¹

Indeed, despite the presence and promotion of the more traditional features of the Isle of Man, by the late 1920s there were clear indications that the TT races had become embedded within Manx identity as

⁴⁸ *Isle of Man Handbook: Isle of Man: Pleasure Island*, (Douglas, 1925); *Isle of Man Handbook: Isle of Man: Playground of the British Isles*, (Douglas, 1926).

⁴⁹ *Isle of Man Handbook: 'Isle of Man: Playground of the British Isles'*, (Douglas, 1926).

⁵⁰ *'Isle of Man: Playground of the British Isles'*.

⁵¹ *Isle of Man Official Guide 1936*, (Douglas, 1936).

externally marketed. The government-funded Board of Advertising promoted the TT as one of the many attractions the island had to offer, alongside music festivals and highland games and indeed the Tynwald ceremony held each year on 5 July.

Similarly, there is evidence in the Manx press that the TT had become integrated into the island's sense-of-place. In 1928 the *Isle of Man Weekly Times* commented on the passing of legislation to permit further road closures. There was no negative reaction to the inconvenience of closing roads to allow TT racers to practice. In an article titled simply "roads closed for practising *at last* [emphasis added]", the *Isle of Man Weekly Times* offered their support for the TT, noting that "the T.T. Races exist for the purpose of improving the breed [the motorcycle]" and further that "this year practising takes place under what can be described as ideal conditions."⁵² These might have been ideal conditions for the racers, but they were not ideal for residents in towns and villages around the course. Nevertheless, there was unquestioned support offered for the TT. Further to this, the 1928 Act was passed by a legislature "who to-day realise as much as we all do the value of motor-cycle racing to this Island."⁵³ That there was no negative reaction to the passing of supportive legislation by Tynwald suggests that the TT had been accepted as a *Manx* event, which should continue to take place on the island and that was beneficial to the Manx. This was a point in time where protests could have been made against the continuation of the TT, yet it seems that because the event had become so far embedded in the Manx sense of what the island offered that this would not happen.

There was also a further representation of the TT as part of the island's self-image in 1929. This was exemplified by the Speaker of the House of Keys when proposing the annual grant for the ACU. He was anxious that the TT races should continue on the Isle of Man, having been "assured that these races have been the cause of vast mechanical developments, not only in connection with motors and vehicles on the road, but indirectly the aeroplane industry and some experimental machines."⁵⁴ The Speaker was clearly proud that the Isle of Man had become associated with improvements in technology. He went on to note:

We are anxious that these races should continue, and we are all very desirous that the Island should be the arena of contests of this kind. We have some rivals in the field who in some respects have geographical and

⁵² *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 19 May 1928.

⁵³ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 19 May 1928.

⁵⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 4 October 1929, p. 1203.

other advantages in respect to certain forms of motor racing other than motor-cycling, but we are quite confident in regard to this that if we show ordinary enterprise and initiative we shall be able to afford unrivalled facilities for any kind of motor racing.⁵⁵

Clearly there was some desire amongst members of Tynwald to see racing events, not just of motorcycles but also motorcars and aeroplanes, continue on the Isle of Man. The Speaker was prepared to overlook any practical disadvantages that there might be in holding motor races on the Isle of Man providing that, with the unrivalled facilities the island could provide, there were economic advantages to be had and above all that the continuation of motor racing on the island led to a positive representation of the Isle of Man as a place of distinction.

Moreover, there was also a growing claim that the TT placed the Isle of Man towards the “centre of the world.” In 1921 Eyre had called for recognition that:

Within recent years this English conquest of the Isle of Man has become more and more apparent. The Manx are gradually forsaking their priceless heritage – they have mostly forgotten or never known the language of their ancestors, and it has become the fashion, unfortunately, to do things as they are done in England.⁵⁶

This was a call for the Manx to assert their independence, to use language and heritage to reject Englishness, and this should have included the intruding presence of the TT. Yet, by the late 1920s the TT was becoming a global event. The Manx were no longer doing “things” to please the English. By now they were seeking to attract TT competitors from Europe and still further afield to give the event an increasingly international feeling. In 1928 it was pointed out in Tynwald that:

We have machines here from all parts of the world; Italian, Spanish and French journalists here; German machines and German journalists. As far as advertising is concerned, the Isle of Man is in a wonderful position not only throughout the British Islands, but throughout the world, and it would be a pity if anything was done to prevent the cyclists from coming here.⁵⁷

The attendance of motorcyclists from across the world meant greater publicity for the Isle of Man, and enhanced substantially the status of the

⁵⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 45, 4 October 1929, p. 1203.

⁵⁶ D. Eyre, ‘The Isle of Man’, *Manx Quarterly*, p. 123.

⁵⁷ Craine, *Debates*, Vol. 45, March 1928, p. 621.

island in the eyes of the Manx themselves. A 1928 article in the *Isle of Man Weekly Times* suggested that there was no doubt that the “island” appreciated the continuation of the TT and that:

We are very proud indeed of our course. We know it is the finest testing ground in the world. Riders who have ridden all over the Continent confirm this statement.

In saying good-bye, as *we* do today, to *our* motoring friends, may *we* express the wish that they will be with *us* again next year, and that the lesson learned this year will enable the British motor-cycle industry to make further progress, upholding as it does, the supremacy of the British motor-cycle over all others [Emphases added].⁵⁸

We can clearly see the Manx press making an association between the Manx people and the TT races. This was clearly an association between the TT and what it meant to be Manx, an ingredient in a sense of Manx identity.

The growing support of the Manx press for the TT, the recognition that the races were a defining part of the island’s character and the suggestion that they placed the Isle of Man towards the centre of the world can again be seen in the *Isle of Man Weekly Times*’s support of Tynwald’s financial grant to the ACU in 1930. Instead of a negative reaction to this use of taxpayers’ money towards funding the event, it was stated that:

For 23 years now the races have been run here, and now this little Island of ours has become the hub of the road racing universe so far as motor-cycling is concerned. During that time the Manx public have been gradually educated to a realisation of the important part which the races play in the life of the Island. They are an undoubted attraction to visitors, and this is fully realised here – so much so that the Manx Government last year voted £5,000 to the A.C.U in order that the prize money might be increased and to provide a fund for assisting overseas competitors with their expenses.⁵⁹

There is not even the smallest hint of criticism in this statement. The journalist considered the growing status of the TT internationally as reason to believe that the Manx people, as a whole, supported the continuation of the event and that the TT races therefore belonged to the island and were a matter of pride.

⁵⁸ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 9 June 1928.

⁵⁹ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 14 June 1930.

Of course, we cannot assume that simply because the press supported the TT and believed it represented the feelings of Manx residents that the man and woman on the street was keen to see the races return year after year. However, there was no organised protest against the TT during the inter-war years. An article in the *Isle of Man Examiner* in 1937 did acknowledge there was a small minority “who frown upon [the races] and resent that nocturnal, unearthly dim made by the machines during practising”, but the author also reported that there was an overwhelming desire to see the TT continue on the Isle of Man.⁶⁰ This article, titled “What we have let us hold” suggested that the TT race had indeed become part of the Manx way of life. The author did “not propose to waste any time by reflecting on whether *we* want the T.T. races to continue or not” [emphasis added]. He was certain that “any plebiscite would give an overwhelming vote in their favour, and so *we* will accept that to be the general wish...[T]o most people the T.T. races are a boon and a blessing to the Island.”⁶¹ While this was the view of one journalist, his suggestions that no time should be wasted on asking whether “*we*” want the races and that “*we*” will accept a general vote in their favour are much more than the journalist interacting with his readers. It is an attempt to assert what had become important to the Manx people and what it meant to be Manx.

Conclusion to Part Two

A quotation taken from the *Manchester Evening News* and contained in the 1925 Isle of Man handbook makes the following suggestion: “The Manx Arms are legs, three in number, surrounded by a motto which means, ‘Whichever way you throw me I shall stand’. Some people take this to mean that the Manx will stand anything. This is wrong.”⁶² This rather flippant assessment of the feelings of the Manx population would be an inaccurate view of their response to the TT, as something that would not merely be tolerated. From the conclusions drawn earlier we might have expected to see the development of a conflict between rural and urban interests that was occasionally voiced in the Manx legislature. We might have expected to see the old and the new clash. However, this did not happen. Instead the TT races became incorporated as another element in Manx identity. They sat harmoniously alongside the traditional constructions of the Manx place-myth.

⁶⁰ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 25 June 1937.

⁶¹ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 25 June 1937.

⁶² ‘*Isle of Man Handbook: Isle of Man: Pleasure Island*’, (Douglas, 1925).

During the inter-war years the TT became ingrained in both external and internal representations of the Isle of Man. This was in conjunction with the growing support for the TT in the Manx legislature. This support was realised because it was believed that the event could help publicise the island. By using the TT in their publicity the Manx government went some way to creating a place myth to rival the traditional Celtic and Norse representations of the island; a construction that was more Celtic Tiger than Celtic twilight. The continuing support of motorcycle manufacturers for the event also aided the growing external representation of the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races. Their attendance at the TT sustained the event, which led to extra column inches in the press and, further, visual representations of the Isle of Man as the home of the TT as in the film *No Limit* and in newsreels shown to the British public.

What is significant though is that the TT was only one way in which the Manx and those outside the island constructed their identity. Whilst there was some reaction against the growth of mass tourism in the Isle of Man (see Eyre and the continuation of the Manx cultural renaissance), there was no apparent organised protest against the TT. The TT races, a more modern ingredient in Manx identity, did not clash with the traditional Celtic (language) and Norse (Tynwald) symbols of identity. In representations of the Manx, both on the Isle of Man and in Britain the old and the new sat alongside each other and were not antagonistic.

PART III

THE TT SINCE 1945

There can be no doubt that for twenty years past, and longer, the Isle of Man has been associated with motor-cycle races. When I say this, I want to bring to members minds this points that we have been to a large extent responsible for the development of the internal combustion engine with which the country has won two world wars.

—*Manx Debates*, April 1947

Manxmen have T.T. racing in their blood and many of us look forward eagerly to these annual meetings with old acquaintances who come here year after year, some on business some just because way back along the years they were bitten by the T.T. bug and have simply got to come to the Island at this time.

—*Isle of Man Weekly Times*, June 1948

CHAPTER SIX

NO SLOWING DOWN: DOMESTIC SUPPORT CONFIRMED

World War Two, in Europe at least, had only been over for one month in June 1945 and the Isle of Man would still have had a number of internees in boarding houses in Douglas and the barbed wire fences on Douglas promenade would not yet have been taken down. There would still have been service personnel on the island. There were not only difficulties for the Manx in restarting the TT, but also for motorcycle manufacturers who would not have time to switch from war time production and to prepare their motorcycles for the TT races, despite the industry being in relatively good shape after the end of the war.¹ In the period immediately after the end of World War Two domestic support for the TT, which had been strengthened during the inter-war period, was confirmed.

Structure and Practice of Government

Further changes were made to the structure and practice of the island's government in the period immediately after World War Two. First, the boards of Tynwald were renamed and reconstituted. The Highways Board became the Highway and Transport Board (1951) and the Publicity Board became the Tourist Board (1952).² Second, the process of selection to Tynwald Boards changed as a result of the establishment of the Executive Council. The Executive Council was to be composed of chairmen of the major spending boards, and Tynwald therefore agreed that the existing process, by which board members selected their chairman, should be

¹ See S. Koerner, 'The British Motor Cycle Industry 1935 - 1975', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1995.

² Boards were renamed under the following Acts of Tynwald in 1946: The Isle of Man Board of Agriculture and Fisheries Act, the Isle of Man Board of Education Act, the Isle of Man Highway and Transport Board Act, the Isle of Man Local Government Board Act and the Isle of Man Board of Social Services Act: *Statutes*, Vol. 16 1942 -1947, pp. 318-336.

replaced by the chairman's election by Tynwald. Third, MHKs took on a greater role in providing chairmen of Tynwald boards. Despite the balance being in favour of the Legislative Council during World War Two and in the years immediately after, by 1951 MHKs provided chairmen for all but the Local Government Board and the Electricity and Water Boards.³ The growing participation of MHKs as members of Tynwald Boards and their participation in Tynwald committees continued through the 1950s. Thus MHKs had a greater say in the practice of government on the Isle of Man, and therefore a greater say in the continuation of the TT.

Perhaps the most significant change in the structure and practice of government in the post-war period was the establishment of an executive council. The precedent for this was set during World War Two when the War Consultative Committee was established, with the purpose of acting as a cushion between the lieutenant governor and the Legislative Council.⁴ The first executive council was appointed on 16 October 1946. The structure of government now saw the lieutenant governor at the top, but an executive council, composed of chairmen from the main spending boards of Tynwald now sat between the lieutenant governor and the Legislative Council. Members of the first executive council were Cowin (Agriculture and Fisheries Board), Crellin (Local Government Board (LGB)) and Gill (Highways and Transport Board) all from the Legislative Council and Kneen (Social Services Board) from the House of Keys. MHKs Alfred Teare and Higgins were also elected to the Executive Council from the membership of Tynwald. In an attempt to provide continuity from the War Consultative Committee, Deemster Cowley, who had been chairman of this committee was appointed as the seventh member. This meant that the Executive Council had a balance that favoured the Legislative Council representatives, much to the Keys' agitation who, in the past, had sought a balance of five to two in their favour. More importantly, however, Cowin, Cowley, Gill and Alfred Teare would all be elected by the members of Tynwald to the Tynwald Motor Races Committee during their time on the Executive Council. This meant that the members of the House of Keys, Legislative Council and the Executive Council all had an interest in the continuation of the TT, and support was widespread amongst members of the Manx legislature.

³ Kermode, *Offshore Island Politics*, pp. 144-143.

⁴ Statement by Lieutenant Governor, in *War Committee Minutes*, Vol. 1, 28 November 1939 - 7 June 1940, Isle of Man Public Records Office (IOMPRO).

Post-war support

Following the end of World War Two, Cowin, MHK for Middle, the constituency around Douglas, was evidently eager to see the TT resume, despite it being somewhat inappropriate to suggest restarting the TT so soon after World War Two. For this purpose the Tynwald Motor Races Committee was soon restored and members were re-elected by Tynwald on 19 March 1946.⁵ At a meeting of Tynwald on 19 June 1945, Cowin, who had previously been a member of the Tynwald Motor Races Committee, had asked the lieutenant governor if there were any plans to re-elect this Committee with the restart of the TT in mind.⁶ The lieutenant governor agreed that if Tynwald wished to see the Committee re-established then steps would be taken. Membership remained the same, with the notable exception of W.C. Southward who had died in 1943, being replaced by Gill, a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils and chairman of the Highways and Transport Board. The Tynwald Motor Races Committee had been established in late 1937 to assess the practicality of continuing financial assistance to the ACU, and its re-establishment after 1945 meant that the restart of the TT was a much more organised affair.

Tynwald approved the Motor Races Committee's first post-war report on 17 April 1946. In this report the Committee had concluded that it was impossible to revive the TT races in 1946, probably because it was simply impractical and unlikely to attract sufficient entries so soon after the end of the war.⁷ However, although the TT did not take place on the island that year, the Committee recommended that money be set aside from the annual budget, first for expenses incurred in staging the Manx Grand Prix in September (£1,500), second, for the cost of maintaining the grandstand, scoreboards, control tower and other expenditure (£1,900) and, last, so that any loss made by the June Effort Committee (which had been made responsible for extending the island's tourist season into June), on an International TT Bicycle Race should be guaranteed up to £300. This expenditure totalled £3,700.⁸ It is apparent that the Committee, despite viewing the restart of the TT as impractical, wished to see the return of some events that might help re-establish the island's tourist industry. Other

⁵ This was noted in *Further Report, 1947*.

⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 62, 19 June 1945, p. 470. Cowin had been a member of the Tynwald Motor Races Committee in 1937.

⁷ *Further Report, 1947*, p. 3.

⁸ *Further Report, 1947*, p. 3.

members of Tynwald supported this, so financial assistance for the ACU was continued and the TT races were given political support.

Later that year, on 15 October, the Tynwald Motor Races Committee was elected once again for the purpose of assessing the annual grant to be made to the ACU. The Committee's membership now consisted of three members from the Legislative Council, Deemster Cowley, Gill and Cowin, and two members from the House of Keys, Alfred Teare (South Douglas) and T.G. Moore (Rushen).⁹ Their 1947 report made the following observations regarding the grant to be made to the ACU. Tynwald's grant of £3,500 in 1939 had helped in the running of the TT, but the event had been run at a loss of £1,257 to the ACU. Moreover the ACU believed that the cost of the TT would increase in 1947 and therefore a larger grant would have to be made by the Manx legislature. As a benchmark for the increase, it was pointed out that the Manx Grand Prix, which had been held on the island since 1923, had cost the Manx government £519 in 1938 but £1,153 in 1946. It was therefore put forward by representatives of the ACU that the Manx government's grant should be increased to £7,000. The Motor Races Committee, however, thought this too large an amount to provide and recommended a grant of £6,000. The ACU were happy to accept this sum agreeing, "if this grant was forthcoming, they would be prepared to enter into a binding contract to continue the Races for at least another three years."¹⁰ Members of the Manx legislature thus recognised the value of continuing to stage the TT on the Isle of Man, but were not prepared, at this stage, to raise their financial commitment much above the £5,000 provided in the 1930s. The report was discussed in Tynwald on 15 April 1947. A resolution was put forward by Deemster Cowley, chairman of the committee, proposing that Tynwald adopt the recommendations of the report. The resolution was supported by Cowin and by G.P. Quine, representative for North Douglas. They too stressed the publicity value of the TT. This resolution received the unanimous support of the members of Tynwald and the TT's publicity value to the island was acknowledged.¹¹

A third report by the Tynwald Motor Races Committee was presented to Tynwald in 1948 and discussed on 20 April. No objections were raised and once again it was agreed to unanimously by members of the House. The TT featured only minimally, alongside recommendations made for motorcar races on the island and the International TT Bicycle Race,

⁹ *Further Report, 1947*, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Further Report, 1947*, p. 3.

¹¹ *Debates*, Vol. 64, 15 April 1947, pp. 524-526.

suggesting that the continuation of the TT was not contentious and needed only to be briefly considered. The Committee's 1948 report recommended that the £6,000 given to the ACU in 1947 should also be provided in 1948.¹² It was this time left to Gill to put forward the resolution for the report to be accepted by Tynwald, and this was seconded by Cowin. The requirement for a further report on the future of motor racing on the island to be submitted to Tynwald suggests that a much larger consensus of opinion was needed for the continuation of the TT, but support for the Motor Races Committee's reports and the renewal of legislation suggests that this consensus was guaranteed.

From this point on it was the responsibility of the Tynwald Motor Races Committee to organise the continuation of the grant for motor races on the island, which required the annual consent of Tynwald. The Highway Board was responsible for road closures, and again the consent of Tynwald was required before any action was taken. In both 1949 and 1950, further financial grants and road closures were permitted after discussion in Tynwald, with no objections raised.¹³ In 1949 the Motor Races Committee recommended that the grant should once again be £6,000 but in 1950 this was raised to £7,000: a further commitment to the TT by the Manx legislature.¹⁴

Road Races Act 1951

In 1951 issues of safety around the course were placed on the legislative agenda. This was a point where members of the Manx legislature might have removed their hands from the political throttle. However, their continued support for the TT was further demonstrated by the passing of the Road Races Act, 1951. The Road Races Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by the attorney general and received its first, second and third readings on 27 February 1951.¹⁵ The attorney general made it clear that the bill was necessary to give the Highway Board the statutory authority to request the public to keep their animals off the roads during racing. Previous legislation, although allowing the Highway Board to close roads, did not permit them to enforce regulations concerning the restriction of animals alongside the course.

¹² See *Report of the Committee on Motor Races with Respect to Motor Car Races and the TT Races, 19 March 1948*. Hereafter *Report, 1948*.

¹³ *Debates*, Vol. 66, 16 Feb. 1949, p. 346; *Debates*, Vol. 67, 28 Feb. 1950, p. 444.

¹⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 66, 3 May 1949, pp. 636 – 638; *Debates*, Vol. 67, 16 May 1950, pp. 752-754.

¹⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 68, 27 Feb. 1951, p. 409.

Animals wandering on the roads of the course increased the danger to racers travelling at high speed, in the same way that practising on open roads had been a danger in 1927, when Birkin had been killed in a collision with a fish-cart.

The second reading of the bill in the Legislative Council was supported by Gill, who in his position as chairman of the Highway Board and member of the Motor Races Committee had supported the races in the past. During this discussion, and prior to a third reading taking place, a number of clauses were considered. Particular attention was paid to clause three of the bill that sought to make the owners of animals responsible if they strayed onto the TT course when roads were closed. Gill offered support for this clause, stating that “we must take every care to protect the competitors and the public who are watching these races. The speeds are now in the region of 100 mph [sic], and I hate to think what would happen, if an accident to a rider, due to an animal being on the course, happened while he was going that speed.”¹⁶ Little attention was paid to the fact that owners of animals might not support the TT, and might therefore disagree with being prosecuted if an accident occurred. After a very brief discussion of the bill, and with no objections being raised, it was read a third time and passed in the Legislative Council. As had been the case in 1928, by supporting amendments to legislation to make the TT safer, members of the Legislative Council demonstrated their continuing support for the event.

After being passed in the Legislative Council, the bill was presented to the House of Keys and was read for the first time on 6 March 1951. It received its second reading on 24 April.¹⁷ T.G. Moore, representative for the rural sheading of Rushen, moved that this was “a consolidation Bill ... it brings together into one body all the provisions relating to the holding of the races and the closing of roads contained in the three Acts set out in the schedule, and which the Highway Board have needed to ensure the proper running of the various events which we hold in the Island.”¹⁸ This was an endorsement of such events from a rural MHK. After a substantial discussion, the majority of which focused on the publicity benefits of the TT, the bill was then read a third time and passed without division in the Keys.

After due consideration, the Road Races Act was passed on 15 May 1951, received its Royal Assent on 29 June and was read at Tynwald Hill

¹⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 68, 27 Feb. 1951, p. 409.

¹⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 68, 24 April 1951, p. 707.

¹⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 68, 24 April 1951, p. 707.

on 7 July 1952.¹⁹ As Moore had pointed out in the House of Keys, the Act consolidated previous highways legislation. It repealed the whole of the Highway Amendment Act 1928, and certain sections of the Highway Act 1927 and Road Traffic Act 1933. Under part one of the 1951 Act it was still the responsibility of the Highway Board to close roads for racing, and it was also necessary for the board to request the consent of the lieutenant governor and Tynwald to put this process into action. So the lieutenant governor still had a part to play in the continuation of the TT and Tynwald still had to agree that the event was an asset to the island. Also put into place were provisions for the punishment of owners who allowed their animals to stray onto the roads. Part two of the act made it possible for the Highway Board to restrict motor traffic on “all or any of the public roads of the Island on the Sunday immediately preceding the day of the races” and, further, to prohibit motorcycle traffic on “all or any of the roads or streets of any borough or town in this Island on the Sunday following the day of any races.”²⁰ This was a continuation of provisions made in previous legislation.

Post-war continuity

Following the passage of the 1951 legislation, and as was the case during the inter-war years, the extension of the powers of the Highway Board to permit road closures for racing, and the provision of a financial grant by the Tynwald Motor Races Committee, required the consent of Tynwald annually.²¹ After the passing of the 1951 Road Races Act there was no subsequent condemnation of the TT, indicative of continuing political support. The extension of the powers of the Highway Board and the provision of an annual financial grant was repeated in Tynwald each year, with no objections and minimal debate. Indeed, political support manifested itself in the growing financial grant given to the ACU, which increased from £6,000 provided in 1947 to £10,500 in 1957.²²

However, in 1956 the decision was made by Tynwald that the Tourist Board should be made responsible for the organisation of the TT in the Isle of Man, officially giving responsibility for the organisation of the TT to the body responsible for publicising the island. This would reduce the

¹⁹ Road Races Act 1951, *Statutes of the Isle of Man*, Vol. XVII 1952-1959. Hereafter *Statutes*.

²⁰ Road Races Act 1951, *Statutes*, Vol. 17 1952-1959, pp. 1211-1215.

²¹ *Debates*, Vols. 69-72, Oct. 1951-Aug. 1955.

²² See *Accounts of Government Treasurer*. The provision of this financial grant was passed annually in Tynwald. See *Debates*, Vol. 69-72, Oct 1951-Aug. 1955.

need for co-ordination between the Highway Board, who were responsible for road closures, and the Motor Races Committee, responsible for the continuation of the annual grant.²³ In December 1956 the attorney general moved a resolution in Tynwald stating that it was “desirable to have one authority responsible to Tynwald for matters affecting the TT, Manx Grand Prix and Manx International Bicycle Race and road races similar which may from time to time be organised in the Isle of Man.”²⁴ The attorney general pointed out that at present a committee of Tynwald was looking after the financial side of the TT and “that was their only power”,²⁵ and that the ACU had to contact a number of bodies – the Highway Board, the Tourist Board and the Douglas Corporation. Giving the Tourist Board sole responsibility as a point of contact on the island streamlined this process. It was also recommended by the attorney general that, “if the task is given to them [the Tourist Board,] [he] would recommend them to appoint a sub-committee, which would be a Race Committee of people vitally interested in the races, and [he would] suggest that this committee should comprise the chairman and two representatives of the Tourist Board, two members of the Highway Board and two members of the Douglas Corporation.”²⁶ Such a sub-committee would be representative of all parties with an interest in the TT.

There was considerable debate on the matter of a single coordinating authority and alternatives were proposed. At the end of the debate the lieutenant governor summed up each suggestion and proposed a vote. The first suggestion that had been put forward was that instead of the Tourist Board taking over control of the TT and other motor races, a separate committee should be appointed that consisted of two members from the Highway Board, two from the Tourist Board and one from the Douglas Corporation; in this way all interested parties would be represented. The second suggestion was that the Highway Board and not the Tourist Board should be given sole responsibility as the body responsible for road closures. The third suggestion asked that instead of the Tourist Board there should be a special committee of Tynwald consisting of five members. Who these five members would be was not stipulated.²⁷ Seemingly, members of Tynwald wished to see the TT continue on the Isle of Man, and there were only conflicting ideas as to how this continuation should be organised.

²³ *Debates*, Vol. 74, 12 Dec. 1956, p. 190-197.

²⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 74, 12 Dec. 1956, p. 190.

²⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 74, 12 Dec. 1956, p. 190.

²⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 74, 12 Dec. 1956, p. 190.

²⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 74, 12 Dec. 1956, p. 197.

Ultimately, it was resolved that the Tourist Board would be the coordinating authority for the TT and other races, and the other suggestions for different approaches were rejected. The Tourist Board was given authority over the TT in the 1958 Tourist (Isle of Man) Act.²⁸ This Act stipulated that the duty of the Tourist Board would be to “maintain, encourage, develop, protect, promote and facilitate tourism in, to, and from the Isle of Man to the best advantage of the Island.” Evidently the TT was firmly recognised as advantageous to the Isle of Man, since the Tourist Board was now solely responsible for its organisation. The Act also gave the Board power to “provide or assist financially (by way of grant, loan, guarantee or indemnity) or in any other manner, competitions, exhibitions, services, sports, races, amusements, carnivals, attractions, entertainments and other facilities, relating to tourism.”²⁹ The Tourist Board Race Committee was also established, and the minutes of their meetings provide a starting point for further examination of political support for the TT, after 1958.³⁰ Therefore, by 1958 the TT had become still more firmly ingrained by Manx legislation and in the island’s administrative structure.

Throughout the 1960s the legislation for motor racing was annually renewed, with very little discussion in the Manx legislature. This did not mean that there was no protest over the continued closure of roads for motor races. Indeed, in 1962 Callister, MHK for North Douglas and a representative of the Manx Labour Party, made a protest over the severity of the conditions for road closures in relation to the TT races. Callister argued: “I think the conditions laid down even for the T.T. are too severe. There are people living around the course who cannot get to their homes or place of business because they cannot go on the course when the races are on” and furthermore that “road closures were going on to such an extent that it is intolerable.”³¹ However, whilst Callister’s fears were recognised by Bolton who stated that “we must protect the people taking part, otherwise we may lose these events”, there was no call for the legislation to not be renewed.³² An amendment to the resolution was proposed, which would allow people to be given the right of access to their home or place of business, by permission of a constable or marshal. A vote was taken on the amendment but did not receive the full support of

²⁸ Tourist (Isle of Man) Act 1958, *Statutes*, Vol. 17 1952-1959, pp. 957-965.

²⁹ *Statutes*, Vol. 17, 1952-1959.

³⁰ See *Tourist Board Race Committee Minutes*.

³¹ *Debates*, Vol. 79, February 28, 1962, pp. 653-655.

³² *Debates*, Vol. 79, February 28, 1962, pp. 653-655.

the house with 13 votes to 9 against in the Keys and the Legislative Council voting unanimously against the amendment.

Throughout the twentieth century the TT continued to take place on the Isle of Man after the renewal of legislation by Tynwald, which took place often with little discussion and with the full support of the island's politicians. This continued to be the case throughout the 1970s and early 1980s and although objections to the TT were sometimes raised, there is little to suggest that ending the event was ever given serious consideration by the Manx authorities. During this period the TT's place on the world championship was threatened – this status would be lost in 1976. Two new pieces of legislation were also passed by Tynwald, the Road Races (Amendment) Act 1975 and the Road Races Act 1982. The debate that took place around these three key events help to confirm that by the last quarter of the twentieth century the TT had come to be supported politically in the Isle of Man. Indeed, it is today the 1982 legislation that permits the closure of roads for the TT races.

1975: Road Races (Amendment) Act

The 1975 Road Races (Amendment) Bill was given its first reading in the House of Keys on 4 February 1975 by Ward, MHK for South Douglas. The Bill was to amend existing legislation to permit motor racing to take place on a Sunday. Ward noted that "those of us who believe in tourism as something that this Island can do well, and must go on regarding as one of the main planks of our economy, must realise the importance of the T.T. races, (a) as a world famous event coupled almost exclusively with the name of the Isle of Man ever since its inception in 1907; and (b) a curtain raiser for our season which almost any holiday resort in the British Isles or anywhere else would give its eye-teeth to promote."³³ Here, once again, was a Douglas MHK promoting the TT races in the interests of tourism.

There was disagreement over the necessity of the proposal. MHK Clucas objected to the "lack of priorities we seem to have in our government", echoing the objections of MHKs in 1904. He questioned "very much our priority in having this particular measure in front of us at this particular time. It was only last July that for the T.T. week we had difficulty with the weather, and here we are, one year of difficulty and we are immediately flying into legislation."³⁴ Whilst Clucas objected to the proposed amendment because of the quickness of the changes to

³³ *Debates*, Vol. 92, February 25, 1975, pp. K338-K339.

³⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 92, February 25, 1975, p. K342.

legislation, Miss Thornton-Duesbury did not support the bill for religious reasons:

The hon. member for Ayre has said that the churches and worship possibilities for such are covered in this Bill, but they are not entirely, because quite a number of churches and in particular chapels do have services in the afternoon ... I feel that it is an intrusion into a day which although may not be kept as holy by many people today, yet it is a day set apart for us in recreation and I feel that such a Bill as this is driving a wedge as it were and is breaking that which is kept for the good of the community and is doing it for only a certain section of the community.³⁵

Clucas agreed with the point, stating that “I am against this Bill, I feel it breaches the Sunday and once people are going to be able to race motor-cycles on a Sunday they will use it as an excuse for all sorts of other things.”³⁶ Cringle’s objection to the Bill was because of the timing of the road closure. He was prepared to accept road closure on the first Sunday of TT week, “because I think that is what is commonly called ‘Mad Sunday’ and we have the inconvenience of the motor-cycle already on the Island on the Sunday.”³⁷

MHK Bell was quick to dismiss these worries: “What has been said is perfectly clear. The T.T. programme is mapped out months beforehand, no-one knows what the weather is going to be in five years’ time on a particular date. We know everyone is going to church on that day and they will be going to church for the other 52 or 53 Sundays in the year and we are not asking them to give up church every Sunday. We are not even suggesting in the Bill that they will have to.”³⁸ Following the discussion the Bill was read for a second time and a vote was taken. In the Keys 13 were for the Bill and 8 against, and so the Act was read for a third time. The discussion over the third reading was centred on the same points and nothing new was introduced into the debate. The Bill was read for a third time and passed by members of the Keys, but not unanimously.

The Bill was then considered in the Legislative Council, on 8 April 1975 and the first, second and third readings were approved. There was little discussion, and few objections were raised. However, Crowe pointed out that it was a “terrific thing if we have got to rush now and pretty well break our necks to get a Bill through, to put it through for this year. This is

³⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 92, February 25, 1975, pp. K342-K343.

³⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 92, February 25, 1975, p. K343.

³⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 92, February 25, 1975, p. K345.

³⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 92, February 25, 1975, p. K344.

the first time it has ever been needed.”³⁹ Kerruish, who had introduced the Bill into the Council, answered Crowe’s concerns adding that the Bill “is simply an enabling measure and it will be exercised in a reasonable and responsible manner.”⁴⁰ Nivison made reference to the uncertain nature of the TT’s future when offering his support for the Bill, stating that “The only thing that I would say in support of the Bill is regarding the whole international structure and the discussion that is going on with the F.I.M, the A.C.U, and the Isle of Man Race Committee concerning the T.T. Any little thing that might be evasive or an irritant could, perhaps, put these things in further jeopardy.”⁴¹ The bill was then read second and third times, with no further discussion and was then passed in the Legislative Council. The Road Races (Amendment) Act 1975 therefore provided for the closure of roads for racing on a Sunday. However, it would only be possible for roads to be closed on one Sunday of the year during the months of May or June and this would be the Sunday between practice week and race week. Such provisions were only exercisable if a race had been postponed during the preceding week and roads could only be closed between 1:30 pm and 6pm.

Following the amendment to the Road Races Act in 1975, new legislation was drafted in 1982. New legislation was necessary because it was felt that the provisions of section four of the 1951 Road Races Act did not make it clear that all road traffic legislation was suspended when roads were closed for racing. This was a matter that had been brought up by C.P. Bowring Motorsport, the principle insurers for motor racing events, and the Attorney General had advised that the best cause of action was to redraft the Road Races Bill, to avoid any mistakes in interpretation. This was another point in time where the importance of the TT to the island was discussed in the Manx Legislature, with the event receiving support in both the House of Keys and the Legislative Council.

There was a good discussion over the proposed new legislation and once again support for motor racing on the island was forthcoming. Walker, MHK for ..., supported the Bill believing it to be “right and proper that the Government should update this legislation and consolidate it, and in fact [it] makes things simpler for everybody to understand.”⁴² MHKs’ disagreements focused largely on the inconvenience caused by the TT and, indeed, other motor racing events held on the island. Anderson, MHK for ..., realised that in his constituency “there are a great number of people

³⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 92, April 8, 1975, p. C205.

⁴⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 92, April 8, 1975, p. C206.

⁴¹ *Debates*, Vol. 92, April 8, 1975, p. C206.

⁴² *Debates*, Vol. 99, February 2, 1982, p. K133.

who are greatly inconvenienced ... it is a very considerable inconvenience and very considerable nuisance" but believed that "there are few of them complaining; they have learned to live with the situation."⁴³ Lowey agreed with Anderson's assessment noting that "it is true to say ... that a lot of people are inconvenienced, but a lot of people are inconvenienced throughout the Isle of Man other than for the T.T. Race; fair days, tin bath championships ... but I believe the vast majority of people in the Isle of Man accept it because the end result justifies it."⁴⁴

MHKs believed that this inconvenience had to be tolerated because of the economic benefits motor races brought to the island. Walker, MHK for ..., proposed that "it is unfortunate, I think, that some people on the Island have to put up with a certain amount of discomfort because of the very nature of the business we are in, tourism, but I think that is a fact of life and personally I am proud of the Isle of Man and the events it holds."⁴⁵ This attitude was shared by Delaney and Teare, MHKs for ... respectively. Delaney believed that "we need everyone we can get regardless of the inconvenience, because we either have to suffer inconvenience or bankruptcy as far as my constituency is concerned, and I would rather have inconvenience for a couple of days and make money for the people in the Isle of Man who badly need it than satisfy one or two people who unfortunately might be inconvenienced."⁴⁶ Teare thought it "wrong to miss the opportunity to try and reduce the irritation and inconvenience to the public."⁴⁷

The bill was read in the Legislative Council on 30 March, and Moore made a similar statement to Radcliffe in the Keys, who had noted that the bill reflected the need for clarity in existing legislation. Moore then went on to offer further information on the bill, suggesting that there had been some misunderstanding on behalf of the (Manx) National Farmers' Union, who felt some new clause was contained in the Bill with which they were not happy. This was clause five, which dealt with the problem of animals straying onto the roads and the question of who was responsible. It was noted that there had been no change in the clause, but the wording had been redrafted to reflect modern terminology. This issue was dealt with quickly. The Council also considered the re-insertion of clause 1 (4). The Lord Bishop proposed that "I think that it is important that the members of Tynwald have the opportunity of making comments on these orders as so

⁴³ *Debates*, Vol. 99, February 2, 1982, p. K133

⁴⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 99, February 2, 1982, p. K133

⁴⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 99, February 2, 1982, p. K133.

⁴⁶ *Debates*, Vol. 99, February 2, 1982, p. K133.

⁴⁷ *Debates*, Vol. 99, February 2, 1982, pp. K136-137.

often we do in other respects, and I think this is taking this out of Tynwald and I do not quite understand why the House of Keys took it out.⁴⁸

The procedure for making road race orders, as it existed prior to the Road Races Act 1982, was as follows. The annual approval of legislation was required by Tynwald, which enabled the Highway and Transport Board to make any orders under the road racing legislation. This was seen as a formality as it did not specific any actual races. The Highway and Transport Board then made an order to close roads for races, gained the consent of the Governor in Council and then gave adequate public notice of the orders. The Keys, by deleting a sub-clause of the Road Races Act, proposed a change to this procedure. It was suggested that under the 1982 bill, the Highway Board would make an order, get the consent of the Governor and then give “adequate” public notice of all orders. This cut out the need for the renewal of legislation to be considered by Tynwald.⁴⁹

It was reported in the Keys that members of the Legislative Council had got in “quite a predicament” over the removal of the sub-clause. The Keys’ proposal caused disagreement between the two chambers in the Manx legislature. To fix this disagreement, the Keys voted that a committee of three of its members should meet with the Legislative Council. The conference was scheduled to take place on 18 May. Following this conference with the Legislative Council, the proceedings were reported in the House of Keys on 25 May, and it was made clear that following discussion over the re-insertion of the sub-clause the representatives of the Legislative Council were to recommend the deletion of the clause to their colleagues. Members of the House of Keys voted for the acceptance of this report.⁵⁰ Thus the Manx legislature had come to accept the TT in the period after World War Two and so the event had developed from an imposition by the lieutenant governor. The next chapter will move on to explore the strength of economic support for the TT amongst members of the Manx legislature and the manufacturers of motorcycles.

⁴⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 99, March 30, 1982, p. C187.

⁴⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 99, April 27, 1982, pp. 387-391.

⁵⁰ The full debate over the passage of this legislation is contained in *Manx Debates*, Volume 99 1981-1982 pp. K133-K152; K157-K164; K387-K391; K493; C168; C176-196; C230; C274.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GOING GLOBAL: THE GROWTH OF CAPITALIST SUPPORT

The TT races had a more significant impact on the island's economy in the years after World War Two. In 1939, before the outbreak of war, the recorded number of visitors to the island was 546,019, but this dropped to 25,841 in 1940. Between 1941 and 1944 only 295,306 visitors were recorded.¹ The Isle of Man was able to maintain its economic stability because internees occupied the empty boarding houses in Douglas, Peel and Ramsey and also in Port Erin and Port St. Mary. The costs of this were met by the UK government.² The island's economy also benefited from the stationing of military service personnel on the island, and the building of two aerodromes. Internees and service personnel replaced the tourists and provided a market for agricultural products that existed all year round. So, with island residents being given new employment opportunities as a result of wartime activity and boarding houses being filled all year round, the Isle of Man fared well during World War Two, at least in economic terms.³

However, a brief analysis of occupational data taken from the 1951 census report shows the further demise of the island's traditional industries of fishing, agriculture and mining (see table 7-1). By 1951 there were only 119 people employed in the island's fishing industry and the majority of these worked out of Peel. Agriculture was by now only employing 2,609 persons and mining and quarrying 135. In contrast and despite the notable

¹ *Isle of Man Summer Passenger Arrivals 1887 – Present*, (Economic Affairs Division, Isle of Man Government, Douglas, 2007).

² For further comment on internment on the Isle of Man see, for example, C. Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire*, (Corgi 1984); Y. Cresswell, *Living with the Wire*, (Douglas, Manx National Heritage, 1994).

³ For further analysis see J.W. Birch, *The Isle of Man a Study in Economic Geography*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964); D. Winterbottom, 'Economic History, in J. Belchem (ed.), *A New History of the Isle of Man Volume V: The Modern Period 1830 – 1999*, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 207-278.

down turn in tourist figures during World War Two, 4,123 people were recorded as being employed in personal service by 1951 and 1,208 persons were employed as lodging or boarding house keepers and a further 164 employed as hotel proprietors or managers. Most notably the majority of these persons were situated in Douglas (982). The dominance of Douglas can also be noted by the large amount of accommodation for visitors on offer there (see table 7-2). Statistics for 1951 show that of a total 1,242 boarding houses situated on the island 882 were situated in Douglas and only 340 were situated across the rest of the island.⁴ By 1961 the total number of hotels and boarding houses was 1,510, with 1,079 situated in Douglas, and 431 in other areas of the island, reaffirming Douglas's dominance both economically and in terms of population.⁵

Tourist numbers recorded for this period are also significant. In 1946 there were 482,962 visitors recorded, rising to 602,230 in 1947, 624,737 in 1948 and 611,286 in 1949.⁶ However, this initial post-war recovery was not typical of the post war period, and after 1949 the island's economy entered a period of recession.⁷ Tourist figures fell from 611,286 (1949) to 535,558 (1950) and averaged 500,000 during the 1950s, before hitting a low of 473,704 in 1960.⁸ Despite this decline in visitor numbers, the tourist industry still remained a valuable source of income for the island's economy. Birch estimates average per capita expenditure by tourists over the time spent in the island to be £15, which, if multiplied by 542,065 tourists gives a figure of approximately £8,500,000.⁹ This figure was increased in 1955 when the Visiting Industry Commission estimated the total spent per tourist to be £18, which was multiplied by an approximate figure of 580,000, a total that was approximately ten times the island's population, giving a total value of £10,500,000. This figure was adjusted to take into consideration travel expenses, which were estimated to be £1,500,000 to give a net valuation of tourist expenditure in the Isle of Man of £9,000,000.¹⁰ The Commission put this into context by valuing the Scottish tourist trade at £45,000,000, the Welsh tourist trade at £30,000,000 and the tourist trade in Jersey at £10,000,000.¹¹ On the Isle of Man, with a

⁴ *Census 1951: Report of Isle of Man*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1956).

⁵ *Census 1961: Report on Isle of Man: Part II Migration, Economic Activity and Other Topics*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1966).

⁶ *Isle of Man Summer Passenger Arrivals 1887 – Present*.

⁷ Birch, *The Isle of Man*.

⁸ *Isle of Man Summer Passenger Arrivals 1887 – Present*.

⁹ *Visiting Industry Commission*, (Douglas, 1955), p. 11. See Appendix Three of the report.

¹⁰ *Visiting Industry Commission*, p. 11.

¹¹ *Report of the Visiting Industry Commission 1955*, p. 11.

population of 55,523 this meant the tourist industry was valued at approximately £162 per capita.¹²

Birch argues that the decline in tourist figures in the mid-1950s “re-emphasised the island’s dependence on this source of income and, in particular, demonstrated the increasingly competitive nature of the industry.”¹³ Indeed, Craine (MHK) voiced the view that the island relied heavily on the tourist industry in 1952, when he stated that he supported the TT because “you can talk about agriculture and anything else, but we have only one industry [tourism]. We should do our utmost [to support the TT] because we live on [it].”¹⁴ The decline in tourist numbers visiting the island also emphasised the need to retain the TT, at least for Craine. He went further to point out that “the arrivals in June last year [1951] represented 22.8% of the total arrivals for the season.”¹⁵ The TT could extend into June a tourist season that currently saw the largest number of visitors between July and August. The TT would continue to draw attention to the island, and thus would act as something like free publicity. The TT also remained a unique selling point for the island. The spectacle provided by the TT and the publicity it generated throughout the post-war period, were enough to justify continued political support for the TT.

Tynwald and Business Interests in the TT

During a public sitting to consider the recommendations of the 1955 *Visiting Industry Commission Report*, a member of the Douglas Residential and Boarding House Association made the following statement:

I am going to make a statement at which you may perhaps be amused. We have three big sporting events which take place during the periods when Wakes do not occur. The T.T. races in early June, the cycle races a fortnight later, and the Grand Prix races at the back end of the season. All of these things happened accidentally on the Isle of Man. No Government body, no Municipal body in any way encouraged or supported them ... A group of dirty little lads got going on motor cycles, when everybody was horrified by them, and started the T.T. Races; they were unobserved and unhelped [sic] for years until it was seen that they could be helpful to the visiting industry.¹⁶

¹² *Census 1951: Report on Isle of Man*, (London, H.M.S.O., 1956).

¹³ Birch, *The Isle of Man*, p. 28.

¹⁴ *Debates*, Vol. 69, 10 Apr. 1952, p. 448.

¹⁵ *Debates*, Vol. 69, 10 Apr. 1952, p. 448.

¹⁶ *Visiting Industry Commission*, p. 54.

Table 7-1: Occupations of males and females in the Isle of Man by area, 1951

Isle of Man	Total	119	2,609	135	4,123	1,208	164
	Males	118	2,428	135	945	268	95
	Females	1	181	0	3,178	948	69
Castletown	Males	2	20	10	24	0	2
	Females	0	0	0	86	8	2
Douglas	Males	30	158	16	550	208	52
	Females	1	1	0	1,777	688	34
Peel	Males	37	37	23	26	4	4
	Females	0	1	0	93	34	2
Ramsey	Males	19	50	5	65	8	12
	Females	0	1	0	273	46	7
Rest of Island	Males	30	2,163	81	280	43	25
	Females	0	177	0	949	172	24

Source: Census 1951: Report of Isle of Man

Though not entirely accurate, this statement highlights the importance of the TT in advertising the island. The belief that the TT publicised the island well became stronger during the post-war period.

The 1947 report of the Tynwald Motor Races Committee, in recommending the continuation of the annual financial grant to the ACU, was very certain that the TT would increase the revenue generated by the island's tourist trade. It stated that, "while this [£6,000] might appear a large increase in the Annual Vote, the members of the Tynwald Committee are satisfied that the advertising and publicity value, and the monetary benefits accruing to the Island, justifies such expenditure, and they strongly recommend such a grant to the favourable consideration of

Table 7-2: Total number of hotels and boarding houses organised by town and district, 1951

Area	Total hotels and boarding houses	Less than ten rooms	Ten or more rooms					
			10 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 199	200 or more
Isle of Man	1,242	151	547	304	196	31	13	0
Douglas	882	100	358	229	165	22	8	0
Ramsey	63	4	30	16	11	2	0	0
Peel	41	3	27	8	3	0	0	0
Castletown	16	4	9	3	0	0	0	0
Port Erin	68	7	32	13	8	6	2	0
Port St. Mary	42	1	21	15	4	0	1	0
Laxey	16	4	16	2	0	0	0	0
Onchan	38	5	38	11	2	1	1	0
Michael	7	5	1	1	0	0	0	0
Parish Districts	49	18	21	6	3	0	1	0

Source: Census 1951: Report of Isle of Man

Tynwald.”¹⁷ Evidently members of the Tynwald Motor Races Committee judged that the grant allowed the island to retain the event, which in turn brought beneficial publicity for the island. This was a view that would be maintained throughout the early 1950s. In supporting the 1947 report G.P. Quine, MHK for North Douglas, was sure that Tynwald would be unanimous in supporting this vote “because we all recognise the publicity value the Island derives...from the motor cycle events.”¹⁸ Representatives

¹⁷ *Further Report, 1947*, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Debates*, Vol. 64, 15 April 1947, p. 525.

of Douglas clearly believed strongly in the financial benefits that the TT brought the Isle of Man, as had been the case during the inter-war years.

Table 7-3: Hotels, boarding houses and total rooms organised by town and district, 1961

Area	Total boarding houses	1-10 rooms		10 + rooms						Total rooms
		Number	Total rooms	Number	10 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 199	
Isle of Man	1,510	457	3,400	1,053	528	314	175	32	4	20,321
Town Districts	1,218	347	2,604	871	413	275	158	23	2	16,854
Castletown	22	9	69	13	9	3	1	0	0	173
Douglas	1,079	308	2,302	771	350	252	145	22	2	15,221
Peel	54	14	107	40	29	9	2	0	0	591
Ramsey	63	16	126	47	25	11	10	1	0	869
<hr/>										
Village Districts	243	85	626	158	102	32	15	7	2	2,970
Laxey	19	8	56	11	7	3	1	0	0	164
Michael	12	8	63	4	3	1	0	0	0	54
Onchan	69	20	148	49	38	6	4	1	0	742
Port Erin	93	27	193	66	37	15	8	5	1	1,430
Port St Mary	50	22	166	28	17	7	2	1	1	580
<hr/>										
Parish Districts	49	25	170	24	13	7	2	2	0	497

Source: Census 1951 and Census 1961: Report on Isle of Man

This support continued in 1948 when Tynwald accepted a further report from the Tynwald Motor Races Committee that stressed the publicity value of the TT. Gill, a member of the Legislative Council and the chairman of the Tynwald Motor Races Committee also believed that

the annual ACU grant was money well spent, because the 1948 TT was “going to be a very great success.”¹⁹ Gill was confident enough to make this statement before the event had even taken place. His confidence arose because a large number of race entrants for the 1948 event was expected. A larger entry would attract a greater number of visitors, which, in Gill’s belief, would equate to more revenue for the island. Later, in 1951, Brew, representative for the rural sheading of Ayre, pointed out that “we don’t want to lose the T.T. races, because they are one of the finest advertisements that we have. I hope this House will give it [the Bill] unanimous support.”²⁰ His support for the TT and acknowledgement of the advertising potential of the races demonstrates that support for the TT was not confined to urban areas, especially Douglas.

Support for the races amongst members of Tynwald was strong and arose from the widely held belief that the TT advertised the island. However, not all members of Tynwald were keen to see the continuation of the TT. Commander Quine, representative for the rural sheading of Garff, raised his voice in opposition in 1947, arguing that by continuing with the TT the Manx government were encouraging an activity that was, in his view, lethal. In Quine’s opinion:

It seems strange that we should encourage these lethal machines, which are responsible for killing seven thousand people on the roads of Great Britain, and injuring 25,000, every year, whereas I have a distinct recollection that when the same hon. member proposed a vote of £100 for the Isle of Man rifle association which is concerned with national defence, it was laid down that no part of the money was allowed for prizes.²¹

That the Manx rifle association was concerned with national defence is a contentious point, but Commander Quine did highlight a fact that could not be denied: the TT was a hazardous contest and motorcycles were a dangerous form of transport. However, G.P. Quine, no relation, strongly backed the event and indeed claimed the support of the Manx people. He was “sure the majority of the people in the Isle of Man endorse this policy of the Government supporting these events … Apart from the advantage to the manufacturers, these events provide a delightful holiday and a fine spectacle for the visitors who come to our Island.”²²

¹⁹ *Debates*, Vol. 65, 20 April 1948, p. 664.

²⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 68, 24 April 1951, p.708.

²¹ *Debates*, Vol. 65, 20 April 1948, p. 664.

²² *Debates*, Vol. 65, 20 April 1948, pp.664-5.

Interests outside Tynwald

We have seen earlier in this discussion that members of Tynwald largely subscribed to the TT's continuation. However, whilst some of the revenue from TT visitors would in a taxation of income go to the Isle of Man government, there were also a number of private interest groups who stood to benefit directly from the continuation of the TT on the Isle of Man. Such interest groups included the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, which was responsible for transporting the majority of TT participants and spectators to the island, plus boarding house keepers and hoteliers, who would provide accommodation for these people, and also the small businesses benefiting from the provision of goods and services around the course. However because of the dearth of sources it has been harder to examine the interests of boarding house keepers and hoteliers, nor of other small businesses.

The existence of minute books recording directors' meetings of the Isle of Man Steam Packet allow us to get a general idea of the importance this company placed on the continuation of the TT to its business interests. A 1948 incident that saw a clash of interests between the Company and the ACU illustrates this point. In January 1948 a letter from the Secretary of the ACU, advising that riders were asking for concessions to be made because of the higher costs of entering the TT, was read in a meeting. The ACU had proposed that the Steam Packet Company should carry competitors' motorcycles for free, since this would help greatly in reducing the cost of entering the TT. It might also have the effect of encouraging a larger number of competitors to enter the event. Hence, it was argued this would be beneficial for both the ACU and the Steam Packet Company. However, the company was not persuaded. It was pointed out to the ACU that they already donated 100 guineas to support the TT. The company also worried that if they permitted these competitors to travel for free, further requests for such assistance would be made in regard to other motorcycle races, such as the Manx Grand Prix. It did not make financial sense to them to transport a large number of motorcycles to the island without monetary rewards.²³

The ACU did not accept the Company's decision, and in April 1948 a further letter from the secretary of the ACU was read, expressing the Union's dissatisfaction. It was hoped that the Steam Packet Company would at least see fit to do something to encourage the continuation of the TT, even if it were only to offer a return fare for half the price to racers

²³ *Isle of Man Steam Packet Minutes Book*, 19 Jan. 1948.

travelling to the island. In response to this it was pointed out that if such a concession were granted it would mean a financial loss. The Steam Packet's original decision was therefore maintained; although the company's financial contribution to the ACU was increased to 120 guineas.²⁴ This, at least, demonstrates the importance placed by the company on the TT to maintain business before the beginning of the conventional tourist season in July.

Although the Steam Packet Company benefited from the holding of the TT on the island, there was little co-ordination between their interests and the interests of the government. In 1955 a letter from the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company to the island's government secretary made this point clear. It stated that:

We understand that consideration is being given by the Isle of Man Government, the Isle of Man Highway Board, the Douglas Corporation, the Auto Cycle Union and other interested parties to the fixing of the TT Races in 1956 on June 4th, 6th and 8th, and, if possible, to keep these early dates for future years.

This company has never been consulted about the dates for the Races and only after repeated enquiries in October/ December each year are we able to ascertain the dates which have been agreed upon for the next Races, in fact in some cases we have had to schedule our sailings for the T.T. Races blindly and hope that the dates provisionally fixed will be actual.²⁵

Both the need for the coordination of interests and the financial contribution made to the ACU were necessary to maintain TT-related business in the early part of the season. The advertised price for a passage on the Isle of Man Steam Packet in 1947 was 6s 9d.²⁶ Therefore, it might be suggested that if visitor figures for the TT week remained at between 30,000 and 40,000, which was the suggested figure towards the end of the inter-war period, the Steam Packet Company could make approximately £13,500 in the early part of the season. The TT races were thus an important boost to business in June when tourist figures were otherwise low. Even with the development of air travel and the increasing ease of travelling to the Isle of Man, the TT races would still provide a large

²⁴ *Isle of Man Steam Packet Minutes Book*, 3 Apr. 1948.

²⁵ Letter from Isle of Man Steam Packet to Government Secretary (Isle of Man), September 1955. In Government Office File R2701/1/6, *Tourist Trophy Races 1956*, IOMPRO.

²⁶ As advertised in the Isle of Man Official Guide 1947.

market for the Isle of Man Steam Packet; after all a motorcyclist could not take his motorcycle to the Isle of Man by aeroplane.

We have also seen that the Manx economy's growing reliance on tourism continued during the immediate post-war years and as a result of this there was a continuation and indeed consolidation of the belief amongst members of Tynwald that the TT would publicise the island, and for this reason supportive legislation for the TT was endorsed. There is some evidence for the continuation of a split between rural and urban interests in support of the TT, but during the 1950s a consensus of opinion in favour of the TT races developed. However, although support for the TT was much stronger during the post-war years and Tynwald endorsed the economic interests of its members there would be no TT unless motorcycle manufacturers still continued to send teams to the event or if no private entrants were attracted, and this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Going global: manufacturers' interests

The inter-war period saw significant developments take place in the support offered to the TT races by motorcycle manufacturers. By the beginning of the 1950s the TT had become firmly supported by the Manx authorities. The event now had the full support of the Manx legislature and there was a dedicated Tynwald Committee responsible for restarting and running the TT. Members of the Manx legislature recognised the economic value of the event to the Isle of Man. The TT had become an event that was firmly embedded in the minds of Manx politicians. The TT had also during the inter-war period become an event attended by manufacturers' teams from across Europe, if no longer by the 1950s from the United States and not yet from Japan. As Ixion put it in 1950 "the contrast between this mighty spectacle and the slightly puny and laughable affair of 1907 is stupendous."²⁷

During the inter-war years the British motorcycle industry enjoyed considerable prosperity and the motorcycle grew in popularity as a mode of transport, outstripping the motorcar in terms of both sales and production figures. In the decade after the end of World War Two and in contrast to the austerity felt in Britain, the result of the economy being overstretched as a result of the demands of war, the British motorcycle

²⁷ Ixion, *Motor Cycle Cavalcade*, (London, Illiffe and Sons Ltd., 1950), p. 147.

industry entered a period of relative prosperity.²⁸ However, during the 1960s and up until the collapse of the industry in 1975, the British manufacturers faced increasing competition from the Japanese motorcycle industry.²⁹

The British motorcycle industry fared well during World War Two and as a result of improved means of production by the war's end some manufacturers were in better shape after 1945 than in 1939.³⁰ Indeed, Koerner points to the example of Triumph who had much of their factory rebuilt after bomb damage as one example of this.³¹ Increased prosperity was also the result of reduced competition in export markets resulting from the destruction of the German and Italian motorcycle industries, which needed time to rebuild and recover after World War Two, and also the loss of competition from the American motorcycle industry that had begun to focus more heavily on the domestic market.³² It was for these reasons the Manufacturers' Union set the motorcycle industry new targets in 1945. British manufacturers were expected to convert to civilian production as quickly as possible, and after doing so were expected to re-open export markets, realise and complete designs for new models, make these new designs available in showrooms, and develop new plants and factories where possible.³³ It might be assumed that all this would help, and would be helped by, the restart of the TT races.

During the 1950s the popularity of the motorcycle grew, so much so that by 1959 there had been a record jump of 200,000 in motorcycle registrations, giving a total of 1,750,000 motorcycles in Great Britain.³⁴ Clarke concludes, "this was the golden age of the motor bike [sic], poised between the artisan image of the bumbling family sidecar and a shockingly fast youth culture based on new teenage affluence."³⁵ Therefore it might

²⁸ S. Koerner, 'The British Motor Cycle Industry 1935 – 1975', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1995.

²⁹ The decline of the British motorcycle industry is the focus of B.M.D. Smith's, *The History of the British Motorcycle Industry 1945-1975*, (University of Birmingham, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, 1981).

³⁰ B. Hopwood, *Whatever Happened to the British Motor Cycle Industry: The Classic Inside Story of its Rise and Fall*, (Yeovil, Haynes Publishing, 1998). See Chapter Three, 'The Ashes of World War 2 Bring a Transformation of Facilities', pp. 39-68.

³¹ Koerner, 'The British Motor Cycle Industry 1935 – 1975', p. 118.

³² Koerner, 'The British Motor Cycle Industry 1935 – 1975', p. 121.

³³ Koerner, 'The British Motor Cycle Industry 1935 – 1975', pp. 117 – 118.

³⁴ P. Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900 – 2000*, (2nd edition, London, Penguin Books, 2004), p. 255.

³⁵ Clarke, *Hope and Glory*, p. 255.

be of little surprise that the TT grew in popularity during this decade. However, despite the growing popularity of the motorcycle and despite endorsement from Tynwald and from a section of the Manx people, especially those who stood to profit from the races, the TT would not have continued if motorcycle manufacturers had chosen not to send teams to the Isle of Man, or indeed if private or amateur riders did not continue to enter, or if more races were not provided to test new designs. During the 1950s races were staged for lightweight machines, 250 c.c. machines and 125 c.c. machines, in addition to the Senior and Junior TT races. Motorcycle manufacturers continued to return to the Isle of Man, because the TT had established itself securely as the most important event on the motorcycle calendar. The following section will consider why the TT continued to be supported by motorcycle manufacturers and motorcyclists alike.

By the beginning of the post-war period, we can say that the TT was firmly embedded as an event in which motorcycle manufacturers could test their machines and also that if success were achieved on the Isle of Man this was good promotion for a particular brand of motorcycle. However, the secretary of the ACU, S.T. Huggett, writing immediately after World War Two, noted that “after the first world war [sic] manufacturers generally plunged wholeheartedly into the T.T., but after this latest upheaval it was only the distinguished few who officially entered the struggle.” He went on further to claim that “It would seem that the excuse which was put forward, that concentration on the export drive prohibited the maintenance of a factory racing stable, was hardly justified.”³⁶ Furthermore, the managing director of Triumph, Edward Turner, who in the 1920s had been of the opinion that attendance in the TT races was not necessary to further the design and mechanical reliability of motorcycles,³⁷ maintained his stance after World War Two. Bert Hopwood, a co-worker, reported, “Turner would never listen to the many persuasive voices urging him to enter and support Grand Prix events such as the TT races.”³⁸ Hopwood agreed with Turner’s opinion, writing in 1981 that:

I feel now, as I did then, that this policy was absolutely right. [Triumph’s] strength and reputation lay with the many sporting Triumph owners who themselves entered and were successful in various competitive events

³⁶ S.T. Huggett, ‘The Post-War Races’, in G.S. Davison (ed.), *The T.T. Races: Behind the Scenes*, (Birmingham, The TT Special, 1949), p. 24.

³⁷ See Chapter Three.

³⁸ B. Hopwood, *Whatever Happened to the British Motor Cycle Industry*, p. 63.

throughout the world. This gave the product the publicity it needed and underlined its reliability, without having the problem of works-supported race teams and their management. Furthermore, it left us free of the extreme demands which such projects would have made on the cream of our technical staff, to the possible detriment of the production programme.³⁹

It seems that the obduracy of Triumph's managing director meant that a team would not be entered into the TT races, because doing so meant interrupting domestic production. This, it seems, was the managing director's decision. However, other manufacturers did enter teams into the TT, and belief in the technical and publicity benefits to be had from the event remained.

A 1953 article in *Motor Cycling* noted the large participation of motorcycle manufacturers in the TT. It was stated that, by this date, 150 different makes of machine had been raced on the island and that the most successful had been Norton, winning 16 Senior and 10 Junior TT races since 1907. The three most popular makes which were entered were Norton, Velocette and A.J.S., with entries totalling 682, 423 and 404 respectively.⁴⁰ There can be little doubt of the popularity of the TT. Motorcycle manufacturers by the beginning of the post-war period would be familiar with the location of the TT course and the Isle of Man. By 1947 the TT had taken place on the Isle of Man for 40 years, and it also became the British stage of the motorcycle World Championship in 1949, thus adding prestige to the event. The ACU had the backing of the Manx legislature both legally and financially, and the event could, therefore, be easily organised each year. By contrast, there was little chance of a race being held in England, which would require legislation to be passed in Westminster, and, as was discussed earlier, passing such legislation was improbable.⁴¹ Indeed the contrasting attitudes of Westminster and the Manx legislature towards road racing were acknowledged in an editorial in *Motor Cycling* early in 1949. The editorial stated that the British motorcycle industry did not enjoy the same freedom to run races as was allowed in Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France, Holland and Germany, where public roads could be closed for racing. It was further stated that:

Only in England are the domestic manufacturers forced to cross the sea
in search of similar facilities.

³⁹ Hopwood, *Whatever Happened to the British Motor Cycle Industry*, pp. 65.

⁴⁰ *Motor Cycling*, 4 June 1953, p. 142.

⁴¹ See Chapter Three.

The fault lies with governments who have recognised the need for racing in the development of bloodstock but which have failed to recognise the same need in the development of motor vehicles. But for the progressive policy of the Manx Government and its wisdom in permitting the T.T. Races our motorcycle industry would probably have died in its infancy.⁴²

Motorcycle races did take place in other areas of Great Britain, usually on enclosed racetracks. In 1946 a road race had been established at Oliver's Mount in Scarborough, the origins of which are somewhat mysterious since racing on public roads was illegal.⁴³ However, no other race provided the same unique test as the Isle of Man TT course. Manufacturers still wanted to prove their machines on the tight corners and steep hills of the Isle of Man TT circuit and, moreover, by then a lot of prestige was associated with the event.

By the time the TT restarted after World War Two it can be said with some certainty that most motorcycle manufacturers were prepared to forgive the disadvantages of the TT's location in order to take advantage of the prestige to be gained from success in the event. Indeed, a June 1949 editorial in *Motor Cycling* argued that there were a number of benefits to be had for both the motorcycle manufacturer and the consumer from racing on the Isle of Man:

The objects of these meetings [the TT] are three in number: First, to promote technical development; secondly, to provide sport for the competitors and a spectacle for the onlookers; lastly, to supply publicity for the motorcycle industry. The [1949 TT] satisfied each of these requirements in full measure.⁴⁴

Ixion, a contributor to *The Motor Cycle* also reckoned that whilst men raced for motives of research and to perfect the numerous components involved in a design, they also raced for fame. This aspect will be discussed later.⁴⁵ More specifically many manufacturers entering teams into the TT did so because they believed the TT experience to be advantageous to the design of the motorcycle. Indeed, articles appeared in the motorcycle press after the conclusion of each TT race, commenting on the technical benefits that were derived from that year's event.

Motorcycle manufacturers believed that racing in the TT could lead to improvements in the mechanics and design of their machines. Indeed,

⁴² *Motor Cycling*, 16 June 1949.

⁴³ This still takes place today. See www.oliversmount.com.

⁴⁴ *Motor Cycling*, 23 June 1949.

⁴⁵ Ixion, *Cavalcade*, p.141.

Ixion put forward the argument that motorcycle manufacturers “cannot afford not to race. [Their] duty to customers demands that [they] give them the best machines possible. This implies that [they] must perfect roadholding, steering, brakes, control and reliability by all means in [their] power. [Their] experience [was] that every race teaches [them] something new.”⁴⁶ But what value did the TT have? Ixion also answered this question. The T.T. races “had been much maligned”, possibly as a result of the danger associated with the event, but it was “indisputable that they transformed the primitive motorcycle from a flimsy toy into a well nigh perfect two wheeler, in which it [was] impossible to fault any feature essential for safety.”⁴⁷ In Ixion’s mind then, there were definite advantages to be had from competing on the Isle of Man. As mentioned earlier, after each TT meeting was finished motorcycle magazines would offer reports of the races and comment on the success of the TT in their editorials and also include articles commenting on the technical developments achieved by racing on the Isle of Man. For example, a 1951 editorial in *Motor Cycling* stated that:

Collectively the races again served their primary purpose by disclosing where further development is necessary. The chain trouble experienced suggests the time has come when, in fairness to the producers, this type of transmission must be improved with efficient lubrication – and that implies enclosure in light cases, possibly made of plastic materials. Such a development would be of direct benefit to everyday motorcyclists. Similarly the tyre, sparking plug and magneto manufacturers gained valuable data, whilst theories on the construction of ultra-light frames were proved in some instances and disproved in others.⁴⁸

This comment might be fairly difficult for the non-motorcyclist to understand, and it is not made clear exactly what knowledge sparking plug and magneto manufacturers had taken from the event, but it does demonstrate that amongst the motorcycling community and especially in the motorcycle press, there was an interest in the purpose of the TT as a testing ground. It was not just an event designed to discover who could get round the Isle of Man in the fastest time. Indeed, this attitude was sustained in a 1953 article in *The Motor Cycle*, which considered in more detail the technical developments on display in the 1953 event:

⁴⁶ Ixion, *Cavalcade*, p.140.

⁴⁷ Ixion, *Cavalcade*, p.140.

⁴⁸ *Motor Cycling*, 14 June 1951.

An unorthodox three-cylinder two stroke; a transverse four of only 350 c.c.; oil cooling of the exhaust valve; ignition by battery and coil; a three valve cylinder head; quickly adjustable hydraulic damping on rear suspensions; variety in front fork design; wider use of two-leading-shoe brakes; these, and others less obvious, are among the wealth of interesting features of this year's Isle of Man machines. The classic series of T.T. Races continues to serve its function as a testing ground to stimulate design and development.⁴⁹

Once again we can see certain technical developments were the result of racing in the TT. Indeed, TT programmes also noted that the TT continued to be an event which would further the design of the motorcycle. An article in the 1952 TT programme, written by the editor of *The Motor Cycle* stated that:

Better chains, more rigid brake drums, better friction materials for brakes and clutches, improved steels for a variety of components, especially rockers, valves, springs and gears, more efficient speaking plugs and ignition equipment, better tyres; all owe their development, in part at least, to the stimulus of the endless quest for success in the T.T. and other races. Racing is a hard task master. It brings proud success and disappointing failures. But racing never ceases to have its lessons that mean so much in the evolution of finer motor cycles.⁵⁰

Despite the benefits of racing that were pointed out in the motorcycle press, not all manufacturers would send teams to the Isle of Man.

The Clubman's TT was used by the ACU to help secure the continuation of the financial grant from the Manx government. It was stated by the ACU that this race would "improve their [the TT races] attractiveness and popularity."⁵¹ The Union said it was anxious to interest a larger number of manufacturers in the TT and were introducing an entirely new type of race. The proposed new race was the Clubman's TT, which would be four laps of the course. The Secretary of the ACU believed that "a ready-made opportunity was afforded to the trade generally to take a close interest in the Isle of Man circuit by the introduction of the Clubman's races."⁵² Entries were to be made by motorcycle club members, not by manufacturers, and the machines would be fully equipped stock machines, with slight improvements, but still with

⁴⁹ *Motor Cycle*, 11 June 1953.

⁵⁰ H. Louis, 'Technical Development and the TT', 1952 TT Programme, p. 27.

⁵¹ *Further Report, 1947*, p. 3.

⁵² Huggett, 'The Post-War Races', p. 24.

the qualities of an ordinary touring motorcycle.⁵³ In the regulations for this race it was stated that:

A driver must not be, or have been, a manufacturer or registered dealer or sub-dealer for the particular make of motor cycle to be driven in the race at any time during the twelve months immediately preceding the closing date for entries, nor may he be, or during a similar period have been, in the employ of such manufacturer, registered dealer or sub-dealer.⁵⁴

This was an important development especially when the comments of Huggett (see above) are taken into account. The Clubman's TT ran between 1947 and 1956 and was aimed at private entrants who had no direct association with the motorcycle trade, but they were riding shop-bought motorcycles. The entry form also testifies to the different nature of the event especially in comparison to the standard TT entry form which shows that modifications could not be made to motorcycles, and that riders in the Clubman's TT must be amateurs, unattached to a manufacturer's team. This shows that the TT was not only popular amongst motorcycle manufacturers as a testing ground for their products but also for private entries, or enthusiastic motorcyclists wanting to try their hand at racing around the TT course. However, there was more to it. Manufacturers' machines would still be publicised in the results of each race and so success and reliability were still important issues, and even more so since motorcycles raced would be similar to production cycles. Manufacturers might, as was the case with Geoff Duke and Norton, take a rider from the Clubman's TT and give them a place on their team.

British manufacturers, such as Norton, Triumph and BSA, enjoyed mixed success in the TT during the post-war period. Norton continued the success it had first achieved in 1907, which was due much to the prowess of Geoff Duke. Triumph, however, was not so successful. In February 1948 Triumph released the 500 c.c. "Grand Prix", which was a racing motorcycle; its success in the TT was limited. Each of the six Triumph Grand Prix motorcycles entered in the 1948 TT retired. In 1949 only two of thirteen finished the race. The Grand Prix model has been described as being obsolete by 1950, and by 1951 with only two senior TT entries it was dead. This may have led to the dissatisfaction with the TT expressed

⁵³ *Further Report, 1947*, p. 3.

⁵⁴ These regulations were included in Government Office File R2701/1/2, *Tourist Trophy Races 1952*.

by Triumph's managing director.⁵⁵ BSA had not been successful in the TT races during the inter-war period, but the company dominated the market in the post-war period, and was especially successful in the Clubman's TT. The organisers of the Clubman's TT had hoped to attract a wide range of different brands. However, BSA's domination of the event, with BSAs eventually taking up the majority of the entries, meant the purpose of the race was lost, and eventually, after 1956, it was removed from the TT programme.⁵⁶ However, other TT races still continued and manufacturers were still able to use the event as a showcase for their products, as the following section will demonstrate.

By the beginning of 1954 Honda, the Japanese motorcycle manufacturer had been established for around five years. In March 1954 Soichiro Honda had made the decision to enter the Isle of Man TT races:

Now that we are equipped with a production system in which I have absolute confidence, the time of opportunity has arrived. I have reached the firm decision to enter the TT Races next year.

Never before has a Japanese entered this race with a motorcycle made in Japan. It goes without saying that the winner of this race will be known across the globe, but the same is also true for any vehicle that completes the entire race safely. It is said, therefore, that the fame of such an achievement will assure a certain volume of exports, and that is why every major manufacturer in Germany, England, Italy, and France is concentrating on preparations with all its might.⁵⁷

Honda clearly identified that in order for their motorcycles to be improved they needed to compete against the best manufacturers and at the best motorcycle race in the world. Honda viewed the TT as a test bed for their machines, but was also quick to note the international nature of the event. By the end of 1958 the Honda Motor Company was Japan's biggest motorcycle maker. It had 3,000 employees, a high-speed test track and was gearing up to enter the European and American markets. It is not difficult to see that entry into the TT would be of great importance.

Between 1959 and the late 1960s Honda took their first steps towards success in the TT. Honda entered the TT for the first time in 1959 and after some initial confusion regarding the rules of some race categories

⁵⁵ H. Louis and B. Currie, *The Story of Triumph Motor Cycles*, (Cambridge, Patrick Stephens Ltd., 1975), p. 103.

⁵⁶ B. Ryerson, *The Giants of Small Heath: The History of BSA*, (Yeovil, Haynes, 1980), p. 82.

⁵⁷ See: <http://world.honda.com/MotoGP/history>

Honda entered the 125cc race, the British leg of the Motorcycle World Championship and not what Honda had turned up for. The Japanese were meticulous in their preparation, even filming a coin on the road to record the state of the track's surface. A correspondent from the *Motor Cycle* reported, "I was very impressed by [their] bike. It was fantastically fast for a one-two-five. I could see from the way the team were going about things that they meant business. But some of my press colleagues didn't take Honda seriously in the early days and there was still some anti-Japanese feeling around."⁵⁸ In 1959 four machines were entered, under the management of Kiyoshi Kawashima and Honda motorcycles came sixth, seventh, eighth and eleventh in the 125cc lightweight class. They also won the manufacturers' team award. Following this early success, Honda lifted its first winner's trophy at the Isle of Man TT in 1961 when Mike Hailwood was victorious in the 125cc and 250cc races. By now it was not just Japanese riders riding Honda's motorcycles. The brand was represented by Mike Hailwood, most significantly, but also by riders such as the Swiss Lugi Taveri, the Rhodesian Jim Redman and the Scottish rider Bob McIntyre. By 1966, Honda was represented in all classes – 50, 125, 250, 350, and 500cc.

Honda dominated the world-series in the 1960s, winning not just on the Isle of Man but in other European events as well, but despite early success, between 1967 and 1977 Honda sent no production team to the TT. The brand's representation at the event rested on the success on standard motorcycles. Honda did return in 1977, to an event that was now called the "Formula TT" established after the Isle of Man was removed from the World Championship circuit following the refusal of many of the top riders, like Barry Sheene, to compete on the Isle of Man. Honda would go from strength to strength during the 1980s and 1990s, and the TT would see the emergence of two of its greatest riders: Joey Dunlop and Steve Hislop. Today, Honda is very recognisable at the event and five years ago celebrated 50 years of TT racing (2009). Honda has provided a number of "star" riders. Looking down the list of results, one sees a number of Japanese manufacturers – Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha for example. The TT has become a truly international competition.

⁵⁸ M. Duckworth, *Realising the Dream at the TT*, (Ramsey, Lily Publications, 2009), p. 23.

Advertising and the TT

During the post-war period, after wartime restrictions were lifted, there was a considerable rise in advertising expenditure, from £76 million in 1947 to £323 million in 1960.⁵⁹ Nevett suggests that between 1952 and 1954 the expansion of advertising began with the lifting of restrictions on, for example, food, confectionary products and petrol. He further suggests that growth in one area stimulated demand in another, for example the increase in house building stimulated demand for furnishings.⁶⁰ Also, as noted by Clarke earlier, the popularity of motorcycles was growing and thus we might suggest advertising plays a bigger role in their marketing.

It was also noted earlier that there was a rise in the consumption of sport during the inter-war years, measured by the growing amount of money spent on watching sport and gambling on sport. The post-war years saw a continuation of this trend.⁶¹ This was despite a decline in newspaper coverage of sport, between 1947 and 1951. *The Times*, which had devoted 21 per cent of news space to the coverage of sport between 1937 and 1939, now only set aside sixteen per cent. *The Daily Mail*, 36 per cent between 1937 and 1939, now only set aside 33 per cent and *The Daily Mirror*, 36 per cent between 1937 and 1939, now allotted only 24 per cent of space. These figures were reduced despite a rise in circulation or the evident sustained interest in sport to consumers.⁶²

Ixion pointed out that “the motor industries are fiercely competitive, and their success is very largely based on shrewd publicity.”⁶³ In 1951 a journalist writing for *The Motor Cycle and Cycle Trader* commented, “one is apt to think of the TT as a sporting event that the trade happens to find worthwhile to patronise. But it is more accurate to consider it as a trade event that happens to be of a sporting character...The ultimate purpose of the [race] meeting is the sale of motor cycles.”⁶⁴ To an extent this was an accurate assessment of the value of the TT to motorcycle manufacturers, and also manufacturers of other products, such as tyres, spark plugs and brake. Motorcycle manufacturers continued to use the publicity gained

⁵⁹ T.R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History*, (London, Heinemann, 1982), p. 177.

⁶⁰ Nevett, *Advertising in Britain*, p. 178. See also B.N. Elliott, *A History of English Advertising*, (London, Business Publications Ltd., 1962), p. 207.

⁶¹ J. Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society 1880 - 1980*, (London, Longman, 1994), pp. 112-113.

⁶² Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society*, p. 116.

⁶³ Ixion, *Cavalcade*, p. 141.

⁶⁴ *Motor Cycle and Cycle Trader*, 15 June 1951, p. 164.

from success or even just participation in the TT to sell their products. This was much the same as during the inter-war years, but by now there were further instances of individual riders being used in advertisements, and publicity for machines was also prominent on the front of TT programmes and of special editions of motorcycle magazines such as *The Motor Cycle*.

Koerner suggests that it was the focus placed on developing a motorcycle for racing, and the emphasis placed on success in motorcycle races, that narrowed the market for motorcycles and contributed to the decline of the British motorcycle industry. Koerner does, however, suggest that motorcycle sport had two practical functions. First, races provided commercial opportunities – allowing advertising and increasing the prestige of British motorcycles in foreign markets. According to an article in *Export Trader* “past racing successes have done much to build and maintain the supremacy of the British sports motor cycle, and its racebred precision has brought it admirers in every overseas country.”⁶⁵ Second, races acted as a forum for research and development and the race-track provided the perfect environment on which to perfect design and mechanical reliability.⁶⁶ Improvements in design and reliability still had to be demonstrated to the public, and one way to do this was by advertising success in the TT.

Again, advertisements in the motorcycle press, demonstrate the use of success at the TT to advertise motorcycles and motorcycle accessories. Within these advertisements, whilst emphasis placed on achievement was still evident, we can see the development of more visual advertisements using images of the Isle of Man and TT riders, of increased use of the riders’ names and of the coming together of accessories and motorcycle brands in a single advertisement for instance a certain tyre to relate to a certain machine. Advertisements for Dunlop tyres, for instance and suggest that “Dunlop leads the way again!” and states that this is “the tyre with a background of leadership.” We immediately see a difference in promotion from the inter-war period. The artwork presents a large “TT”, drawing the reader to assume that this success was achieved at the 1947 TT, overlying an image of the Isle of Man. Similar adverts drew on the achievements of riders such as Firth, Foster and Bell in the 1948 TT to promote the quality of Dunlop tyres, and others promoted Dunlop’s achievement in what is “the Toughest Test”, pointing to 190 successes and

⁶⁵ *Export Trader*, June 1947, p. 167 as quoted in Koerner, ‘The British Motor Cycle Industry 1935 – 1975’.

⁶⁶ S. Koerner, ‘The British Motor Cycle Industry 1935 – 1975’.

62 “firsts” and declaring that the tyres are – and this is important – “race-proved for road service.” Advertisements for Renold Chains,⁶⁷ when compared to the example of the company’s promotion during the inter-war period, make much greater use of images to promote success in the TT. It draws on the achievement of particular riders, but also places the Isle of Man and the TT together by placing the “Three Legs of Man” on the motorcycles in place of the rider’s number. The role played by Lucas Magnetics in the victories of TT riders is also evident in advertising. For example, the success of John Surtees in the 1959 Junior TT using the image of the crowds gathering at the finish line, and the slogan “Taking the Flag.”

Once again we can see that in each of these advertisements there is no need to stipulate that these accomplishments were achieved on the Isle of Man, as was similarly the case during the inter-war period. TT races are simply referred to as “Junior TT” or “Senior TT”, and not the “Isle of Man Junior TT.” We can see that achievement in the TT continued to be prevalent in advertising motorcycles and motorcycle accessories. This angle had developed during the inter-war period and continued to be important in the post-war period but by then there was more extensive use of images of the Isle of Man and of TT riders, and more extensive use of riders’ names.

The emergence of TT “Celebrity”

We have seen above that there was particular use of the names of accomplished TT riders in advertising during the post-war period. This leads into a discussion of celebrity and its relationship to the Isle of Man TT. Celebrity endorsement makes products more attractive because it helps create an image of success. In the modern day the celebrity and indeed the sports celebrity have become a part of everyday life and, as Pringle proposes, when “we watch movie stars on the screen or great sportsmen on the pitch we are in awe of them but we also get to know them. We learn about their capabilities and their characters.”⁶⁸ Businesses choose a celebrity to promote their product because “in choosing a star to be associated with, the advertiser is attempting to gain instant fame, for some of the glitz and glamour to rub off on their brand and to acquire by

⁶⁷ B. H. Tripp, *Renold Chains: A History of the Company and the Rise of the Precision Chain Industry 1879 – 1955*, (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1956).

⁶⁸ Pringle, *Celebrity Sells*, (Chichester, J. Wiley, 2004), p. xxiv.

association some of the characteristics and values of the celebrity with whom they're partnered.⁶⁹

The use of "celebrity" in TT advertising has been touched on earlier, pointing to the employment of the success of the first Manx TT winner in advertising Hutchinson tyres. This section will readdress this issue, and explore it further. Today sportspersons are widely involved in selling a wide range of products to the consumer, from watches to crisps, and from razors to bank accounts.⁷⁰ It is easy to pick up a book and read about how an accomplished sportsperson has achieved such a level of success. Indeed it is difficult, if not impossible, to pick up a newspaper or a magazine and not see sports people advertising one product or another. Indeed, in today's sporting events promotional logos for all sorts of products are placed on the motor cars and motorcycles, in Formula One and at the TT. This is a practice that has developed over the last 50 years. Today's Formula One drivers, footballers, golfers, cricketers, tennis players - and the list continues - are not just celebrities in their own sports and amongst their own sports fans but to a global audience. This might not yet be the case for riders in the Isle of Man TT, but they are still celebrities at least amongst the TT community. Indeed, perhaps as a foretaste, shortly after the 2007 TT John McGuinness's success in setting a new record average speed of 130 mph was used to advertise Honda motorcycles in the *Sunday Times Magazine*.⁷¹ This section will ask how far riders such as Geoff Duke were created, and indeed commercially exploited, as TT celebrities. The names of other TT riders are included in advertising from the 1950s, but among them it is Geoff Duke who remains the most famous.

The concluding sentence of Geoff Duke's biography on the Isle of Man TT website reads: "as legends and heroes go, they don't come much greater than Geoff Duke."⁷² This official TT website lists an extensive

⁶⁹ Pringle, *Celebrity Sells*, p. xxiv.

⁷⁰ 'A Hundred Years of Sport and Advertising', *Telegraph*, 26 Feb. 2008.

⁷¹ While it is difficult to find literature focusing specifically on the history of celebrity, it is clear that images created through the use of celebrities to advertise products is a campaign particularly well used in the advertising world. See for example: Pringle, *Celebrity Sells*; G. Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, (London, Sage Publications, 2004); Andrews and Jackson (eds.), *Sport Stars*. Comments on the use of masculine images and the consumption of sport can also be found in E. Fischer and B. Gainer, 'Masculinity and the Consumption of Sport', in J.A. Costa (ed.), *Gender Issues and Consumer Behavior* [sic], (London, Sage Publications, 1994).

⁷² See http://www.iomtt.com/TT-Database/competitors.aspx?ride_id=1057&filter=d, accessed 24 June 2008.

number of TT competitors from the past 100 years, yet probably only a handful are “household names.” In fact Duke did not win the most TT races (he won only six) and although he also won six world championships his number of successes does not match those of riders such as Stanley Woods, Mike Hailwood or Joey Dunlop. Yet he is still a very well-known rider. Duke’s career is impressive. His success in the Clubman’s TT in 1949 paved the way for further achievement during the 1950s, when he rode for Norton and then the Italian Gilera firm. He was the first rider to wear one-piece leathers, which became a distinguishing mark. He also won the Seagrave Trophy in 1951, Sportsman of the Year in 1952⁷³ and he was awarded an MBE in 1953, a year celebrated also for the Queen’s Coronation, the ascent of Everest by Hilary and Tensing and the so called Stanley Matthews Cup Final. He recorded the first 100 mph lap of the TT course in 1955. After retiring, Duke would become a member of the Isle of Man’s Tourist Board Race Committee and he played a part in the discussion surrounding the future of the TT when World Championship status was threatened in the mid-1970s.⁷⁴ I was also reminded of his success and popularity by the presence of a 1976 advertisement in *The Isle of Man Weekly Times* that used an image of Geoff Duke to promote the Whitestone Garage Ltd. and the Volkswagen Polo with the slogan “Geoff Duke does a lap and a half...easy!”

During his career the motorcycle press praised Duke’s talent and achievement. A 1950 editorial in *Motor Cycling* commented on Duke’s victory that year, when he was riding for the Norton team in the Senior TT: “The 1950 series”, it stated, “will always be remembered for Duke’s effortless Senior victory.” This article went further to suggest that “arguments have raged, and will continue to do so, as to whether Alec Bennett, Jimmy Simpson, Walter Handley, Tim Hunt, Stanley Woods or Jimmy Guthrie was the finest T.T. rider of all time, but there are now many who believe the new star will eventually be awarded that title without equivocation.”⁷⁵ Indeed, one does not readily remember the names Stanley Woods, Jimmy Guthrie or Walter Handley unless you are an ardent TT fan, but many people will have an idea of who Geoff Duke is. Such was the popularity of Duke during the 1950s that a reduction in the

⁷³ M. Walker, *Geoff Duke: The Stylish Champion*, (Derby, Breedon Books, 2007)) p. 105. The Seagrave trophy was awarded by the RAC, in memory of Henry Seagrave, to the British subject who accomplishes the most outstanding demonstration of the possibilities of transport by land, air or water. See also Pathe Newsreel ‘Sportsman of the Year – Geoff Duke’, at www.britishpathe.com.

⁷⁴ *Tourist Board Committee Minutes 1975*.

⁷⁵ *Motor Cycling*, 15 June 1950.

number of people visiting the TT in 1956 was attributed to his absence from the competition. An editorial in *Motor Cycling* stated that “as to the International events, it is perhaps too early to try to plumb all the reasons for the falling off of popularity, though three major causes appear to be obvious: (a) a plethora of races on the mainland: (b) times are getting harder and, (c) no Geoff Duke.” The suggestion was put forward that “as Geoff and the Gilera ‘Fours’ would have competed on the Friday only it is perhaps not fair to ascribe all the downward drop in visitors to their non-appearance. It seems fairly certain, however, that the staggering falling off in ‘Senior’ excursionists can be generally attributed to Geoff’s absence from the races. *From all quarters it is reported that the ‘Stanley Matthews of motorcycling’ is the man the crowds will pay to see*” [Emphasis added].⁷⁶ This comment is clearly in praise of Duke’s sporting prowess, especially in the likening of him to Stanley Matthews, the footballing hero of the 1950s whose popularity leads one sports historian to conclude that “rarely have so many been entertained so richly by a solitary football player.”⁷⁷ In the motorcycle press Duke was placed on the same level of sporting achievement.

Geoff Duke was perhaps not the “household name” that Hill describes Compton to have become. The fact that Denis Compton can be so easily referred to as “Brylcreem Boy” demonstrates his profile outside football and cricket.⁷⁸ He might be seen as one of the earliest examples of a sportsman being used to advertise a non-sporting product. However, the same cannot be said of Duke. Walker states, “there is little doubt ... that Geoff Duke could, equally, have reached the very top in not only road racing, but trials and scrambling (motocross). In fact, he can very well lay claim to being the most successful all-rounder motor cycle sport has ever seen.”⁷⁹ Predominantly advertisements featuring Duke are only advertisements for motorcycles, motorcars or related products. Duke’s

⁷⁶ *Motor Cycling*, 21 June 1956.

⁷⁷ T. Mason, ‘Stanley Matthews’, in R. Holt (ed.), *Sport and the Working Class in Modern Britain*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990). Further discussion of Matthews and his place amongst the ‘Heroes of the North’, can be seen in R. Holt, ‘Heroes of the North: Sport and the Shaping of Regional Identity’, in J. Hill and J. Williams (eds.), *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, (Keele, Keele University Press, 1996), pp. 137-164.

⁷⁸ J. Hill, ‘The Legend of Denis Compton’, *The Sports Historian*, 18 (1998), pp. 19 – 33; J. Hill, ‘Brylcreem Boy: Intertextual Significance in the life of Denis Compton’, in J. Bale, M.K. Christensen and G. Pfisher (eds.), *Writing Lives in Sport*, (Aarhus University Press, 2004).

⁷⁹ M. Walker, *Geoff Duke*, p. 244.

success was used by Norton to advertise their motorcycles in *The Times* for example as early as 1951; he had only ridden for the Norton team for one year before this. Duke is given prominence in advertisements for Norton, and “Lucas Ignition” in which the success of, as well as his new “record speed and record lap” are drawn upon. A 1954 advertisement for Castrol draws on Duke’s success in the Italian Grand Prix on an Italian motorcycle. This is an advertisement for Castrol, with whom Duke had a contract, which demonstrates that his name was used not only in association with the Isle of Man TT but also with other motorcycle races.⁸⁰ Another Castrol advertisement significantly includes a photograph of Duke, with the advice “It’s risky to just ask for ‘oil’ I say Castrol.” Consumers were not presented only with the name of a successful rider, but also with an instantly recognisable image. Denis Compton was used to sell Brylcreem, and by doing so he lent the image of a successful sportsman to the product and increased its desirability. By using Castrol motorcyclists would be using the same oil as a six-time World Champion and successful TT rider.

Boorstin points out that the “the celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness” but that “the hero was distinguished by his achievement.” Geoff Duke might be seen as a TT celebrity. He still attends the event and was a focal point in the centenary celebrations in 2007. Yet, during the 1950s he was also hero at least to motorcyclists, distinguished by his achievements, as were other riders featured in TT-related advertisements. In *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, Holt points to the cricketers, the footballers and the rugby league players in the “north” who might be viewed as northern sporting heroes.⁸¹ Duke was, and remains, one of the most well-known TT riders, and he was a “northerner”, from St. Helens, who enjoyed considerable success in this international event, and other motor sports events, whose image was used in advertising and who members of the motorcycling community hugely respected. Indeed, Duke, who raced in his last TT in 1959, is even pointed to as a sporting champion on Manchester UK, a virtual encyclopedia of greater Manchester.⁸² He is one of seven sports celebrities alongside Andrew Flintoff (cricketer), Ricky Hatton (boxer), Paula Radcliffe (athlete), David Lloyd (cricketer), Stanley Matthews (footballer) and Billy Nevett (jockey). With the prominence of Duke, TT riders were becoming

⁸⁰ This is mentioned in Duke’s *In Pursuit of Perfection*, but few details are given. See G.E. Duke, *In Pursuit of Perfection*, (London, Osprey, 1988).

⁸¹ See Holt, ‘Heroes of the North’, pp. 137-164.

⁸² See <http://www.manchester2002-uk.com/celebs/sport-champs7.html>, accessed 14 Oct. 2008.

both important celebrity figures and sporting heroes, and in this respect the capacity to exploit the TT for advertising purposes had developed further.

CHAPTER EIGHT

“THE MOTORCYCLING ISLE”: THE TT AS PART OF MANX IDENTITY

Despite the gradual linking of the old and the new during the inter-war years, it is still possible to find descriptions of the island that focus on the more traditional ingredients. For example the 1956 *British Railways Holiday Guide* described the island in the following way:

In many superficial ways you can match the Island to England. Yet it is never wholly England, for its roots are not the same ... It has queer superstitions, dealing for instance with the herring trade which was once its main industry, and with the rowan in whose mystic power the Norsemen believed. It remembers its witchcraft, its mermaids, its water-bulls, its fairies, folksongs and prophecies. It remembers from very ancient times its King-wizard, Mannanan, who in the clearest weather could protect it against invaders by sudden mist.¹

Here we have a description that focuses on the more traditional indeed mythical aspects of the island’s past. Consideration is given to the island’s folklore, but most importantly stress is placed on the island’s difference from England. The TT, however, did not have a place in this brief description of the island and in fact this representation went on to focus further on the Norse ingredients of the island’s identity: “On Tynwald Hill the parliament of Manxland is held annually; this is a relic of Norse rule, and is the only ceremony of its kind to outlast a thousand years.”² Further to this, the 1947 *Isle of Man: Footpath Guide* noted that “no conspectus of the Island, however, brief, would be complete without a reference to the Manx Arms and the Manx cat, which with the Great Wheel...are among

¹ *British Railways Holiday Guide 1956*, (Railway Executive, 1956), p. 231. See also Guides for 1950 – 1955.

² *British Railways Holiday Guide 1956*, p. 231.

features for which the Island is best known to the world at large”³ Emphasis was once again placed on more traditional aspects of the Isle of Man.

However, despite representations of this kind in some publications, in other descriptions of the island we can clearly see the old and the new sitting alongside one another. This was a fusion of the two rival place-myths that emerged during the inter-war period. The old and new are encompassed in the first chapter of Maxwell Fraser’s *In Praise of Manxland*, which is titled “The Island Where Yesterday Meets Today.”⁴ Her book, after introducing the Isle of Man, describes the island’s towns, villages and places of interest in clearly marked chapters. It is somewhat surprising then that the opening description of the Isle of Man is the following:

Many people associate only three things with the Isle of Man: tailless cats, crowds of holiday makers, and the T.T. Motor-Cycle Races. Only those who have visited the island – and by that is meant those who have explored its country-side and not merely stayed in Douglas – realize that within its narrow limits the Isle of Man has scenery comparable with the finest to be found in the British Isles, with a background of history and tradition as different from that of England as if it were a foreign country.⁵

Fraser immediately made clear the contrasting place-myths in evidence on the Isle of Man. She goes on further to describe aspects of the island, and writes about the island’s natural scenery, its folklore, customs and history and integrated into this description is a paragraph commenting on the TT races, noting their establishment in 1907 and describing the spectacle provided by the event. Further allusions to the TT are contained at various points in the text.⁶ For instance, in the description of Douglas she notes the existence of Governor’s bridge where crowds gather to watch the races. In Ramsey she states that another attraction for visitors is

³ V. Brennan, *The Isle of Man: Footpath Guides No. 36*, (London, The Saint Catherine Press, 1947), p. xvi. The ‘Great Wheel’ is a reference to the waterwheel in Laxey built in 1854 to pump water from the Laxey mines.

⁴ M. Fraser, *In Praise of Manxland*, (2nd edition revised, London, Methuen, 1948), pp. 1-10. Maxwell Fraser was the pen name of Dorothy May Fraser, ‘a prolific author of popular travel books’. The National Library of Wales has a collection of her papers, see: http://www.archivesnetworkwales.info/cgi-bin/anw/search2?coll_id=167&inst_id=1&term=Authors%20%7C%20Wales%20%7C%20Archives, accessed March 2014.

⁵ Fraser, *In Praise of Manxland*, p. 1.

⁶ Fraser, *In Praise of Manxland*, pp. 3-4.

the TT races and the famous Hairpin Bend. In Castletown she takes note of the troop of boy scouts there who give assistance with the signalling apparatus in the TT, and in St. Johns she points out Ballig Bridge “where in the contest the motor-cycles sometimes leap 30 feet as they tear over the bridge.”⁷ This comment suggests that for Fraser, whose book commented certainly on the more traditional attractions of the island, seeing motorcycles racing along country roads was not an unexpected or unwelcome sight.

John Betjeman also embodied old and new in his contribution to Moloney’s *Portraits of Isles*, in 1951. He suggested “the Isle of Man, like Shakespeare, has something memorable for everyone. It is a place of strong contrasts and great variety.”⁸ Betjeman describes the island between June and September as being packed with visitors, with the lodging houses “stuffed to capacity.” He describes how “the main road around the island, the famous T.T. track, hums with ‘charas’”,⁹ and he then contrasts the modernity of Douglas and the peacefulness of the countryside: “all this in such a small kingdom, such wildness and such sophistication, such oldness and such newness.”¹⁰ His final paragraph sums up pertinently the contrasts on the Isle of Man:

And while the dance bands are playing in Douglas and the yellow moon is rising in its bay, on the western, wilder coast the herring fleet is setting out from Peel. The sun sets behind the rugged outline of the Castle and the ruined Cathedral and Round Tower...Inland, the last rays of sun are lighting the winding lanes of Peel, the red sandstone of its church towers, and the soft protecting mountains behind it of the Isle of Man. Here, salt spray, seagulls, wild rocks and cavernous cliffs. Beyond these mountains the dance halls of Douglas and the dance-band leader in his faultless tails. An isle of contrasts!¹¹

The TT sits effortlessly alongside descriptions of the island’s beauty, of its history and of its tourist industry as a further illustration of the fusing together of the two rival place-myths. The writer and broadcaster S.P.B.

⁷ Fraser, *In Praise of Manxland*, pp. 28-29; 88; 213; 243.

⁸ J. Betjeman, ‘The Isle of Man’, in E. Moloney (ed.), *Portraits of Islands*, (1951), pp. 15 – 16. This short description of the Isle of Man is also included in *The Best of Betjeman: Selected by John Guest*, (London, Penguin, 1978).

⁹ Betjeman, ‘The Isle of Man’, p. 16.

¹⁰ Betjeman, ‘The Isle of Man’, p. 16.

¹¹ Betjeman, ‘The Isle of Man’, pp. 15-16.

Mais similarly described his visit to *The Isle of Man*, published in 1954.¹² On the one hand he commented on the island's towns and historic sites and the many leisure activities available. But integrated into his trip was a visit to the TT course, and references were made to the event as if they were expected by the reader. This again was an integration of the TT in a construction of the island's identity. Mais believed that "the excellent air service has made the Island so much more easily accessible to everyone. I can see more families from the South discovering the allurement of what, I think, can fairly claim to be the liveliest and most progressive island round our coast."¹³

Of course, the motorcycle press also continued to promote the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races. Alongside reports of the races, articles appeared that considered the other attractions of the Isle of Man. A 1948 article in *Motor Cycling*, commented on the "new generation" of spectators who were expected to visit the island, stating that "if you are going to the Isle of Man next week you can be sure of one thing. As an occasion it will be terrific...Viewed from any angle this is *the* meeting of the year."¹⁴ In 1949 R.R. Holliday suggested ways of making the most of a trip by visiting the other attractions the island had to offer and by taking in the scenery and enjoying long walks in the countryside.¹⁵ An article in *The Motor Cycle* in 1956, titled "Our Island" noted, "The Isle of Man's romantic history is full of fascination and legend." It went on to state that:

To most readers of this journal the Isle of Man means motor-cycle racing and nothing else. But the fact that it was the birthplace of the T.T. Races in 1907 and their home ever since is surely an indication that there is something about the island that distinguishes it from all other parts of Britain. Where else could 37 ¼ miles of public roads be closed against the Queen's subjects for the purpose of racing?¹⁶

The article continued by stating: "motor-cycle racing epitomises the unique position that the Isle of Man has enjoyed for centuries as a self-governing dependency of the crown."¹⁷ However, it also went on to

¹² S.P.B. Mais, *The Isle of Man*, (London, Christopher Johnson, 1954). For biographical details see Bernard Smith, 'Mais, Stuart Petre Brodie (1885 – 1975)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46344].

¹³ Mais, *The Isle of Man*, p. 152.

¹⁴ *Motor Cycling*, 3 June 1948, p. 86.

¹⁵ *Motor Cycling*, 9 June 1949, p. 107.

¹⁶ *Motor Cycle*, 7 June 1956, p. 631.

¹⁷ *Motor Cycle*, 7 June 1956, p. 631.

describe the island’s history, with particular reference to Tynwald encouraging people to visit the Isle of Man for reasons other than motorcycle racing. We can see, therefore, that the Isle of Man continued to be associated with the TT races through the post-war period, and also that the two rival place-myths that had emerged during the inter-war years were now commonly fused together. The next section will look at the way this developed inside the Isle of Man.

Identity inside the Isle of Man

Earlier it was mentioned that members of the Manx cultural elite were keen to revive the Manx language as a means of guarding themselves against the growing anglicisation of the island. However, census data reveals that the Manx language underwent a decline and by the beginning of World War Two we can see that attempts at reviving the Manx language had been unsuccessful. Possibly as a result of this, the post-war period saw the beginning of the third phase of these attempts at language revival.¹⁸ This was marked in 1952 by calls from Fargher (secretary of Yn Cheshaght Gailckagh (YCG)) and Woods (secretary of the Manx branch of the Celtic congress) for the Manx language to be reinvigorated, and appeals to support the Manx language were printed in *Mona's Herald*. During this period YCG also recorded the speech of the few surviving Manx speakers on the Isle of Man.¹⁹ In his attempts to revive the Manx language, Fargher made a call for the Manx people to:

Throw off apathy and disinterestedness [sic] and take part in another crusade which can harm no one, but which will strengthen us as individuals and as a nation. We refer to the crusade for maintaining and using the Manx Language. Join an evening class, Manxmen, and bring a friend with you.²⁰

Clearly, Fargher believed that language played an important role in the construction, or in this case in the survival of a distinctive identity. Here we can see once again emphasis being placed on the more traditional ingredients in this construction. The reasons for such a desperate call for “Manxmen” to become committed to a revival of the Manx language are

¹⁸ G. Broderick, ‘Revived Manx’, in M. Ball and G. Fife (eds.), *The Celtic Languages*, (London, Routledge, 1993), pp. 655 – 663.

¹⁹ G. Broderick, ‘Revived Manx’, p. 657.

²⁰ D.C. Fargher and J. Woods, ‘Support the Manx Language’, *Mona's Herald*, 30 Sept. 1952, as quoted in Broderick, ‘Revived Manx’, p. 660.

made clear when we look at the number of Manx speakers on the island during the post-war period. Census data for the years 1951 and 1961 shows a further decline of Manx speakers on the island. In 1951 of a total population of 52,897 (over the age of three years) there were no solely Manx speakers and only 355 capable of speaking both English and Manx. By contrast 52,542 were English only speakers.²¹ By 1961 from a total population of 46,321 (over the age of three years), there were only 155 bilingual English and Manx speakers and 46,156 solely English speakers.²²

Further emphasis was also placed, by some in the Isle of Man, on the promotion of the island's traditional heritage. Carrying on from the inter-war period, during which William Cubbon had published his *Bibliography of the Literature of the Isle of Man* and was responsible for the opening of the Cregneash folk museum, the next curator Basil Megaw (1940-1957) set about cementing the work of Cubbon and enlarging the Manx museum in Douglas, developing Cregneash, and opening in 1951 the island's nautical museum, a celebration of the island's seafaring history. 1951 also saw the passing of the Manx National Trust Act. When his emphasis on the promotion of traditional aspects of island life was challenged, Megaw answered thus:

A people which breaks all links with its traditions and inherited knowledge of the forebears is like a tree without roots. By the addition of a folk section to the museum we are able, for the first time, to appreciate the continuity of development in Manx domestic life from remote times to the present day.²³

Clearly we can see that some stressed the role to be played by language, history and heritage in constructions of Manx identity during the immediate post-war period and earlier, especially those responsible for cultural institutions and societies such as YCG and the Manx Museum.

However, we also see that there was emphasis placed on the new as well as the old in such promotional literature as the Isle of Man Official Guides produced by the Publicity Board, and later the Tourist Board. The great variety of attractions on offer in the island was stressed in these guides. For instance, the 1951 guidebook contained an article written by

²¹ *Census 1951: Report on the Isle of Man*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1954).

²² *Census 1961: Report on the Isle of Man: Part II Migration, Economic Activity and Other Topics*, (London, H.M.S.O, 1966).

²³ S. Harrison, *100 Years of Heritage* (Isle of Man, Manx Museum and National Trust, 1986), p. 12.

E.H. Stenning, which certainly represented the Isle of Man as the location of traditional virtues:

Do visitors look for a holiday of vigorous amusements, dancing entertainments, excursions, sea-bathing and sunshine? These are always available here. Do they seek quiet seclusion with just the peace of the mountains and the moors, rivers and glens, the unpeopled [sic] coastal scenery, the quiet bays and the creeks and coves, free from the hurly-burly of everyday life? Here they all are. Do they look for a quiet motoring or cycling holiday not too strenuous but full of interest? Here we can offer roads, better than the rest in Britain, passing through places of surpassing natural and historical interest, every turn in the road bringing into view some new and delightful vista.²⁴

Stenning here focused on aspects that were not the TT races and by doing so helped in the further construction of a sense-of-place that was centred on the traditional, and not the modern. Such a construction of the island's place-myth can also be seen in the 1953 Isle of Man Guidebook, which stressed the traditional friendliness of the welcome afforded to visitors by the islanders.

Catering for visitors in this Isle is no summer sideline; it is a principle industry in which the minds and endeavours of many people living here are concentrated. Their job is to maintain and enhance the island's reputation as a place where the happiest of holidays can be spent, and they take a good deal of pleasure in the fulfilment of that task.²⁵

However, the traditional place-myth stressing the modern is also evident within this tourist literature, as is the harmony with which the rival myths sat alongside each other. Whilst Stenning had described the more traditional attractions of the Isle of Man, he also stressed “the greatest lure of all in this mechanical age, a lure which attracts so many thousands to our nation. For does not this island claim the greatest and most spectacular of all speed events...the Tourist Trophy Race? Where else in the world can be seen such thrills as we have to offer on our island course?”²⁶ Stenning's assertion was most definitely not solely focused on the traditional attractions of the island, but on the modern appeal of speed and

²⁴ E. H. Stenning, ‘The Magic Isle’, *Isle of Man Guidebook 1951*, (Douglas, Isle of Man).

²⁵ *Isle of Man Guidebook 1953*.

²⁶ E. H. Stenning, ‘The Magic Isle’, *Isle of Man Guidebook 1951*, (Douglas, Isle of Man).

technology and the role the Isle of Man had played in the development of the motorcycle. This statement seemed to sit comfortably in Stenning's article alongside his description of the island's history, heritage and natural beauty.

The 1954 Isle of Man Guidebook similarly made it clear that the TT races played an important role in attracting visitors to the Isle of Man and promoting the island internationally. It was suggested that:

In the sporting field the Isle of Man is already world famous. Of outstanding interest are the International Tourist Trophy Motor Cycle Races, which bring together every June the world's most daring and accomplished road racers. The development of the internal combustion engine has been very closely linked with T.T. racing in the Isle of Man. Will the island play a similar part in the development of the jet engine, or even atomic power for the propulsion of road vehicles? Who knows?²⁷

The Manx were clearly keen to represent themselves as curators of a natural beauty and an appealing history, but also, paradoxically, as being at the forefront of modernity epitomised by technological advance and indeed by danger. The TT itself was described in 1954 as being "one of the most thrilling and hazardous events in the world", and the excitement described as being "high and continuous."²⁸ Similarly the 1955 official guide noted that the TT was "amongst the most important sporting events which take place on the Isle of Man."²⁹ It was further stressed that the event attracted enthusiasts "from all over the world" and that therefore the island was not some backwater because "Douglas assumes a decidedly cosmopolitan air as competitors and their supporters talk in their many different tongues."³⁰ So there still existed within constructions of Manx identity apparently discordant elements, but in tourist guides these did not clash.

The Manx press also comfortably combined old and new. The TT races were prominent in the Manx press during this period. TT reports appeared alongside domestic news, and advertisements for motorcycles and motorcycle accessories adorned large areas of these newspapers, especially in the period before, during and for a couple of weeks after the

²⁷ *Isle of Man Guidebook 1953: The Isle of Man puts the Seal on Happy Holidays*, (Douglas, Isle of Man).

²⁸ *Isle of Man Guidebook 1954: The Isle of Man for Happy Holidays*, (Douglas, Isle of Man).

²⁹ *Isle of Man Guidebook 1955: The Isle of Treasured Holidays*, (Douglas, Isle of Man).

³⁰ *Isle of Man Guidebook 1955*.

TT had taken place. The structure of most Manx newspapers meant that there was no dedicated sports section and so reports of the TT were juxtaposed with local news and events, as a textual representation of the harmony that existed between the old and the new. Therefore, it was not uncommon to find a report of the TT race next to a story about the Manx music festival or such like.

For instance, a 1958 article in the *Isle of Man Weekly Times* reported the visit of “exiled” Manxmen from Canada and the United States. It reported the welcoming ceremony that took place on Douglas harbour. It was stated that:

They were greeted by the Lon Leah Choir’s recording of ‘Oh Canada’, ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ and the Manx national anthem as they drew nearer landing...There was also the singing of ‘Ellan Vannin’ and other beautiful national songs by a quartet, charming speeches of welcome and many grand reunions of the quayside.³¹

We are thus given the impression that those responsible for organising the official reception were keen to promote a traditional view of the island. But, the report of this ceremony went on to suggest that:

If the music of church bells did not come over the water to the Homecomers in this early hour there was instead the roar of high-powered motor cycles a sound as nostalgically sweet to Manxmen as a belfry carillon, *for are not the world famous TT and the homeland synonymous?* [Emphasis added]³²

This comment demonstrates the belief, perpetuated in the Manx press, that the TT races were good for the island. Indeed the report went further by putting the old and the new together and by suggesting that those returning to the island would be listening for the sound of motorcycles and that this sound would remind them that the Isle of Man was indeed their “homeland.” The Isle of Man and the TT were synonymous and so a point had been reached where the Isle of Man and the TT could not be separated.

This might be taken further to suggest that whilst inside the Isle of Man and within the Manx press there was an emerging opinion that the TT was a defining part of a Manx sense-of-self, the TT races also seemed to position the Isle of Man at the centre of the world in both spectacle and

³¹ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 30 May 1958.

³² *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 30 May 1958.

technological development. The TT was an event that had made the Isle of Man world famous. Indeed, in 1949 *Mona's Herald* commented: “the Isle of Man has the right to feel some pride in staging this world famous spectacle, as well as joy in the material gain it brings.” That was why “as a people we jointly - and cheerfully we hope – subscribe to the cost of promotion.”³³

It was also believed that the success of British motorcycles in the TT further elevated the Isle of Man’s position at the centre of the world, because the British motorcycle industry used the Isle of Man as a testing ground for their machines. Indeed, in 1949 when commenting on the unsatisfactory arrangements made by the BBC for broadcasting the TT, the press noted that:

These motorcycle races are of great importance, and not only for the Island but for the whole of the country. They have made the British motorcycle the premier motorcycle in the world and at the present moment they are the finest advertising medium the motorcycle has in Britain in connection with the export drive, upon which we all depend for our very existence.³⁴

The TT might have increased publicity for the British motorcycle industry but undoubtedly it did the same for the Isle of Man. *Mona's Herald* might have exaggerated the feelings of the Manx people when it stated that “we like to think that even those who have this mundane interest in the races and their results share a strong desire to see the prestige of the British motor cycle upheld.”³⁵ The sentiment was, however, the same. Success for the British motorcycle industry would equal further publicity for the Isle of Man and this enhanced sense of importance was factored into Manx identity.

Despite stronger support for the TT in the Manx press, and the greater use of the TT in promoting the island in tourist literature, the fact still remained that a large amount of inconvenience was caused by the staging of the event on the Isle of Man. Roads still had to be closed, and the Manx people would still be prevented from going about their everyday business. Yet no evidence of an organised protest has been found. Indeed, in 1956 the *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, welcoming people to the Isle of Man for the TT, commented that “next week the countryside of Manxland will reverberate to the ‘roar of the free exhaust’ and once again we wish the best of luck to those men who will provide the amazing spectacle offered

³³ *Mona's Herald*, 21 June 1949.

³⁴ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 5 June 1949.

³⁵ *Mona's Herald*, 21 June 1949.

by the incomparable T.T..”³⁶ This comment suggests that racing motorcycles along the island’s roads was an inconvenience that would be tolerated.

Cannon E.H. Stenning, a Manx resident (since 1912) and once president of the Manx Motor Cycle Club, to whom the Duke of Edinburgh once referred as the “Motorcycling Dean”,³⁷ was also quick to discard the inconvenience caused by the TT and to make the point that the event united the Manx people. In an article in the 1954 TT programme he noted that – and the language used is indicative:

Year by year we on the Island look forward with the greatest of pleasure to the coming of the A.C.U. and the attendant train of riders and manufacturers. We look forward to renewing old friendships, making new associations which we trust will last for many years ... welcoming competitors from all parts of the earth, welcoming foreign machines (for we realise that competition is the backbone of success) ... So we on the Island bid you welcome, and hail your arrival with great pleasure. It is true that you bring us wealth, but to the great majority of us that is no concern. We like to hear of new designs, new devices, new speeds, but all these are small matters to us compared with the human side, the personal contact with you all ... look upon us ... as people who welcome you all, who appreciate you fully, who hope you will come again to our lovely island. [Emphases added].³⁸

Using Stenning’s comments we can begin to appreciate the insular point of view by looking at the language used in his article about the TT races. We should not assume that *all* Manx residents were as keen as Stenning to see the TT continue, but Stenning’s point of view, which was projected from inside the island outwards to TT visitors, groups the Manx together in their support of and enthusiasm for the TT races and was never significantly challenged.³⁹ We can therefore see, from the evidence discussed, that the TT had become accepted in internal constructions of Manx identity. This acceptance of the event by the islanders was particularly exemplified in

³⁶ *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 1 June 1956.

³⁷ This reference was included in an article in the *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 2 May 1958.

³⁸ E.H. Stenning, ‘The TT Races: An Insular Point of View’, *TT Programme 1954*.

³⁹ Stenning also expressed this in future TT programmes. He wrote a number of articles in support of the TT races, expressing the views of various clubs and organisations involved with the races and also looking at the history of the event. See articles such as E.H. Stenning, ‘Four wheels on the T.T. course’, *1962 TT programme*; ‘The “Nurseries” of the Tourist Trophy Race’, *1961 TT programme*.

1953 when the Manx press defended the TT against external criticism, when a section of the British press criticised the TT because it entailed risk, danger and death.

Earlier it was shown that *The Times* had raised such matters in 1908 in reaction to the staging of the “four-inch” race.⁴⁰ The TT was again attacked by the British press in 1953 on three grounds. First, fatalities in the TT were pointed out as a reason to stop the event. It was reported in *The Daily Sketch and Graphic* that on 8 June “two more young men met death...on the 37 miles of tortuous roads which form the Isle of Man motor-cycle T.T. race course.”⁴¹ *The Daily Mirror* went as far as to list the fatalities from the past five TT races: one killed in 1948, two killed in 1949, four killed in 1950, six killed in 1951 and five killed in 1952.⁴² These fatalities were seen as reason enough to stop the TT races. *The Daily Mirror* exclaimed, “slap down on the whole show. Close it up”, and stated further that “now with speeds of up and over 100 m.p.h. this spectacle, once called the greatest sport on earth, has degenerated into a suicidal free for all.”⁴³ *The Times’* reaction against the “four-inch” race in 1908 was caused by the possibility of fatal accidents. In 1953 criticism of the TT in a section of the British press was to the actuality of death in the TT.

Second, what made it worse was apparently that the Manx prospered from this murderous event:

Four young men died this week providing a spectacle which brought 25,000 people with £250,000 to spend to this small island. Four young men whose deaths are set against the balance sheet of ‘progress’ in an island where officialdom does not separate their tragic end from the ‘normal run of casualties’.⁴⁴

This article in the *Sunday Pictorial* evidently considered the prosperity the TT brought to the Isle of Man, but did not justify the continuation of the event. Third, it was claimed, “the islanders are used to it [the TT]. For some 46 years they have lived, slept and eaten motor-cycle racing. It has become part of their life.” The Manx therefore should, “turn a blind eye to the fact that the roaring modern motor-cycle has outgrown the narrow

⁴⁰ Government Office File, R2701/1/3, *Tourist Trophy Races 1953* (IOMPRO).

⁴¹ *Daily Sketch and Daily Graphic*, 9 June 1953.

⁴² *Daily Mirror*, 10 June 1953.

⁴³ *Daily Mirror*, 10 June 1953.

⁴⁴ *Sunday Pictorial*, 14 June 1953.

twisting roads of the island.”⁴⁵ The morality of the Manx was being assaulted because they were seen to tolerate death and danger for the gain of economic prosperity and allowed the TT to become an integral part of their life.

The reaction of the Manx press to this criticism was resentful and above all defensive. The event was not defended in 1953 just because the English wished to stop it, as was the case in 1908. The TT was now defended because it was a distinguishing Manx event that had the support of the Manx people. The sensationalist angle taken in reports in the British press, were particularly resented. *The Isle of Man Times* argued that “there are people in the newspaper world with insufficient intelligence to report current events in readable fashion, and they have, perforce, to rely on sensationalism”,⁴⁶ whilst the *Isle of Man Examiner* noted that “national newspaper representatives are incapable of filing a report without losing all sense of proportion. A race without a tragedy or some trumped up ‘human angle’ leaves them floundering for material.”⁴⁷ Their responses may appear as comments on the skills of the journalists writing for these newspapers, but in essence they were defensive of the TT as part of a Manx identity.

Articles in the Manx press did not ignore the fatalities suffered in the TT, but attempted to deny the implications. The *Isle of Man Examiner* commented, “two fatalities on Monday provoked some of the most vicious reporting we have seen of a T.T. race.” It was pointed out that over the years 165 races had been held on the mountain course, which totalled roughly 37,000 laps. During these races there had only been 59 fatalities, and “those few statistics are sufficient to put the story into proper perspective.” This comment sat alongside the assertion that “there are no similar campaigns focusing attention on the 100 deaths and 5,000 road casualties a week being recorded regularly on the other side of the water.” The same article went on to state that it should not be necessary to stress what is obvious, that “the hordes of roaring motor-cycles going round the famous circuit day and night are music to the ears of everyone who has the Island’s interests at heart.”⁴⁸ These comments were in defence of a TT, which had become part of Manx life and a Manx sense of identity.

In the face of the 1953 criticism *The Isle of Man Weekly Times* summed up what it believed to be the general feeling in the island towards the continuation of the TT:

⁴⁵ *Sunday Pictorial*, 14 June 1953.

⁴⁶ *The Isle of Man Times*, 10 June 1953.

⁴⁷ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 12 June 1953.

⁴⁸ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 12 June 1953.

Whatever happens in the future, the Isle of Man people will take pride in the fact they were able to place a course at the disposal of organisers for motor cycle races which undoubtedly did much to develop the internal combustion engine; which did much to make the Spitfire possible in those dread and dreary days of 1940, which has brought fame to some and given satisfaction to others, but which most regrettably has brought tragedy, too, in its train.

These people who write horrific articles in which they describe the Manx as a people who think blood well shed so long as it lines their pockets with money forget one thing: They forget many of us know the men who race here: that their fortunes are our concern, and that we regret the death of any one of them as we would regret the passing of a friend.⁴⁹

There was then a general defence of the TT not only because of an unsporting attempt by the English to dictate to the Manx people. The TT was defended because it had become by 1953, as earlier and later, fully incorporated into Manx identity, something to be defended because of that sense of “who we are”: the parallel defence of bull-fighting by the Spanish against external critics comes readily to mind. The reaction of the Manx press to sensationalist reports; the lack of notice taken by the Manx legislature to this criticism; and the continuation of the event show that the TT had become firmly embedded within a Manx sense-of-self.

After 1945, the island continued to promote its Celtic and Norse heritage, its natural beauty and its distinctive history. However, in both external and internal representations of the island these different ingredients were placed alongside each other and combined. The TT had been accepted as part of Manx identity, and it had a definite role to play in constructions of a Manx sense-of-self. Most importantly and with greater emphasis, the TT also put the Isle of Man on a world stage. Symbols of Manx identity, which by now most definitely included the TT, sat harmoniously alongside one another. Motorcycle racing, which had been imposed on the island and the islanders but which had been gradually accepted during the inter-war period, was now firmly ingrained in the island’s place-myth alongside the island’s natural beauty and its distinctive history and heritage.

⁴⁹*Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 20 June 1953.

Conclusion to Part Three

What began as an imposition by the lieutenant governor before 1914 and became an imposition led by Douglas based politicians and interest groups during the 1920s became, in the years after World War Two, an event that was supported by the Manx legislature and endorsed by members of Tynwald. During this period we can see the passing of supportive legislation, the delegation of the organisation of the TT to the Tourist Board and the continuation and development of the belief that the TT was beneficial to the Manx economy. In addition, the TT continued to be attended by some motorcycle manufacturers' teams and the new Clubman's TT increased its popularity by giving private entrants that chance to race on the island. It was also during this period that the TT would become a more 'global' event attracting teams and riders from as far afield as Japan and New Zealand. The continued support of the Manx legislature, the growing economic value of the TT and the established representation of the Isle of Man as a place for motorcycle races, were all elements that contributed to the further embedding of the TT in the construction of a Manx identity or a Manx sense-of-self and contributed to the continuation of the TT after World War Two and in subsequent decades.

CHAPTER NINE

TAKING THE CHEQUERED FLAG?

In 2014 John McGuinness was inducted into the Motor Sport magazine Hall of Fame, along with motor racing greats Alain Prost, James Hunt and Ross Brawn. In recognition of his 20 wins at the Isle of Man TT, he received his award from John Surtees. Recently the TT has once again begun to gain greater publicity outside of the Isle of Man. The 2011 film *TT: Closer to the Edge* was shown at cinemas nationwide (to considerable acclaim). TT riders such as Guy Martin and John McGuinness have become household names. There are a number of documentaries on national television that follow a now familiar fly-on-the-wall style in the build up to the event. It is much easier to follow the outcomes of the two weeks on motorcycle racing on the Isle of Man without having to make the inevitably expensive trip to the island. Such is the continued popularity of the TT if you want to visit the Isle of Man in June you need to make your plans a year in advance.

Two international sporting events were established at the beginning of the twentieth century: the Isle of Man TT motorcycle races and the *Tour de France* bicycle race. Both are subject to their share of controversy, but both continue to be supported by the communities that host the event, and because they are an integral part of a “national identity.” The year 2007 marked the centenary of the Isle of Man TT races, and so the event has continued to be an almost constant part of twentieth and twenty-first century Manx history.¹ The only time the TT has not been run was during

¹ Huddersfield University Business School celebrated the TT’s centenary by organising a conference, ‘The Isle of Man TT Races: Heritage, Place and Spirit’, between 28 and 30 May 2007. Papers presented at this conference were published in a special edition of the *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*: <http://ijms.nova.edu>. An article summarising the main points of this work was published in the *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*. See S. Vaukins, ‘The Isle of Man TT Races: Politics, Economics and National Identity’, *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, Nov. 2007 at <http://ijms.nova.edu/November2007TT/index.html>.

the two world wars and also in 2004 when an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in England prevented the running of the event. In the light of what the TT has become - a large scale international event commonly associated with speed, danger and death - this book has set out to explain the origins of the TT and also, more importantly, why the TT was not stopped despite easy opportunities to do so in 1914 and 1939, for example, after the event had been disrupted by war. The Manx authorities might also have given in to external criticism in, for example, 1908 and 1953 but they did not. Even in 1927 the death of a rider did not call a halt to the TT, but instead prompted the passage of legislation intended only to improve safety for competitors when practising for the main event. Thus, by the 1960s the TT had become securely established in the island's politics, and it continues to be supported today despite criticism from outside. After the loss of World Championship status in 1976, the continuation of the TT was still endorsed by members of the Manx legislature. In a 1976 debate in Tynwald the Speaker of the House of Keys proposed that the chairman of the Tourist Board should enquire into its future, "in view of the widespread concern felt by motorcycling enthusiasts throughout the world." The chairman of the Tourist Board was adamant in his response: "I would never submit to pressure from inside or outside the Island to abandon the magnificent mountain circuit."²

Indeed, a 1976 letter to the editor contained in the *Isle of Man Examiner* asked: "Will someone tell me what has the T.T. been but the greatest endurance of man and machine in the whole world."³ The letter went on to suggest that, should the races be cancelled, in the next year Isle of Man TT arrivals would be down 65-70, and the season would then start in the first week of July. This was "in short a devastating blow to the Island." Further confirmation of the event's status in this edition of the newspaper: "It is surely the unique nature of the course which attracts the thousands of riders and enthusiasts to the Island. The evidence is here now. The main championship contenders have not been here this week, but the entry has been terrific and the crowd bigger than ever. Whatever happens, hands off the TT course. Short circuits are two a penny. We are certain no one would come here for races on one!"⁴ By the late 1970s then, the TT had become firmly ingrained and supported as part of a Manx

² *Manx Debates*, Vol. 93, 15 June 1976, p. T887.

³ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 14 May 1976

⁴ *Isle of Man Examiner*, 14 May, 1976

identity. Similarly, in 2008 the Manx legislature continued to support the continuation of the TT after strong criticism following fatalities in 2007.⁵

The discussion of *how* and *why* the TT has continued over the past 100 years has been structured around three themes dealing with politics, economics and national identity. The theme of politics addressed the question of how the TT was established and sustained on the Isle of Man and it has shown that political history matters in understanding the origins and continuation of the TT. I have demonstrated that motor racing was imposed on the Manx legislature, and therefore on the Manx people, by an authoritative lieutenant governor. Comparisons with the moves that legalised an international motorcar race in Ireland in 1903 were made because this set a precedent for Manx legislation in 1904. What cannot be doubted is that legislation that authorised motorcar races on the island, paved the way for the motorcycle TT races held on the Isle of Man in 1907 and thereafter to 1914.

However, between the wars, following constitutional reforms, members of Tynwald now offered their backing for the TT's continuation. Members of the Legislative Council and the House of Keys were able to express support for the TT in more open and transparent debates in Tynwald and this led to the embedding of more widespread political support for the TT and the passing of supportive legislation. This was a result of the changing structure and practice of government in the island. Further political support was demonstrated by the endorsement of Hill's initiative in 1929 for a financial grant to be given to the ACU to allow the TT to continue on the Isle of Man. This meant that after World War Two, there was little doubt that the TT would be restarted on the Isle of Man, because of the political support that existed in Tynwald. So after World War Two, there was a further consolidation of political support for the TT. The TT was not, therefore, an event imposed on the Manx people since there was certainly strong support for the event amongst elected members of the Manx legislature. Political endorsement of the TT was demonstrated, for example, by the re-election of the Tynwald Motor Races Committee in 1946 and by the unanimous support for the annual renewal of legislation and the government's financial grant to the ACU. By the end of the 1950s political support for the TT was confirmed, and this, as indicated earlier, has been sustained into the present day.

⁵ This matter was widely discussed in the Manx press and it was made clear that despite the publishing of a report which concluded that health and safety had not been adhered to by those policing the course, it was clear that the Manx government were not going to end the TT.

By the 1960s then, Manx interest groups and ultimately the Manx people had come to accept and indeed welcome the legislation, which allowed the TT to continue. There continues to be no organised protest against the TT's continuation, an absence that has been noted throughout this work. Only occasional rumbles have been unearthed. True, expressions of active public support have been largely confined to anecdotal evidence found in the Manx press. In 1988, however, an article included in *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* assessed residents' opinions of the Manx TT races and concluded that the event was "not considered excessively disruptive by the Manx population."⁶ The investigation asked residents whether they personally enjoyed TT week and for their views on its promotion and its economic impact and whether they found it disruptive. The results of this survey can be seen in appendix one. Interestingly they were also asked whether the TT generated "national feeling." Three statements were put to Manx residents: first, "the TT races create a national feeling"; second, "in my experience most Islanders welcome the TT races"; and third, "the TT races are an essential part of the Island's twentieth-century heritage." A total of 500 residents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with these statements. Seventy-four per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the TT created national feeling, 78 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that most islanders welcomed the TT and 85 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the TT was part of the island's twentieth-century heritage.⁷ Clearly, there was a strong body of public opinion in favour of the TT. Only two per cent strongly disagreed with the statements. Although in the past the Manx people had not been given directly the chance to express their opinions this poll demonstrated that certainly by 1988 there was still much support for the continuation of the event amongst the Manx people.

Throughout the twentieth century the TT became an integral part of Manx identity and an important part of the way the island is marketed to outsiders, as we have seen above. Yet, one question still remains: that is why the TT continues to be tolerated by the Manx. It is undoubtedly an event that causes disruption to the local community. Indeed, in 2006 52.4% of residents were born outside of the Isle of Man, suggesting that some protest against the inconvenience of the race might be expected.⁸ It is difficult to fully understand what the 'man-on-the-street' feels about the

⁶ R. Prentice, 'The Manx TT Races and Residents' Views: A Case Study of Doxy's "Irridex"', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 107 (1988), pp. 155-160.

⁷ Prentice, 'The Manx TT Races and Residents' Views', p.156.

⁸ 2009 *Digest of Economic and Social Statistics*, (Economic Affairs Division, Isle of Man Treasury).

continuation of the TT; there is no way to really understand how greatly the beer sellers, ice-cream sellers or proprietors of campsites believed that the TT offered them an economic advantage, which has been the case throughout the TT's history. This is data that has simply not been recorded.

So in order to summarise how far public opinion had developed since Prentice's 1988 survey, I carried out a similar survey. 1,292 people took the survey: 779 or 60.9% of the respondents were Manx residents; 40.8 per cent of participants were aged between 20 and 39 and 44.7% aged between 40 and 59. Only 2% were aged between 0 and 19, 11.8% 60 to 79 and 0.4% 80 or older. The majority of participants, 64.7% were male, meaning the other 35.3% were female. Of the 779 initial respondents, 738 recorded their place of residence. 177 (24%) lived inside the TT course and 561 (76%) lived outside the TT course. Surprisingly a large majority of participants lived in the north of the island.

The survey was designed to be a way to get some idea of how both Manx residents and some non-residents viewed the TT and to ask further how important a part of Manx identity residents believe the TT to be and the following statements were proposed:

- 1) Most islanders welcome the TT races
- 2) The TT races are good for the Manx economy
- 3) The TT races bring the Island good publicity
- 4) The TT races are a significant inconvenience to Islanders
- 5) The TT races disrupt the peacefulness of the Island
- 6) The TT races are dangerous
- 7) The TT races are an important ingredient in Manx identity
- 8) The TT races create a national feeling
- 9) The TT races are an important part of the island's 21st century heritage
- 10) Without the TT the Isle of Man would lose a distinctive part of its identity

These were opinion statements, and participants were asked if they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with a particular statement or if they had no opinion (an opinion which only a small amount of people chose).

The results of the survey are represented in appendix one, below. From the results it can be suggested that there continues to be strong support and commitment towards the TT from a majority of Manx residents. In this respect little has changed since Prentice published his research in 1988 – and this still remains the only comparable data available. The figures are

strikingly similar. For example, 78.8% of participants in the online survey agreed that islanders welcomed the TT; Prentice calculated this figure to be 78%. 79% of participants believed the TT was good for the Manx economy; Prentice's figure was 83%. However, where the continuation of the TT comes into question the figures differ slightly. My survey showed that 72.7% of residents who responded disagreed that the TT should be ended, whereas Prentice's figure was closer to 90%. This relates directly to changes in perceptions of the dangerous nature of the TT. 76.9% of residents agreed that the TT was dangerous, and only 15.7% disagreed. Opinion was split in Prentice's survey: 47% agreed and 47% disagreed. But there are other areas that are also ripe for further examination. For instance, the balance of opinion between residents living inside the course and outside the course was fairly even - in some cases people living inside the course had a more positive commitment towards the TT. The results of this survey were fairly unsurprising. There was strong support for the continuation of the TT amongst the 738 residents that participated in this survey. It must be concluded that the evidence supports that assumption that the TT is strongly established as a part of Manx national identity.

Decisions made and legislation passed by the Manx government, alongside changes to the structure and practice of government in the Isle of Man, were clearly important to the development of the TT. Thus we can see that politics had a large role to play in the origins and continuation of this event and this is surely also the case for sport in general, which commonly involves the use of public money and has public profiles, especially large-scale international events. Hosting an Olympic Games or a World Cup tournament involves a large deal of political decision-making. Indeed, Guttmann clearly points to the political agenda behind the establishment and staging of the Olympics.⁹ Political endorsement of a sporting event might not be forthcoming, however, unless there were economic benefits expected.

Therefore, whilst the political theme had introduced and answered the question of how the TT races were established and maintained on the Isle of Man it was the economic rewards, which helped to explain the event's political endorsement. The TT's continuation owed much to an anticipated economic gain. Members of Tynwald believed with good reason that the TT brought economic benefits to the Isle of Man. Before the First World War these interests were minimal and members of Tynwald did not suggest until as late as 1912 that the TT might bring prosperity to the

⁹ A. Guttmann, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*, (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1992).

island. During the inter-war years, however, the belief that the TT offered economic benefits grew considerably amongst members of Tynwald. Hence the TT was used to publicise the island and the provision of an annual grant to the ACU. Also during this period, interest groups such as the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company demonstrated their support for the TT with their own grant to the ACU. The belief that the TT would bring financial rewards was consolidated during the post-war years. Thus we can see that economics played a large part in the growth of support for the TT races in the Isle of Man between 1919 and the 1960s. Support continues to be offered for economic reasons up to the present day. When in 1976 the chairman of the Tourist Board insisted that the TT should be continued, his argument was very explicit: "Our main consideration must always be the attraction of tourists."¹⁰ In fact so popular is the event, and such are the economic benefits that the Manx are seen to take from staging the TT, that a 2008 article in the *Lancaster Guardian* reported that:

TT legends John McGuinness, Ian Lougher and Richard 'Milky' Quayle are to visit Miyakejima Island, one of the Islands off Tokyo, approved by the Isle of Man Government's Department of Tourism and Leisure. Miyakejima Island is looking into creating its own equivalent of the Isle of Man TT races to boost local tourism and the economy following significant volcanic eruption in 1983 and 2000.¹¹

The use of a motorcycle race to boost an economy in the wake of a natural disaster could be seen as strange, indeed bizarre. However, the Japanese have taken the Isle of Man TT races as their guide, because it has indeed boosted the island's tourist trade and brought money into the Manx economy. A pseudo-TT race on this Japanese island may well attract spectators, especially when we take into consideration the number of Japanese manufacturers involved in the event in the present day and the popularity of the Isle of Man TT internationally.¹² But it must also be remembered that the TT was established at a time when health and safety issues did not overwhelm the organisers and that today's competition only continues because of the history attached to the event.

We have also seen that it was not just the Manx who believed that there was money to be made from the continuation of the event. British

¹⁰ *Debates*, Vol. 93, 15 June 1976, p. T885.

¹¹ *Lancaster Guardian*, 3 October 2008.

¹² However, the Japanese should be cautious. A similar attempt to replicate the TT in Canada in 2005 met with very little success. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/isleofman/content/articles/2007/05/22/firsttimevisitor_feature.shtml (accessed March 2014).

and overseas motorcycle manufacturers sent teams to the TT because they believed in the technical improvements that could be derived from competing in a TT race. These interests developed most noticeably during the inter-war years, when there was also more extensive use of success in the TT to advertise motorcycles and motorcycle accessories. During the post-war period this led to the exploitation of celebrity riders, such as Geoff Duke in advertising material. This exploitation of TT success still continues today, and we can see riders such as John McGuinness, being used to advertise Honda motorcycles because of his ability to complete the Isle of Man TT course at high speed; at the time of writing he holds the lap-speed record. Also in evidence is advertising around the course, on motorcycles and on riders' leathers. The TT has indeed become more than a test bed for motorcycles, but the capitalist spectacle provided by the TT is not yet, however, on a par with such event as the World Cup or the Olympics Games, which are hugely attractive to producers of a wide range of products.¹³ Nevertheless, the exposure provided by the TT continues to be exploited worldwide by motorcycle manufacturers and manufacturers of accessories.

Political support for the TT and the economic gains to be had from the event's continuation has led to the ingraining of the TT in constructions of a Manx national identity. Over the course of this book I have taken account of the different ingredients in representations of Manx identity outside and inside of the island, defining what this means and assessing the place of the TT within this identity. I set out initially to suggest that in the years before 1914 Manx identity, both internally and externally, was constructed largely around the island's Celtic and Norse traditions and its natural beauty; motor racing did not impinge upon this. Inside the Isle of Man there was little recognition of motor racing as an ingredient of Manx identity, and externally it was almost only the motorcycle press who pointed to the Isle of Man as the home of the TT races. This changed during the inter-war period and the TT came to find a place in the construction of Manx identity, both inside and outside the island. This led to the emergence of two rival place-myths, one still embracing the island's ancient heritage and natural beauty, the other, apparently discordant, stressing such aspects of modernity as technology and speed. However, these rival place-myths were fused together during the post-war period and the TT thus became ingrained in constructions of Manx identity. It was

¹³ See J. Horne and W. Manzenreiter, *Sports Mega-events: Social Scientific Analyses of a Global Phenomenon*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006) and J. Horne, *Sport in Consumer Culture*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2006).

then more common to find the new and the old in juxtaposition rather than separated. The island's identity therefore became multifaceted and was based around the old (Celtic and Norse traditions and the beauty of the landscape) and the new (TT races and the excitement of the modern). Most importantly, however, these representations did not collide, as might have been expected, but came to sit alongside each other harmoniously, as identifiers of the Isle of Man and components of Manx identity.

As Tony Mason proposes, "sport often contributes to an enhancement of the individual's sense of identity with or belonging to a group or collectivity. It can be district, village, town, city or country. It can be class, colour or country."¹⁴ That certainly is the case with respect to the TT and Manx identity. Anderson has famously described nations as "imagined communities" in which large and dispersed populations are led to a sense of commonality by especially the media.¹⁵ In the case of the TT or the Isle of Man, the sources used in this study certainly show that the Manx press did advertise the TT as a matter of common interest. However, in other respects the small space of the island through most of which a 37 ¾ mile road race circuit runs makes the TT pretty inescapable as a bonding experience for a population which has never topped 80,000. Moreover, as noted, the year-round unavoidable remembrance of the TT along those public roads and in the grandstand in Douglas did much to insert the TT into Manx consciousness, along the lines suggested by Billig's thesis on "banal nationalism."¹⁶

Smith and Porter state in their introduction to *Sport and National Identity in the Post-war World* that "the idea, for example, that sport in general, or one sport in particular, creates or fosters a sense of nationhood is important, not least because international competition creates a seemingly endless number of occasions where nations are embodied in something manifestly real and visible."¹⁷ However, Manx riders competing in the TT do not embody Manx national identity. There are Manx riders, and the success of Manx born rider Tom Sheard in the 1923 TT was celebrated, but there is not a national Manx team, embodying the Manx nation. Nor were there, or indeed are there, national teams from

¹⁴ T. Mason, *Sport in Britain*, (London, Faber and Faber, 1998), p. 118 as quoted in J. Hill and J. Williams (eds.), *Sport and Identity in the North of England*, (Keele, Keele University Press, 1996), p. 1.

¹⁵ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (London, Verso, 1991).

¹⁶ M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London, Sage, 1995).

¹⁷ A. Smith and D. Porter (eds.), *Sport and National Identity in the Post-war World*, (Oxford, Routledge, 2004), p.1.

elsewhere. Much was made of the success of British motorcycles, or US, Italian, German and later Japanese motorcycles, but it was the manufacturers who were more celebrated than their home countries. Therefore the TT did not embody other nations either. The Isle of Man is the only winner in terms of national identity. In fact only the national identity of the Isle of Man is expressed and endorsed by the TT. Moreover, rather than the Isle of Man being *embodied* by the TT, it is because the TT is *consumed* internally and externally that it has become an ingredient in the construction of a Manx identity. The island is famous as a venue for motorcycle racing. It is true that Wembley stadium is famous as a venue for international football matches. Hill and Varrasi, in a 1997 article, defined Wembley as a national monument: "it in fact became a synonym for *English* football and something of an icon of Englishness: its twin towers were readily identified by millions as a mark of identity, almost as familiar as Big Ben."¹⁸ Wembley stadium has become clearly identifiable as the English home of football. Likewise, Monaco is the venue for the Monaco Grand Prix, and Singapore has recently become the venue for the first nighttime Formula One race.¹⁹ These are certainly internationally recognised venues where sporting events take place. None, however, can market themselves the same way that the Isle of Man projects itself as *the* venue for a unique international motorcycle road race. The sport and the place embrace each other and constitute a distinctive element in a projected national identity consumed inside and outside the Isle of Man.

The study of sport therefore enables us to examine politics, economics and the construction and consumption of a national identity. We have also seen that when a sport becomes embedded in a sense-of-self it is difficult for it to be given up, much like the Spanish and their bullfighting.²⁰ Undoubtedly the TT causes inconvenience to the Manx people, but the

¹⁸ J. Hill and F. Varrasi, 'Creating Wembley: The Construction of a National Monument, *The Sports Historian*, No. 17 (1997), p.40. The original Wembley stadium was demolished in 2003 and the rebuilt stadium opened in 2007. The 'twin towers' a feature that made Wembley easily identifiable were replaced by a gigantic steel arch. Hill and Varrasi, stated at the end of their article that 'in the imminent, end of century re-building of Wembley the towers are to remain, the only vestiges of the original structure. Thus an artefact designed to commemorate nineteenth-century empire will survive into the world of the twenty-first century'. Perhaps unfortunately, this commitment was subsequently abandoned.

¹⁹ An idea of the promotion of these events can be seen at www.visitmonaco.com and www.visitsingapore.com.

²⁰ For further comment on this 'sport' see T. Mitchell, *Blood Sport: A Social History of Spanish Bullfighting*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

races continue to be tolerated because of the prestige they bring to the island and because they have become part of whom the Manx think they are. The TT has been the subject of criticism from outside because of the danger that comes with racing motorcycles around the Isle of Man, but the TT is sustained because it is a distinctive part of Manx identity. The TT has thus become so far ingrained in a Manx sense-of-self that if the event were to be ended, this would not just mean the loss of a “sport”, or the loss of the economic rewards brought by the TT. If the TT were abandoned a distinctive part of the island’s identity would be lost, an ingredient that has, in the past and still in the present, set the island apart from not just the UK but also the rest of the world. It can be said with some certainty that the TT placed the Isle of Man on a world stage and has become firmly ingrained in constructions of Manx identity and in the consciousness of the Manx people. For the reasons discussed herein, and because of recent developments such as the staging of a “green” TT, at the time of writing it is difficult to see the TT coming to an end; there can be little doubt that the TT continues to be supported by the Manx, and thus would continue to be staged on the Isle of Man.

APPENDIX

RESIDENTS' VIEWS OF THE ISLE OF MAN TT

Summary of results: All Manx Residents (738)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most islanders welcome the TT races	30.90%	48.90%	3.40%	13%	3.80%
TT a significant inconvenience to islanders	15.40%	22.80%	5.30%	37.80%	18.70%
The TT races disrupt the peacefulness of the island	11%	22.80%	7%	34.70%	24.40%
The TT races are good for the Manx economy	49.50%	30.20%	6%	9.20%	5.10%
The TT races bring the island good publicity	45.80%	32.70%	7.50%	10.20%	3.80%
The TT races are dangerous	27.80%	49.10%	7.50%	11.10%	4.60%
National feeling	26.20%	39.30%	13.60%	14.90%	14.10%
21 st century heritage	38.50%	36%	7.70%	10.20%	7.60%
Distinctive	48.60%	28.90%	6.40%	10.30%	14.10%
The TT should be ended	10%	5.70%	11.70%	14.10%	58.60%

Source: Isle of Man TT survey, Vaukins 2010

Summary of results: residents outside the TT course (561)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most islanders welcome the TT races	31%	48.30%	3.20%	14.10%	3.40%
TT a significant inconvenience to islanders	14.40%	23.20%	5.70%	37.80%	18.90%
The TT races disrupt the peacefulness of the island	10.70%	23.90%	7.10%	34%	24.20%
The TT races are good for the Manx economy	50.30%	29.80%	5.30%	9.80%	4.80%
The TT races bring the island good publicity	45.50%	34%	6.40%	10.60%	3.60%
The TT races are dangerous	27.60%	49.40%	7.50%	12.30%	3.20%
National feeling	25.50%	40.90%	17.70%	14.80%	6.20%
21 st century heritage	38.70%	35.70%	7.10%	10.70%	7.80%
Distinctive	48.80%	28.30%	6.10%	11.20%	5.50%
The TT should be ended	10%	5.90%	11.20%	13%	59.90%

Source: Isle of Man TT survey, Vaukins 2010

Summary of results: residents inside the TT course (177)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Most islanders welcome the TT races	30.50%	50.80%	4%	9.60%	5.10%
TT a significant inconvenience to islanders	18.10%	21.50%	4%	37.90%	18.10%
The TT races disrupt the peacefulness of the island	11.90%	19.80%	6.80%	36.70%	24.90%
The TT races are good for the Manx economy	47.50%	31.60%	7.90%	7.30%	5.60%
The TT races bring the island good publicity	46.90%	28.20%	11.30%	9%	4.50%
The TT races are dangerous	28.20%	48%	7.30%	7.30%	9%
National feeling	28.20%	34.50%	16.40%	15.30%	5.60%
21 st century heritage	37.90%	37.30%	9.60%	8.50%	6.80%
Distinctive	48%	30.50%	7.30%	7.30%	6.80%
The TT should be ended	10.20%	5.10%	13%	17.50%	54.20%

Source: Isle of Man TT survey, Vaukins 2010

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- Volume 11 Aug. 1955 – June 1956
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