

Manx Notes 137 (2012)

“WRITTEN DOWN BY MISS CRESSIE DODD & MYSELF”

CRESSY DODD AS COLLECTOR *

Cressy Dodd was the subject of an earlier piece here with an appeal for further information.¹ As a result, we are now in contact not only with Cressy Dodd’s niece but also her daughter who now lives in Australia to where her mother had emigrated from the Island. By serendipity, as is often the case, when working on a box of the papers of Sophia Morrison I came across evidence of her folk song collecting in the company of Morrison herself. The manuscript, sadly undated, is titled: “Some Fragments of Folk Songs I (handed down orally),”² but what caught my eye was the line added above: “(Written down by Miss Cressie [*sic*] Dodd & myself—harmonised by Mr Goodwin)”. There are four songs recorded: (in order) “Arrane ny Ferrishyn,” “Lady Margad,” “Car yn Coog,” and “Arrane Sooree.” Two tunes (“Car yn Coog” and “Lady Margad”) are present in the manuscript and are in *sol-fa* notation. Goodwin’s harmonisations have been lost (incidentally, he was Morrison’s cousin). Working together as a pair was the recommended technique in this period. With two people one of them could notate the tune and the other take down the words. Here, the division of labour between this pair is unknown.

But what of the singers? Fortunately, their names are recorded: one name is already familiar, that of “Joe Moore,” the Joseph Moore visited on her own by Cressy Dodd. Then there is a “Miss M^c Cormid” (the name deleted in the original but this appears to be the reading), a “Mr T. Quane” (who is Thomas or “Tommy” Quane), and a singer known here only by a nickname, one “Tom Billy Hal.” As regards the songs, “Arrane ny Ferrishyn,” was recorded from “Tom Billy Hal,” “Arrane Sooree” from Joseph Moore, “Car yn Coog” was “[g]iven to me by Mr T. Quane,” and “Lady Margad” was noted down from Miss McCormid.

Two of the songs have annotations. As regards “Arrane Sooree,” Morrison notes “Mr Joe Moore who gave me this song said that he remembered 10 verses, at one time, but he has now forgotten all but this 1st verse and the chorus which came after each verse.” On a less forgetful note, “Tom Billy Hal” recalled the following about “Arrane ny Ferrishyn”:

(The fairies went on their travels once. When they returned to Dalby, they told the stay at homes about the places they had seen & the fine things they had to eat. A

* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “Written down by Miss Cressie Dodd & myself: Cressy Dodd as Collector,” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu*, February (2012), [4]–[5]. Reproduced here with sources.

¹ Stephen Miller, “Cressy Dodd. An Unrecognised Manx Song Collector,” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* August (2011).

² “Some Fragments of Folk Songs I (handed down orally)”. Undated sheet in the hand of Sophia Morrison, MNHL, MS 09495, Box 6. To avoid a repetition of footnotes, all ms. refs. are to the one listed here.

Dalby man overheard them, learnt the music & words, & the song became very popular. The singer if he had any wit always added “localisms.”)

This is similar to that of “Yn Bollan Bane,” namely a song learnt from the fairy folk and one learnt as well by overhearing them singing it without their knowledge.³ Besides the detail of the “provenance” of the song, of further interest is the note that “[t]he singer if he had any wit always added ‘localisms.’” This was a song then to be lengthened as the singer thought fit, the skill lying in bringing in places and names familiar to the audience, possibly even threading those present into the song itself. The tone here is suggestive of the present and a song tradition still active: in short, a piece performed by the singer and not one recalled by him from the past. That such detail was recorded shows the pair to be interested not just in the words and the tune, but also the singer and the performance.

Besides the material recorded, we now have the names of more performers to track down, including that of a female singer, and the promise of more manuscripts of interest from amongst the extant personal papers of Sophia Morrison. Hopefully, forthcoming will be more information about just who were those individuals who “gave” up their songs and tunes, to this pair of enthusiastic collectors, ones “handed down orally.”

Arrane ny Ferrishyn

Oie ayns Purt-ny-Hinshey
As oie ayns Balley-Rhumsaa
Fol dee doodle hi doodle lee ree ho

Va shin oie ec Keeill-Eoin
As oie ayns Balley-Chastel

As oie ayns Carn-y-Graie
As oie ayns thie Thom Quirk
C’red voghe shiu ayns shen?
Hooar shin prassyn as feill vuck

As oie ayns yn whllin
As oie ayns y naaie
As oie ayns pishyr glass

³ Discussed wider in Ríonach Uí Ógáin, “Music learned from the Fairies,” *Béaloideas* 60 (1992). See too, Barbara Hillers, “Music from the Otherworld: Modern Gaelic Legends about Fairy Music,” *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, eds. Pamela Hopkins, *et al.*, vol. xiv (Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Celtic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 1994).

Ee Kione jiass ny faaie

Oie ayns Cronk-ooilley-beg
As oie ayns Cronk-ooilley-mooar

Oie ayns Gordon gob-ny-creg
Hooar shin cowree lane prinjeig

Hie shin roish dys Balley-Benney
Hooar shin palchey arran corkey
As meeilley mie dy eeymey

Arrane Sooree

Oh she yn traa va my graih's baghey ayns yn Lagg
V'ish ceau ny goonyn sheidey as ny bussalyn plaid
Son v'ish ben aeg cha aalin—cha naik shiu reiau ny s'booie
V'ish 'skyn dy-chooilley lady ayns ny skeeraghyn twoaie

*Oh she jeelt shiu dou my chabbyl dy voddym nish goll roy
Dy akin graih veg veen my chree son t'ish feer foddey voym
Hem's harrish crink as couanym derrey er mee sker
Dy akin graih veg veen my chree son t'ish feer foddey jee*

Car yn Cooag

Kook, Kook, peep, keep, dooyrt y cooag veg veen
C'ren aght cadle oo choud er y geurey woin

|| -:- d' | s :- : d' | s :- : m. r | d :-: r | m :-: s. s | s :- m | s :-.
f. m | m :-: d | d :-:- |

Lady Margad

Now talk Lady Margad, magh er y cronk
Illiam villish ny-gerrey j'ee
Va laa goll ersooyl, as yn oie er-jeet ta
As cha row yn taggloo jeant ny-yeih

| : | : s, | d : d., r i m : d | r : r i r : s, | r : r., m i f : m | d :
-i- : s, | d : d i s, . s, | f : f i m :-, m | f : r i d : t, | d :-i- |

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VIENNA 2012

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- Hillers, Barbara. "Music from the Otherworld: Modern Gaelic Legends about Fairy Music." *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*. Eds. Pamela Hopkins, Laurance J. Maney and Donna Wong. Vol. xiv. Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Celtic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 1994. 58–74.
- Miller, Stephen. "Cressy Dodd. An Unrecognised Manx Song Collector." *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* August (2011): [9].
- Uí Ógáin, Ríonach. "Music learned from the Fairies." *Béaloideas* 60 (1992): 107–214.

