

Manx Notes 110 (2008)

“I AM AFRAID A FLAIL WOULD BE
TOO LONG TO SEND IT BY POST”

EDWARD FARAGHER WRITES TO G.W. WOOD (1899)

Cregnaish | November 10th 1899

Dear Sir

I received your letter with the skin all right and its very nicely made up I have been very busy writing for some time translating a story from English to manx and fingers were cramped at last I could not hold the pen properly but I have got it finished and I intend to keep it for myself I had a letter from Mr Roeder I told him I was writing a manx story I did not mention your Name to him but he is wanting to know is it for Mr Wood he says he knows you I have cut three pair of carranes of the hide and if I can manage to get laces out of the remnants I will get the three pair made shortly I suppose there is not a quiggal in cregnaish for a flail I could make one there are one or two turf spades in the village but they will not part with them as they cannot get new ones I have a cross laue in the house and an old ling hook craggane chonnee there was a tender box in one house about two years ago but when the old man died I think his daughter burnt the old tinderbox there is one man got one of the old steels that they used to light the fire with but they would not sell it for any reasonable price I fancy I could make a quiggal like my mother had spinning hemp and flax but she spin nothing but wool at present I am afraid a flail would be too long to send it by post but I hope to have the carranes finished in a few days they are bigger than my own foot but mine is a very small foot I have translated the story of the ugly duckling and sent it to Dr Clague but the other one is too long to write copies of it I must now conclude hoping you are all in good health

I remain sincerely | your Edwd Faragher

Source: Letter from Edward Faragher to [G.W. Wood], 10 November 1899, MNHL, MS 1418 A.



“I am afraid a flail would be too long to send it by post.” While this is a somewhat self-evident statement, it nevertheless has a wonderful surreal air about it. If it would have been possible to so post such an item, it surely would be counted as one of the most remarkable items to be delivered by the General Post Office to an address in London (or elsewhere for that matter). Edward Faragher had earlier met G.W.

Wood, a Manx bibliophile who lived in London, as he recounted to Karl Roeder in September 1899:

There was a gentleman and lady from london seeing me last week about the manx laguage he said he had heard my name mentioned in London that he was desirous to see me they came to the field where I was binding corn and waited until we left of but I had not much time to talk to him he said he would call again he could read manx pretty well and he said he could understand every word I read for him. I did not ask his name and he did not tell me but he said his wife was related to Dr Clague and that he had more manks books in his house than any man living he had a manx book with him with very nice relegious stories in it and he said the little talk we had had given him an insight into the manx laguage¹

Such visits to Faragher were not infrequent, for instance, this record of an encounter from 1896:

There was a scottish man came to our cottage one day last week. whoever told him about me I cannot tell . But he said he was a professor of galic and wished to know if I had composed anything in manx there was three ladies with him I shewed him some of my poetry and one of the fables in manx and he took a copy of the fable The ladies and himself were surprised at my writings and wondering that one of cregnaish people could do them. he took down my address and he said he would tell all about me to their society. we were talking in galic but I could not understand him as will as he understood me.²

These encounters caused Faragher to be shunned by the other villagers at Cregneash as they felt that he was drawing undue attention both onto himself and the village.

While the flail was not delivered to the London home of Wood, no doubt the three pairs of *carranes*, essentially hide shoes, did turn up in the post and one can maybe picture Wood in his study *cum* library browsing over some new Manx acquisition, his feet shod in *carranes* made by Edward Faragher.

STEPHEN MILLER
VIENNA, 2008

¹ Letter from Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 17 September 1899, MNHL, MS 11064, J.J. Kneen Papers, Box 2. While not named, this clearly is Wood who is meeting with Faragher. The transcript is a diplomatic one.

² Letter from Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 18 September 1896, MNHL, MS 11064, J.J. Kneen Papers, Box 2. The transcript is a diplomatic one.

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J.J. KNEEN PAPERS

MS 11064, Box 2 Letter from Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 18 September 1896.

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