

# Manx Notes 187 (2014)

## THE RAMSEY ALBERT ROAD SCHOOL DANCERS IN LIVERPOOL (1935) \*

Albert Road School in Ramsey was the *locus* of the revival and promotion of Manx folk dance through the joint efforts of Leighton Stowell and Mona Douglas. In 1935, the Albert Road School Dancers visited Merseyside to give a demonstration of their dancing inbetween displays from their hosts who were the Mersey and Deeside Branch of the *English Folk Dance and Song Society*. Fortunately, there is a surviving copy of the pamphlet produced for the occasion that fully details the programme for the Saturday afternoon of 25 May 1935 when there was a surprisingly late start of three pm for the proceedings to commence in the Picton Hall on William Brown Street in Liverpool.

Danced by the Ramsey team were the following (given here in the order in which they were performed): (1) “Yn Guilley-hesheree” (‘The Ploughboy’), “Jemmy as Nancy” (‘Jimmy and Nancy’), “Car ny Ferrishyn” (‘Fairy Reel’); (2) “Cum yn sheen oanrey cheh!” (‘Keep the old petticoat warm!’), “Reeaghyn dy Vannin” (‘The Kings of Mann’); (3) “Mylecharane’s March, or Cutting Off the Fiddler’s Head,” (4) “Peter-O-Tavy,” “Car Juan Nan” (‘Juan Nan’s Reel’); (5) “Eunyssagh Vona” (‘Mona’s Delight’), “Hunt the Wren!”

There were also performance of Manx songs as well sung by Stephen Carine: (1) “Snieu, wheeyl, snieu[!]” (‘Spin, wheel, spin!’), (2) “Dobberan, Baase Illiam Dhone” (‘Lament, the Death of Brown William’), (3) “My Chaillin Veg Dhone” (‘My Little Brown Girl’), “Tappaghyn Jiargey” (‘Red Top-knots’). (These were the versions arranged by Arnold Foster.)

This was not all that was on offer. Before the Interval, there was a display of the “White Boys’ Mumming Play and Dance,” and first on after the interval was Mona Douglas to give a “Short talk on the Manx dances.” And to close the day, the “Manx Good-night Song” (again in Foster’s arrangement) was sung by “both teams and audience.”

The visit was reported in detail by the *Isle of Man Examiner* with a photograph of the team (see [1]).<sup>1</sup> The previous issue of the *Examiner* had featured another picture of them ([2]) with some this time dressed in costume as the White Boys.<sup>2</sup> As ever, just who are they? The pamphlet names only Stephen Carine, the *Examiner* piece mentions Donald Maddrell as the Dirk Dancer, Joyce Sollitt, and Norah Crellin

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<sup>1</sup> Anon, “Manx Folk Dancers in England,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 31 May 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Anon, “[Photograph] ‘Members of the Albert Road School ...’,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 24 May 1935.

who was the accompanist for the dancing and singing. No names accompany the two photographs.

In 1932, the Albert Road School dancers were present at the Annual Festival of the English Folk Dance Society. The *Mona's Herald* listed the team as comprising of Arthur Bridson, Leonard Coffy, John ("Jack") Hurrell, Donald Maddrell, Alfred ("Alfie") Quayle, and Arthur Starkey with William ("Billie") Cain mentioned as simply accompanying them.<sup>3</sup> Norah Crellin was the accompanist. The *Isle of Man Weekly Times* adds the name of Miss M.T. Davies (a schoolteacher at Albert Road) and has a "Mr Douglas" on violin.<sup>4</sup> The *Examiner* from the previous day has Miss Davidson (another teacher there) also present.<sup>5</sup> In order to raise money for the London trip a fund raising event was held in January 1932 at Albert Road. In the course of the report in the *Ramsey Courier* Davies is mentioned as one of the trainers of the team alongside Stowell himself.<sup>6</sup>

All-in-all, we have the names of the following individuals from 1932 and 1935 involved in one way or another with the Ramsey Albert Road School dance team: (1) Arthur Bridson, (2) William ("Billie") Cain, (3) Stephen Carine, (4) Leonard Coffy, (5) Norah Crellin, (6) Miss Davidson, (7) Miss M.T. Davies, (8) "Mr Douglas," (9) John ("Jack") Hurrell, (10) Donald Maddrell, (11) Alfred ("Alfie") Quayle, (12) Arthur Starkey, and (13) Joyce Sollitt. Some of these names must match some of the faces in the photographs.

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#### REFERENCES

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 ———. "Manx Folk Dancers in England." *Isle of Man Examiner* 31 May 1935: 11.  
 ———. "[Photograph] 'Members of the Albert Road School ...'." *Isle of Man Examiner* 24 May 1935: 1.



<sup>3</sup> Anon, "Manx Folk Dances," *Mona's Herald* 5 January 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Anon, "Ramsey Dancers at London," *Isle of Man Weekly Times* 9 January 1932.

<sup>5</sup> Anon, "Manx Folk Dancers in London," *Isle of Man Examiner* 8 January 1932.

<sup>6</sup> Anon, "Folk Dancing at Albert Road School," *Ramsey Courier* 1 January 1932.