

HISTORY OF THE ISLE OF MAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
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9 August 2021

Setting

This report has been prepared as part of the requirements for completing the Church Heritage Honour of the Master Guide Training Programme of the South England Conference (SEC) of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. 'Master Guides' are people trained to support the Pathfinder organisation within the church. Pathfinders is a uniformed youth organisation which helps equip young people for service by offering opportunities to do crafts, learn about health and giving spiritual teaching.

This report gives information about pioneer workers (missionaries and nationals), dates for the establishment of church institutions, information and youth camps, and Pathfinder clubs.

Sources of information:

- Members who played a role in the establishment of the Isle of Man church, in its current form. These include Carole Scott, Florence de Beer, and Pastor Peter Jeynes.
- Church magazines, accessed through electronic media, covering the relevant years.
- Old newspapers (in electronic form) from the Manx National Heritage (Library and Archives).
- The Church Heritage Manual.
- A Century of Adventism in the British Isles, and
- King's College London Doctoral Thesis prepared by a well-known church historian and academic, Pastor Hugh Dunton.

Where possible, photographs of facilities, members and former and current pastors have been included.

Background

The Isle of Man Seventh-day Adventist is part of the North England Conference (NEC), within the British Union Conference (BUC) of the SDA Church. The BUC is part of the Trans European Division (TED), whose headquarters are in St Albans, United Kingdom. The TED is part of the General Conference of the SDA Church, whose headquarters are in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.

The Millerite Beginnings

In the early 1830s, a Baptist preacher by the name of William Miller started preaching about the second coming of Christ, which, based on his study of the prophecies of Daniel 8:14, he concluded would occur around October 1844¹. The group of believers who rallied behind Miller and his message of Christ's imminent return (advent) consisted of believers from other churches, with the Baptists, Presbyterian and Methodists dominating. They were called Millerites or Adventists.

However, Christ did not return in October 1844, an experience they referred to as the *Great Disappointment*. After the great disappointment, these Millerites broke up into a number of different groups, with the majority abandoning their beliefs. One group decided to undertake a deeper study of their Bibles, for an increased understanding. This, inter alia, resulted in a recognition of the seventh-day Sabbath as the Biblical day of worship, after it was introduced to the group by the Seventh Day Baptists. In 1860, the name "Seventh-day Adventist" was officially adopted. "Seventh Day" refers to the Biblical Sabbath, Saturday, and accepts it as the day ordained for worship by God, at creation. "Adventist" refers to the belief in the second coming, or advent, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the SDA Church, which was formally organised in 1863, has its doctrinal roots in the "Advent Awakening" movement of the 1840s².

¹ Church Heritage Manual (2005), General Conference Youth Department.

² Accessed on 22 June 2021 from https://www.caribbeanunionadventists.org/files/resources/brief_history.pdf

Before they became SDA's, those who founded the denomination sat in the pews of other Protestant churches. They were ordinary people, teachers from local schools, lawyers, farmers, citizens from all walks of life. The spirit of revival that consumed them, resulted from an ability for individuals to study the scriptures for themselves, rather than leaving it to the clergy, thanks to the work of Martin Luther, and other Reformers. Seventh-day Adventists see themselves as continuing in the message of earlier torchbearers of the true gospel, the Protestant Reformers, who chose not to conform to church traditions, and opted to use the Bible as the sole authority³.

As they studied the Bible more, they became more aware of God's purpose for humanity, and started yearning for a more authentic Christian experience, a break from the traditions and rituals that had become routine for a long time⁴. This fervent study of the Bible yielded such Biblical truths as the seventh day Sabbath, which had been replaced by Sunday keeping, and the literal second coming of Jesus. The established denominations did not accept or acknowledge these truths, so it became inevitable that this movement would go it alone.

The newly established Seventh-day Adventist Church developed an obsession with Christ's commission in Matthew 28:19,20 to "go and make disciples". The church adopted an organisational structure that enabled it to achieve and sustain rapid growth. Thus, from these humble beginnings, a movement that started in North America in the late 1800's has grown into a worldwide protestant denomination: at the end of 2019, of the 235 countries and territories recognised by the United Nations, the SDA Church was established in 212. It has a membership of more than 22 million, has more than 320,000 employees (including 21,000 active ordained ministers), and more than 2 million students across its educational institutions (which include about 120 universities and colleges offering degree programmes)⁵.

The Millerite movement, which started off as a phenomenon local to upstate New York in America, rapidly transformed itself into an international campaign which, by 1844, had made itself heard on the Isle of Man⁶. Thus, the SDA Church on the Isle of Man, which was formally organised many years later, has its doctrinal roots in, and shared some experience with that Advent awakening of 1844.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the British Isles

An understanding of the beginnings and growth of the SDA Church in the British Isles requires a consideration of the historical heritage of this movement. It started in the United States, fuelled by an interest in the Second Coming of Christ. An inner conviction that this movement had received a specific mandate to proclaim what it considered to be the end time message to the whole world⁷, gripped the movement. This conviction also came with the belief that God had equipped the movement with the necessary spiritual gifts, to give it impetus and direction. It is largely against this background that the young movement got the motivating force it needed, to contemplate setting up missions and presence around the world in general, and in the British Isles in particular.

*A Century of Adventism in the British Isles*⁸ is a comprehensive treatise on the establishment, early development and growth of the church in the British Isles, complete with pioneers, where they worked, church institutions established, pathfinder ministry, youth camps, etc, up to the early 2000's.

It needs to be pointed out that the fledgling Seventh-day Adventists Church viewed Great Britain to be strategically important for the advancement of their mission and message to the world. One early writer observed that "*if a believer in the world's conversion were asked upon what nations the hope of this great work of evangelizing principally rests, he would doubtless reply, England and America*"⁹. For one, the universality of the English language, the language of both nations was seen as a definite advantage. England was the mother country. England was also seen as the superpower at the time, so its influence was widespread. Therefore, the leadership of the infant church was convinced that the church would first "plant the standard of the last great work of reform" in the nation that had already done more "to spread the knowledge of God than all the other nations combined"¹⁰.

³ Church Heritage Manual (2005), General Conference Youth Department

⁴ Accessed on 24 June 2021 from <https://www.adventist.org/who-are-seventh-day-adventists/history-of-seventh-day-adventists/>

⁵ Extracted from <https://www.adventist.org/statistics/seventh-day-adventist-world-church-statistics-2020/> on 24 June 2021

⁶ <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/2925694/295210.pdf> (p169)

⁷ Extracted from http://www.adventisthistory.org.uk/documents/rexriches/chapter01.php#_edn7 on 25 June 2021

⁸ Extracted from <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Books/CAB12000.pdf> on 25 June 2021

⁹ As quoted in <http://www.adventisthistory.org.uk/documents/rexriches/chapter03.php>. Extracted on 25 June 2021.

¹⁰ *ibid*

Although the Isle of Man is part of the SDA Church in the British Isles, the SDA Church did not get established on the island at the same time as it did on the UK “mainland”.

The Isle of Man



Source: Lancaster Guardian (24 February 2021)

The Isle of Man is a self-governing “crown dependency” located in the Irish Sea. It lies roughly equidistant between Great Britain and Ireland. Home to around 85,000 people, the locals are called Manxman or Manxwoman, or simply, Manx. The island, dating back to Viking origins, enjoys a high degree of autonomy. Its parliament (“Tynwald”), was founded in 979 A.D. Therefore, 1979 marked the millennial year of the founding of the Tynwald¹¹, which is considered to be one of the oldest continuously operating legislatures in the world¹². The UK has ultimate responsibility for the good governance of the island.



The UK is also responsible for the defence of the island, and its international relations, including consular service. The Isle of Man is not part of the UK, but its inhabitants are British Citizens. It is a British island that is not in Britain. The flag of the island is a triskelion, composed of three joined legs (Ny Tree Cassyn) symbol, and carries a Latin Motto whose meaning roughly translates: “it will stand whichever way you throw it”, a reference to the resilience of the Manx people.

Offshore financial services account for most of the GDP, but e-gaming and tourism are also mainstays of the island. Weather is not the island’s selling point, but the rugged coastline, medieval castles, sheep grazing on the rolling hills, and the green rural landscape, certainly make this island rather picturesque. Manx people are obsessed with motorcycle racing and host the Isle of Man TT Races. This event, held every May and June, turns the tiny island into a motorcycle mecca, attracting the world’s greatest motorcycle racers, looking for an adrenalin surge, and keen to test themselves against the improbable “Mountain Course” – about 40 miles of public roads turned into a race course, producing mind boggling road racing records.

This geographical isolation, and parliamentary autonomy the island has historically enjoyed, had an impact on when the SDA Church would gain a foothold on the island, and introduced some unique legal nuances affecting the church, that were different to experiences of the SDA Church on the UK “mainland”. The Isle of Man was, inter alia, ‘under the care’ of the Liverpool SDA Church who felt that the island was too remote for visits while witnessing trips to the island were regarded very much as ‘missionary trips’. The differing financial legal system required colporteurs working on the island to comply with Isle of Man legislation. Daren Bullock¹³ in the SEC and Pastor Adam Keough Keough¹⁴ in the Irish Mission, were two such individuals who worked as colporteurs on the island for some months around 1997. There had been colporteurs in earlier years like George Powls, who had come over from Middlesbrough. Isle of Man law is different to UK law and thus different permissions are required, and these individuals faced challenges around obtaining permission to do colporteur work on the island.

The Tynwald and Religious Liberty

Christianity reached the Isle of Man in 979 A.D. so the year 1979 also marked a thousand years of Christianity on the island¹⁵. The island’s first “taste” of the Advent message came through the Millerites. Miller’s message was different and had a great impact on listeners because it emphasised that Christ would return within their

¹¹ <https://www.gov.im/media/1369690/isle-of-man-in-numbers-2020.pdf>. Extracted on 25 June 2021.

¹² Rhodes, P.M., (1979, p4). Messenger. Church Paper for Seventh-day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 84, Number 4. 16 February 1979. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

¹³ Daren has his own business providing excellent printing services to the church. <https://adventpress.eu/about-us/1-the-team/>

¹⁴ Adam is now a Pastor in the Irish Mission. <https://adventist.uk/news/article/go/2020-07-22/meet-our-pastors-adam-keough/>

¹⁵ Rhodes, ibid

generation. It was inevitable therefore that, when the Millerites stormed the world with this message, they reached the British Isles as well. British scholar, Hugh Dunton¹⁶ established that three Millerites crossed into the Isle of Man, from Liverpool, in 1844, and proclaimed the Advent message to the Manx people. This, of course culminated in the Great Disappointment, and the emergence of the Sabbatarian Adventists.

The Sabbatarian Adventist message reached the British Isles in the late 1870's. Was Sabbath keeping unknown in the British Isles before this time? Leonard (2001)¹⁷ suggests that there is strong evidence of the fact that, as far back as 388 A.D., the major figure in the conversion of Ireland, St Patrick kept both Saturday and Sunday. That seems to have been the case with St Columba (circa 521-597 A.D.) as well, the first Irish missionary to Scotland. Saturday, which was referred to as "the Sabbath" was observed as a memorial to creation, and a Sunday early morning service was also held to celebrate the resurrection. In the 17th Century, Sabbath keeping appears to have grown around the London Puritan Church figure of John Traske. In the end though, it was the Seventh Day Baptists¹⁸ who introduced the Seventh Day Sabbath message to the Adventist believers. Therefore, the SDA Church did not "originate" the Seventh Day Sabbath message. They simply "popularised" it in a way that it had never been before.

Although the Sabbath message reached Great Britain in the late 1870s, it was only in 1903 that the details of the constitution that created the British Union¹⁹ were voted on by the members. This initial activity appears not to have included the Isle of Man. Therefore, although Section 3 of the 1903 constitution of the North England Conference (NEC) noted that the Isle of Man was part of the NEC²⁰, there is no record of actual physical Adventist presence on the Isle of Man.

While the Isle of Man tended to be the overlooked corner of the British Isles on religious matters, and there was no SDA Church presence on the island, in the early 1890's, the Isle of Man captured the religious headlines around the world, due to concerns around religious liberty. The far-reaching legislation that was before the Tynwald, sought to legislate Sunday observance. American based religious thought leader and pioneer of the SDA Church, E. J. Wagonner²¹, noted in 1893 that the question of Sunday trading had become a vexed one on the Isle of Man. Some sections of the mainstream church bodies represented that Manx people were finding Sunday trading, including the sale of newspapers and fruits in the streets, intolerable.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, which by now had Seventh-Day Sabbath observance as a cornerstone message, along with other religious bodies interested in freedom of worship issues around the world, took a keen interest in these developments on the Isle of Man. They believed that, if the Tynwald, a parliament within the British Isles passed these laws enforcing the observance of Sunday, the implications would be far reaching, as this could serve as a template for other parliaments around the world, and would thus set a dangerous precedent.

Wagonner²² notes the three key grounds advanced, and the objections raised against them at the time:

- 1) Temperance: the Sunday laws were required to curtail alcohol drinking, which had gone out of hand. However, the Bishop of Sodor and Man observed that in the 12 months he had been on the island, he had seen only one case of drunkenness, and questioned whether this was a sufficient basis for introducing legislation.
- 2) Physical necessity: physical rest was necessary if working men were to be productive. Opponents, countered by suggesting people should simply sleep more per day, so perhaps efforts could be directed toward legislating seven hours sleep per day instead? They also pointed out that people wouldn't all get tired on Sunday, or tired to the same degree. Thus, it would be tyrannical and absurd to try and enforce Sunday rest. Nature, and not Laws, were sufficient to compel people to rest when they got tired.

¹⁶ Hugh Ivor Brian Dunton's electronic thesis can be downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>

¹⁷ Leonard, H (2001, Pg 5), "The Foundations of Adventism in the British Isles" in *A Century of Adventism in the British Isles*

¹⁸ Church Heritage Manual. General Conference Youth Department. 2005.

¹⁹ A Century of Adventism in the British Isles (Pg 5).

²⁰ The Missionary Worker. Volume 7, Number 17. August 19, 1903.

²¹ Wagonner, E.J., (1893). The Basis of Sunday Laws. American Sentinel. Volume 8. Number 25. June 22, 1893. Published by the Pacific Press Publishing Company, New York.

²² *ibid*

- 3) Religious character of the day: surprisingly, nothing appears to have been proffered to buttress this line of argument, in this instance.

A Member of the House of Keys (a member of the lower house of the Isle of Man Parliament) introduced a motion in the Tynwald, to change the law to make it possible for the Police Constable to impose fines on individuals breaching Sunday sacredness. This law was passed in parliament. However, it was thrown out when it was sent back to the Legislative Council.

Frustrated religious leaders on the Isle of Man accused the Council of being obstructionist and vowed that the rage of the Manx people at this desecration of Sunday sacredness, would ensure the law would eventually be passed.

Pioneering Work

Although there was significant Millerite activity between 1843 and 1844, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged out of that movement in the mid-1860s, there were no Seventh-day Adventists in the British Isles until the late 1870s. When this happened, there is no evidence of this “overflowing” into the Isle of Man. One of the earliest records of Seventh-day Adventist believers doing personal witnessing and selling of church literature on the island was in 1903²³. A Mr Cowley and his family, from London, did personal witnessing and sold more than 200 copies of the church health magazine, while on holidays on the Isle of Man. After his return to London, Mr Cowley received several letters of enquiry, and noted that some seeds of truth had been scattered.

For more than a decade after this, there seems to have been no visible activity, but that doesn’t mean there was nothing happening. Interestingly, when the SDA message first reached the Isle of Man, it was not from the UK mainland. It came from the furthest and most unlikely of places – Australia (Jeynes, 2020)²⁴. A Manxman who had migrated to Wahroonga, Australia, accepted the Seventh-day Adventist message in the early 1900s. The ‘message’ reminds people that becoming a Seventh-day Adventist Christian refers to the adoption of a multi-faceted lifestyle. He became an ardent reader of the *Signs*, the SDA outreach magazine. He started sharing the *Signs* with his sister, based on the Isle of Man. After studying the SDA message through these tracts, around 1915, his sister accepted the Sabbath truth. That is how the Ludgate family, who lived on the outskirts of Douglas, became the first to accept the Seventh-day Adventist message on the Isle of Man.

Pastor A S Rodd, the then minister on the Isle of Man, reported to the NEC that eight people had been baptised into the SDA faith, at the Broadway Baptist Church, on December 8, 1923. Seventh-day Adventists follow the Bible pattern of baptism by total immersion, as the Baptists do. The Ludgate family on the Isle of Man had been baptised because of reading literature from Australia, half-way around the world, clear evidence that shared tracts and literature can be used in the greater scheme of God’s work.

The first Isle of Man Seventh-day Adventist Church Company was thus formed, under the guidance of Pastor A E Bacon, the then North British Conference President (Jeynes, 2020²⁵).

Gaining a Foothold on the Isle of Man

The Seventh-day Adventist Church arrived much later on the island, compared to other churches. The SDA Church was preaching a message that was different to that of the mainstream churches: their emphasis on the second coming of Christ being imminent, and the sanctity of the seventh day Sabbath, did not sit well with both the secular press, and the established churches. Not surprisingly, it was viewed with significant suspicion and a measure of distrust. Also, having an origin in the ashes of the Millerites, a movement that was humiliated when Christ did not return in October of 1844 as they had predicted, did not help their public image, and provided easy fodder for detractors.

Thus, the negative image problems in the Isle of Man press, preceded the church. In June 1897, for example, the *Manx Sun* newspaper²⁶ carried a report about William Hutchings, a man from Truro, Cornwall, in the UK

²³ M.E.O. (1903, p193). The Missionary Worker. Volume 7, Number 25. December 9, 1903.

²⁴ Jeynes, P., (2020). How a little tract started a church on the other side of the world. Reported by the TED News Network (the original story is in the *Adventist Record* of February 21, 2020).

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Manx Sun, Tuesday, June 29, 1897.

mainland, who had murdered his 6 year old daughter, and then committed suicide. The coroner's jury determined that William committed these heinous crimes while temporarily insane. Apparently William had, at some point, joined the SDA Church and, although William had left the church, this *Manx Sun* newspaper report suggests that it was the time he became involved with the SDA Church that William's mind became unhinged.

A 1916 local newspaper article²⁷ analysed the name "Seventh-day Adventist" and concluded that this was a strangely inconsistent concept. The idea of the "Advent" of our Lord, a futuristic event, was a really good thing. However, the "Seventh Day" aspect was deeply regrettable because it was a backward step, attempting to bring Christians under the yoke of legalism.

In 1921, Kate Kinnings, a literature evangelist, was arrested and fined for selling Adventist books on the Douglas Promenade, without a street trader's licence²⁸.

Consequently, when Pastor A.S. Rodd arrived on the scene, he didn't find a society favourably disposed towards the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but one that sought to portray it as a cult that should be viewed with deep distrust. Consequently, most of his work revolved around image building for the SDA Church as it attempted to gain a foothold on the island.

This is the scenario that played itself out in the final week of March 1923 when Rev C.H Brown of the Victoria Street Wesleyan Church in Douglas, delivered a sermon to his congregation which appears to have been a scathing attack on the SDA Church. This was brought to Pastor Rodd's attention. On April 6, 1923²⁹, Pastor Rodd wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper to respond to this attack. Rodd referred to Brown's assertions as being both an ill-advised and misinformed attack on the church. Rodd pointed out that the SDA Church was an honourable and universally known church, which was associated, either directly or indirectly, to such luminaries as President W. G. Harding³⁰ of the United States, as well as some members of Royal Families within Europe. Rodd felt so strongly about this issue, that he challenged Brown to a "theological shootout": Rodd gave Brown notice of his intention to make a presentation at the Oddfellows' Hall, Douglas, where he would make a "complete refutation of Brown's manifold inaccuracies" as they were reported to him. He then challenged Brown and all true Christians, lovers of fair play, and those whose sense of equity would never permit them to condemn a man, or cause, without giving them a chance to be heard, to come and hear the other side of the story.

The same newspaper³¹ reports that Rodd noted that Brown's remarks demonstrated that Brown did not understand the character and doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists, their organisation and activities. How would anyone consider as "insignificant" a church that was doing the largest missionary work of any church in the world, a church that was outspending Brown's Methodists £30 to £1 on missionary work? Referring to the recently published statistics at the time, Rodd noted that the SDA Church, inter alia, operated more than 1,310 educational institutions, 55 health institutions, 46 publishing houses and sales of more than £1m (£63 million in today's money) in religious literature, published in 103 languages, so Brown's conclusions were not based on facts.

Rodd also took the very bold initiatives of delivering Sunday afternoon weekly public lectures in "The Empire" Hall in Douglas. He picked biblical subjects that were thought provoking, memorable and contemporary, e.g. *Can the dead really communicate*³²? *Did God create a devil*³³? *Where is hell, and are its torments literal or figurative*³⁴?

Rodd did not have problems locking horns with ministers from other more established churches, provided that discourse was anchored on the Bible, and verifiable facts. He put himself out there to be challenged by members of the public to prove the legitimacy of what he preached and believed in. To those earnest seekers of the truth,

²⁷ *Manx Herald*, September 6, 1916

²⁸ *Manx Herald*, August 3, 1921

²⁹ *Isle of Man Examiner* (Pg 6), April 6, 1923

³⁰ President Warren Gamaliel Harding's mother began as a Methodist but became a convert to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She became a devout Bible reader, as reflected in the middle name given to her son. Source: <https://www.presidentprofiles.com/Grant-Eisenhower/Harding-Warren-G.html>

³¹ *Isle of Man Examiner* (Pg 4), April 6, 1923

³² *Isle of Man Examiner*, November 10, 1922.

³³ *Isle of Man Examiner*, December 1, 1922.

³⁴ *Isle of Man Examiner*, December 15, 1922.

Rodd skilfully and with conviction, demonstrated from the Bible those key beliefs that set Seventh-day Adventists³⁵ apart, including the following:

- Christ's second coming was imminent, literal, and not metaphorical³⁶. This went counter to the popular teaching of a secret rapture.
- The Sabbath day of the Lord was Saturday³⁷, not Sunday.
- When people die, they don't go to heaven, or hell, but are "asleep" until the second coming of Christ³⁸, and the last judgement.

Clearly, the early visibility of the SDA Church on the island in the 1920s owed much to the work and effort of Pastor A.S. Rodd. Rodd conjures up images of the Apostle Paul's approach to ministry, as portrayed in Acts 19:8-10 (NIV):

"Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."

Rodd also found himself fronting the religious liberty battle for the church when he appeared before the island's law makers. *The Shop Hours Act*³⁹ had been passed to enforce Sunday observance. This brought much disquiet amongst the Manx people. Consequently, the House of Keys (lower house of Tynwald) conducted an enquiry into the working of the Shop Hours Act. Rodd argued the position of the church: Adventists believed in a six day working week, but Sabbath rest should not be forced. In any event, some people had made a conscious choice to rest on the seventh day Sabbath, so the law now compelled them to rest on Sunday also. Rodd pointed out that a similar law had been implemented in Australia but had to be repealed.

In January 1924, Rodd, who had reported to the NEC the baptism of the Ludgate family the year before, now had the sad task of conducting the funeral of Mr Tims Ludgate⁴⁰, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Tims was survived by the wife and three sons. The Ludgate family, it should be recalled, is the family who got converted to Adventism after reading Sabbath truth literature sent to them by mail, from a relative who had migrated to Australia.

This seems to have been Rodd's last publicly recorded act for the Isle of Man church.

Hare (1927)⁴¹ picked up the Ludgate family story again, this time noting that their older son, Timms Kenneth Ludgate, a WWI veteran, had accepted the Seventh-day Adventist message and gone on to enlist in the Master's service, to serve in the great army of truth. Such wording reflects the high esteem given to taking on a role as a Minister spreading God's message of salvation only through Jesus with the further idea that people would then go on to keep the Seventh-day Sabbath. He and his wife went on to serve as missionaries in India. He translated two books into the Gujarati language and was a contributor to the seven volume Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary.

There is evidence that, as late as July 1929⁴² Sabbath Services were being held on the island, at the home of one Mrs A Ludgate. Although Pastor Rodd ministered on the island and left a massive footprint, the Ludgate family appear to have brought the Seventh-day Adventist message on the island and carried the torch for two decades.

Thereafter, it seems that there was no longer a church presence on the Isle of Man from the early 1930s to the late 1970s. However, the church in the UK mainland continued with efforts to re-enter the island.

³⁵ For more details, refer to <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/>

³⁶ e.g. see <https://www.adventist.org/second-coming/>

³⁷ e.g. see <https://www.adventist.org/the-sabbath/>

³⁸ e.g. see <https://www.adventist.org/death-and-resurrection/>

³⁹ Mona's Herald, Wednesday, December 13, 1922.

⁴⁰ Isle of Man Examiner, January 4, 1924

⁴¹ Hare, R.E., (1927, p6). *"Signs" Reader Becomes a Foreign Missionary*. Australasian Record, Volume 31, Number 38. Monday, July 11, 1927. Printed by Avondale Press (A.C.A. LTD), Cooranbong, NSW

⁴² The Missionary Worker. July 22-30, 1929.

The Half Century of Witnessing to the Manx People

Belton (1936) provides an account of student colporteurs visiting the Isle of Man in 1934⁴³, where they sold more than 300 copies of the book *This Mighty Hour*. For purposes of this study, I have found no other recorded activities of Adventist Church on the island for the remainder of the 1930s. The 1940s was also a quiet decade, as were the 1950s. However, in 1957, a local newspaper⁴⁴ carried the story of a Manxman, the Rev J. Poole-Hughes, a Universities' Mission to Central Africa missionary, who had just returned from Africa. He made an impassioned plea for, inter alia, more clergy, to help counter the "false teachings" of the Seventh-day Adventists. This demonstrates the impact and growing influence of the church around the world. It also shows the continuing efforts by some Manx men to portray the church in a negative light.

The 1960s and 1970s were livelier and saw several camps being held on the island. Scottish and Irish Campers, led by Pastor George Emm, held camp on the Isle of Man⁴⁵ in 1963. In 1969, Voice of Prophecy devotional services started on Radio Manx, conducted by HMS Richards on Saturdays, at 11:00am and 8:45pm. Free Voice of Prophecy Bible Courses⁴⁶ were also advertised. The Irish Junior Camp⁴⁷ was held near Peel in 1970. In May 1971, a Literature Evangelism event was held on the island, with participants drawn from England and Ireland⁴⁸. Of special interest were Radio Manx's "Kiddy Club" which was presenting a Children's Bible Story at 09:15am every Saturday morning, from the 1st of July 1971. In 1977, the *Messenger* magazine carried notifications to visitors to the Isle of Man about the Sabbath School meetings at the church hall, Royal Avenue, Onchan, near Douglas, on Saturday afternoons⁴⁹.

In the summer of 1978, Adventist Youth from the Midlands held a witnessing training programme⁵⁰ on the Isle of Man. A request to pray for isolated members on the island was also made. In the same year, a report in the *Messenger*⁵¹ detailed how, for some time, the church had tried to extend evangelistic efforts to the Isle of Man, including youth camps, without much success. At that stage, there were 6 church members on the island, meeting in a hall. In 1979, the NEC scheduled Evangelistic Campaigns on the Isle of Man⁵². An 'evangelistic campaign' is a planned attempt to convey a series of Bible-based teachings to visitors with a view to people becoming Christians who are educated to willingly and happily follow a set of Bible teachings.

In his 1979 article *Mission to Man*, Rhodes⁵³ suggests that, although Christianity in general had ancient roots in the Isle of Man, the Advent message had (as he understood) only recently been proclaimed on the island.

He points out that, three years earlier, Joe and Margaret White, with their children Roger and Rachel, had moved to the Isle of Man, from Newbold. They held Sabbath services in their home, and were joined by Monica Wright shortly thereafter, who had arrived from Canada, as a literature evangelist. Keen to extend their witness, this small company of believers rented a small room in the Anglican Church hall, and soon other Sabbath visitors starting attending, every Sabbath. The previous summer, a group of young people from the North British Conference, led by three pastors (Stuart Ware, Martin Bell and Martin Anthony), came to the island for in-service training in missionary work, for a week.

In August 1978, Philip M Rhodes and his family arrived on the island, to minister. He spent the first 3-4 months introducing the Church, its work, and its messages, by means of door to door evangelism, using magazines and tracts. This was combined with anti-smoking clinics and vegetarian cooking demonstrations held in the home of the minister. Setting out to meet the felt needs of a population is typical of the way that Seventh-day Adventists set out to help their communities. These activities were meant to lay a foundation for the public campaigns, the

⁴³ Belton, B., (1936, p30). *British Advent Messenger*. Special Conference Bulletin No 7. Volume 41, No 22. August 11, 1936. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁴⁴ *Ramsey Courier* (Pg 6), May 3, 1957

⁴⁵ *British Advent Messenger*. Volume 68, No 12. June 7, 1963. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁴⁶ *British Advent Messenger*. Volume 74, Number 15. July 18, 1969. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁴⁷ Sisson, B., (1970, p5). *Messenger*. Church Paper for Seventh-day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 75, Number 20. September 25, 1970. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁴⁸ Cotton, I., and Cotton, A., (1971). *British Advent Messenger*. Volume 76, Number 14. July 2, 1971. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁴⁹ *Messenger*. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 82, Number 13/14. July 8, 1977. Published by Stanborough Press Limited,

⁵⁰ Ware, R.W., (1978, p2). *Messenger*. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 83, Number 17/18. September 1, 1978. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁵¹ Elias, K.A., (1978, p4). *Messenger*. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 83, Number 21. October 13, 1978. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁵² Elias, K.E., (1979, p3). *Messenger*. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 84, Number 10. 11 May 1979. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁵³ Rhodes, P.M., (1979, p4). *Messenger*. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 84, Number 4. 16 February 1979. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

weekly broadcast of the gospel on Manx Radio, advertising of campaign meetings, Sabbath services, and other church programmes. The first Sabbath meeting of the year was held in the Society of Friends' meeting house in Douglas.

In 1979, during the week that the Isle of Man marked the 1,000 years of the invasion of the Vikings, and the opening of the Tynwald, the island was also "invaded" by a group of 25 young Adventist missionaries from Liverpool⁵⁴. They spent a week on the island visiting homes and singing to hundreds of people about the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1980, a girl testified to the power of witnessing camps, and how she felt she would have left the church if it wasn't for the impact of the camp she had attended on the Isle of Man the year before⁵⁵.

Rhodes (1980, p2⁵⁶), an Isle of Man resident minister, looking at work on the island, into the eighties, highlighted Bible School and Evangelistic Campaigns as key events.

The Isle of Man's mutinous past and links to Adventism

One of the most famous naval events of all time, was the *Mutiny on the Bounty*. This event has inspired numerous books, films and songs. One little known fact is that the three central characters, Fletcher Christian, Peter Heywood and William Bligh all met on the Isle of Man, at a church, in Douglas (BBC, 2010⁵⁷). Two of them, Christian and Heywood, were Manxmen.

When the *HMS Bounty* set off on this South Pacific voyage, Bligh was the Captain, with Christian as 2nd in Command, and Heywood was the midshipman. Later, while the *HMS Bounty* sailed the south Pacific, Christian led a mutiny. Bligh and those loyal to him navigated an open boat through rough seas, but eventually reached safety. Now in command of the *Bounty*, Christian and his fellow mutineers roamed the seas for a while, before settling on the then uninhabited Pitcairn Islands.

Bligh was later asked to testify against both Christian and Heywood where, according to Richardson (2010⁵⁸), Bligh uttered the words "I curse the day I ever came to know a Manxman". Richardson aptly concludes that "this statement alone brings this world famous story back to its roots on the Isle of Man". The Pitcairn Islands are a British Overseas territory, but just where are they?

"As you sail towards Pitcairn, you approach one of the remotest of the world's inhabited islands, lying halfway between New Zealand and the Americas. Four thousand eight hundred kilometres of open ocean separate you from them; a few archipelagos lie to the north; and the southern seas are empty to the ice caps of Antarctica"⁵⁹.

But what happened to the mutineers who settled on the Pitcairn Islands? The mutineers chose these islands largely because they were off the grid and didn't appear on admiralty charts. They didn't want to be found. They set the *Bounty* alight, to deliberately maroon themselves. They completely cut themselves off from the rest of the world. The islanders lived that way for many years before they were re-discovered by a passing ship. This period was marked by significant violence, murders, sickness, and tyranny, largely fuelled by drunkenness. By the time they were re-discovered, only one of the original mutineers, John Adams, was still alive. John organised what was left of this group into a small society of devout Christians (Church of England, later all became Seventh-day Adventists)⁶⁰. When two British warships stopped by the island, the ships' commanders, who were expected to take John Adams back to the UK to be tried and possibly hanged for mutiny, were so impressed by the religious influence he held over the community, they allowed him to remain on the island⁶¹.

⁵⁴ Bell (1979, p1). Messenger. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 84, Number 20. 28 September 1979. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁵⁵ Messenger. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 85, Number 23. November 21, 1980. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁵⁶ Rhodes, P.M., (1980, p2). Messenger. Church Paper for Seventh-Day Adventists in the British Isles. Volume 85, Number 8. 2 May 1980. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

⁵⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/isleofman/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8486000/8486000.stm

⁵⁸ Matthew Richardson was then Manx National Heritage Curator. Quoted in http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/isleofman/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8486000/8486000.stm

⁵⁹ <https://www.government.pn/Pitcairnhistory.php>

⁶⁰ <https://www.itv.com/news/2016-10-25/norfolk-island-what-happened-after-mutiny-on-the-bounty>

⁶¹ <https://www.sea.museum/2019/06/14/a-mutiny-and-a-mystery-what-happened-to-fletcher-christian-and-the-bounty-mutineers>

“In the changed life of John Adams – from criminal minded sailor to peace loving patriarch – those on Pitcairn found eloquent testimony to the Divine power that changes lives (Ford, n.d.)⁶²”.

John Adams died in 1829 at the age of 65.

Ford⁶³ notes how, in 1876, Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneers J N Loughborough and James White became fascinated by the story of the mutiny on the HMS *Bounty*, and how they resolved to ensure that the descendants of the mutineers, who still lived on the Pitcairn Islands, should learn of the Adventist faith. They prepared a box filled with religious materials, which a sea captain agreed to deliver to the Pitcairn Islands. Given the simple religious principles and devoutness Adams had taught them, the islanders read the Seventh-day Adventist Church tracts in the box with considerable interest, but this did not result in a change in the way they worshipped. Ten years later, i.e. in 1886, and Adventist layman called John Tay went to the Pitcairn Islands, where he spent 5 weeks studying the Adventist message with the islanders. Almost all the island converted to Adventism, but had to wait until 1890 to be baptised, when Tay returned to the island with an ordained minister. The Adventist missionary ship, the *Pitcairn*, was named after these islands.

The Manx press did not lose sight of their connections with the Pitcairn Islands. In 1901, Commander Knowling of HMS *Icarus*⁶⁴, who had visited the Pitcairn Islands the year before, noted that Manx descendants were still alive on Pitcairn Island. The Commander reported on the excellent Manx work ethic among the citizens of the island, with a diet and lifestyle that resulted in disease to still be almost unknown on the island. Therefore, the people there continued to live their lives without medicines of any sort. No one smoked or consumed intoxicating alcohol. All this was attributed to the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle that the Pitcairn Islanders had embraced. At this point, the oldest man on the Pitcairn Island was Thursday October Christian, the grandson of Fletcher Christian, the master’s mate of the *Bounty*.

Thus, the SDA message reached and was embraced by exiled Manxmen on the Pitcairn Islands, decades before it reached and was accepted by their relatives on the Isle of Man.

In 1933⁶⁵ a letter was published from a Pitcairn Islander Manx descendant, to a family member in England, who had enquired about life on the Pitcairn Islands. A point of emphasis was that almost everyone was a Seventh-day Adventist Church member, and observed the Sabbath from sunset on Friday, to sunset on Saturday.

In 1937, Mr Hamer,⁶⁶ a “globe-trotting” Manxman who had visited the Pitcairn Islands, noted the Manx heritage of the islanders, who he described as a very contented community, living a simple Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle. This strong Manx heritage and the significant influence of the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle and worship on the Pitcairn Islands was also noted in an article⁶⁷ in 1938, as did another one⁶⁸ in 1960.

Therefore, at the heart of the work ethic and disciplined lifestyle that have defined the Pitcairn Islands, lie the influence of the Manx heritage, and the Seventh-day Adventist message. Religious literature, again played a significant role in the spread of the gospel.

The Current Isle of Man Seventh-day Adventist Church

The story of the modern day church starts in Preston in 1974⁶⁹. Carole Lawton, a young Manx lady who lived in Preston at the time, went to spend time with a friend who had just lost her husband. One afternoon, there was a knock at the door and since the owner of the house was not home, Carole answered the door. The lady at the door introduced herself as Sr Evadne White, and asked Carole what she thought was going on in the world. Although not so regularly used these days church members are recognised as brothers and sisters. In the fairly recent past people would address each other as brother and sister. Carole found that question thought-

⁶² Herbert Ford, Director, Pitcairn Islands Study Center. Pacific Union College. Extracted on 29 July 2021 from: https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/studycenter/pit_puc.shtml

⁶³ https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/studycenter/pit_puc.shtml

⁶⁴ Reported in both the *Peel City Guardian* newspaper, dated August 31, 1901 and the *Isle of Man Examiner*, dated September 7, 1901.

⁶⁵ The Journal of The Manx Museum, dated March 1, 1933.

⁶⁶ Isle of Man Examiner, November 26, 1937

⁶⁷ In an article entitled “Dr Shapiro and the Story of Pitcairn”, the Journal of The Manx Museum of June 1, 1938

⁶⁸ Ramsey Courier of January 8, 1960

⁶⁹ Earlier on, this report noted literature suggesting that Pastor Rhodes arrived on the island in 1978, to establish the church. There is a time overlap with this account of Sr Carole Scott. Sr Carole’s account has been corroborated by her husband John, Pastor Jaynes, and other individuals whose names are noted here. There was no way of fact checking these dates with the author of the accounts about Pastor Rhodes, which was written more than 40 years ago. The research tools we have today were not available at that time. Sr Carole’s recollection of events has been corroborated. Therefore, this article has adopted the account of Sr Carole, on the establishment of the present day Isle of Man SDA Church.

provoking because that was the time when the United Kingdom was going through lots of violence fuelled by militant trade unions, and there was fear and uncertainty all round. Sr White then asked Carole what she thought about God, to which she responded that she didn't attend church, but had nothing against God.

The chat was casual but short. Sr White asked if she could call again, and Carole did not have any issues with that. A few days later, Sr White called Carole and they agreed to have another meeting. Sr White turned up for the second meeting with her Pastor, something she had not intimated to Carole. They talked about general things, so Carole felt no pressure from this "high profile" visitor. Sr White kept in touch with Carole and in due course, revealed that she belonged to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a church Carole had never heard about.

Not long after that, Carole was diagnosed with cancer, a deeply traumatic event. She notified Sr White and the Pastor of this development. They were concerned; they were sympathetic; they prayed with Carole. At that point Carole asked what church was like, and they were like "why don't you come and see for yourself?"

Carole did go to see for herself, and the first thing she realised was that she was the only white (Caucasian) person in that church congregation. She was made to feel at home. They asked her to come again. She did, this time with the friend whose door she answered that memorable day. However, her friend was unsettled by being only one of two Caucasians in the congregation, and never came back to church. Carole continued to attend, and actually started getting interested in literature distribution. She distributed *Family Life* and *Messenger* magazines, which she also enjoyed reading. Being a people person, Carole soon immersed herself in door to door distribution of literature. To improve her own understanding of the Bible, she enrolled into a Bible correspondence course. She then made a decision to be baptised and was baptised into the fellowship of the Preston Seventh-day Adventist Church.

One more Call

During their subsequent interactions, Sr White made a confession to Carole. Reflecting on the day they first met, Sr White recalled what an exhausting day it had been for her, and how she had decided to retire for the day, when she heard a voice requesting her to make just one more call. She heeded that inner voice and headed towards the house whose door Carole opened. The rest, as they say, is history.

An overseas love interest

A love plot is the hallmark of all good stories, and this is where the romantic twist enters this one. A dashing young man of Polish ancestry, but based in Australia, captured Carole's heart. In her own words, John Scott was "interested and interesting". John came to the UK to meet Carole. The young lovers married. Carole Lawton became Carole Scott. John did not return to Australia.

The Lord impressed Carole to return to her place of birth, the Isle of Man, as he had work for her to do on the island. The Seventh-day Adventist Church had no presence on the island. This wasn't for lack of recent effort on the part of the church. Numerous previous forays had not resulted in a church presence on the island. Carole wrestled with God in prayer. She promised God she would return to the island to do his work if he spared her life. After all, she could only witness for God if she was alive. John was happy with the idea of relocating to the Isle of Man, and that his how the young couple made the Isle of Man their home.

When Carole and John arrived on the island, they were the only Seventh-day Adventists on the island, so they held their Sabbath worship services in their home. However, as soon as they arrived on the island, they embarked on door to door witnessing and distributing literature.

One day, a gentleman knocked on the door and asked if that was the house where Carole Lawton lived. His name was Noel Holman, originally from South Africa. He and his wife Myra and their three children has just moved from the UK and were looking to join the Seventh-day Adventist fellowship on the island. So the church grew from 2 to 4 adults and 3 children, overnight. That was in the late 1970s.

The little group was later joined by Malcolm Fargher, a Manx man from Ramsey. Malcolm belonged to the Armstrong Church (a Seventh-day Adventist break away) so he was a Sabbath keeper, but not Seventh-day Adventist. From time to time, he came to join the Seventh-day Adventist worship services on Sabbath.

The believers continued to meet in John and Carole's home for worship services. The North British Conference, the name of the Conference at that time, became involved with the work of the small group around this time. Pastor Peter Jeynes, who had married John and Carole in Preston, started to visit the group with the support of the Conference, on a quarterly basis.

However, by the mid-1980s, the church group had grown to a point where they needed more space and couldn't worship at home any longer. Carole went on Manx Radio and made an announcement to find out if there was anyone on the island who had a building that could host Saturday church services. The only response that was received came from a rather unexpected place. The manager for the Care Home where Carole worked heard the Radio announcement. The manager offered to let the little church group use of the hall on top of the Care Home on one condition – they needed to invite the residents to attend the church services, a condition Carole and her group found entirely acceptable. The residents turned up in large numbers to attend church services. They liked the music enormously and, as the numbers grew, they were offered a larger hall. By this time Pastor Jeynes was visiting once a month, for a few days at a time.

The group grew to include Lily McLean, a Chinese born but Manx domiciled lady, in its fellowship. Lily was later baptised in the baptistery at Broadway Baptist church by Pastor Jeynes. Lily's joining the church was a result of the witnessing efforts of Carole. Malcolm, an earlier interest has since passed away. Lily continues to be a faithful member of the IOM SDA Church.

The Swiss Twist

In 1996, the Geneva English speaking Seventh-day Adventist Church enlisted the services of a minister of Zimbabwean origin. His name was Paul de Beer. Paul and his wife Florence (Flo) ministered to that congregation for the next three years. At the end of Paul's tenure, his two options were to go to South Africa, or go to the UK. While Paul was "serving notice", a man – Pastor Peter Roennfeldt - came to visit from the Trans European Division, and Paul and Flo graciously offered to accommodate him. When Pastor Roennfeldt learnt of Paul's imminent departure, he offered Paul a position in the Irish Mission. However, the civil unrest in Ireland made that offer unattractive, so Paul turned it down.

By "coincidence", the group on the Isle of Man had already requested full-time ministerial support from the Conference for the work on the island. They had requested that an older man who wanted to do evangelistic work would be ideal for them. The NEC, the administrative body of the church for the north of England, had no budget to recruit a minister at that time. Pastor Roennfeldt, at his office in St. Albans, was discussing how to help Paul de Beer. They rang the NEC to find out if they could find a position for the man. There was a small stipend available to support Paul de Beer. This call came as the Conference were discussing the needs of the Isle of Man.

Within the month, Paul and Flo, accompanied by Pastor Jeynes and Pastor Llewellyn Edwards, the NEC Executive Secretary, set off for the Isle of Man, to survey the land. When they arrived on the island, it was, according to Flo, love at first sight. Thus, in 1999, Paul accepted the pastoral call for the Isle of Man Church. In so doing, he officially took over from Pastor Jeynes, who had been the "itinerant" pastor for this young congregation.

From the "Magnificent 5" to the "Magnificent 7"

Although church attendance had increased, there were really only five members of the church (i.e. Carole, John, Noel, Myra and Lily, fondly referred to as the "Magnificent 5"). With the arrival of Paul and Flo, they became the "Magnificent 7". Sabbath lunches and picnics were now held at Paul and Flo's house.



Flo de Beer and Carole Scott

Shortly after that, another couple, Philip and Frances Chadwick (British, Adventist), with their two children, relocated to the Isle of Man, and joined the local congregation. Phil's young daughter became the only member of the kids' Sabbath school class, taught by Flo.

David Hartley, relocating from the UK, was the next to join the church. David is a friend of Lily's, and it is through that interaction that David, previously a non-Adventist, joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. David continues to serve as Deacon.

The Church at Pensioners' Hall



giving the church members another avenue for witnessing through interaction.

In 2000, the de Beer children and grandchildren arrived on the island. These were Bernard, his wife Leslie (deceased), and their children Shannon and Chantelle. To accommodate this now large family, Paul and Flo bought a guest house. The church group also started worshipping in Pensioners' Hall on Finchley Road. Carole's workmate, a non-Adventist helped identify this new worship venue. Church services were held at the hall, followed by lunch at the de Beers house. In time, the church group started being joined by non-Adventists for lunch at the guest house, thus

The Church at Gospel Hall



Gospel Hall (the white little building)

In 2004, information reached Lily that "Gospel Hall" was on the market. Gospel Hall was a small building where Carole attended Sunday School as a child. It was currently being "let" by the Baptists for homeless people to sleep in. It was agreed that this would serve as a suitable building for the church to use as its place of worship. Paul started negotiations for the purchase of this building and reached the drafting of the sale and purchase agreement stage before the next stage of the story began.

The Church at Peel and Ramsey

In 2007, Paul and Flo reached the decision to leave the island and relocate to Australia due to Paul's poor health. Pastor Noel Apugan, a Filipino, with his wife and three children, arrived on the island, after answering the pastoral call, in 2008. Pastor Noel's arrival heralded the arrival of many other Filipino families, mostly in the health care services, relocating to the island. With the arrival of the Filipino brethren, the church membership exploded.



Pastor Noel Apugan and Family

In 2007, Archana Kamble, Sri Lankan born but Belfast based teacher, had accepted a teaching position on the island, and joined the congregation. Archie (as she is fondly referred to) became the backbone of the music ministry in the church. Suddenly, Gospel Hall became too small, so a second group started meeting in Peel, and a third, a Sabbath School branch, started meeting in Ramsey. For combined Sabbath services, the church hired the Peel Council Town Hall, to accommodate the three church groups. This was also the case when the church hosted special events, like the special child focused event⁷⁰ that was run in the Isle of Man by the NEC Children's Ministries.

70 Douglas, P., (2015). Children's Ministry on the Isle of Man. Messenger. Volume 120, Number 18. 11 September 2015. Published by Stanborough Press Limited, Grantham

Pastor Paul would not return to the Isle of Man. He was called to rest in 2011, in Australia. Flo returned to the island in 2014 and continues to provide leadership and wisdom to the church.

The growth of the Isle of Man into a fully-fledged world financial services centre meant that it started attracting professionals from the financial sector too. In 2012, Tapiwa Munyawiri, a Zimbabwe born finance professional, accepted a position on the island, joined the Isle of Man Church fellowship and became a Harvest Ingathering stalwart. In 2014, Tapiwa left the Isle of Man for Jersey, another crown dependence, where he has continued to work tirelessly to get a church established on that island. In 2015, Miyanda Siamoongwa, a Zambian born finance professional and author of this article, relocated to the island and joined the Douglas congregation. Stephen Oates, a Manxman returning from New Zealand, also joined the Douglas congregation.

The Church at Salisbury Street



Once it became clear that Gospel Hall was too small, Pastor Noel and Bernard de Beer took on the task of finding a bigger venue. Although it was run down and in need of urgent repairs, the church building at the corner of Farrant Street and Salisbury Street in Douglas was identified as suitable, as it was big enough to bring all three congregations under one roof.

Church members offered their time to clean the place up, including some carpentry and plumbing work carried out led by Stephen. The owner of the property, a Sabbath Keeping Jew, offered it to the church at less than commercial rental rates. An estate agent offered free carpeting, and a Seventh-day Adventist Church in England provided the chairs at a nominal amount. Thus, towards the end of 2016, the church moved from Gospel Hall to Salisbury Street. The Peel and Ramsey congregations also moved to Salisbury Street so everyone came under one roof. The Gospel Hall was rented out.



Pastor Mugari and Family

In March 2017, and just after moving into the Salisbury Church building, Pastor Noel Apugan accepted a call to Minister at the Liverpool Church. That left the Isle of Man Church without a resident pastor for more than 6 months, until October 2017 when Zimbabwean born Pastor Shasha Gabriel Mugari arrived on the island, to be the Minister. The Isle of Man has grown from 2 to more than 60 members. It boasts of members from a number of countries, including the Isle of Man, the UK, Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, the Philippines, Jamaica, Bahamas, and China. It has a Pathfinder club with a membership of nearly 20.

The current church building has therefore become too small to cater for the church's growth and ever expanding activities, including a growing Pathfinder club. Therefore, towards the end of 2019, and just before Covid-19 entered the world lexicon, it was decided that the church should acquire a church building of its own.

The Church at Ramsey

After much prayer, fasting, and consultations, the Church leadership was authorised to enter into negotiations for the purchase of the Trinity United Reformed Church building offered by the Presbyterian Church in Ramsey. It is a much bigger church building, with lots of room for expansion too. The seller offered the church the pipe organ for free. The sale and purchase agreements have been signed, and when the church moves out of Salisbury Street, it will be into its own church building. The move, which has been delayed by Covid, is intended to happen before the end of 2022.

The “Behind the Scenes” Spiritual Shepherd



When Carole and John Scott got married in Preston Church in the mid-1970s, the officiating minister was Pastor Peter Jaynes. Shortly after their marriage, Carole and John relocated to the Isle of Man, but kept in contact with Pastor Jaynes. Carole, who Pastor Jaynes describes as “easily the best evangelist” he has ever met, and John, relied on Pastor Jaynes as their de-facto Minister, the entire period when they were the only members of the SDA Church on the island.

So, when Carole and John complained that no minister had visited them, Pastor Jaynes obtained permission from Pastor Francis (the President of the North England Conference under whose responsibility the Isle of Man fell), to visit the infant church on the Isle of Man. Within a week of obtaining that permission, Pastor Jaynes visited the Isle of Man. It was also about the time Noel and Myra and daughter were arriving on the island and joining the infant congregation. Pastor Jaynes started visiting the island at least once every quarter. He supported Carole in the process of obtaining permission from Pastor Francis, to go on Manx Radio to make the announcement for a Hall from which Sabbath Services could be held. Pastor Jaynes’ visits to the island increased to at least once every month and lasted 3-5 days at a time.

In due course, Pastor Jaynes became the minister for the Lake District, which included Carlisle and Isle of Man. By this time, the Isle of Man membership numbers had increased. ADRA collections became a strong activity on the island. A cookery team came over from Grantham, and the North England Conference arranged literature distributions and youth camps became regular.



Ben-y-Chree (Source: BBC)

A high point was when Pastor Jaynes led the church members in the distribution of literature and witnessing to thousands of people who had gathered at the Douglas Ferry Terminal for the launch of the passenger ferry **Ben-my-Chree** on 4 April 1998. Following that event, a survey involving more than a thousand people was conducted, with well in excess of 80% indicating that they had a positive experience with Seventh-day Adventists. Pastor Jaynes’ hands on involvement with the Isle of Man SDA Church was from the mid 1990’s to 1999 when Pastor Paul de Beer accepted the call to be the resident pastor.

Pastor Jaynes observes that there had been numerous previous attempts to bring the Adventist message to the Isle of Man. The first of these recorded attempts was in 1844 when the Millerites visited the Isle of Man, from Liverpool. Over time, the SDA Church sent preachers, literature evangelists, and conducted youth camps on the island. However, all these efforts and tried and tested initiatives, which had borne fruit elsewhere, did not yield much success on the Isle of Man. External efforts simply didn’t work on the Isle of Man.

However, when a local Manx person, Carole, took on this challenge, the results were different. Carole and John did not hold evangelistic meetings. They shared literature, message and love, with their neighbours. They reached out to people, one at a time. Carole maintained an “interests” file, thus blending administrative, evangelistic approaches with real love and care for her people. Carole was, and remains a dedicated worker for the Lord, and John has been and remains a fully supportive partner.

This story draws some significant parallels with the experience of failure by American SDA missionaries, when they first arrived into the UK, until Pastor W W Prescott recognised the need to ensure there were native British people to evangelise fellow Britons.



Isle of Man Seventh-day Adventist Church Congregation. (Pic: courtesy of Sr Sharon Rose Apistar).

Isle of Man Pathfinder Club

The Pathfinder Club is part of the Youth Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, modelled after the Scout Movement. It is a uniformed organisation with current membership in excess of 2 million around the world. The purpose of the Pathfinder Club is to introduce young boys and girls between the ages of 10-15 years, to Jesus Christ. It challenges the unique talents of its members in cultural, social and religious activities. Activities included civic projects, nature and environmental conservation studies, camping and high adventure trips⁷¹. In other words, Pathfinders are Scouts filled by the Holy Spirit.

The Isle of Man Pathfinder Club traces its origins to the pastoral tenure of Noel Apugan. In 2016, Pastor Apugan sent a letter to Pastor Manneh Sarsoza, who was serving as an Associate Professor at an Adventist University in the Philippines at the time, to see if he was interested in helping develop Bible interests on the island, and establishing a Pathfinder Club at the Isle of Man SDA Church

Pastor Sarsoza gladly accepted this challenge, and was happy to relocate to the island to undertake both assignments. Such a move would also provide Pastor Sarsoza with a chance to reconnect with two boys he had raised in the Philippines who now lived in the Isle of Man.



Pastor & Mrs Sarsoza and their baby

Pastor Sarsoza set off for the British Isles, with the objective of setting up an Adventurer and Pathfinder Club. To acquaint himself with how things are done in the British Isles, Pastor Sarsoza “camped” and attended Church in Manchester for a period of 6 months. On arrival on the Isle of Man, he set about trying to meet the kids and their parents, befriend these young people, gain their confidence, and pray about it.

Pastor Sarsoza arrived at the tail end of Pastor Apugan’s tenure on the IOM, and the start of Pastor Mugari’s. Both pastors gave Pastor Sarsoza enthusiastic support in this youth ministry.

⁷¹ <https://www.gcyouthministries.org/ministries/pathfinders/>

The immediate challenge was the lack of materials, and the people to help out. During his first meeting with the young people, he asked them if they would like to have the Pathfinder/Master Guide experience. Their response was “what’s that?” Pastor Sarsoza sketched his idea on a white board. The kids loved it.

Having garnered this massive interest from the young people, the Pastor wrote a letter to the Church Board for permission to establish the Pathfinder Club. The need for material was also highlighted. The Church Board gave its permission. Every Seventh-day Adventist church has a ‘church board’ made up of locally elected men and women who guide their churches worship and work.

Pastor Sarsoza then wrote to the Youth Director at the NEC for permission to establish the Pathfinder Club. When no response was received after two months, the pastor sent another letter. Again, no response was received. A short while later, there was a Pastors’ conference in the UK mainland which Pastor Sarsoza attended. While there, he met with the NEC Youth Director and raised this matter on the lack of communication from the conference. The Youth Director gave an enthusiastic verbal go-ahead for the programme. Although this was not followed up with a written confirmation, the verbal go-ahead was considered sufficient to start.

Pastor Sarsoza wrote another letter to the Church Board, requesting that Margaret Mugari be appointed Pathfinder Director, and Chantelle de Beer as Adventurer Leader, with Edilmar Espinosa and Aileen Gay Gordon assisting. The names were sent to the Board, with an action plan. The Board not only approved the plan, it also provided the funds required to put this into action.

During the opening ceremony, the kids demonstrated a number of activities – bandaging, simple knot tying, etc. The parents were very impressed to see these demonstrations, and excited to see their kids looking so smart. This was followed by a countdown to the local church’s first ever Pathfinder Camp. Edilmar and Stephen put up the canopy.

The first Isle of Man SDA Church Pathfinder Camp was held in September 2018. The NEC supported the Pathfinder Club with materials. Pastor Ikwisa Mwasumbi, the NEC Pathfinder Director, provided support and advice on how to run a Pathfinder Club. The NEC arranged for training, which was attended by the Isle of Man Church youth leadership, at the NEC offices. The NEC also assigned an Area Coordinator who has ensured that basic staff training of the youth leadership takes place on an ongoing basis. As part of the support for the club, Pastor Mwasumbi visited the Isle of Man Church in March 2019.

Pastor Sarsoza worked with the youth and had an excellent rapport with them. When his 3 year tenure ended, he returned to his native Philippines in 2019. The club has since grown to include Master Guide training.

Other Departments of the Church

The burgeoning Youth Department isn’t the only department at the Isle of Man Church:

- The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), is currently led by John Lustica and Sr Jackline Jackson. It was started by Pastor Peter Jensey, Sr Carole Scott and Br John Scott in approximately 1997. On an annual basis, this team has raised thousands of pounds through door to door campaigns. 20% of the funds raised are donated to Rebecca House, an Isle of Man charity that “provides respite, palliative and end of life care for children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions”. The rest of the money is remitted to the NEC for ADRA, the global humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which works to deliver relief and development assistance around the world.
- The Children’s Department started in 1999. It was led by Flo de Beer and had only one member – the Chadwick daughter. The Children’s Department currently has approximately ten children. It is led by Flo’s granddaughter, Chantelle Cowley.
- The Sabbath School department started in 1974, in the Scott home, with Carole and John Scott as the only members, for an extended period of time. It is currently one of the largest departments in the church and led by John Lustica.

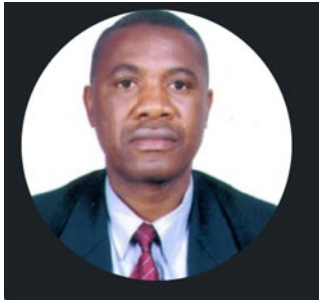
- The Personal Ministries department has not yet been formally established. All literature received from the NEC and/or BUC is channelled through Sr Frances Chadwick.

God is Faithful

Carole promised God that she would work for him if he spared her life. God is faithful. Nearly 50 years later, Carole is not only alive, but still full of energy and enthusiasm. She has, by God's grace, also kept her promise to serve God. God also blessed her with a husband who shares her vision and mission. These two continue to support each other to this day.

From the late 1920s to the late 1970s, the Seventh-day Adventist Church expended much effort to try and (re)establish a presence on the island. The church spared no effort – Youth camps, Bible camps, literature evangelists, etc, without success. Carole and John's ministry broke this impasse. Their interactions with the local community demonstrated that the Sabbath keeping, abstinence from harmful substances and diet were great beliefs, but love for others was the defining characteristic of a disciple of Christ. Loving one's neighbour was the hallmark of the redeemed. It is only when people see the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a community of love, that they will accept the church as a community of faith and hope.

About the Author



Miyanda is a member of the Isle of Man Seventh-day Adventist Church. An invested Master Guide, he is active in church youth leadership activities. Miyanda is a keen Bible student with a particular interest in understanding "old" Bible truths in the context of the modern world. A qualified Chartered Accountant, Miyanda's day job is auditing and financial crimes investigations, and currently has a senior management position in a major accounting firm in the UK. As a "side hustle", Miyanda is studying for a PhD in Accounting and Financial Management, researching into the efficacy of taking a forensic accounting based multifaceted approach to combating illicit financial flows.