

Manx Notes 300 (2017)

THE REVIVAL OF THE MANX LANGUAGE (17)

“MANX EVENING AT BALLURE HALL”

(1929)

[5d] The promoters of the Manx Evening at Ballure Hall on Wednesday, have good reason to be phased with the huge audience the event attracted. It was a very happy idea to arrange an entirely Manx entertainment as a summer attraction, and certainly our visitors were unstinted in their patronage of the event. Moreover, the possibilities of any future entertainments on the same lines, were amply demonstrated. There were times during the Manx Wedding scene and the presentation of the Mheillea when the stage, with the female characters particularly in attractive Manx costumes and abundant sheaves of corn in evidence presented as pretty a spectacle as has been seen in the hall. Some of the chorus singing and the solo items were perfectly delightful, such as the rendering of the songs “Graih My Chree” and “Mannin Veen” by the whole company, and among the soloists were some positive discoveries in this line, including a young basso, Mr J. Knight, and Mrs Corkish (soprano), while the singing of two songs in the Manx language by Mrs A. Taylor, was a specially successful feature. Mr Eric Clarke is a popular Ramsey tenor, and he was heard to great advantage in his items. Mrs Quayle and Mrs Corkish collaborated with a pretty duet, while the really delightful dancing of Miss Kaighen elicited the warmest appreciation, as did also the fairies’ dance by juvenile members of Mr Leighton Stowell’s class. Mr Stowell, at great inconvenience, travelled from Castletown to assist in the programme and was under the necessity to return to the South the same night. He gave three recitals in the Manx dialect—an excerpt from “Betsy Lee,” followed by “Job the White” and “Parsons,” all from the works of T.E. Brown. “The Manx Fishermen’s Evening Hymn” concluded the first part of the evening’s entertainment, which afforded much genuine pleasure.

It was perhaps an ambitious programme to stage an effective Manx setting, at short notice, and there were places when probably some improvements could have been made had the time allowed for more thorough rehearsals. Nevertheless there were many delightful features which the audience were not gloss to appreciate and the various individual performers acquitted themselves with undeniable credit. The horse, which figured in the wedding and mheillea scenes was provided by Mr R. Kneale, Cloughbane.

The second part of the programme consisted of a most excellent presentation of a one act play in the Manx dialect, the parts being taken by Miss A.M. Joughin, Miss Margaret Callow and Mr J.H. Cleator. This is really an adaptation of a play entitled “Mr Sampson,” and it was very cleverly presented in the Manx instead of the Dorsetshire dialect, with a setting for the occasion in the Isle of Man, instead of the

English county. The parts were very well sustained by Miss A.M. Joughin, Miss Margaret Callow and Mr J.H. Cleator.

The performance concluded by the singing of “Ellan Vannin.”

At the beginning of the programme, an interesting address was given in the Manx and English languages by Mr Wm. Radcliffe, of London, the well-known Manx scholar, who was introduced by Mr A.C. Teare.

Mr Radcliffe said:

Mraane seyr as Deinney seyr (Ladies and Gentlemen), Ny gow shin aggle! (Don't you be frightened!) Cha jinnymys freayl shin foddey (I shall not keep you long.) Ta mee cur bossie da'n Soieder-magh jeh Chaghter Rumsaa (I thank the Editor of the Ramsey Courier) son cre t'eh er graa megeayrt meehene (for what he has said about myself.) Va mish lhaihder jeh'n Chaghter Rumsaa (I was a reader of the Ramsey Courier) bleintyn roish va Mainshter Mac-y-teyr er ruggit (years before Mr Teare was born.) Ta mee boggoil nagh vel mee er jarrood (I am glad I have not forgotten) glaare ren mee cheayll (the language I heard) traa va mee lhidrroo beg (when I was a little child) ayns y twooae jeh Skeeyl Andhreas (in the north of Kirk Andreas.)

Ren mee ynsagh Gailck veih yn jissag-voar voar Aym (I learnt Manx from my grandfather,) dooiny va myrgeeddin (a man who was likewise) yn jissigvoor jeh Mainshter J.H. Mac Clettir (grandfather of Mr J.H. Cleator) ta goaill yn aynr jell “Mastha Quilliam” noght (who is taking the part of “Mastha Quilliam” to-night.) Ta Gailck banglane d'unnane (Manx is a branch of one) jeh ny smoo, shinney glaaraghyn 'sy theill (of the most ancient languages in the World,) y glaare va er ny loayrt (the language that was spoken) trooidmagh ny Ellanyn Bretnee (throughout the British Isles) sheeloghyn gyn earroo roish va Baarle er ny ruggit (countless generations before English came into existence.)

Myr glaare dy ve loayrt (As a spoken language) ta Gailck bunnys marroo (Manx is almost dead,) agh t'ee foast feer ymmydagh (but it is still very useful) myr oyr da ny enmyn-boalyn jeh Elian Vannin (as a key to the place-names of the Isle of Man) chammoo da ymmoddee emmynboalyn ayns Sostyn, Albin as Erin (as well as to many place-names in England, Scotland and Ireland, (app.)) Mr Radcliffe proceeded to give some examples of the use of the Manx language in this connection.

In connection with the entertainment, much work and responsibility devolved on the shoulders of Mrs J.H. Cleator, who has repeatedly rendered great service in connection with the musical life of Ramsey, and members of whose choir took a prominent part in the programme. She was also the accompanist, along with Miss Norah Crellin and the Ramsey Municipal Orchestra, under Mr Hilton Cullerne, played excellent selections of Manx airs. Mr J.H. Cleator and Mr J.V. Joughin (secretary of the Development Association) were specially hard workers in connection with the event, which, as stated, had to be organised in short time. Costumes and dresses were kindly loaned by Mrs Moor-Clegg, Mrs Cookson, Mrs Keig (Ballaugh), Mrs Kermodé (Vicary, Lezayre), Mrs Tyler, Mr E.B.C. Farrant.

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Mrs Thomson, and Mrs Windsor helped considerably in the dressing-room. The stewards were Messrs J.W. Callow, A.R. Purcell, J.F. Fletcher, F. Stephenson, [5e] T. Wilson, J. Purcell, Strickett, J. Windsor, A.E. Chrystal, while the programme sellers were Misses M. Sayle, A. Sayle, A. Knowles, J. Chrystal, P. Chrystal, C. Strickett, Joyce Cleator, Joyce and Yvonne Harding, and Robert Corlett. Messrs Oscar Corlett and H. Sharpe rendered valuable help and made probably their first stage appearances in the Manx wedding scene. Mrs Cleator and the Development Association desire to thank all those who so helped, also Mr W. Crennell for special motor run to Castletown, Messrs Allen and Taubman and T.B. Cowley for cartage, and Messrs Oddie and Redman for loan of china, etc., and the Boy Scouts who also assisted.

A souvenir programme of words, the translations of which were provided by Mr W. Radcliffe, was prepared for the occasion.

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STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

