

Manx Notes 220 (2015)

THE MANX LANGUAGE SOCIETY PHONOGRAPH

THE FIRST RECORDING SESSIONS OF 1905 CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS

OVERVIEW: THE MLS PHONOGRAPH RECORDING SESSIONS (1905)

1. “Manx Language Society.” *Manx Sun* 11 February 1905: 4*.
2. “[Rushen] Recording the Manx Language.” *Manx Sun* 1 March 1905: 8*.
3. “The Manx Language and the Phonograph.” *Isle of Man Times*; 15 April 1905: 19*.
4. “Gramophone Manx Records.” *Peel City Guardian* 15 April 1905: 8b.

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(1)

This society, we are pleased to note, has recently purchased a fine phonograph from the Edison Company of New York. The instrument is intended to secure spoken records from Manx speakers in various part of the Island, which records will doubtless be preserved in the Douglas Public Library or other institutions. We learn that the instrument has been tested with very satisfactory results. It is now in the possession of the hon. secretary of the society in Peel, where Miss Morrison hopes to be able to take some valuable records. The instrument will be about a month in Peel, when it will be taken to the South of the Island, thence to Ramsey and district, and finally to Douglas. Any of our readers who may have something to communicate either with Miss Morrison, Peel, or Mr Wm. Cubbon, “Manx Sun” office, Douglas. The Manx Language Society is doing excellent work, and the pity is that its efforts do not seem to be appreciated by certain of the local educational authorities, who have been approached to facilitate the study of Manx in the schools as an extra subject.

Source: “Manx Language Society.” *Manx Sun* 11 February 1905: 4*.

(2)

The Manx Language Society’s phonograph has been sent to the South of the Island and is in the care of Mr Thomas Moore, Brookfield, Port Erin. A number of excellent records taken from Manx speaking old people have been taken by Miss Morrison in Peel and neighbourhood.

Source: “[Rushen] Recording the Manx Language.” *Manx Sun* 1 March 1905: 8*.

(3)

The Manx Language Society is to be congratulated on its prudence and business capacity in purchasing one of the best Edison's phonographs. Rare selections of Manx are now being taken. The machine has been sent to Peel, under the direction of the indefatigable secretary (Miss S. Morrison), who has secured a grand collection. From Peel the instrument was sent to Port Erin, where it was taken in charge of Mr Thomas Moore, of Brookfield, at whose cosy home many Manx folk were gathered with their respective contributions. Among these were the Rev. C.H. Leece (Vicar of Rushen), Mr and Mrs Thos. Moore (Brookfield), Mr John Sansbury, Ballafesson (who is 90 years); Mr Ed. Faragher, Port St Mary (a poet who has composed over one thousand pieces); Mr J.J. Kneen, Port Erin; Mr Keggen, Port St Mary (who is 80 years); Mr Wm. Kneen, Croit-e-Caley; Mr Capern, Port St Mary (who is a gentleman, an engineer, and most valuable helper); Mr R. Lace, Santon; etc. As the task of taking these records is a most important national event, and the preservation of the items for long years to come, an imperative need if the true accents are to be retained, Mr Thos. Moore, Brookfield, Port Erin, took the precaution to call in the aid of that accomplished expert in all matters connected with the phonograph—Mr Shortland, jun., Viller's Bazaar, Victoria-street, Douglas: and under his skilful advice and superintendence all went merry as a marriage bell. When the Manx recording was completed, Mr Shortland, jun., out of fulness of heart, and amplitude of store, gave all the company an enjoyable selection of some of the most recent records purchased from the Edison Company, including songs, instrumental selections, band pieces, chimes, etc. This came as an agreeable surprise. It is to be feared, unless some practical person, such as Mr Shortland, assists in the manipulation of the machine in these delicate operations, some of the efforts in record making must prove hopelessly abortive. From Port Erin it is probable the machine will be sent to Ramsey, and placed under the care of Mr Nelson, a Manx author, who is well-known for his interest in the Manx language. Then Laxey, and Lonan, where is the residence of that excellent Manx scholar, Mr Wm. Quayle, C.P., Ballamilghin, so that these important districts will be judiciously tapped. Other parts will each have an opportunity. Finally, the phonograph finds a home at headquarters in Douglas. When all these records are collected there will be a unique list, much of which might be available or private and public performance, and possible the Manx Language Society, which was never more active and worthy of support and confidence than at the present time, will have many calls made on it from meetings of Manxmen, the world-wide over, for songs, speeches, hymns, scriptural passages, which they may have heard in by-gone years at the festal board, or were favourites with their forefathers, or, may be, were often used by their dear old grandmothers to lull them to sleep.

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Source: “The Manx Language and the Phonograph.” *Isle of Man Times*; 15 April 1905: 19*.

(4)

The Manx Language Society has decided to obtain gramophone records of the Manx language, as spoken by residents in various parts of the Island familiar with it, and for the purpose of procuring such records from people in the South, Mr R.A. Shortland and C.T. Cowell, jun[*io*]r, went to Port Erin on Wednesday. A slight readjustment in the mechanism of the machine suggested itself to one of the young men, and an improvement was effected, with the result that some splendid specimens of Manx were recorded. Those who spoke in the gramophone were Mr and Mrs Moore, Mr Keggen (who is 84 years of age), and Mr Kneen; and the selections recited were the most part Biblical passages. A few hymns and verses of well-known songs were also sung. The results are most interesting.

Source: “Gramophone Manx Records.” *Peel City Guardian* 15 April 1905: 8b.

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VIENNA, 2015

