

Manx Notes 35 (2004)

“WE WRITE YOU A FEW LINES”

KARL ROEDER AND THE HUDSONS OF BALLAFESSON

Ballafesson | Nr Port Erin | Dec 9th 1907.

Dear Mr Roeder

We write you a few lines to let you know that your old friend (John Hudson) of Surby has passed away on November the 24th and was interred in Rushen Church yard on Nov 26th. He had not been very well all the summer but was not kept to bed until about four weeks before the end. He knew us and was able to talk to us to within two days of his death and then last two days he did not notice anyone except the very night before he died we were trying to turn him when we heard him say (Hardin) that is Manx which means (Lord Help me) in English. We don't know will this letter find you or not but if it does we shall be very pleased to hear from you and if ever you are in the Isle of Man please call & see us. We remain your sincere friends.

Alfy & Annie Hudson | son & daughter of | John Hudson.
address Alfred Hudson | Ballafesson | Nr Port Erin Isle of Man

Source: Letter from Alfred & Anne Hudson to Karl Roeder, 9 December 1907, Manchester Central Library, Manchester City Archives, M277/12/1-52.



Karl Roeder not only collected himself when on Man but he also found a number of individuals willing to write down and send on to him, either in the form of letters or small notebooks, what folklore they could recollect or seek out. Edward Faragher is the most well-known of this circle as his material survives in some quantity. Another was John Hudson who lived at Ballafesson, near Port Erin, in the south of the Island.

Roeder certainly had a touch with Manx people as he developed and sustained friendships with many of them. This letter shows that well, although it contained the sad news for him that Hudson was now dead. Hudson's material is difficult to use because his handwriting at times is virtually unreadable. He was also the first to admit it:

I wont name for I feel ashamed of myself being sutch a fool to sit & try to write so much. & not able to studdy the pen but have to studiy the one hand with the

other.—If I was studying some good advise for you I would feel just [?] but what I have been netting wont be of no good to you.¹

Edmund Goodwin had the patience to work through a small amount of material, probably the contents of a small notebook, as the above comes from a transcript in his hand of material originally in the possession of Roeder. Goodwin also had access to further Hudson material, phonetic notation of him reading from the Bible noted down by Roeder in 1896 and 1898.²

STEPHEN MILLER
VIENNA, 2004

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

MANX NATIONAL HERITAGE LIBRARY

- MS 2253 A “Manx Words, etc from John Hudson, Weaver. Ballafesson, Rushen. 1896–1900.” Transcript in Edmund Goodwin’s hand of material originally in the possession of Karl Roeder.
- MS 2255 A Contents include, “1896. Phonological Renderings from Manx Bible, South of I.o.Man Ballafesson [J Hudson] [sic] 2/8/1896.” Transcript in Edmund Goodwin’s hand of material originally in the possession of Karl Roeder. (This manuscript also contains other Roeder material, but not exclusively so.)



¹ “Manx Words, etc from John Hudson, Weaver. Ballafesson, Rushen. 1896–1900,” Manx National Heritage Library (MNHL), MS 2253 A. See p.[14]. Transcript in Edmund Goodwin’s hand of material originally in the possession of Karl Roeder.

² “1896. Phonological Renderings from Manx Bible, South of I.o.Man Ballafesson [J Hudson] 2/8/1896,” pp. 201–09, this section seemingly spanning 2–26 August 1896, followed by pp. 210–217, likewise 26 August–26 September, pp. 217–22, commencing 18 July 1898 in MNHL, MS 2255 A.