

Manx Notes 469 (2020)

THE BALLAKILJERKIM CHOIR (1925 & 1927)

I. RAMSEY COURIER (27 NOVEMBER 1925)

The walls of the Strand Street Mission Hall fairly reverberated with the laughter of the large audience on Tuesday evening, when the now-famous Ballakiljerkhum [*sic*] Choir paid a return visit to the Mission. The hall was literally packed, every available inch of space was used, and the more enthusiastic members of the audience found that the window-sills were good vantage points to see and hear the “choir.” Not that all the items were of the ridiculously funny order—the singing of the Peel Male Quartette Party being a feature of the concert, but the spontaneous humour of the “conductor” (Mr James Boyde), who was “training” for the “choir” for the “Guild,” was given plenty of scope. Mr Boyde is indeed a humorist of the highest order, and though in one of his serious moments, he said that the choir had been affected by illness and was not quite at it best, he and his confreres have every reason to be congratulated on their most enjoyable entertainment. The members of the choir were—Misses E.D and K. Callister, I. Faragher, Mr and Mrs Hebard, Mr J. Boyde, and the Peel Quartette Party (Messrs. F. Quane, E. Clucas, J. Clucas and T. Watterson). The accompanist was Miss K. Cringle, and there was also an orchestra consisting of Misses D. Cringle and E. Martin (Peel) and Messrs. C. and H. Anderson (Ramsey) violins; and Mr J. Cringle (Ramsey) piccolo.

At the conclusion of the concert, Mr T.B. Cowley proposed a vote of thanks to the artistes, and to Dr J.F. Cocker, who had made an excellent chairman. The Chairman, in acknowledging the vote, raised roars of laughter, when he said he was wondering when the Ballakiljerkhum Choir would be asked to broadcast, as their entertainment was so interesting. The “conductor,” Mr Boyde, also rocked the house when he said he didn’t want to go on that “squeaking and grunting thing called the wireless.” There is no doubt that the Ballakiljerkhum Choir is a clever combination of amateur artistes, and their second return visit to Ramsey, when arranged, will be eagerly looked forward to.

“Ballakiljerkim Choir: Return Visit to Strand Street,” *Ramsey Courier* 27 November 1925, 6e.

2. RAMSEY COURIER (25 FEBRUARY 1927)



“[Notice] Strand Street Mission. | [...] | GRAND CONCERT,” *Ramsey Courier* (25 February 1927), [4]b.

3. RAMSEY CHRONICLE (4 MARCH 1927)

The Strand Street Mission Hall well filled on Thursday evening, when an entertainment of a high order was given by the “Ballakiljerkim” party from Peel, favourites for a concert at the Mission Hall, along with the newly-formed Sulby Manx Sketch Party.

The first part of the programme was provided by the Sulby party, who gave in a creditable manner the Manx sketch by Miss Mona Douglas, entitled “The Fairy Tune,” which was greatly appreciated. An action song, “Baby Dolls, was faithfully given by the girls of the Sunday School. A violin selection by Mr G. Cain was well received. A solo by Mr J. Pate provided another enjoyable item. A real musical treat was provided when the Ballakiljerkim Quartette Party took the stage. The blend of voices was perfect, and the audience thoroughly enjoyed their performance. The

other songs given by the quartette were: "Hear dem bells, "Jemima," "Close Melody," and "A Perfect Day." The girls of the Sunday School gave another action song entitled "Nid Nod." A solo by Mr Blackburn was applauded to the full. A stump speech by "Professor Kayward" evoked roars of laughter. Mr Hector Stafford, the evangelist, delivered an eloquent address, which was by no means the least enjoyable part of the programme. Miss Margaret Quayle who is an elocutionist worth hearing, also contributed to the programme. An action song and drill by the girls, entitled "Hoop Song," was smartly executed. "Professor Kaymad" gave another stump speech, equally as funny as the first one. "Rag Dolls," by the children, was a feature of the programme. Perhaps one of the best turns of the evening was provided by the "Darkie," who with his banjo and mouth organ delighted the audience. He also played a tune with two spoons, and performed some acrobatic tricks. At the conclusion of the programme, the Chairman, Mr T.B. Cowley, thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the evening.

The Doxology was then sung, and the entertainment concluded, everybody voting that a repeat programme should be given in the near future.

The Sulby Sketch Party consists of some ladies and gentlemen who have during the past few weeks been rehearsing short Manx sketches. This is their first appearance in Ramsey, and it is to be hoped that they will be seen again here on a stage, where they can perform to better advantage.

"Visit of the 'Ballakiljerkims'," *Ramsey Chronicle* 4 March 1927, [5]f.

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The very name itself of Ballakiljerkim, which does not exist, though it does sounds plausible when one first starts to read it, shows that we are dealing here with a comic choir. Their 1927 appearance saw the Sulby Manx Sketch Party, recently founded, also taking part in the proceedings and performing a play written by Mona Douglas, "The Fairy Tune." These concert parties have received little research to date, and in the case of the "Ballakiljerkhims" there is little to go on in the newspapers it must be said, a reminder that whilst one might feel that everything that happened in the Island was reported in the papers, this is not the case and so we will only ever have a partial view of these types of events. Nevertheless, there is still interesting material available for study, especially the performance of Manx sketches.

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