

Manx Notes 314 (2018)

“SAM HAGUE’S MINSTRELS” *

(1883)

On Tuesday these minstrels visited the town [*ie*, Castletown]. After parading the streets with the bands, they played in the Market-place for a short time, before dispersing. On re-assembling, they started for Douglas at noon. A great many people, taking advantage of the late train from Douglas, went to witness their performance.

“[Castletown and the South] Sam Hague’s Minstrels.” *Isle of Man Examiner* 29 September 1883.

Sam Hague’s Operatic British Minstrels (to give them their full title) were as the name makes clear a minstrel troupe, though one performing in blackface, there being no African Americans present amongst the players. Hague had owned a previous troupe, *Sam Hague’s Slave Troupe of Georgia Minstrels*, who enjoyed an eighteen-year run at St James’s Hall in Liverpool, one that ended in the mid-1870s when he sold the company and they returned to America. In 1881, he founded his own minstrel troupe who as seen here turned up in Castletown in 1883. These days it is a trope of Island life that a trip from Castletown to anywhere requires careful planning and an element of foresight—here, they simply took the train to Douglas.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2018



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