

Manx Notes 118 (2010)

“WHO IS MONA DOUGLAS?” (4)

“I WAS BROUGHT UP IN THE ISLE OF MAN” *

I was brought up in the Isle of Man and spent most of my childhood running around with shepherds, farmers, fishermen and local characters. I have been interested in Manx culture ever since I can remember and learnt to speak Manx Gaelic from an old native Speaker as a young child. At ten years old I began collecting and noting folk lore and songs on the instruction of the Manx Gaelic Society's Secretary, and have been doing it ever since. I supplied material for three volumes of the *Folk Song Journal*, edited by Miss A.G. Gilchrist devoted to Manx folk songs, and contributed a paper to the *Jubilee Congress of the Folklore Society*. I was a founding member of the International Folk Music Council and contributed material to several of their conferences. I collected all the surviving Manx traditional dances, published twelve of them with arrangements by Arnold Foster, and have notations of others from which I teach. For this I have been elected an honorary Life Member of the *Manx Folk Dance Society*, of which I was one of the founders. I have also been invited to speak and demonstrate on many occasions in respect of Manx folk songs and dances by the *English Folk Dance and Song Society*. In association with Arnold Foster I have published with Stainer and Bell of London three volumes of Manx Folk Songs and two of dances. I have also published several books of poems and plays, and am at present working with Mr Peter Kennedy on the Manx section of his new work, *Folk Songs of the British Isles*, in course of publication by Cassells.

I work as a full-time reporter and feature-writer on the Isle of Man Times, and have published with this firm recently five volumes of miscellany on Manx subjects of which the titles are: *This is Ellan Vannin*, *Christian Tradition in Vannin*; *This is Ellan Vannin Again: Folklore*, *They lived in Ellan Vannin*; *We Call it Ellan Vannin*.

I am Hon. Secretary of *Ellynyn ny Gael* (Arts of the Gael), the Society for the encouragement of all the traditional Manx arts and crafts and modern work based thereon, which has instituted, among other things, the Mannanan Trophy Award made annually to some person adjudged by an adhoc committee representing all the Manx cultural organisations to have made an outstanding contribution to Manx culture. I also run the Manx National Youth Club, *Aeglagh Vannin*, which specialises in Manx music and dancing, has been featured several times on Radio Televis Eireann, the BBC Wales and ITV, and is allocated a special position each year at the annual Tynwald Ceremony by the Manx Government. I am a founding member of the Manx branch of the *Celtic Congress*, and was for a number of years Hon. Secretary of this society and of the *Manx Gaelic Society*.

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