

Manx Notes 183 (2014)

THE BRIDE TONIC SOL-FA CLASS (1896) *

The *Ramsey Courier* for 10 April 1896, reported that:

The great event in the parish of Bride during the Easter holidays was the concert which was given in the Parochial Schoolhouse on Easter Monday evening. The room was crowded, and many people were unable to obtain admission. That there should have been a large attendance was not surprising considering the nature of the attractions offered, chiefly in the shape of the Bride Tonic Solfa Class, which, under able direction of Mr Daniel Joughin, assisted by Miss Etta Joughin, has been brought to a high state of efficiency.¹

The Bride Tonic Sol-fa Class numbered over sixty members and had an organisational structure consisting of an honorary secretary, a treasurer, and a supporting committee of three.

The concert opened with “Blessed are the People,” followed by “Cast thy burdens.” Other pieces sung that evening by the class were “Save us O Lord,” “The Village Choristers,” “Laughing Chorus.” Solo pieces were “Rock of Ages,” “The Trysting Tree,” “Loch Lomond,” “Golden Love,” “The Sea and the Sky,” “The Storm-Fiend,” “The Little Maid and her Bonnet.” The concert closed with the singing of the National Anthem. To accompany the choir there was a small orchestra of seven, consisting of an organist, a pianist, three violins, a flute, and a double bass.

The organist was seemingly Etta Joughin of Ballaquark; her name is mentioned in 1895, when an organ was purchased for Bride Church.² The *Ramsey Courier* piece also mentioned that some twenty-five years ago, one R. Kerruish had formed a Sol-fa class in the parish.³ Whether the Society had been in continuous existence since 1875 is unclear; likewise if the “Mr Kerruish” listed above is the same as “R. Kerruish.”

Working through the newspaper account of the evening, some twenty-five individuals are mentioned in one way or another as being involved with the event: Rev. L. Ashworth, W. Brew, H. Butler, B. Butterworth, J. Cannell, A.E. Chrystal, Miss Corrin, J. Cottier, Miss E. Cowell, T.W.K. Cowle, Rev. D.S. Cowley, Dr Davie, Daniel Joughin, Miss Etta Joughin, J.J. Kelly, Mr Kerruish, Miss Kewley, H. Kissack, Miss Kneale, Miss Kneen, Mr Quark, W. Quark Jnr, Miss Lizzie Quarrie, D. Teare Jnr, Miss Teare, T. Vondy.

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¹ Anon, “Musical Festival at Bride,” *Ramsey Courier* 10 April 1896.

² Anon, “Opening of a New Organ at Bride,” *Ramsey Courier* 6 September 1895. In 1893, Jurby Chapel had “lately purchased a fine organ, which when well manipulated considerably enhances the musical selections on festive occasions.” Anon, “Harvest Services at Jurby,” *Ramsey Courier* 21 October 1893.

³ Anon, “Opening of a New Organ at Bride.”

Most of these individuals (though not all) can be found in the 1891 Census: (1) the Rev. L. Ashworth was not enumerated in 1891; (2) “W. Brew” is William J[ohn?] Brew, aged 21, a farm servant living and working on Ballacregga, Bride;⁴ (3) “H. Butler” is Henry M[ichael?] Butler, 47 years old, of 4 Riverside, Ramsey, with no occupation (for some reason) recorded;⁵ (4) “B. Butterworth” is John B. Butterworth, 34 years old, living at [?Redan] Cottage, Bride, and employed as an Elementary School Teacher, born at Rochdale, Lancashire;⁶ (5) “J. Cannell” cannot be identified as there is no-one with that name recorded in Bride;⁷ (6) “A.E. Chrystal” is Alfred E[dward?] Chrystal, aged 25, auctioneer of 2 Altdale Terrace, Lezayre Road, Ramsey;⁸ (7) “Miss Corrin,” surprisingly, there is no one named Corrin (or Curran for that matter) recorded in the in 1891 Census; (8) “J. Cottier” is John Cottier, 55 years old, an agricultural labourer living at Ballakillee, Bride (but not working the land there);⁹ (9) “Miss E. Cowell” may well be Emily Cowell, aged 35, recorded as being a cook at the Albert Hotel, 1 Quay Street, in Ramsey;¹⁰ (10) “T.W.K. Cowle” is Thomas William Kneal[e?] Cowle of [?] Waterloo Road, 28 years old, and a carpenter by occupation;¹¹ (11) Rev. D.S. Cowley, is the Rev. Daniel S[tephen?] Cowley, aged 38 years, Vicar of St German, Peel, living at 7 Parville Road, Peel;¹² (12) “Dr Davie,” is a mistake in print for Dr Charles Augustus Davies, 33 years old, a medical practitioner living at “Irey [*sic*] Lhaa,” on South Promenade in Ramsey;¹³ (13) Daniel Joughin, aged 47, farmed Cronkbane, Bride, and was a member of the Setting Quest of the Lord’s Lands for Bride;¹⁴ Miss Etta Joughin, presumably related, cannot be found;¹⁵ (14) “J.J. Kelly” is John [James?] Kelly, 34 years old, a joiner living at Ballagarret, Bride;¹⁶ (15) “Mr Kerruish” cannot be found; (16) “Miss Kewley” cannot be identified: there are no candidates in Bride though two

⁴ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. III, sch. 37.

⁵ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ramsey 1891, RG 12/4685, fol. 4, sch. 3.

⁶ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, 4684 fol. 97, sch. 16.

⁷ One individual named “J. Cannell” is recorded for Andreas with three others for Ramsey.

⁸ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ramsey 1891, RG 12/4685, fol. 21, sch. 10. *Brown’s Directory* for 1894, however, gives 1 Altdale Terrace as the address.

⁹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 97, sch. 19. The assumption here is that it is not his son who is meant.

¹⁰ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ramsey 1891, RG 12/4685, fol. 68, sch. 42.

¹¹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ramsey 1891, RG 12/4685, fol. 88, sch. 24.

¹² *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Peel 1891, RG 12/4683, fol. 6, sch. 15.

¹³ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ramsey 1901, RG 13/5307, fol. 151, sch. 29. He was not living in the Island in 1891.

¹⁴ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 99, sch. 38.

¹⁵ Whilst mentioned in 1895 as living at Ballaquark, the 1891 Census indeed records a Joughin family resident at Ballaquark, Bride but there is no-one named Etta living there. The Joughin household was Mary, a widow, a son (William), and an unmarried daughter, named Esther. *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 99, sch. 35.

¹⁶ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 102, sch. 2.

in Andreas; (17) “H. Kissack,” is Henry Kissack, a watchmaker & jeweller, aged 42, resident at 2 Market Lane, Ramsey;¹⁷ (18) “Miss Kneale” cannot be found; (19) “Miss Kneen” likewise; (20) “Mr Quark” is William Quark, 51 years old, who farmed Ballavarkish, Bride;¹⁸ (21) “W. Quark Jnr” is his son, William T[homas?] Quark, aged 19, who farmed with him;¹⁹ (22) “Miss Lizzie Quarrie” is Elizabeth E. Quarrie, 25 years old, living at Ballacowle, Bride;²⁰ (23) “D. Teare Jnr” is Daniel J. Teare, a farmer’s son aged 18, of Ballakelly, Bride, and despite his youth was a member of the Setting Quest of the Lord’s Lands for Bride (his father was a member of the House of Keys which suggests pull here);²¹ (24) “Miss Teare” cannot be located; (25) “T. Vondy” is Thomas Vondy, 45 years old, living at Orry’s Mount, Bride, a farmer and a member of the House of Keys.²²

Two interviews from the *Manx Museum Folk-Life Survey* provide some more detail about the Bride Tonic Sol-fa Class. W.A. Kewin and Miss Kewin from Bride interviewed in 1957 recalled the following:

Bride was a great place for music when they were young men and women. A Mr Kerruish from Douglas had a class for teaching Sol-fa. The young people went on winter evenings, and even took music examinations, and were awarded certificates. A Mr Andrew Joughin held similar classes in Lamb Hill School, and anyone who liked could go. They went, glad of something to do in the Winter, as a change from sitting round the fire in the house.²³

This Andrew Joughin appears not to be related to the other Joughins mentioned here but seemingly his son was an informant for the Folk-Life Survey in 1968.²⁴ In notes made during the interview he mentioned the following:

Choir in Bride—trained by informant’s father—who used to teach Sol-fa. There was an evening class with a membership of about one hundred. The choir competed in the Guild and also gave concerts—which were held in the Bride day school and there was a packed audience—to which people came from far and wide—the choir performed music from Oratorios—works are not often attempted today.²⁵

And, further, “[a]n orchestra would be fetched from Ramsey to accompany the choir—there were many instrumentalists—violin players, trumpet players and other

¹⁷ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ramsey 1891, RG 12/4685, fol. 97, sch. 144.

¹⁸ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 99, sch. 37.

¹⁹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 99, sch. 37.

²⁰ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 109, sch. 25. Presumably a relative to George Quarrie, the Manx dialect poet.

²¹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 104, sch. 31.

²² *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Bride 1891, RG 12/4684, fol. 108, sch. 15.

²³ MNHL, MXMUS FLS K/53, I.

²⁴ MNHL, MXMUS FLS J/3 B, I. The interview mentions that “[t]he conductor of the choir [*ie*, Bride] was his father.”

²⁵ MNHL, MXMUS FLS J/3 B, I.

instruments—the elder Chrystal—Mr Alfie Chrystal used to come as a bass violinist.”²⁶

The notes continue:

The newspapers of the time gave accounts of these concerts and he has himself one or two of the programmes—they are interesting in recalling the kind of music a parish choir—not a church choir—used to attempt. His father was a farmer but music was his great interest and even at a busy time on the farm, if he had choir practices to attend to, he would go and leave the farm work. This must have been around about the late 1800s and early in the 1900s—he recalls being at one concert when he was a very small child of about four. He remembers seeing the men in their top hats and frock coats.²⁷

The distinction made here between a parish and a church choir highlights that we are dealing here with an example of the new associational culture of the nineteenth century and an addition to vernacular musical making in the Island. Social status was no bar to membership it would appear from many of the occupations listed above; individuals with musical talent could be well-regarded on account of their skill alone and come to play a significant part in the musical life of the parish.

The interview concludes with the final piece of information that “Miss M.L. Wood came down to take the choir later on when his father was no longer training it.”²⁸ She lived in Douglas and at a time now when jokes are made about packing sandwiches when travelling to somewhere regarded as so remote as Bride (though such contemporary humour is more to do with defining a sense of Manxness than anything else) it is as well though to reflect that parishes such as Bride at the end of the nineteenth century were not isolated parts of the Island but participated not just in wider Island life but were also influenced by English metropolitan culture as well. What is now needed is further research on other such parish choirs in the Island.

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REFERENCES

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²⁶ MNHL, MXMUS FLS J/3 B, I. This is obviously the A.E. Chrystal mentioned above; see fn. 6.

²⁷ MNHL, MXMUS FLS J/3 B, I.

²⁸ MNHL, MXMUS FLS J/3 B, I.