

# Manx Notes 115 (2009)

“THE SOCIETY CAN REGARD ITS PUBLICATION  
AS AN HONOUR AND A PRIVILEGE”

CYRIL I. PATON'S *MANX CALENDAR CUSTOMS* (1942)

From Professor J.H. Hutton  
St Catherine's College, | Cambridge.

Received | and | Answered | 30/9/42

Dear Mr Paton,

As President of the Folk-Lore Society I write to express to you the pleasure with which the Society—and I need hardly add myself, welcome the publication of your work on Manx folklore as a bound volume. It is not very often that the Society publishes work which has not been done by its own members but when it does do so you may feel sure that it does so do because the work is so good that the Society can regard its publication as an honour and a privilege. As a token of what the Society feels about it I would ask you to accept three copies of the bound volume and the Society's grateful thanks for your very valuable contribution to their studies.

Believe me | Yours sincerely | J.H.Hutton

**Source:** Letter from J.H. Hutton to C.I. Paton, 24 September 1942, MNHL, MS 09505, C.I. Paton Papers, Box 8.



The Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the Council of the Folk-Lore Society in 1937 announced that:

The next volume of the series, *Scottish Calendar Customs, Vol. I, Movable Festivals*, edited by Mrs. M. Macleod Banks, is now printing and will be issued in the spring; sums amounting to £13 1s. have been received from generous friends for this series. The preparation of the second volume of *English Calendar Customs*, which will be published in 1938, is well advanced. *Manx Calendar Customs*, edited by Mr. Cyril I. Paton, is already ready for the printers, and will be published as soon as possible. *Welsh Calendar Customs* is being edited by Prof. T. Gwynn Jones and is nearing completion. A sensible increase of membership would hasten the publication of this material.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Folk-Lore Society, "Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the Council," *Folk-Lore* xlvi.1 (1937).

There was to be no progress as the next year's report mentioned:

So far it has not been possible to publish the volume of *Manx Calendar Customs*, for financial reasons. A generous offer of twenty pounds towards the cost has been received from the trustees of the Manx Museum, but another hundred and thirty pounds must be available before the work can be put in hand. It would be a welcome tribute to the Society in this the Sixty-first year of its existence, if some generous donor would provide the necessary sum.<sup>2</sup>

That for 1940 reported that "It has been decided that the collection of *Manx Calendar Customs* shall be published serially in *Folk-Lore*, but that extra sheets shall also be printed in order that a number of copies may be available for separate sale later." The material appeared in each of the quarterly issues of *Folk-Lore* for 1940 and 1941.<sup>3</sup> In 1942, *Manx Calendar Customs* finally appeared in book form.<sup>4</sup>

Paton was not a member of the Folk-Lore Society as seen by the letter of appreciation sent him by Professor J.H. Hutton, the President of the Society. As editor, Paton was not the first choice. Originally, it was to be compiled and edited by Mona Douglas. She passed on the project and then J.J. Kneen was considered as an editor until it was settled on Paton. Why both passed on the book is unknown.

Paton was an unusual choice as he was better known of as a naturalist, though he had published a short piece on the traditional Manx song "Mylecharane" in 1923,<sup>5</sup> and a longer and comprehensive article on *carvals* in 1928. A note by him on Manx fairy lore had appeared in *Folk-Lore* during 1938.<sup>6</sup> In any case, Paton produced a work that stands to this day.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Folk-Lore Society, "Sixtieth Annual Report of the Council," *Folk-Lore* xlix.1 (1938).

<sup>3</sup> Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. Moveable Feasts," *Folk-Lore* li.2 (1940), Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. The Calendar: The First Quarter," *Folk-Lore* li.3 (1940), Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. The Calendar: The Second Quarter," *Folk-Lore* li.4 (1940), Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. The Calendar: The Third Quarter. The Fourth Quarter (Part 1)," *Folk-Lore* lii.1 (1941), Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. The Calendar: The Fourth Quarter, i," *Folk-Lore* lii.1 (1941), Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. The Calendar: The Fourth Quarter, ii," *Folk-Lore* lii.2 (1941), Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. Wells," *Folk-Lore* lii.3 (1941), Cyril I. Paton, "Manx Calendar Customs. Fairs," *Folk-Lore* lii.4 (1941).

<sup>4</sup> Cyril I. Paton, *Manx Calendar Customs*, Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, vol. cx (London: Folk-Lore Society, 1942). For facsimile reprints see, Cyril I. Paton, *Manx Calendar Customs*, Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, vol. cx (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1968), Cyril I. Paton, *Manx Calendar Customs*, Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, vol. cx (Llanerch Press: Cribyn, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Cyril I. Paton, "Mylecharaine: A Few Notes on an Old Poem," *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society* ii.3 (1924).

<sup>6</sup> Cyril I. Paton, "Belief in Fairy Fishermen," *Folk-Lore* xlix.1 (1938). Other contributions to the journal are Cyril I. Paton, "Purgatory Hammers," *Folk-Lore* lii.4 (1941), "The Burning of the Christmas Decorations," *Folk-Lore* lviii.1 (1947).

<sup>7</sup> For a checklist of his folklore writings, see Stephen Miller, "Cyril I. Paton: An Interim Checklist of Writings on Manx Folkways," *Manx Notes: Folkways and Language* 9 (1993).

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VIENNA, 2009

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