

# Securing the Future of Manx Gaelic

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## Introduction

Against all odds, Manx Gaelic has clawed itself back from the verge of extinction over the past thirty years. It is more than surprising that a language declared dead by academics and rejected by the Manx community some thirty years ago is rapidly growing in popularity, has steadily increasing numbers of speakers and has recently received substantial Government backing through the introduction of Manx Gaelic medium education in September 2001.

This chapter offers an explanation for the remarkable change in fortunes for Manx and chronicles the first attempts at language planning undertaken by the Manx Government in the mid 1980s and 1990s. It is, however, first appropriate to contextualise these developments with a brief overview of the historical development of the Manx language.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that distinctions between Scottish, Irish and Manx Gaelic began to emerge in the 13th to 14th century during the tumultuous period following the collapse of the Norse kingdom of Mann and the Isles and prior to the long settled period of English control through the Stanleys. The first written evidence for the existence of Manx Gaelic as a language or dialect separate from the other Gaelic languages appears as late as 1611 with Bishop Phillips' translation of the Book of Common Prayer (Moore 1893). It is generally accepted that Phillips' orthography formed the basis for the split between Manx and its larger linguistic neighbours, Irish and Scottish Gaelic and that this split was later cemented by the extensive biblical and religious translations of Bishop Wilson. This view was however challenged by Dr Nicholas Williams of University College, Dublin in his Ned Maddrell Memorial Lecture, 'Aspects of the history of

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations

DoE Isle of Man Department of Education.

GU *Report of the Select Committee on the Greater Use of Manx Gaelic, Tynwald (18/06/85).*

T7 *Report of Proceedings of Tynwald Court*  
(Isle of Man Government, 12th December 1984).

Manx' (1998 unpublished), in which he cites the similarities between early written Manx and that of the Book of the Dean of Lismore as evidence that Manx orthography was brought to Mann from Scotland in the 16th century. With the exception of the Stanley stronghold in Castletown, Manx Gaelic was universally spoken in Mann until the 1765 Revestment Act by which the Duke of Atholl sold the Isle of Man to the British Crown. This led to the collapse of the Manx economy and significant emigration requiring the previously relatively isolated Manx people to use English at the expense of their native tongue.

The move to English was accelerated by immigration from North West England (1790-814) and the emergence in the 1830s of mass tourism in the Isle of Man. Although the 19th Century began with the overwhelming majority of residents speaking Manx, by the time of the 1901 census, the number of speakers had fallen to 4,419 – only 8.1% of the population. By 1921 the figures had fallen to around 1.5% and they continued to decline until the 1961 census when only 165 people (0.34%) spoke the language. Despite a slight improvement by 1971 (up to 0.52%) the language appeared doomed and when the last traditional native speaker, Ned Maddrell, died in 1974, many academics declared the Manx language to be extinct. Indeed, no question on Manx was asked in the 1981 census. From this desperate position, the 1991 census made surprising reading: 740 people were recorded as being able to speak, read or write Manx - around 1% of the population. This has risen to 2.2% in the 2001 census.

Manx was not officially taught in the schools and many people believed that it had no practical use in the modern world, so why did these people choose to learn Manx, bearing in mind that prior to 1991 there was little support available to adult learners? The Isle of Man Act 1958 heralded the beginning of more than two decades of significant constitutional reform which saw a democratic, responsible Manx government emerge from the shadows of British colonial rule. The 1950s and early sixties had been a time of high unemployment in Mann, so the Manx Government, keen to exercise some of its newly acquired powers, in the sixties and seventies, introduced changes to the tax system aimed at attracting new residents to the Isle of Man (Kermode 2001).

The new resident policies led to massive social and cultural upheaval with population growth of 13% in the sixties followed by a 21% growth in the seventies. The arrival of so many outsiders placed a severe strain on the close-knit traditional Manx communities and saw the rapid growth of nationalist politics. By the end of the 1970s Mec Vannin (the Manx Nationalist Party) came very close to winning a number of seats in the House of Keys. Following the initial shock caused by the arrival of so many new residents, many Manx people were searching for a sense of identity and purpose. Urged on by the common perception that Government and new residents alike were treating the Manx as second-class citizens, a number of Manx people and some incomers looked to the Manx language and its associated culture to re-establish a strong Manx identity (Gawne 2000a, 20-32; Gawne 2000b, 139-143).

With the confidence gained from Mann's growing constitutional independence perhaps influenced by the upsurge in popular support for the nationalist cause, the ideas of moderate nationalism began to be accepted by mainstream politicians. With an increasing and already significant vocal minority supporting the Manx language and culture, Charles Cain, Member of the House of Keys (MHK) for Ramsey, placed the

following motion before Tynwald (Cain, Tynwald Proceedings, T7 17).

Tynwald is of the opinion:

(1) That Manx Gaelic should be supported and encouraged by all agencies of Government and Boards of Tynwald so far as they are practically able.

(2) That all official oaths and declarations should be able to be made in Manx Gaelic or English at the option of the person making any such oath or declaration.

(3) That all documents expressed in Manx Gaelic shall have equal official and legal standing as documents expressed in English.

(4) That where places, roads or streets are bilingually named in English and Manx Gaelic, the use of the Manx name should have the same official and legal standing as the use of the English name.

The motion was put to Tynwald on Wednesday 12th December 1984, and directly followed Tynwald's agreement of a declaratory resolution that: '1986 be designated Manx Heritage Year' (Kerruish, Tynwald Proceedings, T7 16-17). Charles Kerruish, Speaker of the House of Keys (SHK), had defended this resolution by asserting that 'this Government and recent Governments have shown an astonishing disregard for the need to both preserve and promote that (Manx) Heritage'.

In commending his motion on the language to Tynwald, Charles Cain declared that his motion: '... is not here to enforce any set of cultural values. What it does is to enable a Manxman to use his own language with pride and to express his own nationality without being made to feel second rate' (Cain T7 19). Referring to the second part of his motion he said: '... Are Gaelic speakers therefore to take it that the use of the language on Tynwald Day is merely a sop to the peasants, or merely a tourist gimmick? Either way it is an insult to our culture and to our forebears. Either it is an official language or it is not, and for myself I feel it is only right that any Manxman should have the right to take official oaths in the Manx Gaelic language' (Cain T7 19-20).

Mr Cain concluded by summarising his view as follows: 'This debate is in general about how this court regards its cultural heritage as embodied in the Manx language. Is it worth fostering or not? Is the Manx language something important to our cultural heritage or not? I believe it is, and I believe that by supporting this resolution it is the least that you can do' (Cain T7 20).

Only Eddie Lowey, Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) spoke against the motion: '... I do not believe that there is any pressure from within the Island for this and I am not going to be branded less of a patriot to the Isle of Man as a Manxman because I do not happen to speak Manx Gaelic or, even more important, understand it. That may be wicked of me, it may be disloyal in some eyes; I do not particularly believe it is' (Lowey T7 21). Mr Lowey concluded by giving us an insight into the main concern of those who were not in favour of supporting the language: 'I do not accept in total my good friend from Ramsey's prognostication that somehow a country is less of a country if it does not have its own language. It may be in someone's eyes essential. I would disagree with that; I would say it may be desirable, but at what cost? I am not certain that cost is an acceptable one at this moment in time ...' (Lowey T7 21).

Mr Cain received support from the Speaker, with Dominic Delaney MHK finally making the following remarks which in essence describe the desired outcome of the

motion: '... as far as I am concerned, ... probably one of the major things we will do in the life of this Government is get some backbone to the Isle of Man, if we can do it by this way, even though members might never even be able to speak a word of Manx I know that maybe my children or my grandchildren might have the opportunity and encouragement to do so' (Delaney T7 22). An amendment to the motion was moved and carried – that the resolution be referred to a Committee for consideration and report. Four MHKs, Messers Cain, Maddrell and Moore and Mrs Christian, and one MLC, Mr Lowey were elected on to what was soon to become the Select Committee on the Greater Use of Manx Gaelic.

### **The Select Committee on the Greater Use of Manx Gaelic**

The Select Committee spent six months considering the motion seeking evidence from interested parties either directly or through advertisements in the press. The bulk of evidence from the general public was from individuals and societies who wished to see greater use of Manx, fourteen of the seventeen letters received being strongly supportive of Mr Cain's motion.

Of the three letters opposing the motion, two show considerable opposition if not hostility towards the proposals. The first from the Isle of Man Bank uses alarmist rhetoric to suggest that every Bank branch, shop and business in Man would be forced to employ Manx speakers if the motion were carried. The second letter from a private member of the public launches a blistering attack on: '... an apparent attempt ... being made by a small vociferous and almost totally unrepresentative minority to give greater emphasis to Manx Gaelic to an extent that it could affect detrimentally the economic well-being of the whole Island'. He concluded by saying: 'From private discussion I have had throughout the Island, I believe there is an overwhelming majority who have little or no concern for the Manx language' (Oates GU).

The Committee received a mixed response from nineteen Government agencies and officials. Deemster Luft and the IoM Post Office Authority in particular provided very negative responses to the motion. However, in general those opposed to the proposals did at least support the sentiment of the motion. Their opposition centred rather on the lack of staff available to provide translations, the potential costs of producing all forms and leaflets in Manx and English, and delays in customer service if business were to be allowed to be conducted through Manx.

In total, fourteen Government respondents expressed some degree of opposition, though twelve of these conceded that there were some merits in the motion. Those in favour generally expressed some sympathy to the preservation of the language and most were in favour of bilingual signs, letter heads and notices. The Board of Education explained that its policy was for Manx heritage and the environment to be studied at primary schools with the teaching of Manx as an optional subject. It also was planning to introduce a Manx studies course at one secondary school (though this never fully materialised) and was supporting an O-level course in Manx at the College of Further Education.

Undoubtedly the most positive response came from the Manx Museum and National Trust (latterly known as Manx National Heritage), which offered overwhelming support for Mr Cain's motion. The Trust pointed out that: 'while accepting that Manx speakers represent a small minority of the community, it is a growing minority and the fact that indigenous language acts as a badge of cultural identity elevates the importance of Manx above its current minority status'. The Trust wished to go further than the original motion stating that the Trust: '... while supporting the principle of the resolution, would favour a clear, unambiguous and positive statutory declaration of general application to the effect that the Manx language has the same legal status in the Isle of Man as the English language' (Harrison GU).

The Report of the Select Committee on the Greater Use of Manx Gaelic was presented to Tynwald on the 10th July 1985 and approved without further debate. In the general observations at the beginning of the Report it set out the following statement of philosophy which was fundamental to its consideration of the four sections of Mr Cain's original motion: '... the use of Manx Gaelic should be encouraged wherever possible and practicable'. In conclusion the committee reported that: '... until a more significant proportion of the population is familiar with the language, its integration into day to day life, particularly in Government, will perforce be limited' (GU 2.3 and 7.2). The committee pressed for the introduction of more Manx studies courses in schools but was keen to stress that it did not wish to force Manx down the throats of a reluctant population.

The recommendations of the Report approved by Tynwald were as follows:

(a) Tynwald declares its intent that the preservation and promotion of the Manx Gaelic should be an objective of the Isle of Man Government.

(b) The Board of Education in conjunction with the Manx Heritage Foundation should provide foundation courses in Manx studies for all pupils in both primary and secondary schools with opportunities for further specific courses on a voluntary basis and to that end should also provide courses for teachers. We also recommend that an O-level course be created in Manx studies.

(c) Boards and Departments should use bi-lingual signs for offices, vehicles and on notepaper and should, wherever possible and practical, make greater use of the Manx Gaelic insofar as this can be done without increasing costs or reducing efficiency.

(d) The Ceremonial Oaths entered in the *Liber Juramentorum* should be capable of being taken in Manx Gaelic provided certain conditions are fulfilled and appropriate legislation introduced where necessary.

(e) The Manx Heritage Foundation should establish a voluntary Manx Language Advisory Commission.

(f) The use of bi-lingual documentation should not be discouraged provided such use does not deleteriously affect commercial activity or the expeditious administration of justice.

(g) Street name signs and village and town boundary signs should be bi-lingual except where the traditional Manx name is the accepted form (GU 7.3).

## **Outcomes: first attempt at language planning**

The approval by Tynwald of these recommendations provided the first significant attempt at language planning by Government. Regrettably, no agency was identified to ensure that these recommendations were acted upon. Despite the lack of consideration of an implementation strategy, this report established some important principles not least that Tynwald believe that support of Manx Gaelic should be an objective of the Manx Government.

Most of the recommendations of the report have been acted upon in one form or another though importantly the proviso that support should be given only where there are no significant cost implications has limited the implementation of recommendations to at best the minimum level suggested. It could be argued that recommendation (a) led to the establishment of the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee, although this is more widely credited to the persistence of Peter Karran MHK, a keen supporter of the language and founder of *Caarjyn ny Gaelgey* (friends of the Manx language). The Gaelic Broadcasting Committee (*Bing Ymskeaylley Gaelgagh*) was established following an amendment to the Broadcasting Act and since its formation has been very effective in bringing more Manx Gaelic broadcasts to Manx Radio. Unfortunately, the committee's narrow brief excludes support for TV, video and film, so limiting its overall potential.

Undoubtedly the aspiration of recommendation (a) has helped encourage the growth of Government support for Manx, but it is also true that agencies, societies and individuals have had to work hard even to attain the modest compliance of Government to the 1985 Report's recommendations. In the late 1980s there was further nationalist unrest prompted once more by the popular view that incomers, particularly those in the finance sector, were taking control of the Isle of Man and destroying Manx culture and identity. In 1990, the year following the imprisonment of three nationalists for burning down luxury homes, Government commissioned a Gallup survey on the Quality of Life in the Isle of Man which found that 36% of respondents wished to see Manx taught in schools. This significant finding came at the same time as the Department of Education (DoE) was being approached by the Manx Language Working Party, among others, to have Manx introduced into the school system. So, in January 1992, nearly seven years after Tynwald approved recommendation (b), after significant nationalist unrest and considerable lobbying by the Manx Heritage Foundation and the Manx Language Working Party, the Manx Language Programme was introduced by the DoE, with the first official Manx classes being held in September 1992.

In December 1995 the DoE produced a report on the Future Development of the Manx Language, which was received by Tynwald <sup>2</sup> (see below). It explained that:

Following a decision by the Council of Ministers, a Manx Language Officer (funded by the Manx Heritage Foundation for two years) and two peripatetic Manx teachers (funded by DoE) were appointed. They took up their posts in January 1992 in order to introduce the formal teaching of the language in schools. A decision was taken to offer a 'taster' Manx course to all pupils aged seven and over (including secondary school pupils), ... Pupils would take Manx for a nominal half-hour per week on an optional basis ... (DoE).

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<sup>2</sup>*The Future Development of the Manx Language - A Report to Tynwald*, (December 1995) 6.1.1.

To date the Manx Language Programme has been well supported with somewhere between 20-40 % of all school children attending optional Manx lessons at some time during their school years. The DoE has enhanced its Manx language provision in recent years by increasing its staff by one to three teachers and a Manx Language Officer, and by introducing the Teisht Chadjin Ghaelgagh (GCSE equivalent in Manx Gaelic). So more than ten years after Tynwald approval, recommendation (b) was more or less achieved at least in relation to the Manx language, if not for Manx studies. Even though the delay in introducing specific Manx language courses on a voluntary basis was undoubtedly unnecessary, it cannot be overestimated how significant this introduction was. For nearly ten years now, large numbers of children in Man have been given access to the language of the country in which they live. Children enjoy their Manx lessons and importantly many of them are vociferous in upholding their right to learn Manx Gaelic. It seems that the reasons given by the select committee for limiting the support given to the language are being superseded, as more and more children are leaving school with Manx and a more significant proportion of the population is becoming familiar with the language.

Recommendation (c) was enthusiastically adopted by most Government agencies, at least in terms of bilingual headed paper and signs on vehicles, though there are still a few who have chosen not to do this. Adoption of bilingual signs for offices and buildings has not been so well supported, as the aspiration to make greater use of the language without increasing costs was self-defeating. Despite this, the official use of Manx by Government Departments has done much to raise the perceived status of the language.

During the summer of 2001, over sixteen years after it was first approved, recommendation (d) calling for the Ceremonial Oaths to be available in Manx was finally achieved. Despite it having been possible for some oaths to be taken in Manx for a number of years, such as the oath taken by Members of the House of Keys, the production of translations of oaths for the remaining offices recommended in the 1985 Report was only completed in July 2001.

The Manx Heritage Foundation established Coonceil ny Gaelgey, the Manx Language Advisory Council in 1986 as agreed in recommendation (e) of the 1985 Report. However, Coonceil ny Gaelgey confines itself to the production of authoritative translations and the production of new words where gaps in the language appear. It does not advise on the development and promotion of Manx, nor does it advise on the teaching of Manx, both of which were suggested in the Report.

Recommendation (f) has had a mixed response. Some Manx is used in documentation - most significantly by the IoM Water Authority, however, the specific use of Manx on bank notes, coins and stamps has not been addressed. The successful issue of stamps for Heritage Year 1986 and for the centenary of Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, the Manx Language Society 1999 are notable exceptions to this. Recently an amendment placed by Peter Karran MHK to a Banking Act passing through Tynwald led to the requirement that all banks accept cheques written in the Manx language.

Recommendation (g) has received a similarly mixed response. Recently Douglas Corporation has undertaken an extensive exercise to replace all its street and road signs with bilingual ones. In sharp contrast, other local authorities such as Castletown have removed bilingual signs and replaced them with versions in English only.

So the recommendations of the 1985 Report, though haphazard and somewhat limited in their implementation, have largely been acted upon and on the whole they have led to considerable improvements in support for, and in the status of, the Manx language.

## **Second phase of language planning**

Following the successful introduction by DoE of its Manx language teaching programme in 1992 an effort was made to update and strengthen the 1985 recommendations with a DoE Report to Tynwald on the Future Development of the Manx Language. It appeared in December 1995 and was primarily written by the DoE's Manx Language Officer, Dr Brian Stowell. It focussed on recommendations for extending the Manx language provision offered by the DoE as well as highlighting areas to be addressed by other government and non government agencies.

Dr Stowell expressed some concern – privately at the time and more publicly since – that the report asked for more than Tynwald and the general public would accept, indeed, that it sought more than was practicably achievable. The retention in the report, by senior DoE officials, of an ambitious recommendation for recruitment of teachers and an insistence by certain politicians that the entire report be placed before Tynwald, meant that a motion for the report's approval was convincingly defeated. An amendment to the motion, which called for Tynwald approval of the report's main recommendations, but not the controversial recommendation to recruit 9.3 teachers over 5 years, was defeated by only one vote with the report eventually being received by Tynwald. While this defeat meant that the report has no official status, it was significant in that nearly half the members of Tynwald were prepared to back all but one of its extensive range of recommendations for language development.

The DoE Report, Government's second attempt at serious language planning, is being used by DoE as a guide to Manx Language development and policy. Many of its recommendations have been implemented: a GCSE equivalent course has been introduced, and work to produce an A-level equivalent is well under way; the new Manx Education Bill provides greater security for Manx in the curriculum; a Manx Medium class was introduced in September 2001. These, and other less significant aspects of the report have been successfully implemented. Unfortunately, little or no action has been taken to introduce effective teacher training or to address the understaffing of the Manx language programme, leaving the hub of Manx language development at significant risk.

## **Help from Gaelic Scotland – Grass Roots Development**

In February 1996, a few months after Tynwald received the DoE Report, Chris Sheard and Phil Gawne visited a number of Scottish Gaelic development agencies in Inverness and the Isle of Skye. Chris, who was leader of Manx Gaelic playgroup Yn Chied Chesmayd, organised the visit with help from Finlay MacLeod of CNSA, the Scottish Gaelic Pre-school Council, and Margaret MacIver of Gaelic Development agency, CnaG. The visit inspired the formation of Mooinjer Veggey (MV), the Manx pre-school organisation, which was established within a year of this trip (Gawne 2000a).

MV has provided some of the most exciting Manx language developments in recent years.<sup>3</sup> By July 2001, 3% of children starting school in the Isle of Man had been to one of MV's groups, which aim to bring children from non Manx speaking homes to fluency in understanding and semi-speaker level in Manx Gaelic. MV's greatest success has been in providing easy access to Manx Gaelic for young families, people who previously were not attracted to the language. From its inception in January 1997 involving five enthusiastic families who were already committed to supporting Manx language and culture, MV has grown to the extent that in September 2001 it provided a Manx pre-school service for over 80 families, most of whom had little or no initial contact with Manx. Whereas Manx Gaelic had primarily been a male dominated pursuit, MV has also been successful in encouraging women to access the Manx language by providing child-care jobs for around twelve part time staff. These successes are all the more remarkable in that, unlike the situation in the United Kingdom, where pre-school groups are primarily Government funded, MV has only recently been successful in attracting large scale Government support (50% for year ending 31.8.01), with fees paid by parents making up a significant amount of MV's income.

The second important grass roots development to emerge following the trip to Scotland was the Manx Gaelic festival, Feailley Ghaelgagh (FG). The first FG was run in November 1996 with the aim of promoting the value and importance of the language throughout the Isle of Man. The week long festival is now a recognised feature of Manx cultural life and has been particularly successful in persuading business and Government sectors to use the language. FG includes concerts, ceilis, workshops and exhibitions for the general public as well as specific events for Manx speakers. Whilst it attracts around 800 people to specific events during the week, it also becomes a focus for many businesses and Government departments to use simple Manx greetings. Extensive advertising in the newspapers and on the radio ensure that most people in the country are aware of the language.

### **Third phase of language planning**

Another significant development which came out of the trip to Scotland was the establishment of the part-time post of Manx Language Development Officer (a post currently held by the writer). Due to the overwhelming demand for Manx lessons in the schools, the DoE Manx Language Officer's time was soon primarily focussed on the schools language programme. Advice from workers in the Scottish Gaelic movement made clear that there was a huge amount of development work needed in other domains: in pre-school, for adult learners and in general promotion. The DoE officer clearly did not have the time to deal with these areas. Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh was soon convinced of the need for an additional Manx language officer (this was also recommended in the DoE report - 1995). Following an approach to the Manx Heritage Foundation by Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh the part time post of yn Greinneyder (Manx Language Development Officer) was established in April 1998, jointly funded by the Manx Heritage Foundation and Manx National Heritage.

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<sup>3</sup>Mooijer Veggey websites:

<http://www.mooijerveggey.esmartstudent.com>  
<http://www.mooijerveggey.iomonline.co.im>

The primary purpose of this post was the production of a language development plan – Government's third Manx language planning document. In essence the plan was devised to ensure that existing demand for Manx services is met as well as to ensure an ample supply of competent Manx Gaelic speakers well into the future. The main recommendations are based on sound language planning ideas from Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The most crucial development area identified by the plan is the provision of quality Manx Gaelic medium education. This is essential if Manx is ever to re-establish itself as the competently spoken, regularly used language of a significant part of our community. The other key recommendations of the report include greater financial support for Manx pre-school groups and, to address current Manx language needs, the establishment of a one-year-to-fluency Manx immersion course and the establishment of a full time development and support service.

The Manx Language Development Programme, approved by the Manx Heritage Foundation and Manx National Heritage in December 2000, has provided additional impetus to the development of the Manx language and already a number of its key recommendations have been implemented. The programme is being used by the Manx Heritage Foundation as a basis for its support of the Manx Gaelic language and the approval of the programme has led to the establishment of Bing ny Gaelgey an inter departmental language development committee involving the Department of Education, Manx Heritage Foundation and Manx National Heritage. There are many areas identified by the programme which need to be addressed, not least the continued marketing and promotion of Manx Gaelic throughout the Isle of Man. Undoubtedly the areas which will have the most significant effect on the future of the language are adequate teacher training and the development of quality teaching resources. There is every sign that Bing ny Gaelgey and its member organisations will provide the necessary support and funding to ensure that these areas are properly addressed.

## **A Linguistic and Cultural Phoenix**

Clearly the death and rebirth of Manx Gaelic can be strongly linked with the social and cultural turmoil which affected the Isle of Man for much of the 1970s and 1980s. Nationalist direct action and electoral success during these decades represented a distillation of wide felt misgivings over the decline in traditional life and loss of Manx identity. Perhaps spurred on initially as a reaction to nationalist activities, Government has shown increasing willingness to support Manx Gaelic with the late 1990s seeing a reluctant recruit converted to an unreserved enthusiast.

To many Manx people the language can never be a replacement for the traditional Manx way of life which has been so comprehensively undermined by the immigration of the past three decades. There is, however, a growing acceptance that it is one of only a handful of unique aspects of Manxness which can be used to ensure that a form of Manx identity survives into the future. As traditional Manxness is perceived to be further eroded and the proportion of Manx born residents on the Isle of Man continues to decline, this role of the Manx Gaelic language, in providing a new, all inclusive, Manx identity, looks set to expand for many years to come. With this strong need for the language established and the foundations for linguistic development largely in place, the future security of Manx Gaelic looks better than it has for centuries.

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