

Manx Notes 32 (2004)

“MY FATHER PASSED AWAY VERY PEACEFULLY” THE DEATH OF EDWARD FARAGHER (1908)

(1)

6 Blackwell | Colliery | 6 – 6 – 08

Dear Mr. Roeder

My Father passed away very peacefully at 8 . 10 oc Friday morning it is a happy release He was unconscious for 2 day previous. I feel quite run down as I have been suffering from neuralgia all the time he has been ill Will you please let The people in the Island who were interested in Him whom you know.

Know and oblige yours very Gratefully | W A Faragher

P.S. The Funeral will take place on Tuesday next at 3 . o'clock.

(2)

THE LATE EDWARD FARAGHER OF CREGNEISH TO THE EDITOR

Sir,—I regret to have to inform you of the death, on the 5th inst., of our old friend, Edward Farquhar,* late of Cregneish, at the home of his son, W.A. Farquhar, at 56 Blackwell Colliery, near Alfreton, Derbyshire, to whom he went a few years ago when he broke up his home at Cregneish, in consequence of his housekeeping widowed daughter and her two sons, emigrating to Canada. I know it cost him a great fight, and it was with a bleeding heart he had to tear himself away from the native heath which he so deeply loved. There was no man who loved his Mona so much as he, and every fibre of his heart was intertwined with her traditions and memories of the soil. To the Island his death is a real loss—he was one of the old links; there was no other Manxman who was so steeped in its lore, and gifted with a true poetical vein, he sang its beauties and charms. He was a master of the native tongue, and used to compose many songs and hymns in Manx and English. It is entirely due to him that so much traditional folklore has been preserved; he had a fine memory, and his knowledge of things Manx seemed to be inexhaustible, which he would communicate with unreserved readiness and liberality to those who enjoyed his friendship. He was a great admirer of Milton and Scott, and an earnest and very religious man. He translated some of “Aesop’s Fables” into Manx, and contributed largely to “Manx Notes and Queries.” A sketch of his life is given in the former. He suffered many disappointments, and as a fisherman led a very strenuous life; and the unmerited harshness he experienced during the last few years before

leaving Cregneash, from some of the village people, left a deep mark upon his sensitive heart. May he rest in peace and his memory be ever green! He died at the age of 77.

I would have written before, but unfortunately the letter which announced his death only reached me today—having been away from business during Whitweek.—Yours truly, C. ROEDER.

4 South Parade, Manchester, 15th June, 1908.

* Mr Roeder spells “Faragher” differently to the usual Manx way.

Source: (1) Letter from William Faragher to Karl Roeder, 6 June 1908, Manchester Central Library, Manchester City Archives, M277/12/1–141. (Diplomatic transcript.) (2) Charles Roeder, “The Late Edward Faragher, of Cregneish,” Letter to the Editor, *Isle of Man Examiner* 20 June 1908, 8 col. a.



Edward Faragher had been forced to leave Cregneash in 1907 and move to a coal-mining village in Derbyshire in England where his son lived. “I am not longing for much but a sight of the sea,” he wrote after reaching there.¹ Just before Christmas that year he wrote to Karl Roeder, “As for myself I am a stranger in strange land and have made but very little acquaintance and the most of them are too light for me.”² Roeder would send Faragher the *Isle of Man Examiner* newspaper every week, “I know you are yet alive by receiving the examiner every week and I am very much obliged for it.”³ Faragher’s health was poor and was not to improve, in fact it was to worsen:

my head is a good deal easier but I am not safe to go out but very little as I am so apt to stagger and fall I have suffered very much in my head for five months but it is getting easier for a few days now [...] the colds and pains I have suffered at sea in the years gone by are often working on me my eyesight is getting weak I have about half A dozen eye glassys but I do not see very plain by them.⁴

The body of the letter was to end with a poignant line:

¹ Edward Faragher to “My Dear Friends,” 25 March 1907, Manx National Heritage Library (MNHL), MD 687.
² Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 20 December 1907, Manchester Central Library (MCL), Manchester City Archives (MCA), M277/12/1–141.
³ Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 20 December 1907, MCL, MCA, M277/12/1–141
⁴ Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 14 April 1908, MCL, MCA, M277/12/1–141.

“MY FATHER PASSED AWAY VERY PEACEFULLY”

I dont expect to live very long in this world but I will not be sorry to get to my rest yet I often think of you and but very few beside you.⁵

Faragher was to close the letter, the last one known between the pair, “I must now conclude and remain your friend Edward Faragher.” This is a change from his regular formula of remaining “sincerely yours.” Theirs had been a long friendship, from at least 1889 onwards.⁶ Edward Faragher died Friday, 5 June 1908, and his funeral was the following Tuesday, 9 June. Absent as a mourner would be Karl Roeder, away on business from Manchester, with the letter from William Faragher awaiting his return.

STEPHEN MILLER
VIENNA, 2004

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

MANX NATIONAL HERITAGE LIBRARY

MS 2146/6 A Letter from Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 25 December [1889].

MD 687 Letter from Edward Faragher to “My Dear Friends,” 25 March 1907.

MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY

MANCHESTER CITY ARCHIVES

M277/12/1-141 Letter from Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 20 December 1907.

M277/12/1-141 ———, 14 April 1908.



⁵ Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 14 April 1908, MCL, MCA, M277/12/1-141.

⁶ The earliest extant letter between the pair is undated, but it can be dated to be 25 December 1889, MNHL, MS 2146/6 A.