

Manx Notes 614 (2023)

“AN ITALIAN INVESTIGATING THE FOLKLORE OF THIS SMALL NORTHERN ISLE”

NIKOLAI GIOVANNELLI WRITES TO MAUD KARPELES *

(1954)

Greeba Mill, | St. Johns, | Isle of Man.

21st April, 1954.

Dear Miss Karpeles,

I was, naturally, very much disappointed by your letter of the 15th inst. I had thought that my paper would fit into the section for the discussion of folk music in education, but I suppose you know best what your members will appreciate. Actually, there should be some general interest in America, as although the Isle of Man is a very small place, there are large colonies of Manx people all over the American continent, far exceeding the present population of the island itself, while there are also many Italians in Brazil who would be intereste[d] in an Italian investigating the folklore of this small Northern isle.

I am very loath to tell the Manx Folk Dance Society that the film will not be shown, so am quite willing for you to offer it (in the final version, which I send herewith) to the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Perhaps they would also be interested to have my paper read at one of their meetings? Unless, of course, you think it might fit in at Oslo next year, and would prefer to save it for then.

I hope that by now you have heard the record we sent over for your Midsummer programme, and that it, at least, will prove suitable. For one of your later radio programmes, if you would like it, I have the promise of a recording of the last of the traditional Manx Carval singers, an old man who has since died. The tape is the property of the Manx Society, but they will give me permission to have a record made from it, with due acknowledgment.

Yours sincerely,

Copy letter of [Nikolai Giovannelli] to Maud Karpeles, 21 April 1954, MNHL, MS 09545, Box 15, [Folder] English Folk Dance Society.

* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “An Italian investigating the folklore of this small Northern isle.’ Nikolai Giovannelli writes to Maud Karpeles (1954),” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* September (2023), [22].

“I was, naturally, very much disappointed by your letter of the 15th inst.” So opens this letter to Maud Karpeles of the International Folk Music Council. Whilst unsigned, it is taken that the correspondent is not Mona Douglas but instead Nikolai Giovannelli. The reference to Brazil is due to the upcoming conference of the Council at São Paulo in the following year of 1955.

Stephen Miller, RBV

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