

# Manx Notes 357 (2019)

## THE “MOLOG BAND” IN CASTLETOWN IN 1881 \*

It is with the idiosyncratic spelling of “molog” that the Manx newspapers carried reports of the Mollag Band in Castletown in 1881. The *Manx Sun* reported in its issue for 31 December 1881 that:

The Castletown brass band, the White Boys’ band, and the “Molog Band” have enlivened the town during the past few days by selections of Christmas music which have been much appreciated, the performances of the Molog Band in particular, under Mr Robert Kelly, Commander-in-chief, being very warmly received.<sup>1</sup>

An earlier mention in the *Mona’s Herald* (28 December) contains the only newspaper account of the appearance of the Mollag Band, the musical instruments carried, and the manner of their performance:

Every evening during the week the town has been enlivened by what is called the “molog band,” consisting of about 18 performers, all dressed from head to foot in sheepskins, and in all the colours of the rainbows, each with different kinds of musical instruments, consisting of melodeans, foghorns, drums, imitation fiddles and harps, &c. These performers paraded the streets of the town nightly, and one of their number was dressed to resemble a bear, which went through some very amusing antics.<sup>2</sup>

The mention of them having a “Commander-in-chief” is again another added detail and unfortunately there are too much candidates in the 1881 census to be able to identify which Robert Kelly is involved here.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019

### REFERENCES

Anon. “[Castletown and District] The Castletown brass ....” *Manx Sun* 31 December 1881: 4f.

———. “Christmas in Castletown.” *Mona’s Herald* 28 December 1881: 8e.



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\* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “The ‘Molog Band’ in Castletown in 1881,” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* January (2019), [10].

<sup>1</sup> Anon, “[Castletown and District] The Castletown brass ....” *Manx Sun* 31 December 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Anon, “Christmas in Castletown,” *Mona’s Herald* 28 December 1881.