

Manx Notes 107 (2009)

“HUMBLE FARQUHAR STANDS OUT MORE & MORE A GIANT”
KARL ROEDER WRITES TO SOPHIA MORRISON (1911)

17 Amherst Street Withington

Many thanks for letter & loan of Clague's book. I shall return it shortly. I looked it over; the only interest is the Manx version—otherwise the work falls flat, there is absolutely nothing in it that adds to our stock of Manx lore. He seems to have been perfectly innocent of what has been done 'before' by Harrison, Moore, etc; if he only would have collected with a certain aim or intelligence! if this is 50 years gathering he must have missed Manx life, and merely pricked the surface. What [?] he has had and thrown away. Humble Farquhar stands out more & more a giant who was the man who knew the inner life of his race & people.

With best regards
Yours truly
C.Roeder

Source: Postcard from Karl Roeder to Sophia Morrison, undated [postmarked 14 July 1911], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 8. The transcript is a diplomatic one.



“Clague's book” is a reference here to Dr John Clague's *Cooïnaghtyn Manninagh: Manx Reminiscences By the Late Dr John Clague* (1911),¹ the title a certain clue as to its posthumous appearance, Clague having died in 1908. Roeder is a little ungenerous here, while *Cooïnaghtyn Manninagh* is uneven in many places, several chapters are invaluable accounts of Manx folklore, especially one concerning folk medicine, not surprising given his medical background. Roeder, though, was not the only person who was disappointed about what appeared. Edmund Goodwin wrote to Sophia Morrison in 1911:

Glad to see Dr Clague's book. I enclose 7/- for the two copies. My only disappointment with the book is that there is not more of it. Clague wrote me that he had material for a book of 400 pages gathered from the lips of all sorts of people

¹ Dr John Clague, *Cooïnaghtyn Manninagh: Manx Reminiscences By the Late Dr John Clague* (Castletown: M.J. Backwell, n.d. [but 1911]). For an enlarged edition, see Stephen Miller, ed, *Dr John Clague: Cooïnaghtyn Manninagh / Manx Reminiscences* (Onchan: Chiollagh Books, 2005).

of “the older generation—those who thought and dreamt in Manx.” I should have liked to have seen at least twice as much again of the native “yarns.”²

J.R. Moore, who had emigrated recently from the Island to New Zealand was another one who felt left down:

I get an occasional letter from my dear Friend Miss Morrison of Peel from whom I have received Mr J.J. Kneens Direct Method, Mr Faraghers Aesops Fables, Dr Clague’s Reminiscences in which Im greatly disappointed. I expected something more racy from the genial old Doctor. And a few days ago The folklore collection of that grand old salt Bill Cashen. ³

William Cashen’s Manx Folk-Lore,⁴ published in 1912, the year after *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh*, was more to his taste, as he wrote to the person who had gifted it to him, namely Sophia Morrison:

I have again to thank you for sending on to me dear Old Bill Cashen’s Folklore with a portrait of the grand old salt. [...] To my mind his folklore is more racy reading than that of Mr Moore and is nicely spiced with Gailck.⁵

We still await though to see critical editions of Faragher’s many letters, his mss, and notebooks.⁶

STEPHEN MILLER
VIENNA, 2009

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- ² Letter from Edmund Goodwin to Sophia Morrison, undated [June/July 1911], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 2.
- ³ Letter from J.R. Moore to William Cubbon, [21 March] 1913, MNHL, MS 2355/I C.
- ⁴ William Cashen, *William Cashen’s Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912).
- ⁵ Letter from J.R. Moore to Sophia Morrison, 17 March 1913, MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 3.
- ⁶ Some material has though appeared: John [as “Juan y Geill”] Gell, “Seanchas ó Mhanainn,” *Béaloides* xviii (1948), reproduced as John [as “Juan y Geill”] Gell, *Skeelalyn ’y Ghailck Neddy Beg Hom Ruy Cre’neash* (Douglas: Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, 1948). See too, George Broderick, “Four Manx Folktales from the MSS Collection of Ned Beg Hom Ruy,” *Béaloides* 42–44 (1976 [for 1974–76]), George Broderick, “Manx Stories and Reminiscences of Ned Beg Hom Ruy,” *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 38 (1981), George Broderick, “Manx Stories and Reminiscences of Ned Beg Hom Ruy: Translation and Notes,” *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 39 (1982). These last two items reprinted as George Broderick, *Manx Stories and Reminiscences of Ned Beg Hom Ruy* (Douglas: Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, 1991). Also, Stephen Miller, ed, *Charles Roeder: Skeelalyn Cheel-Chiollee, Manx Folk-Tales* (Onchan: Chiollagh Books, 1993). Further, Cyril I. Paton, “Arrane mychione Eirnee Sayntoilagh’: A Song about Covetous Farmers by Edward Faragher (‘Neddy Beg Hom Ruy’) of Cregneish,” *Journal of the Manx Museum* v.71 (1944) and Eric Cregreen, “Skeelalyn Edard Karagher, Cre’neash,” *Coraa Ghailckagh* 9 (1954).

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