

Manx Notes 362 (2019)

A.I CAINE

“FOLK-LORE AND ITS BEARING ON SONG AND DANCE”
(1930) *

Address at Exhibition of Folk-Dancing, 20th Dec., 1929

[382] Perhaps some of you present to-night can tell us of dancing at *Mhelliahs* in the recent past. Mr William Cubbon's mother remembers dancing over the making of the suggane, while my father remembers his mother speaking of a rope-dance, which was performed by men and women. Canon Quine also has some dances.

Five years ago, on my return from a Folk-dancing School at Cambridge, I doubt the assistance of Miss Mona Douglas, who told me she knew a small fragment of a dance which had been told her by her grandmother. From her description I fitted the steps to the tune given in Gill's [Manx] *National Music*, and taught the dance to the Laxey Players. Miss Douglas has since been able to add some additional figures. The dance is “Hydaa dy Boailley,” or ‘Return the Blow’ (with a kiss, of course). Three figures are very English, the last is typically Scandinavian.

The “Mraaine-Oike” will now dance “Hydaa.” The song which Gill has called “Rival Cockades” is decidedly a dance, and a very interesting one indeed (some of you saw it at the Cruinnaght). I believe it was taken down some thirty years ago from an old man at Port St Mary. The tapping of sticks is decidedly reminiscent of a Morris-dance, while the wheel-formation of the second figure is very like the old Beltane-wheel, so prominent a feature in sun-worship.

There are two dances called “Fairy Dances” in Gill's collection. That is scarcely to be wondered at when you think how many haunts of little folk our Island possesses! I do not know what their dance was, but can show you an English one that goes well to the tune.

Song, “Widow's House.”

The “Widow's House” (‘Hie mee staigh’) is such a splendid dance-tune that I fitted it to an English dance, too. So that what we are now to see if really mongrel (like myself) but the Manx part of it is “morthal good.” I might say that we danced this at St George's Hall, Liverpool, last New Year, and it was extremely well received.

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See too, Stephen Miller, “[A.I. Caine] The Manx Folk-Dance Society: Our Beginnings (1954),” *Manx Notes* 221 (2015), 1–2.

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* A.I. Caine, “Folk-Lore and its Bearing on Song and Dance,” *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society* iii.4 (1930), 378–82.