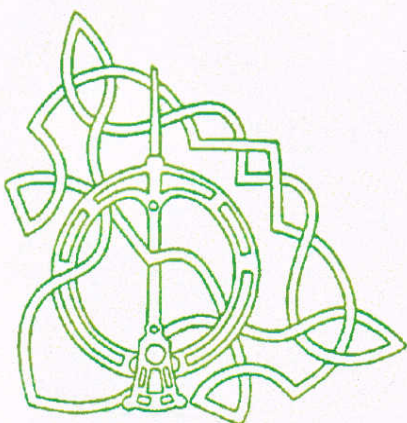




Britain in Bloom

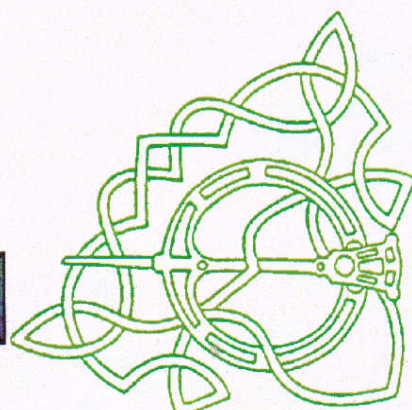
Laxey

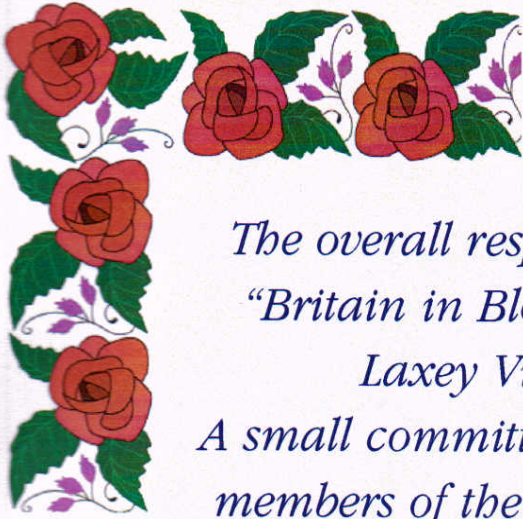
ISLE OF MAN



Centenary Year 1895 - 1995

Laxey Village Commissioners





The overall responsibility for preparing for "Britain in Bloom" fell principally on the Laxey Village Commissioners.

A small committee was formed from the nine members of the Board. Commissioners staff, the Laxey Traders Association and other local bodies all helped to ensure Laxey was looking its best for the visit of the Judges. The population of Laxey is approximately 1,400 and the judging route taken involved almost 50%, all of whom had some form of garden or floral display.

Laxey does not have any major companies to offer sponsorship. Everyone took responsibility for their own property and where necessary assisted each other.

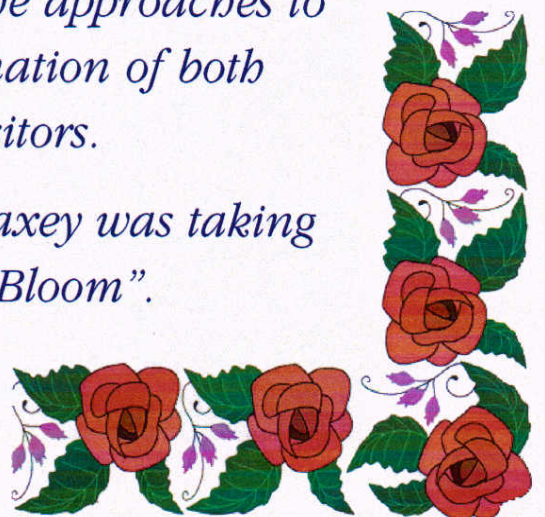
It was without doubt a Village affair.

The Laxey Village Commissioners gave an updated account of progress at their public monthly meetings. This was duly reported in the press and on Manx Radio.

From May 1999 both the Chairman, Andrew Smith, and the Parks and Gardens employee Raymond Clague, were interviewed a number of times for Manx Radio.

Signs were also erected at the approaches to the Village for the information of both residents and visitors.

Everyone was aware that Laxey was taking part in "Britain in Bloom".



Laxey takes its name from the Norse "Laxa" (salmon river). It has a rich heritage of industry, some of which continues today. These diverse industries blend with the natural setting of this unique Manx village.

Mining was the first major industry and earliest known activities date from 1781. Water power was of great importance and many ingenious methods were used to assist Laxey's industries. The Laxey Wheel (Lady Isabella), named after the wife of the then Lieutenant Governor, was constructed in 1854 and is the largest water wheel of its kind in the world. It remains one of the Isle of Man's major tourist attractions.



Judging Wednesday 11 August 1999

Laxey Village – Isle of Man

Meet Mr Raymond Clague – Parks and Gardens Employee

Judging Commences – New Inn – Commissioners Office

Private Garden – New Road – Mr & Mrs Robinson

Glen House Residential Home

Glen Garden – Top Car Park to Baldhoon Road

Private Garden – Baldhoon Road – Mr & Mrs Quayle

Station Approach

**Christ Church – Station – Rose Gardens – Heritage Implement
Display**

Blacks – Valley Gardens – Shrubbery – Brown's Cafe

Dumbell's Row – Heritage Shop – Fire Station – Laxey Wheel

Captain's Hill (Valley Gardens)

Private Gardens

Glen Road – Mr & Mrs Bowers – Mr & Mrs Kneale – Mr Douglas

Waterfall

Glen Road Terrace – Local Government Houses

**Harbour – Promenade – Back Shore Road – Shore Road –
Minorca Hill**

Private Garden – Quarry Road – Mr & Mrs Morrison

Camp Site

Private Garden – Quarry Road – Mrs Jacob

Minorca Hill – Ramsey Road

Brown's Cafe (Refreshments)

Judges Depart



Each year children are given bean and sunflower seeds to plant at school. They then continue to nurture and measure their growth at home.



The children of Laxey School keep the story of Laxey alive by performing each year in the Valley Gardens, the site where ore from the mine was washed. Dressed in Victorian costume they sing songs explaining the history of Laxey. From an early age this instills a sense of heritage and pride.



1894 saw the arrival of the Electric Railway in Laxey.
The Snaefell Mountain Railway also starts in Laxey and these continue to support
the local tourist industry.



While the development of Laxey owes much to Captain Richard Rowe it also produced its own entrepreneur and businessman Robert Williamson. He played a significant part in developing the prosperity of the village community. The most enduring of his ventures must be the Laxey Glen Gardens. Unlike other national glens, Laxey Glen forms an integral part of the village and has been the site of various forms of planting. In 1984 a detailed tree survey was carried out with some 410 trees being measured. It abounds with indigenous trees, shrubs, bird song and rich woodland flora.

One of the oldest and most imposing buildings in Laxey, the Glen Flour Mills was built in 1860 by Richard Rowe, Captain of Laxey Mines. He decided to build the mill here for two main reasons. Firstly to provide employment as the mines were beginning to be worked-out. Secondly, Rowe, being a Water Engineer, had a ready supply of water from the nearby Gley Roy River.

The Mill has a chequered history. Its Machinery has been upgraded and modernised and today it mills all Island produced grain for both bread making and flour.

St George's Woollen Mill is of the same era and following a continuous history still functions on traditional lines including the craft of handweaving.

The Pipe Factory, situated by the harbour, was originally an old granary built in 1830. It has been making smoking pipes since 1965 and is the last remaining producer of African Meerschaum. Its products are exported throughout the world and is yet another example of Laxey's diversity.

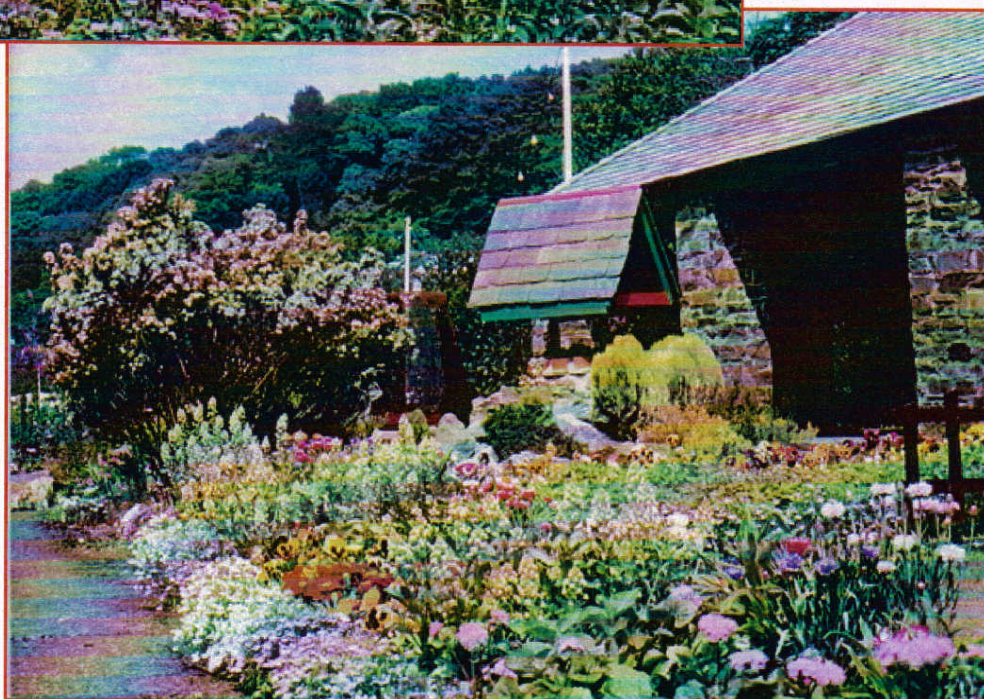


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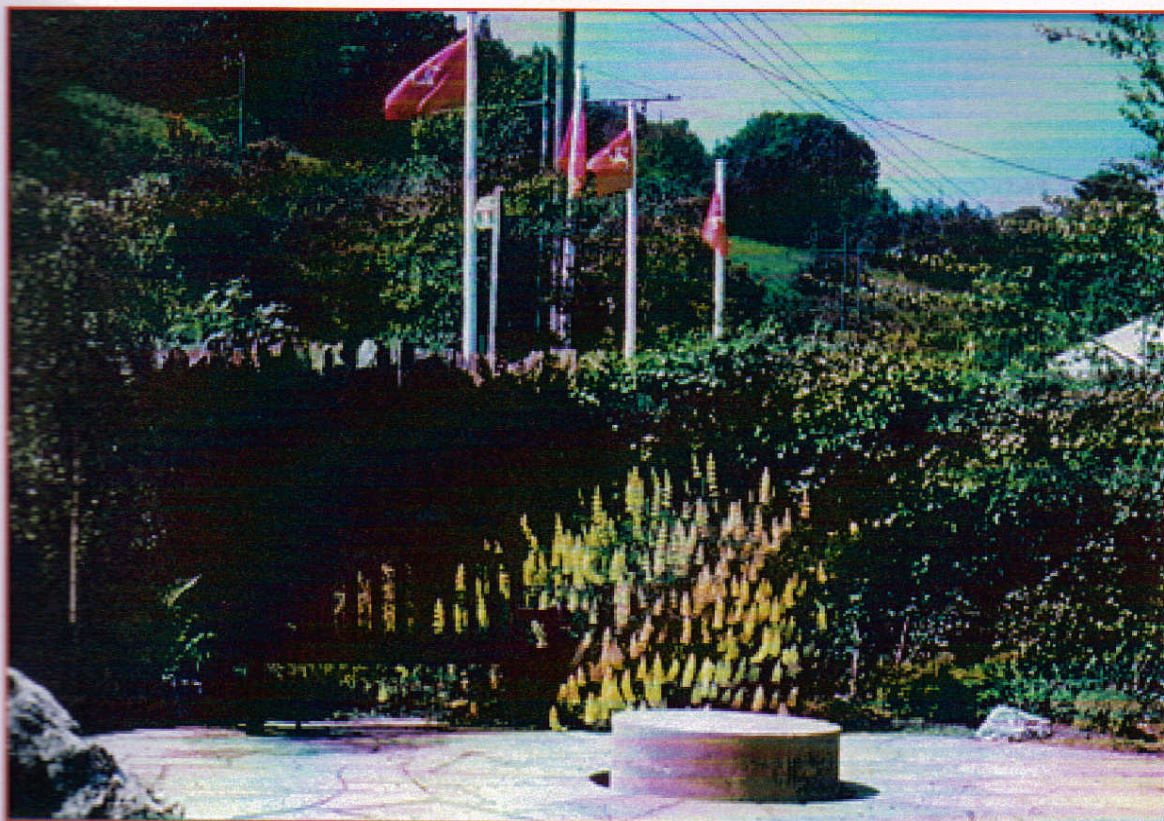
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Judges in a contemplative mood





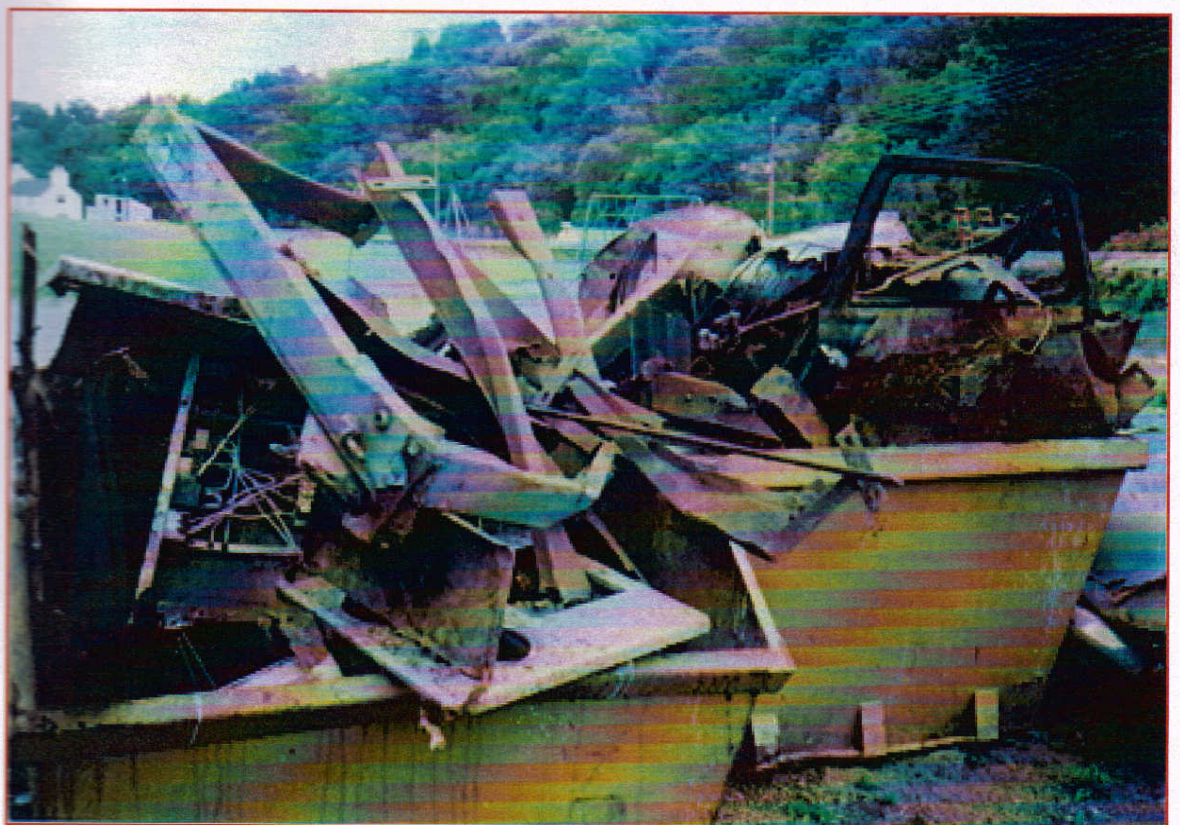
A quiet corner

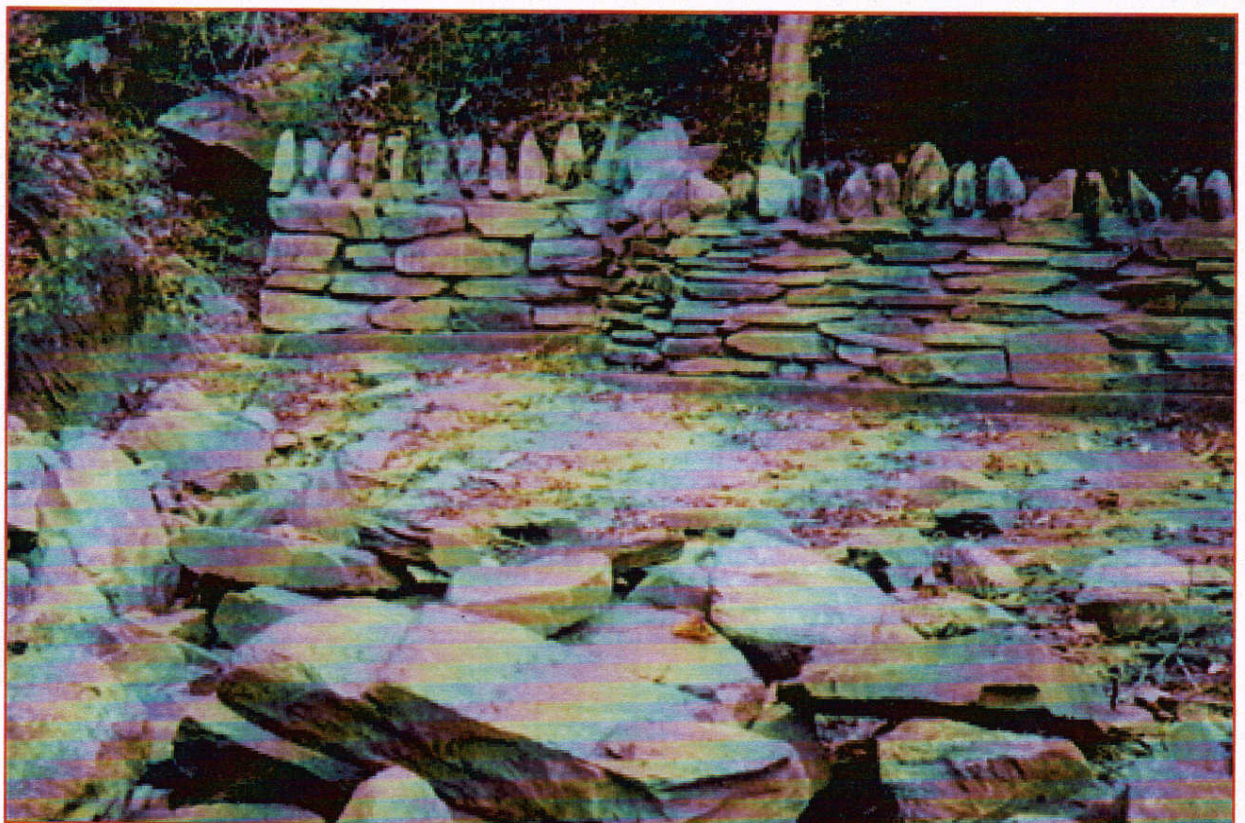


Natural beauty



From tip to tourism





Obscured by years of fly tipping, hard work by the Commissioners, assisted by Laxey Youth Club and the Isle of Man Probation Service, revealed . . .

. . . this splendid waterfall.

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Always a topic of conversation, this terrace of Local Government Houses excels in their floral displays. A combination of flair and dedication produces a sight to gladden the eye of all who pass by.



To commemorate the Centenary of the Laxey Village Commissioners (Local Authority) the school children designed and constructed a mosaic mural. This again develops a sense of responsibility and encourages a lasting interest in the village.

A further mural is planned for the Millennium.



Over the years, the Commissioners have jealously guarded the beauty and tranquillity of the Village of Laxey.

The development of the Laxey Wheel, the Glen Gardens, the Valley Gardens and the Rose Gardens along with its natural scenic splendour makes Laxey a truly unique village.

"PLANT IN TIME FOR 99!"

It is a great honour to have been chosen to represent the Island in the "Large Village Class" in next years Britain in Bloom Competition.

Over recent years Laxey Village Commissioners have invested a considerable amount of time and expense in soil preparation and floral displays. This was previously recognised when the village represented the Island in 1995.

Laxey benefits from natural beauty and, together with the skill and experience of Mr Raymond Clague (the Commissioners only manual employee) proves to residents and visitors alike an exceptional example of horticultural splendour.

I am sure the residents of Laxey will give their full support to the Commissioners as they rise to meet the challenge of representing the Island in 1999. It is important that all feel part of this major event and each contributes either singly in their own gardens or collectively.

"Plant in time for 99!"

Now is the time to start preparations and the Commissioners would welcome any achievable ideas from members of our community. Businesses too should become involved and the Commissioners will be contacting Laxey Traders Association with this in mind.

I sincerely hope all will treat this competition with energy and enthusiasm, thus giving Laxey and the Isle of Man the best chance of winning first prize.

It is truly a rare opportunity not to be missed.

Andrew Smith
Chairman Laxey Village Commissioners
6 October 1998