

Manx Notes 333 (2018)

“THE WITCHES IN THE DUCKS”

1847

Not a mile from the classic town of Douglas, fate, poison, starvation, or some other evil agency decreed, that a man's ducks one after another should kick the bucket. This fatality went on until Saturday last, at which time six ducks had paid the debt of nature, and the seventh gave signs of following the dead flock. This was too bad, and even good nature and human endurance could hold out no longer. Witchcraft, ay, the real old Mannin M'Lear witchcraft alone could account fur this disastrous affair; and the bewitching old hag, whoever she might be, was supposed by the duck-owner to be incarnated in the remaining drooping duck. Now, to make sure of the bewitching old wretch, a great fire was kindled at the cross-roads, the burning ling laid round in a circle, and the poor old duck was confined in the centre. As she gave her last gasp, there were not wanting those present who alleged they saw the baleful spirit of the infernal sprite ascending with the blue smoke.

“The Witches in the Ducks.” *Manx Sun* 22 May 1847: 4b.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2018

