

Manx Notes 180 (2014)

“MRS OLIVER, AGNEASH”

MONA DOUGLAS AND HER INFORMANTS
(AN UPDATED NOTE) *

Since the piece in a previous issue of *KMJ*¹ appeared asking for help to identify the Manx singers and dancers found by Mona Douglas, George Broderick has come up with some information about a number of them.² Also, work on the 1901 Census has come up with some indentifications. The updated information is as follows (this all from GB): 1. “Mrs Bridson, Glen Maye was great-grandmother to George Bridson, Ballahutchin Mooar, Dalby, whom I interviewed for place-names in the area in 1990. His great-grandfather came from and lived in Glen Maye, he told me.” 2. “William Caine, Jurby, was Marstrander’s informant from that area who supplied him with a number of (bawdy) Manx songs (printed in *A Handbook of Late Spoken Manx*, Vol. 1).” 6. “Mrs Clague, Niarbyl, known of by George Bridson. He said she lived in the end cottage (nearest the sea) on the shore (*ie*, filmed in *Waking Ned*).” 13. “John Kelly, Baldrine, known as Kelly Partine(s) (?Pat Hines). I interviewed his son Harold *re* Manx songs and dance in 1979. He then lived at ‘The Crescent,’ Olympia, on Victoria Road, Douglas.” 23. “John Matthew Mylechreest (‘Johnny Mat’), Thalloo Hogg (?) [...]” Sue Woolley has more details about John (“Jack”) Davies of Ballasalla:

My mother was born in Malew in 1912 (she died in 2000) and she used to talk about a character in the village in her childhood known as ‘Daddy Davis.’ I presume it is the same person. He was a folk doctor and made remedies out of herbs that he would roll into small pills with goose droppings! (On reflection, perhaps they only looked like goose droppings to a small child!). He wore a long coat. I think they lived in a cottage in the meadow just beyond the children’s play area at Silverdale, along the Silverburn River. It would be a good place to collect fresh herbs!³

Another source of names was overlooked in the previous piece. It is a notebook of dance notations in her own hand, unfortunately undated, but containing names

* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “Mrs Oliver, Agneash’: Mona Douglas and her Informants (An Updated Note).” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* November (2013): [7]–[8]. Reproduced here with sources.

¹ Stephen Miller, “A Hard Man, and Wild Mighty...’: Mona Douglas and her Informants,” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* September (2013).

² Personal communication by email, 2 September 2013.

³ Personal communication by email to Dr Breesha Maddrell, 2 September 2013; forwarded same day to myself.

from whom the dances were taken down.⁴ Not surprisingly, many of them overlap with those already known—however, there are a number of names that are new. They are the following: “Granny,” [obviously her Grandmother]; “Great Grandfather” [likewise obvious]; “Kelly the Blackguard,” Glen Rushen; Mrs Bridson, Glen Meay / Booilly Vrackagh; Mrs Callow, Cardle Veg; Mrs Corlett, Garey, Ramsey; J. Craine, Jurby; William Craine, Jurby Curragh; [the names next are taken to be the Kelly brothers of Baldrine] J. Kelly; P. Kelly / “Pat” Kelly, Kelly; and “Kelly Baldrine’s brother” [either of the pair]; J. Kermode / — Kermode; Mrs Kermode, Port Mooar; Tom Kermode, The Lag; Phillip Moore, Peel; Mrs Oliver, Agneash; James Quine, Peel; William Quine, Peel;⁵ Mrs Scarffe, Maughold; Ada Skillicorn; Mrs Teare, Ballaugh; Charles Watterson, Castletown.

The additions to the names (excluding her grandmother and great grandfather) are the following: (1) Mrs Corlett, Garey, Ramsey; (2) J. Craine, Jurby; (3) T[h]om[as] Kermode, The Lag; (4) Phillip Moore, Peel; (5) Mrs Oliver, Agneash; (6) James Quine, Peel; (7) Mrs Scarffe, Maughold; (8) Ada Skillicorn; (9) Charles Watterson, Castletown.

Some names have been found: (5) Elizabeth Oliver, aged 49 in 1901, was a widow living at Agneash, with her three sons, Joshua E., 19 years old, a greengrocers’ assistant, Elijah, 15, and Benjamin, 10 years old. All were born in Lonan. Elizabeth Oliver spoke both Manx and English, her children English only.⁶ (6) James Quine aged 40 in 1901 was enumerated on the Peel fishing boat the “Choice,” *PLI*. Married, he was born in Onchan and was an English speaker.⁷ (7) “Mrs Scarffe, Maughold,” is Catherine A. Scarffe born in Maughold, living on Ballasholague with her husband, William Scarffe, a schoolmaster, aged 33, and born in Lonan. He spoke English only, whilst his wife, 32 years old, both Manx and English.⁸ (8) Ada Skillicorn was aged 21 in 1901, unmarried and living at the Dhoon with her widowed mother, Margaret, 62 years old, enumerated as a farmer. A two year old granddaughter, Isabella, aged 2, was also present. All were born in Maughold. Margaret spoke Manx and English, Ada just English.⁹

As regards names from the fuller list presented earlier, a number have been identified. “Mrs Bridson” is Annie J. Bridson, married, aged 46 in 1901, and with two children, Eliza Anne Bridson, 10 years old, and John J. Bridson, aged 3 years. She lived on Glen Rushen Road in Patrick with her widowed mother, Anne Gill, 79 years

⁴ “Folklore Notebook. | Dances. | Tunes, descriptions & notes”. Undated notebook. MNHL, MS 09545, Box 9.

⁵ This pair seem not to be related as might be first thought. James was born in Onchan, William in Patrick. The latter could speak Manx, the former English only. They must then be two different Quines.

⁶ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Lonan 1901, RG 13/5307, fol. 24, sch. 31.

⁷ *Enumeration of Fishing Vessels* for Peel 1901, RG 13/5308, fol. 146, sch. 1.

⁸ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Maughold 1901, RG 13/5302, fol. 24, sch. 24.

⁹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Maughold 1901, RG 13/5302, fol. 23, sch. 9.

old, “living on her own means.” All were born in Patrick and both mother and daughter could speak Manx and English.¹⁰ The “Mrs Clague” who ran a summer café of sorts from her cottage at the Niarbyl in Patrick is Annie Clague, aged 32 in 1901, married to Henry Clague, 37 years old, a mariner. They had three children, William H., 12, Edith M., 6, and Fredrick S, 1 year old. All were born in Patrick and the household was an English-only speaking one.¹¹ The often-mentioned “John Matt Mylechreest” is John Mylechreest of Thalloo Hogg in Lonan. In 1901, he was aged 49, single, “living on his own means,” sharing the house with his unmarried sister, Christian Mylechreest, 45 years old. Both were born in Lonan and the pair spoke Manx and English.¹² William Quine in the 1901 census was aged 51, a joiner, and lodging with his sister-in-law, Ellen Clucas, 44 years old, and her family, at 30 St German’s Place. Both were born in Patrick and spoke Manx and English.¹³ Margaret Quayle of Glen Auldyn Mill in Lezayre lived not in the mill itself, that was home to a pair of families, both named Quayle and probably silblings, but presumably alongside or close to it. Aged 47 in 1901, single, she lived there with her unmarried sister, Elizabeth Quayle, and John Quayle, 20 years old, a farm labourer, and a son to someone in the family. All were born in Lezayre and no one spoke Manx, only English.¹⁴

A start has been made now on tracking down some of Mona Douglas’ informants—however, many still remain to be found. What again of “Kelly the Blackguard”? Is he the William Kelly, aged 52 years old, single, a Manx speaker, to be found living on Ballachrink, Dalby, and farming a piece of ground there in 1901 or not?¹⁵

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VIENNA, 2014

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REFERENCES

Miller, Stephen. “‘A Hard Man, and Wild Mighty...’: Mona Douglas and her Informants.” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* September (2013): [6].



¹⁰ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Patrick 1901, RG 13/5306, fol. 122, sch. 49.

¹¹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Patrick 1901, RG 13/5306, fol. 107, sch. 14.

¹² *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Lonan 1901, RG 13/5307, fol. 21, sch. 2.

¹³ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Peel 1901, RG 13/5306, fol. 63, sch. 229.

¹⁴ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Lezayre 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 95, sch. 37.

¹⁵ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Patrick 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 114, sch. 16.