

Manx Notes 109 (2009)

“DR CLAGUE SENT ME A LETTER IN MANX”

DR JOHN CLAGUE WRITES TO EDWARD FARAGHER (1898)

(1)

Crofton | Ballacashtal | Ellan Vannin.
Laa'll Eoin 'syn Ullick | 1898.

Edward Faragher, | Vainsther Veen,

Gur eh mie oo son yn “Skeal Manninagh” as yn “Drane.”

S'liak lhiam ad dy mie. My ta veg dy screwynyn Gaelg elley ayd, veign booiagh my yinnagh oo cur ad dooys. Ta mee cheet dy chur shillee ort reesht.

Ta mish ynrican gynsagh Gaelg, myr shen cha nhegin dhyt yannoo faghid j'eeem.

Dy Wrrinagh ayd's “Fer-lhee” Clague

Clague yn fer lhee, “yn dooinney shen ta pooar echey dy varroo.” | P.S. Ollick ghennal ort, as Blein Vie Noa.

Source: (1) Letter from Dr John Clague to Edward Faragher, [27 December] 1898, in Edward S. Dodgson, “A Manx Letter,” *Peel City Guardian* 7 September 1901: [2] col. g. Reprinted as “Mr Edward Faragher's Translations,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 14 September 1901: 3 cols. c–d.



Edward Spencer Dodgson (1857–1922), a cousin to Lewis Dodgson, better known by his pen name of Lewis Carrol, is one of those characters who bobbed and floated around the fringes of the Pan Celtic movement. He was also active in Basque studies as well, another discipline that attracts such individuals. Nevertheless, here we see him at Cregneash visiting Edward Faragher and coming away with a letter written to him by Dr John Clague. Faragher mentions this letter when writing to Karl Roeder in 1899:

Manx is all the go in the Island now Dr Clague sent me a letter in Manx the ather day the first that ever I received in the language he wants me to try and write some manx rhymes and I was trying to make a few verses and I think I would get on with a little practice.¹

¹ Letter from Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, Manx National Heritage Library, 4 January 1899, MS 1135 A.

Dodgson came away with the letter which he subsequently deposited in the Bodleian Library in Oxford where it sits stills as the only Manx Gaelic ms. in its collection.²

Dodgson interestingly advocated the sound recording of native speakers of Manx as early as 1901:

It is to be hoped that a phonograph will be provided onto which the best Gaelic speakers in the Island, such as Mr Cashen, shall be invited to read off the whole of one or two of the older books in the language, the paraphrase-epitome of “Paradise Lost,” for instance. By this means, future generations would have the means of knowing how the words were sounded at the beginning of the twentieth century.³

It was to be a little later, in 1904, when the Manx Language Society purchased a phonograph and embarked on a recording program.

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VIENNA, 2009

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MS Manx E Letter from Dr John Clague to Edward Faragher, [27 December] 1898.

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Dodgson, E.S. “Some Inscriptions in the Gaelic of Mann.” *Manx Church Magazine* xi.10 (1901): cxxviii col. a–cxxx.



² Letter from Dr John Clague to Edward Faragher, [27 December] 1898, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Manx E1. He also gifted a number of printed publications concerning Manx to the Taylor Institute.

³ E.S. Dodgson, “Some Inscriptions in the Gaelic of Mann,” *Manx Church Magazine* xi.10 (1901): cxxx col. a.