

Manx Notes 319 (2018)

“RAMSEY PLAYERS AND FOLK DANCERS IN LIVERPOOL”

(1937)

The concert organised by the Liverpool Manx Society and held in Crane Hall, Liverpool, on Thursday, was a huge success. As is generally known, a party of Ramsey players crossed specially to perform “Juan Noa’s” play “The Rayformah,” and Mr P.L. Stowell’s Ramsey dancers, who were en route to London to perform at the Royal Albert Hall, gave a demonstration of their art. The Ramsey folk, both the players and dancers, crossed to Liverpool on Wednesday by the daily steamer from Douglas. The sea was rough and the crossing was by no means pleasant, and the youngsters, especially, were not sorry when Liverpool was reached. At Liverpool landing stage the party were met by representatives of the Liverpool-Manx Society who gave them a hearty welcome.

The proceeds of the concert on Thursday were in aid of that very deserving cause, the Liverpool Radium Institute and Hospital for Cancer. The hall was packed to the doors, and the players had a wonderfully appreciative audience. Although the “Rayformah” is in Manx dialect, not a word seemed to be lost on the audience, and it was all put over remarkably well.

The programme opened with the singing of two verses of the Manx National Anthem, following which, Mr Charles Williams, of Liverpool, a vocalist, gave a rendering of the song “The Lute Player.” The Manx folk dancers then presented the two dances “Guilley hesheree” (Ploughboy) and “Car by Ferrishyn” (The Fairies’ Tune). The neatly executed dances evoked a storm of applause, and there is no doubting the fact that the performances were greatly enjoyed.

Mr J.H. Cleator followed with a Manx dialect recitation called “Butched,” and the dry and subtle humour with which it fairly bristled, created roars and roars of laughter.

Miss Joy Sollit, of Douglas, a Manx Guild winner, gave selections on the violin, and then came more dances, Donald Maddrell, of Ramsey, performing the Manx jig “Cum Shenn oanrey cheh” (Keep the old petticoat warm), and the Manx folk dancers contributing “Peter O’Tavy” and “Eunysagh Vona “ (Beauty of Mona). These were exceedingly well received, and the party then presented the White Boys mummery play and dance, in which the parts were taken by the following:

The King of Egypt, P.L. Stowell; St. George, his son, T.C. Quayle; Sambo, his slave, Ted. Christian; Prince Valentine, Donald Maddrell; Guards, S. Carine and G. Quayle; Dr. Cure-all, George Percival. This was well done, and there was no mistake about the pleasure which it afforded the audience.

The second half of the programme was opened with a violin selection by Miss Joy Sollit, and afterwards the Ramsey players presented “The Rayformah.” It will be remembered that Mr J.H. Cleator was awarded the gold medal at the Cruinnaght in

1930 for this play which is an outstanding work in its class. It might have been expected that the Manx folk living in a city like Liverpool, where they have not the opportunity of hearing Manx dialect every day would have been a little on the slow side at grasping the meaning of the jokes, but this was certainly not the case. The audience enjoyed it to the full, and the players acquitted themselves splendidly, and were obviously enjoying it almost as much as the audience. The following were the characters in the play:

Thubm Keolyah, P.L. Stowell; Margaret, his wife, Lily Duggan; Esther Keolyah, his daughter, Margaret Callow; Billy Comaish, a young farmer, Jack Corkill; Juan Corjeag, a young sailor, Harry Martin; Jane Corjeag, his mother, Olive Kerruish.

Following this performance, Mr J.H. Cleator gave another Manx dialect recitation of his own composition, and Donald Maddrell gave a presentation of the Manx Dirk dance, "Sword Dance of the Kings of Man." The Manx folk dancers followed with the Manx dance "Car Juan Nan" (The tune of John, son of Nan). Mr Charles Williams obliged with another song, "An Evening Song," and the Manx folk dancers concluded the programme with the dances "Mylecharaine," given by the men's team; and "Jemmy and Nancy," given by the women's team. Thus ended a most enjoyable concert.

Afterwards, Mr David Craine, M.A., the president of the Liverpool Manx Society, thanked the visitors from the Island for their performances, which, he said, had been enjoyed immensely by all present. The accompanists were Miss Melba Kelly and Miss Nora Crellin.

On Friday, the Manx players accompanied the dancers to Lime Street Station, and saw them off for London, where they were to compete in the International Folk Dance Festival at the Royal Albert Hall.

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