

Manx Notes 665 (2024)

EDWARD CORTEEN (1827–1913) *

We much regret to announce the death of Mr Edward Corteen, which occurred at his residence, 13, Hawarden-avenue, Douglas, on Friday morning. Mr Corteen was a native of Maughold, and during the early part of his life was parochial surveyor of that parish. On the retirement of Mr Garrow, Mr Corteen was appointed Surveyor-General of the Island, which post he occupied for about thirty years, serving the Highway Board in all about fifty years. During the time he held this position, several important roads were constructed, particularly the road from the Bungalow to Ramsey, one of the finest drives in the kingdom. Mr Corteen was deeply interested in everything Manx, and also took a great interest in musical matters. Possessed of a fine tenor voice, he was much sought after in his young days to perform at country entertainments. He married a Miss Teare, by whom he had ten children, eight of whom are still living. One of his sons holds the position of Parochial Surveyor of Maughold and Lonan.

The late Mr Edward Corteen was born at Ballashologue, in the parish of Maughold, in the year 1827, just eighty-six years ago. Early in life he displayed an aptitude for mathematics, which he afterwards mastered to a remarkable extent. He was educated by the late Mr Robert Cotterman, who, in his day, was reckoned a first-class schoolmaster. At the age of about 30, he was appointed Parochial Surveyor of Maughold, and later the roads of the parish of Lonan were also placed under his charge. In his capacity of Parochial Surveyor, he took an important part in the construction of the road from Glen Mona Hotel to the King Orry, Laxey, and he assisted the late Mr Anderson and Mr Garrow in many of their undertakings. On the retirement of Mr Garrow, Mr Corteen was appointed Surveyor-General. This was about 36 years ago. During the time he occupied that position he was the honoured and respected servant of the Highway Board, to whom his services always proved satisfactory. The principal road that was constructed under his supervision was the Mountain road into Ramsey, which he always contended was the best, despite the opposition of many members of the Insular Government. He also designed and constructed several bridges in different parts of the Island—one at the Dhowin Andreas; another at Ballig, German; and Ballasalla Bridge; the widening of Ballure and the Corony Bridges were also carried out under his instructions; likewise many other important works. His services were often sought in land disputes and his influence often induced the disputants to settle their differences, for he was a man who loved peace and justice. He was always a Maughold man at heart, and took a deep interest in the affairs of that parish, and worked hard at times of House of Keys'

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elections. Mr Corteen was, to a certain extent, the oracle of the district, who was consulted in times of difficulty, likewise he wrote most of the wills for the parishioners. There is a story told of a woman who came to see Mr Corteen shortly after her husband's death, to see if he had made a will. Mr Corteen said he didn't know. "Well," said the woman, "if you haven't one, you must make one." His greatest interest, however, was centred in Cardle Wesleyan Chapel, where he was always to be found when service was being held. He played the violincello, and led the singing there. He was also possessed of a fine tenor voice, which he knew how to make use of. On the night before leaving the parish of Maughold to take up his residence in Douglas, some twenty years ago, there was a lively time at the Chapel. One aged man wished Mr Corteen to sing a favourite hymn again and again. When the new chapel at Cardle was built, he took a great interest in it, and subscribed handsomely towards its cost. He used to say that he was afraid he would never see a new chapel at Cardle, but he was at the opening ceremony, and sang a Manx hymn at the service. He was glad that the new Chapel was built. On coming to Douglas, he worshipped regularly at Rose Mount Church.

About sixty years ago. Mr Corteen married a Miss Teare, who was a niece of the late Mr James Teare, who was one of the "Seven Men of Preston" who started the teetotal crusade. His wife survives him.

The funeral took place on Monday morning and was largely attended, the internment being at Maughold Churchyard. The chief mourners were Messrs Robert, Albert, James, Ernest, and Fred Corteen, sons of the deceased; Mrs T.R. Kelly; Miss Corteen, and Miss Jessie Corteen, daughters; several grandchildren, Mr W. Jelly, brother-in-law, Messrs H. Corteen and W. Kerruish, cousins (the united ages of these three amounted to 265 years); and a large number of nephews, nieces, grand-nephews, and grand-nieces. The Highway Board were represented by the Chairman (the Vicar-General), Messrs R. Kerruish, W. Radcliffe, and R.H. Collister, members of the Board; Mr Walter Kay (Surveyor-General); Mr R.H. Cubbin (secretary), and almost all the parochial surveyors. At Maughold the funeral was met by a large number of parishioners and Ramsey residents. The Rev J.R. Ellis (Wesleyan Superintendent) attended at the home of the deceased and gave out the hymn, "O God our help in ages past," and offered prayer. The service at Maughold was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev J.G. Pope, and after the interment the old favourite hymn, "Rock of Ages," was feelingly sung. Thus was committed to his resting place a true and kindly gentleman, the last of his generation of the Corteens, one of the very oldest and most respected of Maughold families.

"Death of Mr Edward Corteen. Ex-Surveyor-General of the Island. A Sketch of His Career." *Mona's Herald* 25 June 1913: 7c.¹

¹ {Anon, 1913 #2317}

Edward Corteen (1827–1913) was visited by the Gill Brothers on 6 April 1895, and with him they started their collecting tours in the Island. Five tunes were taken down that day by W.H. Gill: Creg Willy-Syl, The Farmer's Boy, Hie my ghraih shiaghey, The Loss of the Herring Fleet, T'eh traa goll thie. The other brother, Deemster J.F. Gill, also took down notes from Corteen, and the record of this interview survives.

STEPHEN MILLER RBV

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