

“A DIP INTO THE PAST
FILMING AN OLD TIME MANX WEDDING”
(1926) *



People in the northern parishes of the Island have been somewhat mystified recently by the incongruous spectacle on the roads of chars-a-banc containing an early 19th century Manx wedding party, comprising dames and country maidens in poke bonnets and crinolines, esquires, well-to-do farmers, and villagers, all costumed in the height of fashion of a century ago. Coincident with this, a number of gallant looking riders clad in scarlet and blue, astride some of the finest horse flesh in the Island have awakened the echoes of the quiet roads in the neighbourhood of Ballaugh with the clatter of hoofs, and have made dwellers in the countryside rub their eyes to make sure that the world had not suddenly gone back to an age of romance. The why and the wherefore of these mysterious appearances is not unconnected with romance, for is not the making of films one of the most romantic of professions? In order to complete a new film for the Board of Adverting a large company of Manx players from Laxey have recently placed themselves enthusiastically at the disposal of the Board for the purpose of enacting what will be a main feature of the film, namely—a real old Manx Wedding.

The arrival of the bride and bridegroom at the bride's home, the ceremony of breaking the cake, and other old customs leading up to the dancing at the wedding breakfast were all enacted at Staward, Sulby, by courtesy of Mr and Mrs Fayle, which had been specially selected as the most suitable and picturesque location. The remainder of the wedding scenes were gone through outside Ballaugh Old Church, while a thrilling horse race was run off in Sulby Glen, and on the Claddagh near by.

The parts of bride and bridegroom were played by two film artistes, of whom more will undoubtedly be heard in the near future in the persons of Miss Olive Rimmer and Mr Moore Marriott. Miss Rimmer was born in Liverpool, her parents meeting in the Isle of Man and having been married at Kirk Braddan. After completing her education in Switzerland, she studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music, and has appeared at the Aeolian, Queen's, and Wigmore Halls, London. In musical comedy she played an important part successfully in "The Blue Kitten," and though only young she has had valuable experience also of film work, her most important engagement in this direction being in "Nell Gwynne."

* Originally published as Stephen Miller, "A Dip into the Past: Filming an Old Time Manx Wedding" (1926)," *Ballaugh Heritage Trust Newsletter* 15 (2017), 41-42 & 44.

Mr Marriott has featured successfully in theatres, music halls, and has now found his niche in the film world. For over two years, he toured with the A.B. Cross Company in "The Manxman," during which time he played various roles, including those of Ross, Caesar Cregeen, and Philip. His father and mother met and became engaged to be married while appearing at the old Theatre Royal in Wellington Street, Douglas, as George M. Marriott and Edith Finley. Mr Marriott has played James Welch's parts in "When Knights were Bold" and "Oh I Say;" and as Fagan in "Oliver Twist." He has done much film work for the Gaumont Company, Henworth, Stolls, Artistic, and other studios. Forthcoming releases in which he figures are "The Whirlpool," and "Every Mother's Son," the latter being due for release next Armistice Day, as a war time story.

The production of the film is in the capable hands of Mr Jack Raymond of the Gaumont Company, assisted by Mr H.J. Bishop, cinematographer (who has travelled all over Europe for Gaumonts in the pursuit of his profession, and who was commissioned to film the opening of Tutankhamen's tomb), and by Mr J. Harris.

Let it be said also that all those who were asked to give their services, gave them readily and without stint. Repeated calls at short notice were made upon the good people of Ballaugh, and from Rector Kneale (who wished the couple God speed at the quaint doorway of the old church). Miss Kneale and Mrs Hall, and other ladies associated with Ballaugh Village Hall, downwards, nothing but the heartiest spirit of co-operation was evident. Mention too should also be made of the cheerful determination of the Laxey Players, under Miss Mona Douglas and Mr W. Moughtin, to see the protracted business through; and to the splendid co-operation of numerous employers and various public spirited ladies and gentlemen who assisted in a variety of ways in the production of what it is confidently expected will prove an excellent advertisement for the Island.

Real Manx fare for the wedding breakfast was supplied by Mrs Christian and the Misses Christian, of the Fairy Tea Gardens, Sulby Glen. Horses were kindly provided by Misses Rudd, Ramsey (2); Messrs Wilfred and Harold Cain, Ballamoar (5); Mr Bernard Mylchreest, Kirk Michael (3); Mr R. Richmond, Lezayre (2); Mr George Wade, Ballaugh (2); Mr Ramsey Crookall, Lhergydhoo, Major Gwynn, Ballaugh; Mr J.A. Barrett, Lezayre; and Mr Harold Kermeen, Sulby, while Mr Blackwell of Ballamoar generously placed saddles at the disposal of riders.

The Board of Advertising is under a debt of gratitude to all these and numerous other helpers for ungrudging service in a national cause.

"A Dip into the Past: Filming an Old Time Manx Wedding." *Isle of Man Examiner* 2 July 1926: 7d.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

