

# Manx Notes 392 (2019)

“FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PUBLIC” (1907)

“TAR DYS MANNIN” & “BAHIE VEG” \*

“The next item was one of especial interest, in that for the first time in public we were to hear two old folk-songs which Miss Morrison has had the good fortune to discover; one entitled ‘Tar dys Mannin,’ from, we believe, Mr Thos. Quane, of Peel, and the other, ‘Bahie Veg,’ from Miss McCormick. Both are very fine, but we prefer the latter; it is a very beautiful song and was very nicely sung by the boys.”<sup>1</sup> This was at the *Fastyr-Giensal* held on 4 January 1907, the now annual Manx Tea and Concert organised by Sophia Morrison under the auspices of the Manx Language Society.

Amongst Morrison’s personal papers there is a note on “Tar dys Mannin” (no text, sadly) given here in full:<sup>2</sup>

Tars dys Mannin.

Arrane Ghelby.

“Come to Mann,” or “A Dalby Song.” This melody was given to me by Tommy Quane, a Dalby fisherman. He had no words to it but sometimes sang it to a hymn in the Manx Wesleyan Hymn Book. The tradition given to me with the song is as follows:—In the long ago a curiously fashioned boat would be seen of a summer evening coming from the dark Mull Hills towards the Niarbyl. In the boat sat an old, old man with long <sup>1</sup>hair<sup>1</sup> white as the driven snow who rowed in the track of the setting sun until he got off the Niarbyl point, there he rested on his oars and sang this song which runs up and down in the minor scale with the lilt of the waves. But his boat was afar off and his voice sounded like a passing bell to the listeners on shore—no words could be distinguished. When his song was ended the old man rowed away—still in the light of the setting sun—until he and his boat disappeared in the black shadow of the Mull Hills beyond. And no one knew from whence he came, nor whither he went, nor who he was—but Dalby knew his song.

I found that the ‘peculiar metre’ & the song exactly fitted some verses in Mr A. W. Moore’s, ‘Manx Ballads,’ which had not hitherto been set to music—I have not the book here with me to quote the page, however, there are five verses, the first verse begins “Yoarree, my r’ou laccal ve.” but my little chorus of boys sang only four at the Manx Concert, we left out that verse which refers to Mannin veen as being a haven from the tax gatherer as it is ~~only~~ no longer applicable. Miss Kermodé “Cushag” intends to write some English verses to the music, and I rather

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\* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “‘For the first time in public’ (1907). ‘Tar dys Mannin’ & ‘Bahie Veg,’” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* August (2019), [17]. Reproduced here with sources.

<sup>1</sup> Anon, “Yn Cheshaght Gailckagh Fastyr-Giensal,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 12 January 1907.

<sup>2</sup> “Manx Fragments of Music.” Incomplete, undated [but 1907, or later], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 6.

think myself of sending it to the forthcoming Music Competition in March under the class for “traditional Manx Music hitherto unpublished.”

The manuscript is now incomplete and so the note on “Bahie Veg” is lost (the ms. has a list of titles at the start).

Thomas Quane was enumerated in the 1901 census as being 43 years old, a Manx speaker, and onboard of the fishing boat *Gleaner*, bound for the spring mackerel fishery at Kinsale off the south-west coast of Ireland.<sup>3</sup> When not at sea, he lived at 7 Cowley Terrace in Peel with his wife and children.<sup>4</sup> Anne McCormick was aged 40 in 1901, residing in Tynwald Road in Peel, and living with her mother and her siblings there, all with independent means.<sup>5</sup>

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019

REFERENCES

Anon. “Yn Cheshaght Gailckagh Fastyr-Giensal.” *Isle of Man Examiner* 12 January 1907: 2f.



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<sup>3</sup> *Census Enumerators' Book for Vessels 1901*, RG 13/5308, fol. 154. He was onboard the same boat in 1891, *Census Enumerators' Book for Vessels 1891*, RG 12/4692, fol. 103.

<sup>4</sup> *Census Enumerators' Book for Peel 1901*, RG 13/5306, fol. 80, sch. 12; *Census Enumerators' Book for Peel 1911*, RG14 PN34689 RD635 SD2 ED9/2 SN50.

<sup>5</sup> *Census Enumerators' Book for Peel 1901*, RG 13/5306, fol. 85, sch. 1.