

Manx Notes 83 (2007)

“I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MANX TAUGHT IN MY SCHOOL”

RICHARD LACE OF SANTAN (1902)

17th May 1902

Dear Madam,

I am much obliged for your interesting letters: I beg to apologise for dealy in replying.

I am anxiously awaiting fullest particulars of how best to introduce the Manx language into the school.

I shall be obliged to look to you for assistance as to a suitable “scheme”[.]

It would be well if we had definite schemes early so as to submit to Inspectors, and enter on Time Table.

I am almost tempted to wait till the experimental Stage is past, and adopt only when you have the machinery in good working order. But I suppose there has been sufficient procrastination—[“]thraa-dy-lioar” already.

I know nothing of Manx, I am just as bad as a heathen Chinee[.]

I could not be in any way responsible for the teaching in the School.

I must ask for the assistance of the peripatetic teacher appointed for the purpose. and hope that along with the children I may be able to acquire proficiency in the grand mother tongue,—or grand old tongue[.]

I would like to have Manx taught in my school[.]

I do not think the Board would object. But you well know schoolmasters are sometimes grumblers, and fancy the curriculum fairly full already—especially in understaffed country schools.

I think I would like, if possible, some little choice as to which teacher I would prefer for my school from the list of those authorised by the Society to teach.

I do not know a competent teacher of Manx, but know several who think themselves competent to ridicule the teaching given in classes in the past.

I hope when we endeavour to introduce the teaching, we may be able to do so without clashing with the other subjects, obtain efficient teaching without engendering a distaste for the subject among the scholars, and even find the peripatetic teacher free from prejudice, no spy, no newsmonger, seeking ever to work in harmony, consideration and sympathy.

I am | Dear Madam | Your Sincerely | R.Lace

Source: Letter from Richard Lace to Sophia Morrison, 17 May 1902, in bound volume of correspondence to Sophia Morrison, Manx National Heritage Library, ms 5495 A.



This letter from Richard Lace, the headmaster of Santan school, raises issues about the introduction of Manx in 1902 that were to arise again in 1992: the need for formal approval, at this date, the school board; the inability of any current member of staff to teach the language and the need then for a peripatetic teacher to be appointed; the question where to place Manx in the curriculum without clashing with the subjects already being taught; and, finally, the need for a teacher able to enthuse the children themselves to learn Manx without “engendering a distaste for the subject among the scholars.” On this point, Lace writes that “I do not know a competent teacher of Manx, but know several who think themselves competent to ridicule the teaching given in classes in the past.” This indicates that there had been some form of teaching in the past, no doubt informal, and maybe along the lines of that carried out by William Radcliffe at Andreas school.¹

STEPHEN MILLER
VIENNA, 2007

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRINTED SOURCES

Miller, Stephen. “To instil a little knowledge of written Manx’: William Radcliffe Attempts to Teach Manx (1902).” *Manx Notes* 82 (2007): 1–2.



¹ Stephen Miller, “To instil a little knowledge of written Manx’: William Radcliffe Attempts to Teach Manx (1902),” *Manx Notes* 82 (2007).