

TYNWALD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

First Report for the Session 2025-26

**Tynwald Honours:
Jean Thornton-Duesbery**

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There shall be a Standing Committee of the Court on Management of the Clerk of Tynwald's Office.

The Committee shall be chaired by the Speaker of the House of Keys, the Vice-Chairman shall be the President of Tynwald and it shall further be composed of two Members of the House of Keys and a Member of the Legislative Council.

The Committee shall -

- (i) oversee the management of the secretariat of the Office of the Clerk of Tynwald;
- (ii) ensure that necessary services are provided for Members of Tynwald, that appropriate resources are made available to allow for such services and that such resources are properly used;
- (iii) oversee the efficient and effective use of resources by the Clerk of Tynwald, who shall be the Accounting Officer for the Tynwald budget;
- (iv) provide authority for setting staffing levels and overall terms and conditions of service of the staff of the Office of the Clerk of Tynwald;
- (v) for the purposes of the Public Records Act 1999 be the Committee authorized to make decisions in relation to Tynwald papers;
- (vi) be the Tynwald Management Committee referred to in section 3 of the Tynwald Auditor General Act 2011, with the relevant powers and responsibilities in relation to the Tynwald Auditor General; and
- (vii) be the Tynwald Management Committee referred to in section 3 of the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration Act 2011, with the relevant powers and responsibilities in relation to the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration.

The Committee shall consider nominations of deceased persons for inclusion in the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour and may recommend to Tynwald the award of honours by the Court to living persons; and in relation to these duties –

- (i) the Committee shall report to Tynwald at least once during the life of each House of Keys, but not necessarily to make a recommendation;
- (ii) any recommendation made by the Committee shall be subject to the approval of a majority of the whole of Tynwald sitting in public and voting as one body;

- (iii) the Committee shall be responsible for the erection and continuing maintenance of the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour, which shall be maintained in a prominent position in the public part of the Precincts of Tynwald;
- (iv) a plaque shall be placed in a prominent position at a site in the Island appropriate to each person admitted to the Roll and the Committee may consider presenting a suitable memento to the family of the person concerned.

The Committee shall –

- (i) carry out its consultative functions under section 6(3) of the Payment of Members' Expenses Act 1989 as the body designated by the Payment of Members' Expenses (Designation of Consultative Body) Order 2022 (SD 2022/0324);
- (ii) consider and report to Tynwald on the emoluments of the Clerk of Tynwald;
- (iii) own the records of the Emoluments Committee established on 20th April 2010 and its predecessor Joint Committee.

The powers, privileges and immunities relating to the work of a committee of Tynwald include those conferred by the Tynwald Proceedings Act 1876, the Privileges of Tynwald (Publications) Act 1973, the Tynwald Proceedings Act 1984 and by the Standing Orders of Tynwald Court.

Committee Membership

The Hon J P Watterson SHK ex officio (Chair) (Rushen)

The Hon L D Skelly MLC ex officio (Vice-Chair)

Mr R Callister MHK (Onchan)

Mrs S L Maltby MHK (Douglas South)

Mrs K Morphet MLC

Copies of this Report may be obtained from the Tynwald Library, Office of the Clerk of Tynwald, Finch Road, Douglas, IM1 3PW (Tel: 01624 685500) or may be consulted at www.tynwald.org.im.

All correspondence with regard to this Report should be addressed to the Clerk of Tynwald, Legislative Buildings, Finch Road, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 3PW.

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To: The Hon. Laurence David Skelly MLC, President of Tynwald,
and the Hon. Council and Keys in Tynwald assembled

TYNWALD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
First Report for the Session 2025-26
Tynwald Honours: Jean Constance Thornton-Duesbery

I. Nominations for addition to the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour

1. We have decided to make one nomination for addition to the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour:
 - Nurse, magistrate, Guides leader and politician, Jean Thornton-Duesbery (1907-1997).

Jean Thornton-Duesbery

2. Jean Constance Catherine Thornton-Duesbery was born in London on 25th July 1907, to Charles Leonard and Ethel Nixon Thornton Duesbery.
3. She moved to the Isle of Man in 1925 when her father became Bishop of Sodor and Man. Though she returned to London after his death, her connection to the Island remained strong throughout her life.
4. Jean trained as a nurse and midwife at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, qualifying in 1931. She worked in East London and later served as a school nurse in Jerusalem from 1933 to 1939. With the outbreak of World War II, she returned to the Isle of Man, settling in Maughold.

5. Her public service career began with her election to the Isle of Man Education Authority in 1946, eventually becoming its chairman. She was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1956 and entered politics in 1966 as a Member of the House of Keys for Garff. Over the next decade, she served on numerous boards and committees.
6. Jean was also deeply involved in Girlguiding, leading local units and bequeathing land at Maughold on the Laxey to Ramsey Coast Road known as the Thornton-Duesbury Wood for the movement's use.
7. Her legacy is marked by a strong sense of duty, humour, and commitment to public welfare. She passed away in 1997 and is buried in Kirk Michael Churchyard.
8. A research paper produced by the Tynwald Research and Scrutiny Support team can be found at Appendix 1. This paper provides further information on Jean Thornton-Duesbery's life and various achievements.

Recommendation

That Tynwald approves the inclusion in the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour of Jean Thornton-Duesbery (1907-1997).

II. Background

The Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour

9. The Roll of Honour is designed to give formal recognition to deceased persons who have made an outstanding contribution to Manx life; the names of those included are listed in Annex A.
10. The recommended criteria for inclusion on the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour are:
 - 1) before the name of any person is recommended for inclusion in the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour that person must be shown to have disinterestedly or self-sacrificially exerted himself or herself to promote the well-being of the Isle of Man;
 - 2) no living person be considered for inclusion in the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour; and

- 3) inclusion in the Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour be not restricted to persons born in the Island or of Manx parentage.

Method of commemoration

11. The Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour is displayed in the entrance foyer of Legislative Buildings.
12. A more detailed record of each Manx Patriot is included within a dedicated section of the Tynwald website.¹
13. In June 2016 Tynwald approved the creation of a prominently located Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour Board and a Tynwald Honour Board. The Boards were made by the Manx Workshop for the Disabled and are located at St John's Chapel.

Function of the Committee

14. The Tynwald Honours Committee was established in December 1998, following recommendations made by the Select Committee on Manx Patriots, to propose names to Tynwald for inclusion in a Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour for deceased persons.
15. In December 2002 the Committee's remit was extended to recommend to Tynwald the awarding of honours to living Manx persons.
16. At the May 2018 sitting, Tynwald Court considered the 'First Report of the Tynwald Standing Orders Committee for the Session 2017-2018 – Suspension of Members; Organization of Committees; Other Matters' [PP No 2018/0074] and agreed to the recommendation that the functions of the Tynwald Honours Committee be added to the remit of the Tynwald Management Committee.

J P Watterson (Chair)

L D Skelly (Vice-Chair)

R Callister

S L Maltby

K Morphet

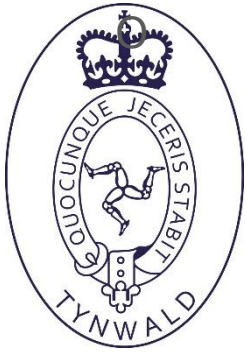
¹ <https://www.tynwald.org.im/Roll-of-Honour/Recipients>

III. Annex A: Manx Patriots' Roll of Honour

Godred Crovan	d. 1095	First King of Mann and the Isles
Edward Christian	1600-1661	Electoral Reformer
William Christian - Illiam Dhone	1608-1663	Manx Patriot
Rt Revd Thomas Wilson DD	1663-1755	Church and Educational Reformer and Historian
Rt Revd Isaac Barrow DD	1613-1680	Church and Educational Reformer
Eleanor (Nellie) Brennan	1792-1859	Nursed Cholera Victims
Thomas Edward Brown	1830-1897	Manx National Poet
Major Robert Henry Cain VC TD	1909-1974	Gallant and Distinguished Soldier
Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine CH KBE MHK	1853-1931	Author and Constitutional Reformer
Sir William Percy Cowley KBE	1886-1958	Constitutional Reformer and Culturalist
John Christian Curwen MP MHK	1756-1828	Agricultural Reformer
Mona Douglas MBE RBV	1898-1987	Poet, Folklorist and Collector
Sir James Gell CVO JP	1823-1905	Constitutional Reformer
Sir William Hillary Bt	1771-1847	Founder of RNLI
Sir Henry Charles Kerruish OBE LLD(hc) SHK CP	1917-2003	Reforming Parliamentarian
Arthur William Moore CVO JP SHK	1853-1909	Constitutional Reformer and Historian
Henry Bloom Noble	1816-1903	Public Benefactor
Sir Joseph Davidson Qualtrough CBE JP SHK	1885-1960	Constitutional Reformer
Captain John Quilliam RN	1771-1829	Distinguished Naval Officer
Marion Shimmin MHK	1879-1942	First Female MHK
Mavis Kelly LRAM	1926-2005	Musician and Teacher
James Brown	1815-1881	Democratic Reformer
Robert Fargher	1803-1863	Democratic Reformer
Samuel Norris MLC	1875-1948	Reforming Parliamentarian
William Kennish	1799-1862	Inventor, Explorer, Polymath

Archibald Knox	1864-1933	Artist, Designer and Teacher
Hector Duff OBE MM BEM TH	1919-2020	WWII Veteran
Sophia Morrison	1859-1917	Author, Editor and Linguist
Annie Bridson	1893-1985	Reformer and Campaigner

Appendix 1:
Jean Thornton-Duesbery - Research
Paper by the Tynwald Research &
Scrutiny Support Team



Jean Constance Thornton-Duesbery

Issued 30/04/2025

For: TMC

From: (Name redacted)

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1. Introduction

Miss Jean Constance Catherine Thornton-Duesbery was a nurse, magistrate, Guides leader, and politician who spent her life protecting children and serving her community.



2. Early Life

Jean Constance Catherine Thornton-Duesbery was born in London to Charles Leonard and Ethel Nixon Thornton-Duesbery on 25th July 1907. She had one brother, Julian. She was educated at St Paul's Girls School in Hammersmith, and held a Christian faith.

Her father Charles was born in Glen Helen in the Isle of Man, and later became a Reverend for the Anglican Church. The family often took summer holidays in the Isle of Man.



When Jean was 18 years old in 1925, Charles was appointed as the Bishop of Sodor and Man, so the family moved to the Island and settled at Bishopscourt.

Thornton-Duesbery family at Bishopscourt

Jean was a lover of animals, and described her younger self as rebellious, refusing to accept her Mother's teachings of the Old Testament as the animal sacrifices in the stories upset her. She did not understand why God could've made people good, but had not. Talking about her childhood at Bishops court, she said that she was not a model Bishops daughter, and whilst she attended Sunday school and missionary band, she much preferred being outdoors with her dogs, pony and birds.

After three years in position as Bishop, Charles Leonard Thornton-Duesbery passed away on 11th March 1928. At this point in time, it was said that she had developed a strong love for the Island, but it was decided that Jean and Ethel would return to North Oxford to be near her brother Julian.

3. Career

3.1 Nursing

Jean began training as a nurse at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, London, where in 1931 she qualified as an SRN and midwife.

She then worked as a staff nurse at the Salvation Army Hospital for Mothers and

Babies in the East End (Lower Clapton Road). It was a source of great pride to her that, despite poor conditions, she never lost a mother or a baby.

In 1933 Jean went to Jerusalem, Palestine where she joined her brother, the academic and priest Julian Percy Thornton-Duesbery, at St George's School for boys where he was headmaster. She worked there as a school nurse for six years.



Julian would later return to England as Master of St Peter's Hall in Oxford, and Jean followed back to the UK.

Ethel and Jean decided to return to the Island in the early days of the Second World War in 1939, and made their home at Hillside Cottage, The Corony, Maughold. The first year Jean spent mostly resting, caring for her mother, growing vegetables, raising chickens, and helping with the war effort. The mother and daughter also held Red Cross classes in their garden.

3.2 Girl Guiding

One day an evacuee girl from Liverpool who was staying close to the Thornton-Duesbery residence came into their garden, and begged Jean to start a Guide company. She agreed and became the leader of the Maughold Guide Unit after attending a training camp at Rushen School. Shortly after, a group of younger girls who were not yet old enough to join the Guides came and stood in Jean's garden every day until she started Maughold Brownies Unit for them. When the Guides grew too old, she began a Rangers Unit.

With some help, for the local boys, she soon began a Cubs unit. Older boys also convinced Jean to start a Scout troop which she spoke about:

They said 'You are doing this for the girls. What about us?' So I laughed and I said, 'Now can you picture me with a pole leading you over the moors and up the hills?' Well, no they couldn't, but one of them wisely remarked, 'But you might run it until we get somebody better!' and with that I started a Scout troop. Fortunately for them, and possibly for me too, a local doctor took on the troop fairly soon after that.

Jean was the Leader of the Maughold Brownies and Guides for nearly 30 years.

3.3 Justice of the Peace

Jean was a Justice of the Peace for over 20 years, beginning in 1956. The first 15 of these years of service included a large amount of work on the Juvenile Bench due to her experience working with children. In her final 5 years acting as a Senior Magistrate, she was often 'taking the chair and carrying out petty sessions'. Speaking in an interview, Jean later said:

I always felt myself very strongly that proper sentences had to be imposed and that justice must be done, because our first duty was to the public who were appointed as Justices of the Peace, to preserve the peace for the general public.

3.4 Member of the House of Keys

In 1946, Jean was elected to the Education Authority as a non-government member due to her interest in children, and later served as chairman from 1951-52 as well as chairing various internal committees. This role lasted for 10 years in total.

In 1966 a general election was due to take place on the Island, at which point Jean was approaching her 60s. When on a visit to friends in London one night, a phone call at the Red Cross Club interrupted her dinner. A constituent from Garff was calling to explain his dissatisfaction with the current candidates in the Sheading, and wanted Miss Thornton-Duesbery to stand for election. At first she declined, insisting she was not politically minded, but after some thinking and consulting her brother, she decided to stand a few weeks ahead of the election.

In 1966 Jean Thornton-Duesbery was successfully elected as a Member of the House of Keys for Garff, unseating the former Speaker of the Keys who was not re-elected. During this administration, she was the only woman in the House, the first ever single female MHK, and the first woman in the House of Keys for 10 years. She also made history as the first woman appointed to an executive role in Tynwald. Jean made her maiden speech on 14th February 1967, in regard to a vote of no confidence in the Speaker.

Jean was re-elected in the 1971 election with a larger majority of the vote. On this occasion she was joined by two other women in the House.

Over her time in office, she held the following positions:

- The Board of Education (1966-76), the final four years as Chair.
- Board of Social Security (1966-71)
- Manx Electric Railway Board (1966-76)
- Assessment Board as chairman (1971-72), as Chair.
- Health Services Board (1971-76)
- Manx Museum (1971-76)
- Tynwald Committees - Ecclesiastical (1966-76), Consumer Protection (1970), Members' Interests (1974), Isle of Man Marketing Society and Agrimark (1967),
- Bishop's Nominee Diocesan Synod
- Member of the Liquor Licensing Commission.



Jean Thornton-Duesbery at Tynwald Day

Speaking about her time as Chairman of the Education Board, Jean said:

The numbers [of children] have risen very much of recent years from 8,000 to 10,000 with immigration into the island. So I had great problems, extending schools, old schools, building new schools and all the extra manpower and extra equipment.

Now approaching the age of 70, Jean decided to retire at the 1976 general election, despite pleas from her constituents to stand again. At her last sitting in Tynwald, in October 1976, she moved two major resolutions for Manx education; one was a request for £116,000 for an extension to Ashley Hill School which went through without debate; the other was £60,000 for plans, preliminary work and additional land for a secondary school in Peel which succeeded after a short debate. During her time in the Keys, she was known for her sense of responsibility and service, and her sense of humour.

*Parliamentary Conference**1974*

4. Later Life

Jean remained committed to her role within Girl Guiding in her later life. Local girls enjoyed hikes, camps and nights spent on the floor of Jean's cottage. She remained a committed Christian, and was involved in the work of the Mothers' Union. Her garden remained very important to her as a pastime.



In her 70s, Jean had the opportunity to speak on the 'Songs of Praise' choosing a hymn and 3 minutes to speak of God, with a viewing audience of 9 million people.

For her 71st birthday, she went camping with Scouts and Guides from the Isle of Man in Sweden, although she was given a cottage on the campsite to stay in. She went sailing and was sung to when presented with a birthday cake, and enjoyed tea parties.

Jean liked to say, in later life, that she was a true cockney as she was born within the sound of Bow Bells, and she maintained her ties with London to the end of her life.

4.1 End of Life

Jean passed away on 23rd November 1997. Her funeral service was packed with people who had met her during her life. She was buried in Kirk Michael Churchyard alongside her parents.



Tribute was paid by one of her former Guides, Clare Christian -

'Our lives have been enriched by knowing her. We would do well to reflect on her example'.

5. Legacy

Upon her passing, Jean bequeathed a portion of land to the Guide Association Isle of Man for the use of members and future generations of the Guiding movement.

Located behind her former home, the Thornton Duesbury [sic] Wood is located at Maughold on the Laxey to Ramsey Coast Road and is used by Rainbows, Brownies and Guides on trips.

6. Sources

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- <https://www.foraneworld.org/people/jean-thornton-duesbury>

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E-mail: enquiries@tyrwald.org.im

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