

## TALES OF THE TAILLESS

Issue Date: 23.06.11



**The Isle of Man Post Office is pleased to present a set of six stamps featuring artworks from a series of Manx Cat postcards.**

There is a Victorian saying: "There is no end of cats in the Isle of Man because they have no ends. These are the totally tailless".

There is no end to them either, despite repeated predictions about their imminent extinction.

They still roam free on their Island home and internationally are prized pets.

Animated cartoons have portrayed Manx cats as dim-wits like Stimpson J. Cat, or cowards, like Mayor Manx in the Hanna-Barbera 1990s series *Swat Cats*. Really, they are tough, determined and bright.

Their hunting instincts were demonstrated at a World Mousing Championship at a 1964 Calgary cat show. A Manx cat was the fastest to follow a mouse's scent through a glass maze. Little wonder then, that a Manx cat was a mouser in the House of Lords in the early 1940s and another, the black 'Peta', in Britain's Home Office in the 1960s. A gift from the Isle of Man in 1964, 'Peta' invaded 10 Downing Street and roughed-up the resident Siamese owned by Prime Minister Harold Wilson. There were no repercussions; however, as The Home Office once ruled that she enjoyed 'diplomatic status.'

Manx cats have been the companions of royalty and the famous: for example - ship's cat on the former royal yacht, *Britannia*.

Walt Disney, creator of Mickey Mouse, had a black one. Manxie was a gift from the Isle of Man in 1933 and roamed the Disney studios. The unrealised hope was that he would inspire the creation of a Manx cat playmate for Mickey.

Two Manx cats were adopted by Koko, the Gorilla Foundation's amazingly communicative lowland gorilla. The first, named All Ball by Koko because she looked like a ball of fur, became an international celebrity. When Koko was told of All Ball's accidental death she hooted mournfully in painful understanding.

Today a Manx cat named Zoe is used as a logo for the American-based Zoe Foundation, whose objective is the creation of a preserve for endangered tigers. The slogan, which applies as much to Manx cats as tigers, is "extinction is not an option".

Throughout the world show standards for Manx cats vary. Traditionally, on the Isle of Man *Dimple Rumpies* are totally tailless, with an absolute hollow where a tail would begin. *Rumpy Risers* have a hint of a tail. *Stumpies* have a little more. Tailed cats, known as *Longies*, can be Manx if they carry the appropriate genes and display other Manx characteristics that can be passed on to their tailless kittens. Other distinctive features are: a round and large head, a nose longer than that of a good British shorthair, prominent cheeks; ears wide at the base and tapering slightly to a point; hindquarters, exceptionally high; rump round; back short. Of primary importance is a 'hopping gait.' The coat must be 'double' - open and soft like a rabbit's; colour - immaterial though the earliest recorded was 'brown tabby,' otherwise 'tiger' - earth brown with black markings.

## 'MANXIE' LEAVES FOR HOLLYWOOD

FROM 'ISLE OF MAN EXAMINER' 1 9 3 3

Fine send-off from Liverpool - What he told the Press

If 'Manxie,' the pure-bred Manx cat, which is now on its way to Hollywood to begin his film career, was a human 'star,' he could scarcely have had a better send-off than he experienced last Saturday when he left Liverpool for New York.

'Manxie' left Douglas at 8.30 a.m. that day on the 'Manxman,' and, when he was taken on board the Cunard liner, 'Franconia,' he found a crowd of Press representatives - reporters and photographers - waiting for him. He was accompanied on to the liner by Mr T.R. Radcliffe, M.H.K., and, after all the 'interviewing' and photographing was over, the cat was placed in charge of the ship's butcher for the ocean journey and no doubt the butcher and 'Manxie' will be great pals before New York is reached.

'Manxie' had a very interesting tale to relate. This is what 'he' told the Press:

'I am 'Manxie' - Manx to the backbone, and I am proud of it, because it carries the distinction of having no tail. How my ancestors came to be minus their caudal appendages I have no idea, and I suppose it will remain a mystery. This, however, is my tale. I was born 14 months ago on land which belonged to the late Sir Hall Caine.

I like to be fed twice a day - at about 8 o' clock in the morning and 4 o' clock in the afternoon. I am not faddy in the matter of food, but I have been reared on boiled milk, raw meat, and fish without stint. I have a good, healthy appetite. I am preceding four of my family to the Far West by a week. They are emigrating to Montreal. It will probably take me a little while to get accustomed to my new surroundings, but the prospect of meeting Mickey Mouse tickles me to death!

As we stated last week, 'Manxie' has been enrolled on the staff of Mr Walt Disney, the creator of Mickey Mouse. When the latest aspirant to film fame reaches New York he will be the guest of honour at a reception arranged by the United Artistes' Corporation, and, afterwards, he will be placed on the train for his long journey across the American continent.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Isle of Man Post Office thanks Mr Roger Oram for his kind assistance with this project.

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	Isle Of Man Stamps & Coins PO Box 10M • Douglas Isle of Man • IM99 1PB	<a href="mailto:maxine.cannon@iompost.com">maxine.cannon@iompost.com</a>  <a href="mailto:dot.tilbury@iompost.com">dot.tilbury@iompost.com</a>	Phone: +44 (0)1624 698437 Fax: +44 (0)1624 698434 <a href="http://www.iomstamps.com">www.iomstamps.com</a>
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