

## The Ellan Vannin Tragedy

1. Snaefell, Tynwald, Ben My Chree  
Fourteen ships had sailed the sea  
Proudly bearing a Manx name,  
But there's one will never again -

**Oh Ellan Vannin of the Isle of Man  
Company,  
Oh Ellan Vannin, lost in the Irish Sea.**

2. At one a.m. in Ramsey bay  
Captain Teare was heard to say:  
"Our contract said deliver the mail,  
in this rough weather we must not fail".

**Oh Ellan Vannin of the Isle of Man  
Company,  
Oh Ellan Vannin, lost in the Irish Sea.**

3. Ocean liners sheltered from the storm,  
Ellan Vannin on the waves was borne.  
Her hold was full and battened down  
As she sailed towards far Liverpool Town.

**Oh Ellan Vannin of the Isle of Man  
Company,  
Oh Ellan Vannin, lost in the Irish Sea.**

4. With a crew of twenty-one Manxmen  
Her passengers Liverpool businessmen  
Farewell Mona's Isle farewell  
This little ship was bound for hell

**Oh Ellan Vannin of the Isle of Man  
Company,  
Oh Ellan Vannin, lost in the Irish Sea.**

5. Less than a mile from the Bar lightship  
By a mighty wave Ellan Vannin was hit.  
She sank in the waters of Liverpool Bay  
There she lies unto this day.

**Oh Ellan Vannin of the Isle of Man  
Company,  
Oh Ellan Vannin, lost in the Irish Sea.**

6. Few Manxmen now remember  
The third day of the month December -  
The terrible storm in 1909  
Ellan Vannin sailed for the very last time

**Oh Ellan Vannin of the Isle of Man  
Company,  
Oh Ellan Vannin, lost in the Irish Sea.**

Lyrics and Music by Hugh E. **Jones** - Wee Huge  
Publications. Listen at [youtu.be/qUvX3JIzT2A](https://youtu.be/qUvX3JIzT2A).



**SS Ellan Vannin entering Ramsey Harbour**  
from Wikimedia Commons

### Notes:

**Song** by Hugh E Jones, 1960's, when one of *The Spinners*.

Hear Hughie singing it at [youtu.be/qUvX3JIzT2A](https://youtu.be/qUvX3JIzT2A).

Although this song is believed by many to be a traditional song from the Isle of Man, it was in fact composed by Hughie Jones, and first performed by his group "The Spinners" from Liverpool. The Spinners enjoyed considerable success during the 1960's and 70's but are now disbanded. Hughie Jones is still performing though and has several CD's available.

### About the incident

[Taken from [themanxman.ch](http://themanxman.ch), 2016, since expired]

On the morning of 3rd December 1909, the SS Ellan Vannin of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co. left the Isle of Man at 01.13 bound for Liverpool. She was carrying 15 passengers, 21 crew plus mail and 60 tons of cargo. In command was Captain James Teare of Douglas with 18 years of experience.



At departure the weather was not particularly rough, and though the barometric pressure was falling, the captain did not expect any trouble. As the passage progressed the weather rapidly deteriorated and by 06.35 when she arrived at the Mersey Bar the wind had increased to storm force 11 with 20 foot waves.

She foundered between the Mersey Bar and the Q1 buoy on the Mersey approach channel. She filled with water and sank by the stern. All passengers and crew were lost.

For more information see <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/stories/maritime-tales-remember-ellan-vannin>

### Notes on the names

**Snaeilell, Tynwald, Ben My Cree** - ships of the Isle of Man Company

**Ellan Vannin** - in Manx this means Isle of Man

**Mona's Isle** - Anglesey. the original name of this ship.

The ship was constructed in 1860 as an iron paddle steamer named Mona's Isle. In 1883 her name changed to Ellan Vannin, (the second of that name) following a re-build and conversion to be propeller-driven.



Liverpool's modern **Mersey Bar Light Float**

**The Bar Lightship** - the light vessel on the Mersey Bar, marking the entrance to Liverpool from the Irish Sea; this is the point where pilots embark ships entering Liverpool Docks

Light floats are often used in waters where strong streams or currents are experienced, or if greater elevation of the light source is required to aid visibility for mariners.