

# Manx Notes 241(2016)

## SOME LETTERS FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (1899–1908) \*

- MS 09495 Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 1  
Letter from Dr John Clague to Sophia Morrison, 16 March 1899.  
——, 29 March 1899.  
——, 4 November 1903.  
——, 10 April 1904.  
——, 28 September 1904.  
——, 11 November 1904.  
——, 9 February 1905.  
——, 26 April 1907.  
——, 30 June 1907.  
——, 23 July 1907.  
——, 15 August 1907.  
——, 29 September 1907.  
——, 29 April 1908.  
——, 3 May 1908.  
——, 14 June 1908.  
——, Undated.

1899

### I. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (16 MARCH 1899)

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

16 Mar 99

Dear Miss Morrison,

I beg leave to thank you for sending me a specimen of the lessons the Peel Association intend to print for the use of their classes. I have not had time to look them through yet, but if you can spare them until Monday, I may have a little time on Sunday to do so. Please drop me a post card to say whether you can spare them so long or not. If you are not able to spare them so easy or not. If you are not able to spare them I shall forward 'them' by the next post after the receipt of your postcard. I do not know in what way you are getting up your subscription, whether by taking a

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\* This transcript is a diplomatic one without footnotes and comments and should be thought of as a working version of the letters (I.O / 2016).—STEPHEN MILLER, 2016. Originally published as Stephen Miller, "Some Letters from Dr John Clague to Sophia Morrison (1899–1908)," *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* August (2016): download link on [14].

number of copes or by persons giving a certain sum, but in either case you can put my name down for two guineas. I highly approve of Mr Goodwin's system as I started about [a *needed for sense*] year ago to work on O Growney's system. I have the four parts of the work, and I think they are most admirable. I soon left off looking at O'Growney as I found it was interfering with my Manx. Mr Goodwin is the only person that I know who is capable of doing the work as he knows the language, we have only a dialect. I am still working at idiomatic Manx and the Irregular Verbs. Fortunately there are only about a dozen of them. I am sure Mr Goodwin could very easily smooth some of my difficulties, I mean more especially their derivations

With kind regards | Yours faithfully | JClague

**2. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (29 MARCH 1899)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

29 Mar 99

Dear Miss Morrison,

I hope I have inconvenienced you by keeping your manuscripts so long. I really had not time to read them through—except on Sundays. I am very much pleased with Mr Goodwin's work, it is really the best that I have seen so far as the structure of the Manx language is concerned, and I should very much like to see some more of his explanations of its structure in relation to Manx + Scotch. He is the only man that I know who is able to do this kind of work. I should like very much to have a long chat with him, as I am sure he could settle some of my difficulties. These difficulties have nothing to do with learning the language as we learn the language before we know anything about grammar The only way to acquire it is to hear it spoken, and then speak it yourself. Enclose please find cheque [*unreadable word*]  
2/2/0

Thanking you very much

I am | Yours faithfully | JClague

1903

**3. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (4 NOVEMBER 1903)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

4 Nov 1903.

Dear Miss Morrison,

I am very sorry to state that I shall be unable to attend the meeting this year.

I have not been able to get to Douglas during the summer, and I shall not venture to do so during the cold weather.

Since Canon Savage and Canon Kewley will not be able to be present, I think it would be better not to hold the meeting until they shall be able.

I think your report is as good as it can be in the circumstances, and I have nothing to add to it.

Enclosed please find my subscription to the Society.  
Thank you very much for your enclosures.

With kindest regards | Yours faithfully | Jclague

1904

**4. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (10 APRIL 1904)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

10 Ap 04.

Dear Miss Morrison,

Personally, I do not think much of the idea of the phonograph—The Manx spelling is purely phonetic, and I think it is the finest system in existence when you thoroughly understand it.

I have heard many people who have spoken Manx exactly as it is written.

Many of those who speak it now, do not know the separate words in their sentences, that is, they “glide” the words into each other, careless alike of the middle and the termination.

I believe we should do better if the old corrupt pronunciation were entirely forgotten.

With kindest regards, | Yours faithfully | JClague

**5. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (28 SEPTEMBER 1904)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

28 Sept 1904

Dear Miss Morrison,

I beg leave to thank you for sending the programme of the Pan Celtic Congress.

I really do not know at present anyone who could sing a Manx Song.

If a piece of Manx Music were set for the purpose of competition, I do not think we could get any singers to compete.

Perhaps you know of some persons who would do so

With kindest regards | Yours faithfully | JClague

**6. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (11 NOVEMBER 1904)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

11 Nov 1904

Dear Miss Morrison,

I am sorry to state that I shall be unable to attend the Meeting of the Manx Language Society on the 14<sup>th</sup> instant.

So few people seem to take any interest in our language, and the effort to keep it a living one makes little, if any progress.

Will you kindly thank the members for having elected me as president for the year, and also inform them that I do not wish to be reelected?

Enclosed please find cheque to amount one pound as my subscription to the Society.

Yours faithfully | JClague.

1905

7. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (9 FEBRUARY 1905)

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

9 Feb 1905

Dear Miss Morrison

I am very much pleased to know that you are taking down in the Tonic Solfa notation all the old Melodies that you can get hold of.

Car yn Coog is a very good fragment—it is a pity you cannot get more of it.

No 2 is a genuine specimen of Manx Music It is rather interesting as it is in the minor scale ascending and descending.

No 3 is an old melody used here in the early part of the nineteenth century.

I believe it is one of the tunes introduced by Butcher, the Pioneer of Primitive Methodism in the Isle of Man.

Tune yn Ollick is an Wesleyan Methodist tune called Wednesday—adapted by Wesley to a translation from the German ~~for~~—Worship and thanks and blessing—after he had been hooted pelted with rotten eggs at that place.

I also have a great number of old melodies which will never be published.

If you will send me a copy of any of your melodies I shall be pleased to comment on them.

With kinds regards | Yours faithfully | JClague

1907

8. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (26 APRIL 1907)

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

26 Ap 1907

Dear Miss Morrison

I saw Canon Savage today at Mrs Ferriers funeral, and I told him, if it should be a fine day I should come to the Court House, Douglas, 9<sup>th</sup> May. If this would be impossible, I should not do so.

I highly approve of your suggestions and cannot add anything to them.

With kinds regards | Yours faithfully | JClague

**9. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (23 JULY 1907)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

23 July 07.

Dear Miss Morrison

I am in favour of giving liberty to the teachers to send the children to the Guild what ever way they think best.

‘Feis ceoil’ is [?our] “feailley kiaullee.”

“Feaillys” is also too much like “failure.”

I shall give one or two suggestions.

Keird chiaullee

Quaiyl cheirdee [co ail] {[ ] *in the original*}

Quaiyl chiaullee

I am going to see T. Moore, Brookfield to morrow and perhaps he may make a suggestion.

With kinds regards | Yours faithfully | JClague

**10. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (15 AUGUST 1907)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

15 Aug 07

Dear dear Miss Morrison,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to act as a judge of the Manx Music at the [?Next] “Quail cheirdee.”

I can hardly refuse after the courteous way you have put it. and I have been at a good many functions—if I may call them so—lately.

If this one should prove to be a success, I do not think we shall be troubled on any future occasion, as we can be perfectly independent of Boosey or anyone else.

There is no copyright of National Music and [as *overwritten*] so long as we do not sing their particular arrangement, we can have any time lithographed or even photographed at very little cost.

I should not object to act with you and Mrs Laughton if you wish me to do so.

With kinds regards, | Yours faithfully | JClague

II. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (29 SEPTEMBER 1907)

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

29 Sept 07.

Dear Miss Morrison,

I forwarded the manuscripts to Mrs Laughton yesterday, as I approved of everything that had been done.

Thank you for the ‘Car y Cooag.’

It is very pretty as you took it down from the Dalby fisherman and I think it should not be altered. It was never sung as a “round” by Manxmen.

Mr Gills adaptation makes a good one but it is his own. There has been too much “Anglicising” is all our National [*added to end of line* Music] It is not right or honest to modernize the old music. It should be left as it has come down to us.

Mr Gill says the notes of the cuckoo are wrong. The cuckoo at the beginning of the season sings in the “late” key—a minor third.—d: l: as the season goes on she sings a major third—m: d: later on she sings a little sharper than a major third that is a diminished fourth.—fe: d: and at the end of the season a perfect fourth—f: d:

I enclose the words of the Straw Cradle.

Hinkin! Winkin! Clane suggane,

Harrish ny sleityn Nalbin. Joney Crowe.

Hinkin! Winkin! Clane suggane.

Harrish ny sleityn Gimlad.

Hurro! Dandy Davy, Hurro! “Tiff y reesht”

Eenvy owe the Dandy Davy.

Lennie Teare. Peter O. Nicky Kermatt.

It is a doggerel rhyme and I can make neither head nor tail of it.

Most of the tunes I have taken down from singers are unfit for publication and I have merely used some fragments of the words as titles. “Eaisht oo as clashtyn”—what Gill has called—The Fisherman’s [*initial f overwritten by F*] Evening Hymn is a love song.

Eaisht shiu as clasht shiu as Kiaullym shiu arrane—Is the only line fit for publication.

I took it down from the singing of an old man at Cross y Caley—He afterwards heard it played by the Castletown Band at The Level, Rushen, and he said “it was all right except one note.” He was perfectly right—that had been altered.

I think you are like myself—we value [*original word overwritten cannot be read*] the original music and care very little about emendations.

Keeayl chimnit yn cheeayl share

Mannagh vel ee kionnit ro gheyr,

Bee fys ain er ny shau yn nah cheayrt.

Lhiats dy firninagh | JClague

P.S. Thanks for “Arrane Queeyl neuieu.”  
Did you ever read the true Celtic story of “Trit Trot”?  
JC

1908

**12. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (29 APRIL 1908)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

29 Ap 08

Dear dear Miss Morrison,

I beg leave to forward you two Manx recipes and Mrs Clague send one for Manx short cake. Enclosed please find [*unreadable word*] postal order to [?amount]: 2/-

Thank you for [*two words unreadable*]

You do great work in Peel.

With kind regards | Yours faithfully | JClague.

**13. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (3 MAY 1908)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

3 May 08

Dear dear Miss Morrison,

I think it is unnecessary for me to attend the Meeting of the Guild delegates on 7<sup>th</sup> May.

We are dependant on Mr Gill and Dr Lyons for the music and on Mr J.J. Kneen and Mr J.J. Nelson for Manx translation of the test piece. I have no objection to D<sup>r</sup> Lyon Ny Kirree fo Niaghtey being used as a [*unreadable word*] voce test piece but I cannot do anything further without Mr Gills ‘permission.’

I have written to him to make a selection but you may not like that.

He is a life long friend [*unreadable word*] I dislike too much “Anglicanized” as much as you do but what can we do?

Mr A.W. Moores collection is less altered than Mr Gills.

I shall be pleased to help you in any way I can but I do not like to go [to *misses for sense*] meetings of any kind

With kind regards | Yours faithfully | JClague.

*Annotated by Sophia Morrison on final page:*

From D<sup>r</sup> Clague—his last letter

he died in Aug. 1908

**14. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (14 JUNE 1908)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

14 June 1908

Dear Miss Morrison,

Thank you very much for the [*unreadable word*] of “Folk Lore.”

It is very interesting as a Manx variety of “Trit Trot” when one knows that the “ennym” or name was the same as the “annym” or soul. so that when you had possession of the name of a god or a saint you had power over his soul. A charm was useless if you did not use the name of the person who required it or the name of the god or saint you [*unreadable word*] in the charm. Religion of [is *intended*] full of folk lore out of fashion. I beg leave to return Mr Gills “Leaves”

I am glad he is helping you in the choice of pieces. Although I think there is some truth in what he writes I wish he would leave the Manx Music as it has come down to us. at least you and I should like it much better

With kind regards, | Yours faithfully | JClague

**UNDATED**

**15. LETTER FROM DR JOHN CLAGUE TO SOPHIA MORRISON (UNDATED)**

[*Embossed Letterhead*] CROFTON, | CASTLETOWN, | ISLE OF MAN.

Dear dear Miss Morrison,

I do not like to promise to undertake a duty that I do not know whether I should be able to perform it or not.

I should like to have been at the last Guild competition but I was unable to be there.

You will have to utilize the music already published, and make use of the English words. It is perfectly useless to try to teach the children Manx words as if they were parrots when they do not understand the language. To my mind it is the same as Italian opera—we like the music whatever the words may be.

If you do not fully agree with these suggestions I would advise you to write to—

Mr W.H. Gill

Mona

Abingdon on Thames.

I am sure he would give all the assistance possible to help to make the Manx Music at the Guild competition a success,

With kind regards & thanks | I am | Yours faithfully | JClague

STEPHEN MILLER, 2016

