

Manx Notes 98 (2007)

“HAD QUITE A LONG CHAT WITH KERMODE”

R.L. JONES MEETS THOMAS KERMODE

On the Thursday after you left I went up to Bradda and had quite a long chat with Kermode. I mentioned your name and he said that you had been interviewing him and another man a day or so before. He also told me about a well (situated near where Andrew pointed out as the Chapel field) and said that he could remember the time when the natives used to go to it and whenever they took a drink of water, always left something on the bush close to it, even if it was only a piece of rag, they would not take a drink without leaving something.

Source: Letter from R.L. Jones to Karl Roeder, 28 July 1898, Manchester Central Library, Manchester City Archives, M277/12/1-101.



Quite who R.L. Jones was is at present unknown. However, the person he was talking with was Thomas Kermode, a fisherman blinded from birth due to smallpox. He was a folk singer whose lengthy repertoire had been recorded in early 1896 by Dr John Clague who had come across him in December of the previous year.¹ As mentioned before, this was somewhat of a rediscovery (using Clague’s words) as John Strachan and Father Henebry had encountered him in 1883 (and Strachan was to do so again in 1895).² And now Karl Roeder had been by to collect from Kermode and following on from that, R.L. Jones had decided to pay him a visit.

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VIENNA, 2007

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PRINTED SOURCES

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- Strachan, John. “A Manx Folksong.” *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 1 (1897): 54–58.



¹ Stephen Miller, “I have discovered a new ‘mine’ at Bradda’: Dr John Clague and Thomas Kermode,” *Manx Notes* 20 (2004).

² John Strachan, “A Manx Folksong,” *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 1 (1897).