

Manx Notes 301 (2017)

“TOMMY THE TRUMP” *

(1899)

Thomas Arthur Kaye, better known as “Tommy the Trump,” found himself in 1899 a pauper in the Poor Asylum in Douglas.¹ The Douglas Poor Relief Committee was seeking to pass him on to the Poor Relief Committee of Lonan for his maintainance. When details of his life emerged in a court examination Lonan then sought to have him supported by the committee in Foxdale. Kaye was then 49 years old, born in Ramsey but brought up in Laxey. When he was 23, he left the Island and lived in England, moving often, save though for seven years when he was in jail. 1881 saw him back in the Island and living at times in Douglas, Ramsey, Laxey, and Foxdale. Theophilus Hogg remembered him from his Laxey days and mentioned that “[s]ince 1881 Kaye had travelled the country as a ‘wandering musician’ playing a concertina.” This was back up by W.J. Moore, the Inspector for the Douglas Committee. The Douglas Court of Petty Sessions was more interested in allocating responsibility for Kaye’s upkeep than his life as a musician, but one wonders how many other individuals also travelled the Island as Kaye did, on which occasions did they play, and the nature of their repertoire.

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REFERENCES

Anon. “Tommy the Trump’s Settlement: A Wandering Minstrel in Truth.” *Peel City Guardian* 11 February 1899: [4]f.



* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “‘Tommy the Trump’ (1899),” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* November (2017): [13]. Reproduced here with sources.

¹ Anon, “Tommy the Trump’s Settlement: A Wandering Minstrel in Truth,” *Peel City Guardian* 11 February 1899.