

BUILDINGS AT RISK

Heritage: Buildings can be saved and reused for the good of the community

Passion for buildings can see them be put back to good use

As well as raising awareness of island buildings which are currently endangered and campaigning for more to be Registered, the Manx trusts, societies and other organisations collaborating for the Buildings at Risk campaign in the Isle of Man Examiner want to highlight examples of success stories in buildings conservation and how such buildings can be given a new lease of life, helping local communities to appreciate their built heritage. Here Sarah Christian of the Ballaugh Heritage Trust shows what has been achieved in her village

Ballaugh Heritage Trust was formed in 2005 and although the parish boasts no imposing castles or big water wheels, it does have some interesting buildings.

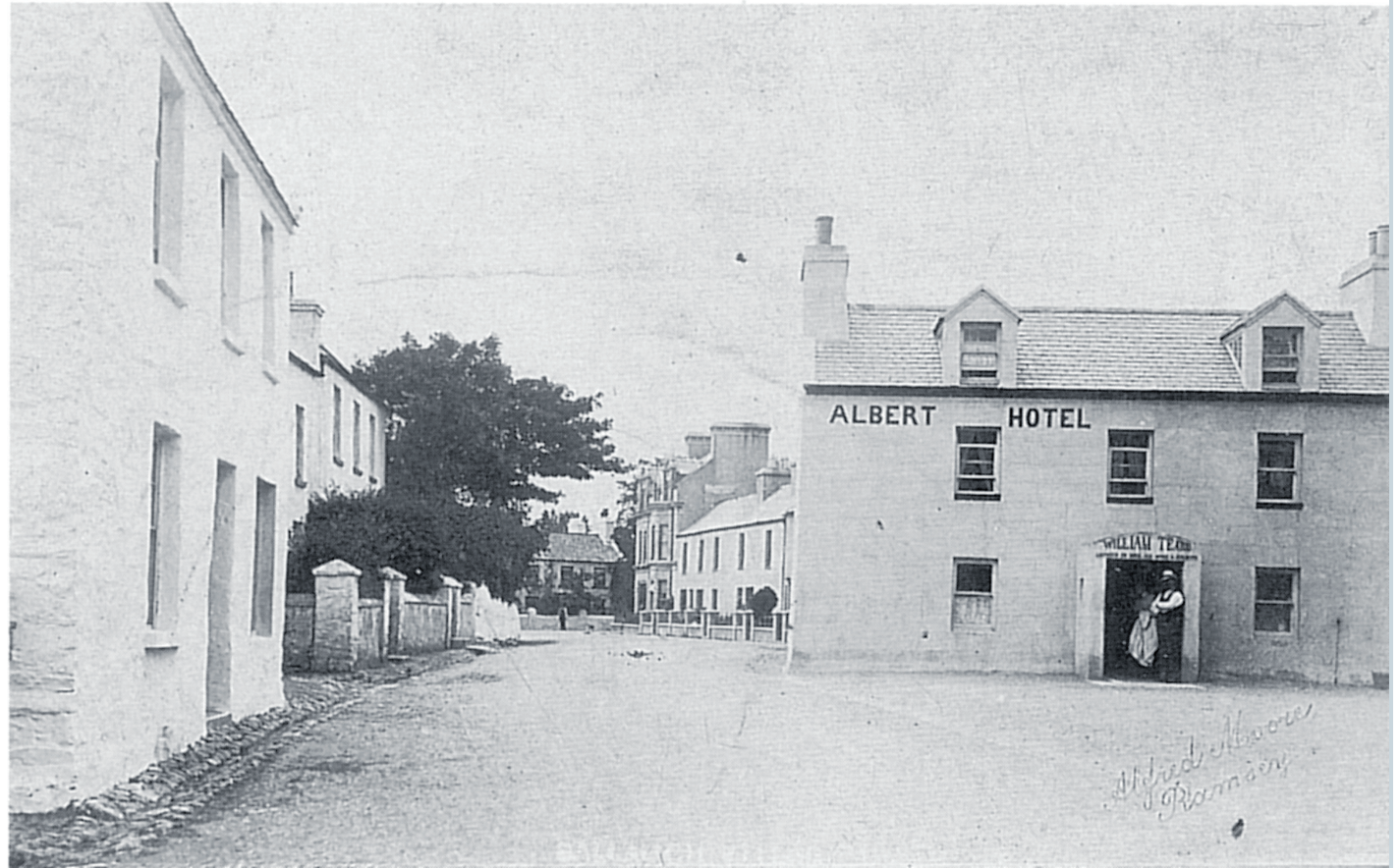
One of the first things we did as a group was to hold an exhibition where we encouraged people to display and lend any old images they had of the village. This resulted in a collection of snapshots, particularly of the village streetscene, which is remarkably unaltered.

Changes were made for road safety reasons. For example, The Albert Hotel was reduced in size to facilitate road widening in the 1960s. The pre-1879 image of T Jelly's Old North Inn shows the garden wall. Perhaps this is the wall described in the inquest of Karl Gall, who is commemorated on a plaque in the village: 'If a rider did not take the bridge on the right, he came face to face with a garden wall. That apparently happened to Gall, who tried to correct the position he was in, and that caused him to part from his machine..'

One of the founder members of the trust, Peter Robins, was a keen rail enthusiast and quickly highlighted the dilapidated railway goods shed as both a problem and an opportunity. Villagers had protested against the shed being converted into an MEA substation, so a new one was built alongside it.

Ballaugh Parish Commissioners owned the building and used it for storage, but it was scruffy and deteriorating. A lease was signed in April 2012 and a scramble for fundraising began. The then Manx Heritage Foundation agreed to fund essential re-pointing work. The Manx Lottery Trust provided support but the Edward Lewis Trust was our biggest benefactor.

We were able to ask some of Mr Lewis's descendants to open the goods shed in May 2014. It is used as an exhibition space, opening during Manx National Heritage visit-



The Albert pub in Ballaugh in 1905 and, right, same scene today

ing weekends and for special events. The exhibitions have ranged from the obvious rail content to art, music and a celebration of the centenary of Ballaugh Children's Day. We happily open on request for rail enthusiasts and Ballaugh School regularly visits.

This past autumn, after a donation of scrap material from Manx Rail Projects and transport from Mezeron, the committee laid track outside the shed in the eventual hope of having rolling stock or an engine to display. The joy of this project has been in the enthusiasm and hard work of volunteers but also the willingness of charities and businesses to chip in and support.

The continued use of the building is even more impor-

tant as the railway station was sadly demolished to make way for a bungalow. The station master's house, once called 'Railway View', was renamed 'The Garden House' and, more recently, 'Bluebell Cottage'. Older residents still know it as 'Station View', however.

Ballaugh Heritage Trust uses and contributes to the research on other buildings.

We hold most of our meetings in Ballaugh Bowling Club. A talk last year described how villagers bought an old army hut from Jurby and used it as the basis for the clubhouse.

The former Ravensdale Castle Hotel was once the venue for parish celebrations. The current owner is a kind supporter and allowed us to hold our annual general meet-



ing there in 2008.

Ballaugh Parish Hall was the focus of our attention in 2010 and 2011. The hall is

owned by The Walker Trust, which is run by the Vicar and Wardens of Ballaugh and leased to Ballaugh Par-

ish Commissioners. In 1720 Thomas Corraige, of Lezayre, gave a piece of land to Dr William Walker. Walker gave the



Jelly's Old North Inn in a historic photograph, and, right, the same scene today with the public house renamed as The Raven



A late Victorian or Edwardian view of the road past the milliner's and butcher's shops and The Albert and, right, the same scene today



The Main Road through Ballaugh, looking south, before widening and, right, the same scene today

benefit of the land to Ballaugh, where he was vicar for the 'promoting of religion and piety... and for the perpetual use and advantage of the school'.

By 1906, the trust was not being made use of, so it was put before the Chancery Court and resulted in money to be 'used to erect a Sunday school and church room'.

Fundraising got into full swing and John Thomas Boyde of Ramsey was appointed architect. Volunteers carted stone from the quarry at Gobby-Volley near Quarry Bends. The hall cost £1,105 to build and furnish. It is a huge part of community life and is used by Brownies, Scouts, Mums and Tots, Children's Day sport and parties, TT teas, car boot sales, the badminton club, public meetings and private parties.

Obvious buildings worth a visit are the churches. The beautiful Old Church at The Cronk was put on the Protected Buildings register in 1983. Those famous gateposts are



Ballaugh Goods Shed has been restored and is now used for a range of events by the community

still leaning!

The New Church was commenced in 1830 and has recently benefited from a restoration of the stained glass (assisted by the Isle of Man Victorian Society) as well as some determined fundraising. Methodist buildings have fared less well with chapels and halls being demolished.

falling down or converted to homes.

Worth a visit are the tholans at The Purt. The social history of the valley was set out in a fundraising book in 2011 From Travail to Tranquility – The Social History of Glen Dhoo. Work by stonemasons capped the top of the walls at the lower farm ensur-

ing this atmospheric ruin stands for a few more years yet – again funded by donation and goodwill. The upper farm and mill were not so fortunate and crumble slowly into the bracken.

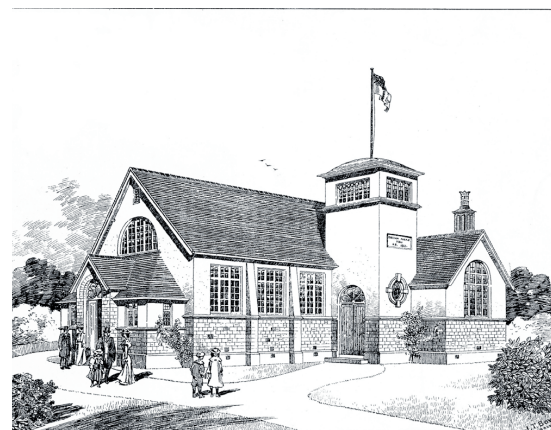
The Isle of Architecture awareness-raising initiative has made us consider what other buildings we should be researching and celebrating in our area.

We have been lucky to work with homeowners renovating property to record and display their images, but there is more we can do.

A project combining new photography with historical research is being discussed.

If you have research, deeds or photographs to share, please get in touch or come to one of our events.

For further details see <http://ballaugh.org>, email Bridgeatballaugh@manx.net or find us on Facebook at <https://en-gb.facebook.com/ballaugh.org>



Ballaugh Parish Hall

Ravensdale's lady philanthropist

When researching the history of the parish hall, it

soon became apparent that the biggest benefactor of the project was Mrs Ethel Cross – she donated £47 and 15s in all.

Although charitable giving was not an obligation, it was certainly Christian. But who was Mrs Cross?

Ethel had been Ethel Clare Smith, born in Leicestershire. Her father Joseph had been an architect. There is a story that she had been an actress but I have so far failed to back this up. She married James, a wealthy industrialist from Urmston, Lancashire. A book by David Craine states: 'He was responsible for the extension of the original Kelly house of the early 19th century in which the clock tower is a prominent feature. The doorway of the main entrance has been said to be a copy of the west doorway of a Liverpool Church – St Anne's Aigburth'.

Or could the designs have been influenced by Ethel's late father?

The Manx Church Magazine of 1893 states: 'We regret to have to record the death of Mr Chadwick, of Ravensdale, who was a constant and liberal friend to the poor of Ballaugh, who we fear greatly miss him'.

James left over £75,000 in his will (over £8 million today). Mrs Chadwick used to give a penny to the child who opened her carriage door on a Sunday morning at church, so she was a popular lady indeed!

Ethel had married William Cross by 1895 and sold The Ravensdale to James Masson Wikeley in 1920. Cross was a naturalist and his son became an 'Importer of wild beasts, birds and reptiles'. There have been rumours of a bear pit being sited at Ravensdale but that is so far unsubstantiated. Cross died and Ethel married an American Doctor called William Jameson. They lived in London but spent time in Italy.

Ethel died in 1932. Her will states: 'I desire that I may be buried with my late dear husband James Chadwick'. Accordingly, Ethel's body was brought back from Surrey and she was buried with James. The grave is near the New Church entrance and feature ornamental iron railings, Lancashire roses and carved column. The Church Magazine wrote that 'she always took the greatest interest in the Island and this parish. She was a most gracious and generous person, and having the capacity to give, gave willingly and liberally'.



Captain of the Parish Edgar Cowin and Commissioner Will Radcliffe give up their weekend to work on the heritage display outside the old railway goods shed