

Manx Notes 406 (2019)

“HOP-TU-NAA MEMORIES RECALLED AT BALLAUGH”

(1946)

I was amused by the Hop-tu-Naa rhyme in last Friday’s “Examiner” which conjured up many pleasant memories. These old customs have died in the country districts, but I recall the time, over 50 years ago, when Hop-tu-Naa was an outstanding night in Ballaugh and district, and young men, as well as boys, indulged in the fun.

I recall one night when we were met by a man who was highly strung. He warned us to keep away from his home as “the gun was ready and plenty of powder and shot.” Being in high fettle, we were not the least alarmed and his door was our first target. Bang went the turnips and he gave chase shouting “I’ll shoot—I’ll knock the wind out of some of you....” Lucky we knew that his gun was a brush.

There was a couple who gave us great sport. The woman was in a furious temper and was shouting “I’ll tell the policeman—I know you all you vagabonds.” The door was open and bang—in went the turnips and rolled down the stairs. The man had a sense of humour and shouted—“Fire away boys, the mare’ll dale wi’ all the tarnips.” The village policeman was lying low that night—not a button was seen, but his door, too, was getting a few hangings.

There was also a terrible lot of hot air that night. I mean cussing as the doors were banging.

Hillside, Ballaugh.

DAVID CORLETT

David Corlett, “[Letter to the Editor] [Letter Box] Hop-tu-Naa Memories recalled at Ballaugh,” *Isle of Man Examiner*, 22 November 1946, 5c.

*

David Corlett in the 1901 census was 20 years old, a butcher, and living at Cronkould, Ballaugh, with his parents and siblings.¹ No mention here in his account of either turnip lanterns or songs on the night.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019



¹ *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Ballaugh 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 36, sch. 3.