

Manx Notes Pilot (2004)

EDITORIAL

Manx Notes: Folkways and Language (ISSN 1351-2293) appeared in fifteen issues between 1993 and 1994. Evidently, a decade's gap has crept into the production schedule, not one it is intended to repeat. The aims of *Manx Notes* were two-fold: to provide accurate and full bibliographies of individuals and topics relevant to Manx folklore and the Manx language and to reproduce source material of interest. The initial focus was on bibliography; ten issues were devoted to this theme, eight focussing on individuals and two on thematic topics. The other five issues reproduced a variety of materials relating to Manx Gaelic.

Each issue was A4 in size, laid out in two columns and ran to one or two sides. This layout was in fact no favour to the enterprise as finding material that would satisfactorily fit into this framework was a problem. Often the source material left little space for any notes or commentary; conversely, in other cases the material would fall well short, leaving more white space than text and so could not be readily used. Typically, such material came from newspaper columns or was extracted from printed sources and manuscripts and so valuable material was passed over.

Initially, *Manx Notes* was distributed in paper form only. The coming of the Internet and, more importantly, the World Wide Web as it was then dramatically capitalised, led to a policy of "dual distribution." The effort however to convert from the printed to the electronic format (in simple terms a webpage) was more effort than it was worth, although eventually this extra production cycle was alleviated when Adobe began offering free downloads of the Acrobat Reader and together with increasing speed of access to the Internet a wider distribution in PDF format was then feasible. As a result reproducing each issue in HTML format was abandoned.

These lessons have been learnt. The format has been changed from that of a newsletter to one resembling a booklet or pamphlet, in essence issues will now consist of A5-sized book pages. Material of varying length can now be readily reproduced so shorter issues will hopefully not be seen as somehow out of place. In fact, both longer as well as shorter pieces can now be accommodated with this constraint removed so it is a double gain. *Manx Notes* will be produced only in PDF format and distributed solely via the Internet. In time, the first fifteen issues will be "retro-converted" and reset using this new format. They will be left unchanged content-wise except for the correction of obvious typos. The house style has been amended along with a new typeface used for the headmast.*

Its focus, nevertheless, will remain in the main unchanged. The first issue was devoted to a bibliography of the Manx folklorist Karl Roeder (1848–1911), a German national then living in Manchester, who became a frequent summer visitor to Man.

* *Colmcille* by Colm Ó Lochlainn, originally cut in 1934 and later digitised by Monotype in 1994.

He befriended several Manx people, most notably Edward Faragher, “Neddy Beg Hom Ruy,” a fisherman living in the village of Cregneash in the south of the Island. His importance was that he was the only collector who was seemingly able to transcend the social gulf between a visitor from the city and those living in the countryside.¹ In the case of Faragher this was further transcended as he not only became an active collector for Roeder rather than a passive informant but also developed a close friendship with him lasting until his own death in 1908.²

Since the issuing the bibliography two new items by Roeder have been identified and so it is fitting that the new run of *Manx Notes* commences with an updated listing of his publications, albeit an admittedly modest one.

However, it is also recognised that while such bibliographical efforts are important, ready access to the material itself is equally crucial. The majority of items can only be read in the Manx National Heritage Library (when hunted out). This is a situation likely to be of no great surprise to anyone familiar with such materials.³ It is hoped that the second aim of this series can realise access to at least some of this material.

Manx Notes can be downloaded from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and I wish to record my thanks to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig for their continuing willingness to act as a host and to Caoimhín Ó Donnaille for technical support and encouragement over the years.

URL: <http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/~stephen/manxnotes>

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VIENNA, 2004

¹ But, as Judit Frigyesi reminds us in her study of Bartók, not all sought to bridge this gulf: “In the social context of the beginning of the century, a meaningful relationship between the peasants and the visiting gentleman from the city was almost unthinkable. And the idea of such closeness never occurred to Bartók.” Judit Frigyesi, *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 152.

² “I dont expect to live very long in this world but I will not be sorry to get to my rest yet I often think of you and but very few beside you.” Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 14 April 1908, Manchester Central Library, Manchester City Archives, M277/12/1–141. This is the last known letter between the pair. Faragher was to die soon after, on 5 June 1908.

³ And this is an appropriate place to acknowledge the efforts in this regard of Alan Franklin, MA, MCLIP, of the Manx National Heritage Library.