

Manx Notes 438 (2020)

DOUGIE FARAGHER & JOE WOODS
“SUPPORT THE MANX LANGUAGE”
(1952)

To the Editor

May we, through your columns appeal to all Manx men and women to study the syllabus for Further Education issued by the Isle of Man Education Authority, with a view to enrolling in one of the classes for tuition in the Manx language?

They will see that evening classes have been arranged for various districts in the Island, and there is no doubt but that if a sufficient demand were forthcoming, additional classes could be arranged.

For years the preservation of the Manx language has been left to a handful of scholars, but the practical work of recording from native speakers now being carried out by members of Yn Chesaght Ghailckagh and the ability shewn by young Manx speakers during this year's Celtic Congress, convince us that the Manx language is on the verge of a popular revival, and that the time has come to give the lie to those who predict the gradual extinction of the language.

In this Island are hundreds of people who are members of one or more of the various patriotic societies; in addition are many thousands of Manx men and women who do not belong to any Manx Society, but who have a great fund of knowledge of their beloved home and its traditions, and an instinctive pride in their nationality and heritage. We appeal to members of this legion of Manx people to come forward with a practical demonstration of their nationality by enrolling in a Manx language class. What an infusion of life and energy this would give to the Manx language, which is the life blood of our distinctiveness as a nation.

It may be argued that learning Manx brings no commercial advantages, and will not assist the Island's main industry of catering for visitors. Well, the Island's chief asset is the contrast it affords to the background from which our visitors come; if more Manx people spoke their own language as well as English, far from deterring visitors, it would foster that national pride which we must retain if our Island is not to lose the “different flavour” which surely is part of its appeal. As for bringing commercial advantages—if it does not profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul, can it profit a nation if the heritage of the past is allowed to be lost?

Many of us of this generation have seen service in a great struggle to prevent world domination by one form of aggression, and may yet be called upon to resist another attempt by another form of aggression. We have been campaigners in a crusade for liberty and the preservation of those national characteristics which are the eternal deterrents of Fascism or Communism, and we were proud to be able to make our contribution—small though it may appear to have been—to that crusade.

Now is the time to throw off apathy and dis-interestedness and take part in another crusade which can harm no one, but which will strengthen us as individuals and as a nation. We refer to the crusade for maintaining and using the Manx language. Join an evening class, Manxmen, and bring a friend with you. If you are “jus’ the shy,” send your name and address to either of us, and we will make arrangements for you.

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