

“LANGUAGE SPOKEN (CHILDREN UNDER
3 YEARS OF AGE TO BE EXCLUDED)”

THE SPEAKERS OF MANX IN BALLAUGH IN 1901 *



The 1901 census for the Isle of Man for the first time had a language question. It appeared due to the influence of the newly-founded Manx Language Society (1899), who made a request to the Lieutenant-Governor for it to appear. Their concern was a clear one—to solve the puzzle as to how many speakers of Manx there still were in the Island. No one had a clear idea and estimates varied widely and were simple guesses with figures plucked out of the air.

On the census schedule for each individual household there was a column headed simply “Manx Language.” It was to be filled in with one of three possible answers: “Manx,” *ie*, one was a monolingual, unable to speak English; “Both,” when one was able to speak both Manx and English; “English,” speaking that language alone. But how to fill in the answer? This was left to the individual to decide how to best interpret the question, but the *Manx Sun* for 30 March 1901, the day before the census itself, provided ready guidelines:

It is not at all necessary for a person to be as fluent in Manx as in English in order to return himself as a Manx speaker, nor is it necessary to have a reading and writing knowledge of the language. Sensible people need not be told that in doubtful cases the language should get the benefit of the doubt. We would point out to the people the full importance of giving a full and accurate return of Manx speakers.

The language shift in the Island is acknowledged here with fluency in English now the norm, and the question was rather one's own ability in Manx, a clear point to the reader then as now. But that ability was in speaking it, not, as pointed out, being capable of reading and writing Manx, skills that few possessed and, if they did, that were never called upon at this date.

Such questions around language are always loaded ones, and emotions can come to the fore, as here with the appeal that “the language should get the benefit of the doubt.” And, at the end of the day, it was a matter of self-assessment—but how then was the question answered in Ballaugh in 1901? It is to column 18 in the Census Enumerator's Book, headed “LANGUAGE SPOKEN (children under 3 years of age to be

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excluded),” that one needs to turn to in order to begin to answer that question. Here, were filled in the answers to the simple and direct question on the census schedule, namely, “Manx Language.”

MANX IN THE 1901 CENSUS

The 1901 census enumerated 54,752 as inhabitants of the Island, some 25,496 males and 29,256 females. The figures as regards the language question were given for the entire Island, and then broken down into counts for Douglas, Peel, and Ramsey, with surprisingly Castletown not separated out, and so lumped into the catch-all entry of “Remainder of the Island.” By far, the largest town was, as expected, Douglas, with 19,223 resident there, followed by 4,729 in Ramsey, and 3,304 in Peel. As regards the answers, Douglas had 855 speakers of both Manx and English (356 males & 499 females) while Ramsey accounted for 305 (130 males & 175 females) and in Peel there were 374 speakers (180 males & 194 females). Adding these together, the total number is 1,534 (666 males & 868 females) with knowledge of Manx. As regards the rest of the Island, amongst the population there of 27,496 (13,084 males & 14,412 females), the number was 3,064 (1,574 males & 1,490 females). This gives then a grand total of 4,568 individuals, broken down into 2,210 males and 2,358 females who answered the language question with “Both.” [The 59 monolinguals returned for the entire Island must be a mistake—for example, not one of the 27 reported for Ramsey can be found.]

BALLAUGH IN THE 1901 CENSUS

As regards Ballaugh, first of all, how many were enumerated on the night of Sunday 31 March 1901 as living in the parish. In total, it was 699 individuals and not 700 as was returned, an error in calculation on one of the pages not being corrected and so carried forward. There were 175 schedules returned (and thereby households in the parish), 60 were then “filled up by the Enumerator himself” as the phrase had it, basically one-third of them. As to the organisation of the census, the parish was split into four Enumeration Districts, though none of the divisions bore a name as with some other parishes in the Island. John C. Crellin was “the Person appointed to Superintend the Enumeration of the Parish,” and he signed off the four Census Enumerator’s Books on 17 April 1901, each the responsibility of a single enumerator. Despite his first name given, and with an initial as well, this Crellin cannot be traced in 1901; somewhat of an irony that the person responsible for the census for Ballaugh cannot be found in the census itself.

Enumeration District 1 was in the hands of William Lace Teare, with 60 schedules being returned, 25 of which he had to fill in himself. There were 212 individuals in that district, 90 males & 122 females. Teare, aged 53, ran the Albert Hotel in the

Village and spoke only English.¹ District 2 fell to William H. Caley, who had to complete 11 of the 39 schedules. The count there was 171 persons, 75 males & 96 females. (This was the Enumeration District where the error was made.) Caley, aged 40, farmed Ballathoar and spoke only English.² District 3 was handled by Frederick Silas Richards, where 17 of the 41 schedules had to be written up by himself. The total here was 178 bodies, 87 males & 91 females. Richards, aged 41, farmed Ballaterson and spoke only English.³ District 4 saw Joseph Stephen Keig dealing personally with 7 schedules out of 35, and 139 was the final count, made up of 61 males & 78 females. Keig, aged 54, was a miller living at the Carlane and spoke only English.⁴ He was the last to sign off his Book taking until 14 April; the other three Books were dated 4 April.

The inevitable first question—who was the youngest person in the parish in 1901, and who was the oldest? That was an as-yet unnamed one month old child, the son of Florence Teare, from Peel, now a 29 year old widow and living in the Curragh as a farmer. The oldest, at 90, was Christian J. Corlett, again living in the Curragh, and sharing the croft with John Curphey, a widower aged 50 and working as a High Road Labourer, with Mary and Nellie Curphey, 16 and 22 years of age. Curphey is entered as simply as a “Relative.” Mary and Nellie are listed as granddaughters and so he is Corlett’s son-in-law. None of them were from Ballaugh. Corlett was born in Lezayre as were his granddaughters, while Curphey was born in Jurby.

This leads to the inevitable second question—who, living in Ballaugh in 1901, was actually born in Ballaugh? Just over 1 in 2 is the answer, with 387 inhabitants out of 699. So where do the others originate from? Those born in other parishes in the Island number 237, leaving 75 born elsewhere, 56 in England, with Ireland coming next with 8, Scotland with 5, and then the USA with 5, and finally the Phillipines, 1.

Marianna Cannell, aged 70, and born in Manilla in the Phillipines was a visitor at the Broughjiarg, which was farmed by John Craine and family. Clearly someone who at some stage had married a Manxman. Thomas Kershaw was a Tea Agent and lived with his family at Cronkould. He and his wife were born in England but now were US citizens and with their three children all born in the USA. Sarah James, the wife of John James, a Surgeon and Dentist, living in the Village, was born in the USA and was now a naturalised British subject. Finally, there is Ida Corlett, the wife of Thomas Corlett, the Board Schoolmaster, born in “Ohio, America.” One assumes someone of Manx descent returned to the Island itself.

As regards those born in England, Eliza Keig was born in Whitehaven and (the wondrously named) Jaminar Keig in Cumberland and they can be taken to be a pair of sisters of Manx descent. Amongst some of those born in England, a small number

¹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ballaugh 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 37, sch. 40.

² *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ballaugh 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 44, sch. 15.

³ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ballaugh 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 53, sch. 41.

⁴ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ballaugh 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 50, sch. 7.

of familiar Manx surnames crop up—Corlett (×2), Caine, Faragher, Kneale, Gawne—and are found to be women who have married Manxmen. Others, namely Florence Gawne and William Quayle were born in England to Manx parents. The number of English people living in the parish can be accounted for in large part by single families residing there. For example, the Andersons living at Mona House, the Blundells at Honewood, and the artist William Watson, in Ash Cottage, his children Florence and William described as Students of Art.

Returning to those born in the Island but not in Ballaugh (237), it is not surprising that Northern parishes are to the fore—with Lezayre (45), Jurby (39), Andreas (29), Michael (21), Bride (9), and then Ramsey (14), making 157 in all. Smaller numbers are recorded for Arbory (7), Braddan (9), Douglas (18), German (5), Laxey (2), Malew (15), Marown (3), Maughold (6), Onchan (1), Patrick (3), Peel (4), Rushen (3), and Santan (2). That leaves one person born simply “Isle of Man” and another one in “Foxdale.” People are clearly on the move and parishes of birth other than Ballaugh reflect marriage partners and, interestingly, movement of families between parishes.

THE SPEAKERS OF MANX IN BALLAUGH

Those returned as speaking Manx and English are 155 in number (no monolinguals appear); in other words, 1 in 4 of those enumerated in 1901 as being born in the Island. But how does this figure break down? A summary is given below:

Over 80	8
70–80	29
60–70	48
50–60	46
40–50	12
30–40	11
20–30	1

The figures for those over 60, where one expects Manx speakers to be concentrated due the date of language shift, must be read against one simple fact of demography, namely, mortality. There is a clear division here between those aged over 50 and those younger—131 as against 24 speakers. There can be no clearer illustration of the large-scale shift to English in the 1850s, with Manx not being actively transmitted to children. Those 24 speakers under 50 were more than outnumbered by the 474 also under 50 years of age. What also needs to be noted is that of the Manx speakers over 50, those who were unmarried numbered some 24 individuals.

How then does Ballaugh compare to other parishes within the Island? This we simply do not know as Ballaugh is the first parish that has been looked at. But what

of Eliza Quayle, aged 29, born in Patrick, living on Glen Road and the youngest declared speaker of Manx in 1901.⁵ Did she remain living in the parish and so be the last Manx speaker in Ballaugh? And let us too take notice of Sarah Richards, a widow living on Ballacoraiage, aged 72, a Manx speaker, but who was born in England; clearly, she felt at one time the need to learn the language—and for that matter, Eliza Quayle to carry on speaking it.

THE MANX SPEAKERS OF BALLAUGH (1901)

Catherine **Boyde** (72), Bishops Court Farm.
Christian Boyde (64), Glen Road.
Eliza Boyde (39), Carmodyl.
Jane Boyde (70), Castle Lake.
Jane Boyde (75), Curragh.
John Boyde (49), Curragh.
William Boyde (67), Curragh.
Betsy **Brew** (48), Ballaterson.
Eleanor Brew (66), Glen Road.
John **Caine** (71), Ballakinnag.
John Caine (60), Curragh.
John C. Caine (63), Ravensdale.
Mary E. Caine (45), Dollagh.
William Caine (47), Dollagh.
Catherine **Caley** (54), Ballacrye.
John Caley (39), Carmodyl.
Sarah A. Caley (36), Ballamoar.
Ann **Callister** (73), Ballacrye.
Eliza Callister (69), Village.
Eliza Callister (52), Blackwood Cottage.
John Callister (81), Village.
John Callister (57), Dollagh.
Thomas Callister (61), Blackwood Cottage.
Thomas Callister (60), Carlane.
William Callister (79), Ballacrye.
William Callister (64), Castle Lake.
John **Cannell** (73), Ballacooilley.
Edward **Cavendish** (38), Ballaterson.
John Cavendish (53), Ballaterson.
Mary Cavendish (59), Ballaterson.
Robert Cavendish (50), Ballaneddin.

⁵ *Census Enumerators' Book* for Ballaugh 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 43, sch. 12.

Thomas Cavendish (53), Ballaterson.
Willie Cavendish (40), Ballaterson.
Jane **Christian** (63), Lough Dhoo.
Thomas Christian (63), Lough Dhoo.
Charles **Clague** (59), Railway Cottage, No. 2.
Elenor Clague (60), Railway Cottage, No. 2.
Elizabeth **Cleator** (75), Cronkould.
Ann **Corlett** (51), Bishops Court Farm.
Anne Corlett (64), Ballaterson.
Catherine Corlett (83), Cronkould.
Catherine Corlett (58), Ballacoraige.
Charlotte Corlett (53), Downdalk.
Elinor Corlett (58), Ellin Rheney.
Elizabeth Corlett (66), Village.
James Corlett (66), Cronkould.
Jepatha Corlett (52), Bishops Court Farm.
John Corlett (74), Ballamona.
Margaret Corlett (53), Curragh.
Robert Corlett (58), Downdalk.
Thomas Corlett (68), Ballakinnag.
William Corlett (73), Ballaterson.
William Corlett (58), Ballacoraige.
William Corlett (57), Curragh.
William Corlett (64), Ellin Rheney.
William H. Corlett (50), Village.
James **Cottier** (61), Ballacoraige.
Edward **Cowell** (52), Doves Hill.
Eliza Cowell (50), Doves Hill.
William Cowell (50), Ballacroscha.
William Cowell (82), Dollagh.
Elizabeth **Cowle** (85), Carmodyl.
Margaret Cowle (68), Village.
Jane Craine (54), Carmodyl.
John T. **Craine** (66), Broughjiarg.
Thomas Craine (78), Village.
Margaret **Crennell** (71), Ballathoar.
Catherine **Cubbon** (60), Police Station.
James Cubbon (56), Police Station.
John C. **Curphey** (52), Ballacrye.
Mary A. Curphey (36), Ballacrye.
Jane **Doughan** (72), Ballamona.

Catherine **Duggan** (70), Village.
Thomas Duggan (71), Village.
John **Faragher** (56), Ballavolley.
Mary Faragher (53), Ballavolley.
Eleanor **Freer** (72), Glenshoggie.
Eleanor M. Freer (71), Village.
Lenora Freer (68), Glenshoggie.
Elizabeth **Gale** (51), Ballakinnag.
Ann **Gawne** (70), Dollagh.
Jane J. Gawne (50), [unreadable].
John Gawne (82), [unreadable].
Daniel **Gill** (67), Ballacain Cottage.
Isabella Gill (59), Ballacain Cottage.
Margaret **Green** (61), Ballacurn.
Joseph **Hall** (40), Crawyn.
William **Hunter** (60), Village.
Margaret E. **Kaighen** (33), Dollagh.
Elizabeth Kaighin (57), Close Lake.
Humphrey Kaighin (64), Close Lake.
John W. **Kaneen** (53), Corvalla.
Anne **Keig** (73), Ballacain.
Jane **Kelly** (57), Dollagh.
James **Kerruish** (60), Dollagh.
John J. Kerruish (33), Dollagh.
Margaret Kerruish (54), Dollagh.
Thomas **Kewley** (59), Ballacrye.
Jane **Killey** (74), Dollagh.
Ann **Killip** (73), [unreadable].
Anne Killip (62), Ballaterson.
Elizabeth Killip (61), Carmodyl.
James Killip (66), Carmodyl.
Margaret **Kinread** (78), Carmodil Beg.
Elenor **Kneale** (52), Lough Dhoo.
Jane Kneale (59), Blackwood Cottage.
Jane Kneale (57), Ballacoraige.
Philip Kneale (82), Ballaneddin.
Thomas Kneale (67), Ballacoraige.
Thomas **Kneen** (68), Dollagh.
William Kneen (70), Ballamoar.
Charles **Lace** (67), Village.
John **Morrison** (55), Glen Road.

Thomas **Moughtin** (56), Dollagh.
Ann J. **Mylecraine** (41), Ballamoar.
Annie Mylecraine (50), Glen Road.
Eleanor Mylecraine (72), Village.
Philip Mylecraine (70), Glen Road.
Thomas Mylecraine (46), Ballamoar.
Daniel M. **Quayle** (60), Village.
Edward Quayle (67), Ballacrosta.
Eliza Quayle (29), Glen Road.
Elizabeth Quayle (50), Close Taggart.
John Quayle (39), Curragh.
John J. Quayle (35), Glen Road.
Margaret Quayle (80), Ballacrye.
Margaret Quayle (68), Curragh.
Robert Quayle (65), Ballacorage.
Thomas Quayle (53), Ballaneddin.
Thomas Quayle (61), Close Taggart.
Thomas Quayle (36), Curragh.
Richard **Quirk** (57), Dollagh.
Sarah **Richards** (72), Ballacoraige.
James C. **Roberts** (41), Village.
John T. Roberts (46), Broughjiarg.
John J. **Sayle** (30), Ravensdale.
Caesar **Shimmin** (63), Port.
William Shimmin (66), Glendhoo.
Eleanor **Taggart** (79), Village.
Jane Taggart (69), Cronkould.
William Taggart (69), Village.
Elizabeth **Teare** (80), Cronkould.
Elizabeth Teare (54), Railway View.
Jane Teare (68), Post Office.
Jane C. Teare (68), Ballaneddin.
John Teare (68), Ballaneddin.
Margaret Teare (67), Ballakinnag.
Robert Teare (50), Curragh.
William Teare (79), Post Office.
Anne **Veale** (63), Ballamona.
James Veale (64), Ballamona.
Thomas Veale (73), Ballamona.
Agnes **Vowles** (48), Ballacrye Villa.
Elizabeth **Watterson** (59), Carmodyl.

Thomas Wynter (46), Bishops Court.

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