

Manx Notes 645 (2024)

“WEDNESDAY WAS THE DAY CHOSEN FOR THE OUTING,
AND VIA GLEN HELEN THE ROUTE” *

(1907)

As a rule, members of choirs expend a considerable amount of wind in the performance of their vocal duties, so that it is not to be wondered at if the singers' vocal organs need a little refreshing now and again—at least once a year—by having a good enjoyable day's outing in the country, so as to inhale the fragrant air, laden with the sweet-smelling scent of the new mown hay as well as that of the thousand and one wild flowers which adorn the fields at this season mixed with an occasional whiff of ozone. At least, such seems to be the idea obtaining with those at the head of affairs at St Paul's Church. Consequently these outings, which are most popular with the choir, are always carried out in proper manner—and, as a rule, in fine weather, and this year's "do" was no exception to the rule, unless, indeed, the last was the best. But, be that as it may, Wednesday was the day chosen for the outing, and *via* Glen Helen the route. The choirs—there are two choirs—St Paul's Sunday choir, which is composed of male voices, and the week night and Ballure Church choir (mixed voices), to the number of between thirty and forty—assembled on St Paul's Square shortly after 8.30 on the morning in question. The four vehicles necessary to accommodate the party were on the scene in good time, and all hands got on board, accompanied by sundry well filled hampers. A start was made at 9.10, under a bright blue sky, a brisk S.W. wind blowing and an entire absence of ominous clouds. When I say that the horses and trans were hired from Mr E.H. Dawson's noted posting establishment, further comment is unnecessary, save to mention that the appointments of the equipages were all that could be desired, and the drivers perfection itself. Behind such grand horseflesh as comes from Mr Dawson's stables, the party rattled along the perfectly dry road in marry fashion, and all were happy. What mattered it to them if there was a brisk wind and a bit of dust flying about; the choir was on pleasure bent; and was not the wind broad on the beam. Soon Skyhill was left astern; Gob-a-Wunna passed; Kerrowmoar hill ascended and descended; Sulby Bridge passed over in safety; Sulby Street negotiated in grand style in a glorious breeze; and Gob-a-Volley rounded in variable puffs. Yet capital progress was made, and Ballaugh was duly reached and left out of sight. The next place of interest was the Episcopal Palace of Mona's Isle, and yet no halt was made. In passing up "Kirk Michael Street" the chief feature observable was the extreme quiet which seemed to reign supreme. The next goal to be reached was Glen Helen. No time was lost, and,

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anon, the procession was climbing the rising ground leading up to Barregarrow. This accomplished, and that dangerous decline, known as Creg Willie's Hill safely negotiated, the party drove into the open space at the beautiful Glen Helen with a flourish of trumpets, to the tune of "Ramsey Town." Here the horses, which had done so nobly were put up; hampers of provision were unpacked, and an *al fresco* picnic was held. To see the quick change manner in which the edibles disappeared at this function satisfied me that whatever other complaints the fresh air cure may be good for, it seem to be a sure and certain remedy for loss of appetite. In the contest, however, the "grub" won by a narrow squeak only. To be serious: The effects of the drive upon our impaired town appetites alone was worth all the trouble. Like giants refreshed with wine, we took our places once more in the vehicles, and went spinning over the ground in the direction of the Insular Metropolis. At the end of a grand drive, the party pulled up in the busy Victoria Street, Douglas, at Mr George Bowlings restaurant shortly after 2 p.m. At 5 p.m., after having done the sights of Douglas, the whole party assembled at Bowling's and sat down to an excellent knife and fork tea, and in Mr Bowling's best style, and the hearty manner in which the meal was partaken of was sufficient proof that the viands provided were acceptable. In the evening, some of the party visited the different places of amusement, while the others, including all the juveniles, returned home by early vehicles, arriving in Ramsey about 11 p.m. It was a bright day until the evening, when the heavens assumed a threatening aspect. Yet the weather held good until all got home. The Vicar (Rev H.T. Devall), the hon. choirmaster, (Mr Chas. Kissack), and the organist (Mr J. Bates), accompanied the outing, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed, the only trouble expressed being that such like excursions did not happen often enough.

Pseud [signed as "By the Man on the Spot"]. "St Paul's Choir Outing."
Ramsey Courier 30 August 1907: [5]e.

"Wednesday was the day chosen for the outing, and *via* Glen Helen the route." The occasion was a day out for the St Paul's Sunday choir and Ballure Church choir from Ramsey.

Stephen Miller RBV

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