

# Manx Notes 413 (2020)

## “WHEN I SHOWED THIS DANCE TO N.C.”

HYNDAA YN BWOAILLY

When I showed this dance to N.C. at the time when I was thinking of reviving it in Laxey as part of a village play she said it must be a corrupt revision because it seemed so ragged, & also because it was quite wrong to do any pointing or kicking in a country dance. The 3rd figure she thought wrong & mixed up, & said it probably ought to be the one known as “sideing,” which she showed us how to do. She also said that the stamping ought to be a much lighter and prettier movement known as “setting,” & we altered the dance accordingly. I think it is as well however in this notebook to put down exactly how it was done traditionally; and if it is mixed up with jigs etc. it may be an interesting variant.

Mona Douglas, “Folklore Notebook, | Dances, | Tunes, descriptions & notes”. MNHL, MS 09545, Mona Douglas Papers, Box 9.

The person referred to here as N.C. is Norah Crellin who was involved with Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell in their folk song and dance activities. She was the pianist for the Manx folk dances displayed at the visit of the English Folk Dance Society to Douglas in 1930,<sup>1</sup> and again the following year at a Manx Entertainment at Laxey Glen Gardens, a fund raiser for the Celtic Congress.<sup>2</sup> In 1932, she played the piano at the Royal Albert Hall where the Albert Road School team were taking part there in the English Folk Dance Festival.<sup>3</sup> She was at the keyboard again in 1935, at a display of Manx folk dancing given at the Picton Hall in Liverpool by the Albert Road School team.<sup>4</sup> The following year, 1936, she was off this time to Cecil Sharp House in London, for another demonstration of Manx folk dancing.<sup>5</sup> She was active playing at other social entertainments in the Island and was once the organist at St Olave’s in Ramsey and latter took the same position at Maughold. Besides the piano she was also a keen ballroom dancer and competed in the annual Isle of Man Dance Championships (the newspaper clipping here is from the 1935 competition). It is that knowledge of dancing that is being drawn on here and put into practice as well. Note, however, the insistence by Douglas to herself that the notebook to contain descriptions of the dances exactly as given to her by her informants.

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<sup>1</sup> “Visit of English Folk Dancers: Easter Vacation School Held at Douglas: Miss Mona Douglas on Folk Songs of the Isle of Man: Civic Reception to Welcome Visitors,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 25 April 1930.

<sup>2</sup> “Presentation to Manx Boy Dancer,” *Ramsey Courier* 6 March 1931.

<sup>3</sup> “Manx Folk Dancers in London,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 8 January 1932.

<sup>4</sup> “Manx Folk Dancers in England,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 31 May 1935.

<sup>5</sup> “[Northside News] As reported in ...,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 14 February 1936.

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REFERENCES

- Anon. "Manx Folk Dancers in England." *Isle of Man Examiner* 31 May 1935: 11b.  
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———. "Presentation to Manx Boy Dancer." *Ramsey Courier* 6 March 1931: 4e.  
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ISLE OF MAN EXAMINER (9 APRIL 1937)

