



MANX MANORIAL RECORDS

This guide MUST be used in conjunction with Wood's Atlas and the Asylum and Tithe maps, copies of which are available at the Reading Room desk.

Please note: this guide is aimed at Readers who are researching the history of land or property as a leisure pursuit. If you are undertaking research for any legal purpose you are strongly advised to seek the advice of a suitably qualified member of the Island's legal profession.

The Library staff cannot undertake land record searches on behalf of the public, but can supply names of local Land Record Researchers on request

1

INTRODUCTION

The ancient means of conveying customary land in the Isle of Man, was by verbal agreement and the symbolic hand over or surrender of a 'straw' by the 'grantor' to the 'grantee'. This was performed at the half-yearly Manorial, or Baron Courts, and recorded on the court rolls. However as the number of land transactions increased, the inconvenience of delaying the completion of the transaction until the next Manorial Court, likewise increased and so the system of conveyance by deed gradually became the custom. But this did not supersede the practice of being entered on the rolls, which was necessary in order to provide tenants' names for the collection of the Lord of Mann's rent.

These rolls consist of the following records: (all available on microfilm on a self help basis in the Reading Room)

Libri Assedationis, or Setting Books, (c.1507-1911), containing the names of all landowners and the rent which they paid to the Lord of Mann.

Libri Vastarum, often called 'Wast' Books, (1511-1916), recording the admissions, entries and titles of landowners and the alienation fines and rents paid to them.

Composition Books, (f.1593) describing each tenement and recording all fines paid

Libri Monasteriorum, or Abbey Books, (1579-1890), containing the rentals of Rushen Abbey and of the various baronies.

These records were not created for the purpose of property title searching but rather for the efficient collection of annual rents by the Lord and also fees charged whenever a transfer of land occurred. They can therefore be rather difficult records to use for the

purposes of searching for title to property, so the purpose of this guide is to provide practical help to enable you to fully use these records.

- **Land Divisions**

Manorial Rolls follow a pattern which is based on the ancient divisions of land in the Isle of Man. The largest division of land is the '**Sheading**' which consists of several parishes; and each parish consists of so many 'Treens ' which consist of so many 'quarterlands'. Then there is land which is called 'Intack' which is the poorer sort of land. Land, specified in accordance with those divisions, and also cottages and mills, are all entered in the Manorial Rolls. The fullest series of records are those of lands leased directly by the Lord of Mann, namely **Libri Assedationis** or **Libri Vastarum**.

2 HOW TO USE MANORIAL ROLLS FOR PROPERTY SEARCHES

- **Step 1**

Using **Woods Atlas**, which shows the ownership of most land as at 1867, request from the Library counter the map and index sheets relating to the area of the Island in which you are interested. On each page of the index sheets there are six columns showing:

- 1 Parish
- 2 Treen
- 3 Quarterland or intack
- 4 Plan number
- 5 Propriator
- 6 The land area concerned

The number of the plan is most important. If the number is a plain number then it is an **Asylum Plan** of 1861-1864; but if it has a 'T' after it then it is a **Tithe Plan** of 1839. (**Please note:** the Library holds on Microfiche copies of the individual plans for each number for both Tithe and Asylum, and these provide more detail if required.)

The base maps are coloured to indicate the type of holding as follows:

Abbey Demesne	pale green
Abbey Farms	light blue
Abbeyland	blue
Barony	light yellow
Cottage	brown
Freehold	orange
Intack	deep yellow
Mill Rent	un coloured
Quarterland	pink

They also show Ecclesiastical Boundaries as a Green/Red line and Quarterland boundaries are outlined in red.

- **Step 2**

Taking the **Woods Atlas** map for the area you are researching, note down the relevant number(s) and locate it on the index to establish the name of the proprietor in 1867. Thus from Woods Atlas you will have established the following essential information.

- 1 The parish
- 2 The Treen
- 3 Quarterland
- 4 Tithe or Asylum plan
- 5 Owner
- 6 Area

WITH THIS INFORMATION YOU MAY NOW MOVE ON TO THE BOOKS CALLED **LIBER ASSEDATIONIS**.

These books, record at intervals from the early 16th century to 1911, the names of all the owners of land in each parish; always in the same order of parishes; always in the same order of properties.

- **Step 3**

Taking as an example **Liber Assedationis** for 1881 Patrick, for the parish of Patrick:

The first Treen is Dalby and the tenant is Thomas Quirk, paying rent of £1-3-0, on land which is part of a Quarterland of a total rent of £2-2-0.

Using another example:

1891 Patrick.

A Robert Curphy is shown as owner of a portion of the Treen of Dalby, such portion being of a Lord's Rent of £1-3-0

Against each owner's name you will see a date, eg. A1890. This means that a transaction relating to the property was recorded at the Manorial Court sitting of April 1890. Other letters are for other months of the court — M for May, O for October and N for November.

In the case of Robert Curphy's property the **Liber Assedationis** shows a transaction was recorded in the Manorial Court for October 1906, but the actual Manorial record is contained in **LIBER VASTORUM** which contains entries for each individual transaction (be it sale, mortgage, transfers by will or intestacy) in respect of each property. There are indexes at the back of each book, by parish.

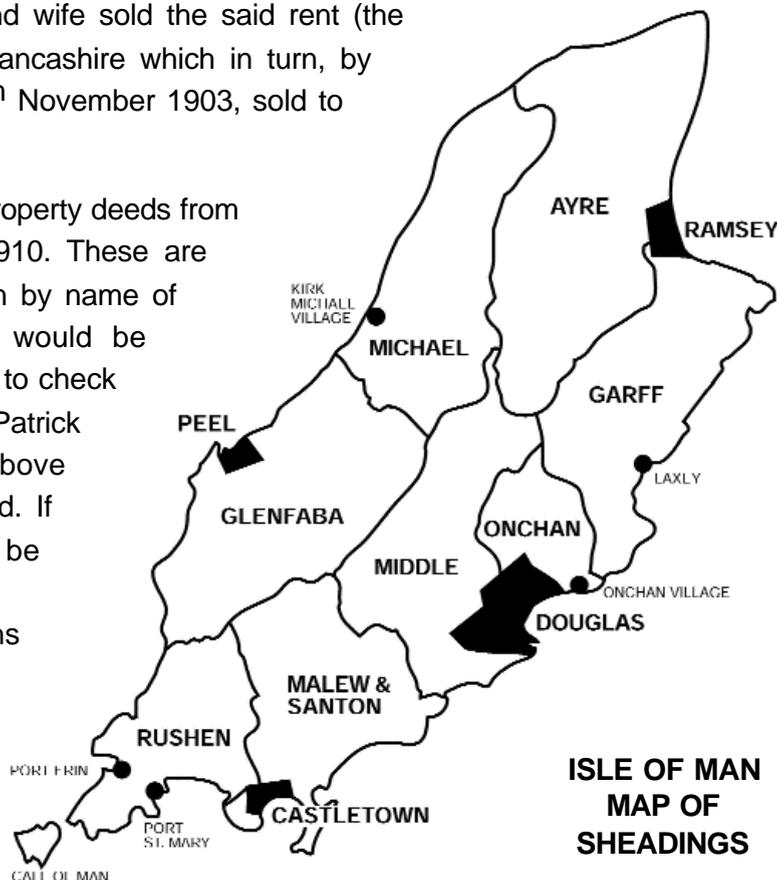
ARMED WITH THIS INFORMATION WE CAN MOVE ON TO THE **LIBER VASTORUM** The records of which cover the period 1511 to 1916 and as with **Liber Assedationis** are available on microfilm.

- **Step 4**

Using the relevant volume of **Liber Vastorum**, ie. 1906, the parish index shows that on page 693 is the entry for the Treen of Dalby. This records that Robert Curphy was previously shown as the owner of £1-3-0 worth of the £2-2-0 rent, but the property is now passed to Thomas Teare. The explanation recorded is that Curphy and wife sold the said rent (the property) to the Bank of Lancashire which in turn, by deed of sale dated the 11th November 1903, sold to Thomas Teare.

The Library holds original property deeds from the late 17th century to 1910. These are indexed by parish and then by name of the 'grantor' or seller. It would be perfectly possible therefore to check the index for the parish of Patrick to see whether the above transactions were registered. If they were, copies may be purchased. But do bear in mind that not all transactions were registered.

Should you require help please do not hesitate to ask a member of the Library staff.



- **FURTHER READING**

e.g.

(1) Manannan's Isle. D.Craine pp 234-236 re. Bishop's Barony Ref. F64/121

(2) Article by W.Cubbon the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Vol V, pp 88-98 re. Bishop's Barony, 'The Baronial Possessions of Bangor & Saul in Man' by G Broderick in Bulletin of Ulster Place-Name Society, Series 2, Vol 4, 1981-2.

The Manx National Heritage Library holds a wealth of various and extensive source material. Staff at the library and throughout Manx National Heritage, are always pleased to hear from anyone with an interest in Manx history.

RS: 09.02

Manx National Heritage,
Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 3LY.
Tel: +44 (0)1624 648000
Fax: +44 (0)1624 648001
E-mail: library@mnh.gov.im
Website: www.gov.im/mnh

Opening times: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm
Closed Sunday and for one week in January.