THE HISTORICAL REFERENCES TO MANX TRADITIONAL MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE: A REAPPRAISAL AND A CHRONOLOGY*

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I

Participants in the current 'revival' of the traditional folk music and dancing of the Isle of Man have tended to accept what they have found at face value, without being aware of its history. However, a wider knowledge and appreciation of these traditions in the context of those of Britain and Ireland highlights differences and peculiarities in the Manx material as it is known today. Some of these are noted in the discussion below.

It is often assumed that these are the result of the Island's insularity. In reality, the opposite can be said to be the case. The way in which the music and dances were recorded and passed on during the period when they were in the final stages of decline requires systematic and critical analysis. This will help us to determine to what extent the differences and peculiarities arise from the *process* of recording and interpreting the material, rather than residing in the inherent nature of the material in its pristine state. It may also bring into question the validity of some current views on the nature of 'Manx music'.

The work of Mona Douglas and others in the early years of this century, belatedly following the spirit of the nationalist movements in many other parts of Europe in the 19th century, was carried out in order to facilitate the growth of a

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'Manx national consciousness'. For example, in the Isle of Man during this period, there were calls for 'Home Rule' which echoed the Irish Home Rule movement.

The *manner* in which some of this work was presented, and some of the results which flowed from it, reflect the desire to create something different and unique, rather than record or revive something which had been a part of Manx community life. In other words, the issue of identity was of paramount concern while authenticity was only a matter of secondary importance.

It was only in the early 1970s that a form of revival movement began to emerge in connection with traditional music and dance, with adults making an effort to learn about the subject, rather than children being taught it. It is true to say that adults were involved in the *Manx Folk Dance Society*, for example, which was formed in the early 1950s and with earlier 'dance teams' associated with Leighton Stowell. However, both the *folk* traditional element of this material and its presentation is questionable. The socio-economic context of the 1970s' movement involved a popular reaction against Manx government policies of the late 1960s. These sought to reverse the population decline of the 1950s and to promote the Island as an offshore tax haven. This reaction stimulated a revival of interest in all things Manx (amongst incomers and native Manx people alike) and included a renewal of efforts to revive the Manx language.

There is now a *de facto* process of revival underway and the merit or otherwise of efforts to revive elements of folk tradition is not at issue here. However, it should be noted that, in itself, revival does not provide any guarantee of a genuine outcome. The basis for the true revival of a folk tradition, must depend on a close examination of records of the past with a view to gaining some insight and knowledge in addition to that which has been passed on orally or learned by ear. This study must needs cover everything that would normally be included within the ambit of oral tradition, particularly anecdotal accounts and first-hand descriptions of the type which have not survived because of the death of that tradition. Such a study should also include accounts which

give an indication of the social context of the material so that it can be deployed in an appropriate manner. The *Chronology* below contains accounts and descriptions of this ilk; the references therein to traditional music, song and dance, as well as adjacent aspects of folk life, are intended to provide a useful background to the subject in hand.

In the case of the Manx language, the process of revival has involved considerable effort in researching records of the historical usage and context of the language and has included comparisons with related linguistic traditions. Clearly in this context, it would be unacceptable to undertake a superficial and incomplete study of the subject, passing on poor pronunciation, ignoring idiomatic usage and neglecting to offer an explication of the orthographic system. It would be equally desirable for those involved in the process of reviving Manx traditional music and dance to undertake research along similar lines so that the collected material may be properly interpreted.

In this context, the references contained in the *Chronology*, already make it obvious that greater attention must be paid to the Irish and Scottish traditions, with particular emphasis being placed upon the former. This is especially relevant in the case of dance music, since the collectors do not appear to have paid much attention to it.[1] By implication, a body of music which was important to the community was largely ignored. If the *types* of dance tune which were collected are examined, it can be seen that they are either of Irish/Scottish type or structure, or are close variations of tunes drawn from those traditions. Strathspeys and flings are found in both Scotland and the north of Ireland, but the collections do not give any evidence that they were adopted in the Isle of Man. Also, the so-called 'Scotch snap' is not convincingly evidenced by the Manx collections.[2] While it is dangerous to generalise, we may venture to suggest that, overall, the likeness is with these traditions; this has been noted by other commentators and references to it are adverted to in their various published works.

1 A.W. Moore, *Manx Ballads & Music*, Douglas 1898, xxxv, footnote 1.
2 W.H. Gill, J. F. Gill and J. Clague, *Manx National Music*, London 1896, xiii.

To take this observation a stage further, if the characteristics of the small sample of dance tunes which were collected from the tunes formerly in use are typical, it must be concluded that *almost all* of the traditional dance music in the Island in the 19th century was of the Irish/Scottish type and, given the evidence in the *Chronology*, played in a similar style, using similar techniques. To what extent the style of fiddle playing, for example, will have reflected neighbouring regional styles is, at this stage, a matter of conjecture. It is interesting to note that the comparative study of Manx and the other Gaelic languages and dialects indicates strong links with Donegal and East Ulster, and also with south-western Scotland, particularly Arran and Kintyre. However, the distribution and transmission of music and dance does not necessarily follow the patterns set by language, and it is not possible therefore, to draw immediate conclusions about these matters along similar lines.

There has been a tendency in recent years to regard with antipathy any comparison of the collected Manx material with the Irish tradition. This is due in large measure to the growth in popularity of Irish music and dancing over the past fifty years; this has been such as to cause it to be regarded as constituting a threat to the relatively weak Manx tradition. This attitude assumes that the two traditions are, and should remain, separate. However, the relative weakness of traditional music and dancing in Ireland 100 years ago – long before its current successful revival – should also be borne in mind.[3]

Other possible reasons for this antipathy may have arisen on account of racial and religious prejudice, latent or otherwise, against the Irish. The former may stem from the process of anglicisation of country districts of Man during the 20th century, a process which has influenced every aspect of Manx life. It may also be connected with the emergence of a middle class society in the Island which (as elsewhere) has tended to disassociate itself from the 'peasantry'. There were and are Irish families living in the

3 Cf. F. Roche, *The Roche Collection of Traditional Irish Music*. Combined edition. Cork 1982. Introduction by Micheál Ó Súilleabháin.

Island but the 'peasantry' seems to have been credited with Irish asociations whether or not they were *actually* Irish. The first reference in the *Chronology* for 1862 below manifests an element of lightly veiled distaste in its description of the obvious connections and similarities between the Manx and the Irish. Religious prejudice may have less immediate roots stemming from the conflict which existed in the Island, as it did elsewhere, between Roman Catholics and members of other religious denominations. These prejudices, coupled with fear of the strength of the current Irish revival, may have had a part to play in generating a certain anti-Irish attitude in the present context of music and dance.

On the other hand, it can be shown that traditional musicians and dancers of the 19th and early 20th centuries did *not* discriminate against particular tunes, songs and dances on the grounds of their perceived national associations or origins. Notions of that kind largely found their origin in the influence of nationalist politics, rather than in the comparative study of traditional folk music. There are several references to named ballad and dance tunes from outside the Island which were used by traditional musicians, but which were not included in any collection (cf. the ballads of 'Tom the Dipper', between 1853 and 1879 and the events described by George Quarrie in *The Melliah*, c. 1849, both noted in the *Chronology*). Conversely, a number of tunes were included in the collections which were known traditionally elsewhere. Some representative examples of the many tunes in the Manx collections attributable to more than one tradition would be: *Thurot*, K.V. 37 (Irish: *Haste to the wedding*); *Keep the old petticoat warm*, K.V. 174 (Irish: *The Galbally farmer*); *Step dance*, K.V. 41 (Irish: *Farewell to whiskey*); untitled tune, now known as *Gyn ennym*, K.V. 178 (Irish: *St. Patrick's Day in the morning*) and *Upon a Sunday morning*, K.V. 142, (Irish/N. American: *The banks of Ponchartrain*).

Links between tunes collected from Manx tradition and those noted elsewhere can be found in other published

sources such as, for example, Gilchrist[4] (some cross references, however, appear to be tenuous), Jerry[5] and Kaneen & Jerry[6]. The latter exhibits a tendency to blur the distinction between *tune* and *ballad* titles which are linked with other traditions. For example, the popular 19th-century ballad *The Curragh of Kildare* appears with English words beneath the currently popular tune generally used in the Irish tradition. This version of the tune is not known to have migrated to the Isle of Man, but *three* other tunes appear in the Clague collection (cf. K.V. 27, 29 and 243) with titles indicating they were used for this ballad. The latter of these three tunes appears beneath Manx Gaelic words.

The musicians in the Island appear to have exercised an element of choice based on personal (not 'national') preference as the general structure of the dance tunes shows. Their similarity with each other becomes clearer when they are compared with traditions such as the Welsh (which shows differences in structure from the Manx dance tunes) and this applies equally well to the Irish and Scottish traditions. Other types of music which have been collected in the Isle of Man seem to show evidence of different origins or influences. The ballad and popular song tunes are in many cases common to both Britain and Ireland, with variations of the same tune being found in several traditions. The hymn tunes, and possibly also the carval [carol] tunes, appear to be of mainly English origin. The band music collected is from a very cosmopolitan body of music which included local compositions, arrangements of traditional tunes and European classical music (cf. John Sayle's Serpent Book, in the *Chronology*, 1837).

The most extensive work to date on placing the tunes of the Clague collection in a wider context is that done by Anne Gilchrist. With regard to the dance music, one of her conclusions is that the 'Clague collection is not lacking in good and lively dance-tunes, but most of them seem to be of

4 Anne Gilchrist, *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, 7, Part 3, No. 28 (1924), 99-108.

5 C.W.P. Jerry, *Kiaull Vannin*, Douglas 1987.

6 J. Kaneen and C.W.P. Jerry, *A Garland for John Clague*, Douglas 1988.

Irish or Scottish origin'.[7] The word 'but' here indicates her scepticism concerning the native Manx origin of many of the tunes. However, this approach does not take account of the universality of much of the music finding its way into the repertoire of traditional musicians, an issue which makes definitive statements as to 'national' origin difficult to substantiate. This approach also ignores the whole basis upon which traditional music operates, for tunes will only become accepted into a music or dance tradition if they are of the same general character as those which are already there, or can be adapted to fit the relevant regional style. For example, while it cannot be disputed that Sets of Quadrilles originated in France in the early 19th century, or that the Polka was introduced into Prague in 1837,[8] it could hardly be claimed that those dances as they exist in Ireland today are not Irish; they have become Irish as a result of 'naturalisation' and adoption into the folk tradition.[9]

It follows that Gilchrist's dismissal of the dance tunes collected by Clague and others as being mostly of 'Irish or Scottish' origin (and, by implication, somehow or other not relevant to the Manx tradition) does not acknowledge the fact that a) tunes of the same general type migrate freely and produce many variants[10] and b) any local variants and compositions which were used traditionally will have had to follow the same form in order to have become accepted in the first place.[11] This latter aspect of the music 'revival' has been particularly poorly dealt with to date and many of the tunes and songs which have been presented for adjudication at the annual *Yn Chruinnaght* festival, referred to below, have no connection whatsoever in style or structure with the collected source material. Worse still, adjudicators often appear poorly qualified to make any critical comment of

7 Gilchrist, *op.cit.*, 171.

8 M. Kennedy, *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, Oxford 1991, 556 and elsewhere.

9 B. Breathnach, *The Dances and Music of Ireland*. New edition. Dublin 1989, Chapter 6.

10 T. Ó Canainn, *Traditional Music in Ireland*, Cork 1978, 1993 edition, Chapter 1.

11 Breathnach, *op.cit.*, Chapter 10.

value in this respect, with the result that no real guidance is given. Inevitably, the 'differences and peculiarities' identified below as having resulted from the process of collection and interpretation have produced some inappropriate new material and led to the promotion of non-traditional styles of playing and singing. It would appear that the chief cause of this is ignorance amongst those currently involved with these matters of the *context* of the collected material and of the style and structure of the music within the extant tradition. The evidence presented here gives the lie to claims that the only available source of information about the tunes collected is the tunes themseves and contradicts the viewpoint that interpretation must be a matter of guesswork since no living authority can be consulted. Gilchrist in her comments on the ballad and religious tunes, appears to have over-emphasised the attribution of tunes to other traditions[12] particularly the English tradition with which she seems to have been most familiar. As already indicated, the importance of a tune's 'national' origin is not as important in any event as its acceptability to a regional tradition and its suitability for interpretation in the regional style.

In 1982, a copy of the Clague collection was passed by my colleague, Dr George Broderick, to Breandán Breathnach for examination. The tunes known in the Irish tradition were annotated and it is anticipated that this, and other traditional connections, will be the subject of another article in the near future. This will be of help in reaching a more objective assessment of the corpus of music collected from the Manx tradition. With regard to 'Manx' dancing, work has been planned on the further examination of the structure of those dances performed as 'traditional' at present. This should identify which elements have been added to the traditional forms as they once existed and it may also be useful to those engaged in reviving traditional

12 J.E. Quayle, 'Manx Music', *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society* IV, No. 11 (1937), pp 240-50.

dances and of interest to those wishing to make a comparative study of the subject. It is also my hope that the current reappraisal of this whole subject will stimulate further discussion.[13]

II

In 1939, by the beginning of the Second World War, traditional music and dancing had virtually ceased to be part of the social life of the community in the Isle of Man. For more than one hundred years before, collections of what was considered to be 'Manx' music had been made in order to preserve a written record of it before it passed into folk memory. The long period over which this decline occurred suggests that something more complex was happening than a continual loss from a 'national store' of Manx traditional folk music and dances, as the collectors of traditional folk music and dance would have it. For example, it is known that collectors of traditional music found that their sources were unaware of much of the material being supplied by their contemporaries and, likewise, that later sources produced 'new' material.[14] This seems to confirm the view that, rather than there being a single body of Manx traditional folk music, individuals in different districts had their own body of songs and tunes which changed over time, albeit slowly. However, in addition to this, there were a number of songs and tunes which were popularly known throughout the Island, and which had become widespread in the usual traditional fashion.[15] This situation is similar to that which currently exists in some parts of Ireland. Certain tunes and songs are known traditionally to individuals, whilst others are common property and more widely known.

As regards traditional dancing, its popularity is confirmed by many historical references (cf. *Chronology*). The types of dances which became part of the folk tradition, steps used

14 Gill *et al.* (*op.cit.*), x-xi.

15 The well-known Manx traditional ballads of the 19th century included: *Mylecharaine*; *Ny Kirree fo Niaghtey*; *Mannanan beg Mac y Lir*; *Thurot as Elliott* and *The Loss of the Herring Fleet*.

and style of dancing are also indicated. But how far Manx dances as they are known today correspond with those referred to is uncertain. Reels, jigs, set dancing and hornpipes are specifically mentioned in various sources. Step dancing is also mentioned; by this is meant a solo dance using elaborated versions of the basic dance steps in a way which emphasised the rhythm of the music provided. It is known that boards were used for this purpose in the Isle of Man.[16] Again, a survival of this type of dancing can be found in its traditional form in parts of Ireland, chiefly amongst men, and often in the context of the public house. However, while they are mentioned in passing, no record is known to exist of step dances having been collected in the Isle of Man.

There was a real as well as perceived decline in these activities in the Island and, as already mentioned, they eventually 'died out' amongst the adult population. In view of this, the motives of the collector/publishers, and the way in which they used the material collected, are of particular significance. The earliest published collection of Manx music dates back to the early part of the nineteenth century, being *The Mona Melodies* by Barrow.[17] The stated motive for publication was to 'rescue [the melodies] from oblivion' and to 'introduce [them] to public acquaintance'.[18] This dual aim did not lead to any success in 'rescuing' the traditional music which purportedly inspired the venture in the first place. Its purpose was rather to provide a sort of legitimacy to Barrow's work, which had involved the 'arrangement' of traditional melodies for piano accompaniment, and the alteration of melodies to suit popular taste.

16 Mona Douglas, 'Hunting the Dance in Mann' quoted in S. Miller (ed.), *Mona Douglas, Folk-song, Folk Dance, Folklore. Collected Writings*, Onchan 1994, 21, §§ 6 & 7.

17 J. Barrow, *The Mona Melodies / A Collection of Ancient and Original Airs / of the Isle of Man. / Arranged for the voice, / with a Piano Forte, accompaniment, / by An Amateur, / The Words by Mr. J. B. / Dedicated by Permission, To Her Royal Highness* [sic]/ *The Duchess of Kent, / By Her Royal Highness's Grateful / and Devoted Humble Servant / C. St. George.* London 1820.

18 *Ibid.*, 2.

By that time, the publication of arrangements of traditional folk music and its use as the basis for classical composition was commonplace in many European countries and elsewhere.[19] But, unlike some collectors, such composers did not claim either to be presenting traditional music, or to be working for its preservation. *The Mona Melodies* is significant in that it represents the first published arrangement of traditional tunes collected in the Isle of Man, using conventional notation and following contemporary popular musical tastes.[20] In exploiting a body of folk music whilst claiming the higher motive of providing it a means of 'rescue', it is typical of this genre of musical collection.[21]

The largest collection of Manx traditional music is that made by Dr John Clague and others during the 1890s. This was used by W. H. Gill in producing his arrangements.[22] The intended publication of the manuscript, 'with or without historical and critical notes for the use and information of

19 It is well known that Haydn, Tchaikovsky and Grieg, amongst others, had all used folk melodies in their compositions by this time. These were followed later by composers such as Ralph Vaughan-Williams and Arnold Foster in England, both of whom made compositions based upon Manx traditional folk music. For example, Vaughan Williams' *Mannin Veen (Dear Mona)*, London 1913, and Foster's *The Sea, Invocation*, London 1927.

20 However, the earliest known arrangement of a Manx traditional folk tune was made by Shepherd, a 'music master', in c.1815. He combined the tune (which he entitled *An Original Manks Tune*) with the ballad 'Mylecharaine'. This is found amongst the various hymn tunes he was teaching at the time in a manuscript book, and has a bass part for voice (MM MS 437A: 38 - 39).

21 For example, Gill *et al.* in the preface to *Manx National Songs* (1896 ed., v) state that ' ...the compilers consider they are doing a useful and patriotic work in rescuing these tunes and placing them on record for future use.' Further examples of the claimed motives of traditional music collectors can be found in Breathnach (*op.cit.*) and elsewhere.

22 Gill *et al.* (*op.cit.*, 1896) and W.H.Gill, J. F. Gill and J. Clague, *Manx National Music*, London 1898.

those interested in the subject'[23] did not take place at the time. Perhaps this was a consequence of the hostile criticism from some quarters of Gill's work,[24] which had involved 'tampering' with some melodic scales and the replacement of the known Manx words to songs by newly-written English texts. A further criticism, which had also been levelled at the earlier publication, *The Mona Melodies*, arose on account of the new words being mostly unconnected with the original text. Clague himself added tunes to the manuscript afterwards,[25] but this did not become widely available until 1987, when a transcription of the tunes in the more commonly used keys was included in the publication, *Kiaull Vannin* (= K.V.).[26] Other publishers were more honest in their approach and, although inevitably using formal notation, they did not deliberately alter scales, or add harmonies or spurious texts when publishing their work. For example, the notation of bare melodies – albeit accompanied by a simple harmony – appeared in Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music* and in *Mannin.*[27]

23 Cf. the preface to Gill *et al.* (*op.cit.*, 1896: [1979 ed., iv]). The preface to Gill *et al.* (*op.cit.*, 1898) contained the revised wording '... with or without *explanatory and other notes* (my italics).' This later preface also states that 'these volumes are not intended to *supersede the work originally contemplated* (my italics), [presumably by Clague acting alone]'. This addition to the text of the preface followed the criticism which the first volume received.

24 The *Chronology* contains accounts from the *Mona's Herald* (13th January, 1897); and the *Manx Sun* (16th January, 1897). The main criticism was summed up in the latter article: '[the Gill brothers were guilty of] .. not giving to the world the fruits, pure and simple, of their industry ... never [had the author] previously met with a more painful instance of the art of the "improver".'

25 An untitled tune collected from 'Blind Cain, Douglas' is dated 25: X : 99. This is near the end of the last music Ms. book. Some preceding and all subsequent tunes are likely to have been collected after the publication of both *Manx National Songs* and *Manx National Music*.

26 C.W.P. Jerry, *Kiaull Vannin*, Douglas 1987.

27 Sophia Morrison (ed.), Published by Yn Chesaght Gailckagh, Douglas, Vol. 1 (Nos. 1 & 2), Vol. 2 (No. 3) and Vols. 3 (Nos. 5, 6, 7 & 8), May 1913-May 1917.

The contrasting aims of the various collector/publishers are summed up by Barrow's declared motive in publishing *The Mona Melodies*: to notate and preserve; or to create and popularise.[28] In their respective ways, these principles have contributed towards the creation of a record of *some* of the traditional music which existed in the Isle of Man.[29] Their value today is that they can be used (in conjunction with the manuscript sources, historical references and the results of comparative study) as a basis for research into the subject, and also by those involved in the current process of 'reviving' Manx traditional music, song and dance. All these activities have tended to be influenced and, to an extent, impeded by those who later used the source material as the basis for the creation of a classical 'neo-Celtic' tradition more concerned with identity than with authenticity.[30] A further impediment is the tendency today, particularly amongst the older generation, to regard the contents of *Manx National Songs* and *Manx National Music* as being definitively 'Manx music'. Any 'folk' representation of the subject matter is regarded as being of lesser merit, or even as not being 'Manx' at all.

Traditional music and dancing in the Isle of Man finally 'died out' during the first part of this century. However, there were people alive at that time who did have a knowledge of traditional dancing (and, by implication, music also) and who still danced themselves.[31] No manuscript or audio records

28 Cf. W.H. Gill 'A Plea for Modern Manx Music', *Mannin*, May 1916, 385-90. Here Gill argues that the distinction was between the 'antiquarian approach for the learned few; and the modern for the unsophisticated many.'

29 The collectors appear to have relied quite heavily on the opinions of their sources as to whether the music being collected was regarded as being 'Manx', though some did try to define what they were collecting. Despite this, the discrimination between which tunes were admitted and which omitted seems to be almost arbitrary in some cases (cf. p. 229 above for some examples).

30 Mona Douglas, 'Manx Music – Then & Now', *Manx Life*, March/April 1978, pp 30, 33 (= Douglas 1978).

31 Cf. Mona Douglas, 'Manx Folk Dances – their Notation and Revival' [*sic*], in Miller (ed.), *op. cit.*, 3-6. Here Douglas says that there were 'still ... one or two [fishermen] who will dance in a public house for a drink.'

which might have given a clear indication of how, for example, musical notation should be interpreted vis-à-vis the traditional style of the time are known to have survived. The declared aims of the collectors was preservation and for them to have neglected to attend to this detail is a rather odd omission, particularly since the authors of some of the extracts below containing only *incidental* references to Manx traditional music and dancing are quite specific in describing its style.[32] It must be assumed, therefore, that the collector/publishers were not interested in preserving the style of instrumental playing, singing and dancing.[33] Rather, they wanted to use the material for their own purposes and clearly sometimes did so in a way that would not find acceptance today amongst ethnomusicologists and folk-life researchers.

In the cases of Barrow, Moore and Gill – albeit for widely differing motives – the purpose was simply to produce a publication; in the case of later workers in the field, most notably Mona Douglas and Philip Leighton Stowell, it was to establish a 'Manx youth movement', based upon 'Manx' dancing and music. The dancing was largely for the purpose of display. For example, the children themselves (who would have been mostly unaware of what traditional music and

32 This despite a recommendation given by a Dr James Lyon in a lecture delivered at the 1909 Manx Music Guild (cf. *Chronology* 1909). By far the commonest and most consistent comparison of the style and structure of Manx traditional music amongst collectors and commentators has been with the Irish tradition (cf various references in the *Chronology* and above, p. 230).

33 This assumption is in line with the comments made by some collectors on the song texts (cf. Barrow 1820: 2, lines 32 and 33; Moore (*op.cit.*), xiv, para. 2; and Gill *et al.* (*op.cit.*, 1896), iv and v, enumerated items). In Gill *et al.* (*op.cit.*, 1896) it is stated in the preface that the [anglicised songs published show '*one form into which the originals may be developed*' (my italics). This phrase was quoted in the critical review dated 16th January 1897, printed in the *Manx Sun* (cf. *Chronology* 1897). Interestingly, the later volume, *Manx National Music* (Gill *et al.*, *op.cit.*, 1898) does not contain this section in what is otherwise a substantially similar preface.

dancing actually was)[34] were used by Douglas and Stowell to assist in the 'working out of the actual movements' of Manx dances between c.1929 and 1937.[35] During this period, fourteen dances were 'restored', and a further five were 'partly noted but still incomplete'.[36] By the time *Rinkaghyn Vannin – Dances of Mann* (= R.V.) was published (c.1984), twenty three dances were designated as having been collected from the extant tradition by Mona Douglas. Several others, noted as having been composed in the 'local idiom', were also included in this volume. In paragraph three of her introduction to *Rinkaghyn Vannin*, Douglas clearly indicates that the initial spur to producing Manx dances was provided by the fact that, during the 1920s, 'a few schoolteachers were introducing English country and Morris dances into the elementary schools, mainly due to the growing influence of the English Folk Dance Society'. An examination of Douglas' writings on the subject reveals that her aim was *not* to reproduce traditional dances in a scientific way despite her obvious ability to do so.[37]

The peculiar difficulty of the Manx dances in comparison with those of neighbouring traditions is well attested, and the display-oriented nature of some figures make their traditional origin suspect. Together, these facts suggest that a good deal of artistic licence was used in the 'restoration' of the traditional material collected. This stands in stark contrast to the work on traditional singing by Martin

34 Apart, perhaps, from the customary songs and dances such as *Hop tu Naa* and *Hunt the Wren*; and also children's games which involved singing, such as *Here comes Tom Dukes a-riding*.

35 Douglas, quoted in Miller (ed.), *op.cit.*, 3, § 5. As it is variously stated that the initial work was done over a period of seven years (§ 5) or five years (§ 11), it is not clear when it actually commenced. In addition, a dance team had been trained to perform for the English Folk Song and Dance Vacation School held in Douglas at Easter 1929.

36 Douglas, quoted in Miller (ed.) *op.cit.*, 6. The dances noted as being incomplete were: *The Frog Dance*, *The Flitter Dance*, *The Salmon Leap*, *The Mollag Dance* and *The Harvest Dance* (now known as *The Mheillea*). At least two of these are now danced in their 'restored' form as being traditional.

37 Cf. Miller (ed.), *op.cit.*, i, §2. Cf. also Douglas, quoted in Miller (ed.), *op.cit.*, 31-5.

Freeman,[38] in which full details of vocal inflection, style and pronunciation were recorded. These articles appeared in 1920 and 1921, and preceded Anne Gilchrist's articles drawing on the Clague collection, published between December 1924 and August 1926.[39]

One of the dances in *Rinkaghyn Vannin*, *'The Flitter Dance'*, is introduced as being, 'another with a slightly unclear history' (R.V. 12). Curiously, the tune was written down by Mona Douglas in her music collection and provided with a 'semi-Gaelicised' title, *Flitterdaunsey*. The dances and tunes in this volume show a number of pecularities. One example is the 'hiring fair dance' for women only, *Shooyl Inneenyn,* which is given with what appears to be a tune with two contrasting parts corresponding to contrasting movements within the dance. This is, in fact, two *different* tunes from the Clague Ms. – *Myr hooyl mee magh moghrey Laa Boayldyn* [As I walked out on May day morning] and *As I walked out one morning clear* (the second part of *Shooyl Inneenyn*). The titles, which are very similar, are associated with a popular British/Irish ballad type. Both tunes appear in one of the issues of the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* dealing with Manx music.[40] The tunes appear on facing pages, and it would seem that this was the first time they were brought into association with one another. It would also seem to confirm that they only came to be associated with the dance *after* the appearance of this particular publication. It may be mentioned too in passing that the title given by Gilchrist for *As I walked out one morning*[41] is incorrect: it reads *'Myr walk mish magh moghrey'*, which has a similar meaning, but refers, in fact, to a different tune, one attributed by Clague to W. Corlett, a miner of Laxey. The dance itself had first appeared in the early 1980s. It was a time when dances were needed to take to the

38 A. M. Freeman, *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*,Vols. iv,v and vi = Nos. 23, 24 and 25 (1920-5).

39 Anne Gilchrist, *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 7, Part 3, No. 28 (1924), vii-xvi, 99-108; 7, Part 4, No. 29 (1925), ix-xi, 203-76; 7, Part 5, No. 30 (1926), 281-327.

40 Gilchrist (*op. cit.,* 1924), 142-3.

41 Gilchrist (*op.cit.,* 1924), 143.

various festivals at which there was a demand for the performance of Manx dancing. As with the earlier dances, it would seem that the dance was 'restored' in response to the prevailing circumstances.

Another example is the dance *Mylecharaine's March* (R.V. 43). The tune *Mylecharaine* has two basic forms, one being for use with the ballad of that title and a second called *Mylecharaine's March* in Clague's Manuscript. The *March* has an added section of music with a slightly different rhythm, but, no reference is made by Clague to this tune being used to accompany a dance, as he did, for example, in the case of *Peter O'Tavey*. The tune appears with the title *Molly Charane* (sic), and *Mylecharaine*, in various music books for Serpent, cornet and other band instruments, amongst popular waltzes, schottisches and polkas (cf. John Sayle's Serpent Book, dated 24th September, 1837 in the *Chronology*). It would appear that these arrangements for brass band use were of a tune which was well known and much arranged by the early part of the 19th century. Although it may be supposed that the tune was picked up and used by traditional musicians, and then later used to accompany a dance, this explanation rests upon flimsy evidence. In view of this, doubt must be cast on the traditional origin of this dance.

A third example is the dance *The Fathaby Jig* (R.V. 25) and the tune of the same name. This tune is one which is also found in the Irish and Scottish traditions and it is usually played 'double' – that is, the first and second parts of the tune are each repeated. It is given as the tune for use with this dance, but the first part must be played twice and the second part *once*, ostensibly to fit the dance. It is not unknown for traditional dances to have odd sections, requiring the music to break with its usual form, and some Irish long dances, for example, are asymmetrical. But the usual structure of jigs, reels, polkas and hornpipes is such that the bars of music (played 'single' or 'double') correspond to the steps in each movement. The structure of this dance is similar to that of a set dance, which would follow these conventions. However, it seems that the dance was reconstructed and attached to this tune, with the tune being altered to fit the number of bars

required to complete the movements. It is worth noting that some commentators who have experience with groups of dancers say that the movements can actually be executed with the tune played 'double'. The reason for the alteration of the tune structure is not clear, therefore.

Finally, there is the dance *Hyndaa yn Bwoailley* (R.V. 20) which appears in R.V. as 'a courting dance collected by Mona Douglas'. However, the tune given for this dance is *based* on one collected from traditional sources, and first appears in Gill (1898). The collected version appears in the Clague Collection, with the tune having one strain of music, and appearing under the title *Booill*. Evidently, Gill altered the first part and composed the second. The implication throughout R.V. is that the dances should be performed only to the tunes given, which in itself raises a number of questions. The entry for 1812 in the *Chronology* offers contradictory evidence and is in accord with the common practice in neighbouring traditions where social dances are concerned. This raises doubts about the traditional origins of the dance. Altogether, these examples call into question the authenticity of at least some parts of the dances, and possibly the steps, given by Douglas as being 'traditional', and presented as such today. This is not to say that there is *no* traditional basis for the dance material. However, they require much more careful treatment if such a claim is to be upheld.

This highlights the amateurish and unsatisfactory nature of the collection and presentation of the Manx material. Despite it being known in the Island that other work was being undertaken on folk-life subjects using a more systematic and careful approach, and despite the hostility with which Gill's 'interfering' work had been treated a few years earlier, those involved still apparently chose to disregard the normal standards and requirements of folk-life research.[42] We may conclude that work on traditional dancing

42 Cf. *Chronology* entry under *Manx Sun*, January 16th, 1897. Even at this stage in the Island the reviewer of *Manx National Songs* states that 'the Messrs. Gill ... have utterly and ignominiously failed to attend to the elementary rules which should be observed by collectors...'

exhibited the same exploitative approach that marked the efforts of most of the earlier collector/publishers of music.

There are further reasons for having reservations about the authenticity of elements of the dances performed today which were 'restored' during this period and during later years. Since no original notes are known to survive,[43] the dances produced and steps given cannot be accurately linked to any particular source or sources;[44] neither can comparisons be made where more than one source may have existed for a particular dance. Secondly, Mona Douglas was in reality the only person working on the collection of Manx music and dance from the 1920s onward.[45] Consequently, there are no other collectors with whose notes the 'restored' dances can be compared. Finally, her ambition to establish a classical Manx culture within a broader Pan Celtic and international context[46] appears to have influenced her approach. She openly expressed regret at the tendency of those beginning to 'revive' Manx music by reference to comparable folk traditions having an 'antagonistic attitude' towards classical and composed music, this being, in her opinion, 'inimicable to creative progress in any art'.[47] She concluded with the question: 'But what about the building on this foundation of new and perhaps more sophisticated Manx music which could aim at becoming someday classical and international in its own right? Is this too high an aim?'[48] It would not be unreasonable to assume that these comments would have

43 The main body of notes were said by Douglas to have been made by her great-grandmother based on the teaching of dances to children by her great grandfather, Philip Quayle, Glentrammon. However, some collecting was done directly from first hand sources (cf. Miller [ed.], *op.cit.*, p. 21-2).

44 With the exception of *Reeaghyn Vannin*, the *Dirk Dance*, which is attributed to Jackie Kermode, a fisherman of Port Mooar (but on this cf. Miller [ed.], *op.cit.*, i & ii). Other sources are named by Douglas 1958 (quoted in Miller [ed.], *op.cit.*, 19 & 20), but no clear methodology was indicated, and no cross referencing of attributed material is possible.

45 Apparently, P. L. Stowell may have collected some material. However, the authenticity of this cannot be verified.

46 Douglas (*op.cit.*, 1978), p. 30, 33.

47 Douglas *op.cit.* (1978), 30.

48 Douglas *op.cit.* (1978), 33.

applied equally to the 'restored' dances as well as to the music when the content of the other articles by Douglas mentioned here is taken into account.

These views are also reflected in the nature of some more recent publications containing arrangements of Manx traditional music. The motives given for their publication are not dissimilar from those of Gill, chief amongst these being the desire to bring the music to a wider and a different audience. For example, the music has been notated for instruments such as the harp (which was not used traditionally in the Isle of Man) merely because such notation did not exist previously. It must be conceded that these publications largely achieved their aims, for a wider body of people does encounter the traditional music of the Isle of Man (albeit in a derivative form) as a result. But they also serve to re-define the popular perception of this music by blurring the distinction between what could be very loosely termed 'Manx music', and Manx *traditional* music.

The former is given a wide interpretation, and may include anything from *Kelly the Carman*[49] to *Ree ny Marrey.*[50] The latter is defined by reference to its historical and regional context, and by the musical conventions appropriate to traditional music.[51] In addition, there is an implied belief here that traditional music is a degraded form of classical, or more formally taught music, which is only acceptable when presented using the conventions appropriate to classical teaching.[52] This belief is outmoded and has never held any

49 C.W. Murphy, *Kelly The Carman*, London 1898 (MM MS J66 6270).

50 F. Bazin, *Ree ny Marrey, traditional Manx songs for children / with piano accompaniments and chords for guitar and keyboard.* Douglas 1994. This contains arrangements of traditional music for piano and other instruments for use in schools.

51 For further discussion on the blurring of this distinction, cf. G. Broderick, 'Manx Traditional Songs and Song Fragments I', *Béaloideas* 48-49 (1980-1), 9-29.

52 For a fuller discussion of traditional playing styles, as distinct from classical, see B. Breathnach, *Folk Music & Dances of Ireland*, Cork 1977, chapter 8 and C. Carson, *Pocket Guide to Irish Traditional Music*, Belfast 1986, *inter alios*.

currency, at least amongst ethnomusicologists. However, with the current establishment of 'Manx music and dance' in some schools, this attitude still prevails. It is reinforced by a combination of the need to be seen to be teaching music and dance in an 'orthodox' way and by a lack of any wider knowledge of these subjects amongst the teachers.

If traditional music and dancing had remained alive in the Island, as it did in some parts of Ireland and Scotland, the aspirations of individuals to elevate these traditional activities to a 'higher' art form would not be relevant to their continuation. However, it is difficult not to conclude that what has come to be taught through the school system, and beyond, bears little resemblance to the tradition as it once was. This situation has inevitably resulted today in a 'quasi-tradition' based on the earlier published and 'arranged' material, the influence of the 'improvers', the creativity of school-teachers and individuals, and the establishment of festivals of music and dance which encouraged, and still encourage, competition within prescribed classes in a classical format.[53]

This presents a problem for anybody concerned with authenticity in the 'revival' of traditional music and dance in the Isle of Man. The collected material is now accepted as being 'Manx music and dance' in its entirety without any understanding of its origins, and without any real consideration of appropriate style, or past usage. In the case of music, a close examination of the manuscript and published material shows that we are dealing not with one body of music but with several; not all of this is 'traditional' in the accepted sense of the term. Music which was regarded by the collectors and their informants as being 'Manx', [54]

53 For example, *Yn Chruinnaght*. First established 1924 and held annually until 1940, with the exception of 1938. Re-established 1978 to the present.

54 Moore (*op. cit.*), p. xxxi comes closest to defining the folk origin of the music when he said that it was simply that which was 'known to the Manx people by oral tradition'; but not that they were necessarily of Manx origin. Most of the collectors admit to some of their material being of non-native origin. Comparative study shows this to be the case.

and/or not being of recent composition, was recorded on an *ad hoc* basis, resulting in its evident heterogeneous nature. In some of the published material, various categorisations have been used to distinguish between, for example, religious carvals (carols) and dance tunes. However, the 'folk' performance of the music has tended to develop, during the past twenty years both inside and outside the school situation, in a way that ignores the context in which the different types of music existed. Thus, it is not seen as being in the least incongruous to play church music, band music, traditional dance music and ballad tunes instrumentally in the same social context and describe it as being 'Manx folk music.'[55]

III

This discussion along with the material contained in the entries in the *Chronology*, forces us to the conclusion that the 'differences and peculiarities' associated with Manx music and dance mentioned earlier are likely to be almost entirely due to the way it has been handled in the process of its recording, publishing and 'revival'. Consequently, much of the music and dance material currently presented as being 'traditional', or 'Manx', must be treated with reservation.

Furthermore, the ballad and sacred material should be viewed in the wider British/Irish, and not just the English, context. Many of the tunes and songs travelled widely,

55 A good example of a tune which was collected several times, but out of different contexts is *Mona's Delight*. It appears in the Clague collection as a carval (*Jacob's Ladder*, and other titles, K.V. 246 & 247); and a ballad, (*Come friends and relations*, K.V. 154); and as a dance tune, (*Mona's Delight*, K.V. 161 – in the form of a hornpipe). It was also collected twenty or so years later by Mona Douglas as a dance tune. Curiously the later version was given a title in Manx Gaelic (*Eunysagh[t] Vona*, K.V. 367), being a translation of Mona's delight. This gives weight in the Manx context to the assertion that a good tune accepted into a tradition will be well used. But the *way* in which the tune was used in each case here was different. It is this distinction that has been blurred, particularly during the course of the current 'revival' (cf. p. 244 above).

sometimes together, and at other times separately. The style of singing in different regions as we now know it does not appear to have varied significantly from the so-called *seannós* style of singing used for certain types of song in Ireland, Britain and the Isle of Man. Finally, I believe that Manx traditional dance music, together with the dances, was substantially similar to that of the neighbouring traditions of Ireland and Scotland, with the extant styles of instrumental playing and dancing being correspondingly similar.

With regard to the interpretative aspects of the present 'revival' of traditional music and dance, greater care needs to be exercised by those currently involved to ensure that what is passed on is not a largely spurious quasi-tradition. Failing this, the traditional basis of the 'revival' must be regarded as being of uncertain value. It is hoped that the current reappraisal will lead to a wider discussion of this subject and that further development of the arguments presented here will result in the emergence of a clearer picture of these traditions as they once existed.

IV

A Chronology

Every effort has been made to place in chronological order all items, including reminiscences where the events described have not always been fixed exactly in time. Manx Museum library references (MM) have only been given in cases where the Museum has been the source of the entry. It has not been deemed necessary to provide such references in the case of entries abstracted from more widely available sources.

1656

'A Short Treatise of the Isle of Man by James Chaloner', published in *The Manx Society* 10 (1864).

> '[The Manx people are] much addicted to the Musick of the Violyne; so that there is scarcely a family in the Island, but more or lesse can play upon it; but as they are ill

composers, so are they bad players; and it is strange that they should be singular in affecting this instrument before others, their neighbours; the Northern English, the Scots, the Highlanders, and the Irish, generally affecting the bagpipe.'

1722

'Church of England Worthies – Dr Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man', in *The People's Magazine*, 2 August, 1869 (MM, L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 69).

After being released from Castle Rushen [in September 1722], there was general rejoicing: 'Mile after mile, from Castle Rushen to Bishop's Court, the way was lined by mounted yeomen furnished with flutes and instruments of music, and from the surrounding hills, when night came down, there flashed a thousand flames to testify to a people's joy.'

1726

'A Description of the Isle of Man, George Waldron', first edition 1726, in *The Manx Society* 11 (1864).

[p. 48] 'In their sports they [the Manx people] retain something of the Arcadian simplicity. Dancing, if I may call it so, jumping and turning around at least, to the fiddle and base-viol, is their great diversion. In the summer they have it in the fields, and in the winter the barns. The month of May is every year ushered in with a ceremony which has something in the design of it pretty enough, and, I believe, will not be tiresome to my reader in the account. [Waldron relates an account of a pageant of the battle between the Queen of May and the Queen of Winter] ... the one [Queen] being preceded by violins and flutes, the other with the rough music of the tongs and cleavers.'

[p. 50] '[After hunting and killing the wren, they proceed with] ... burying her with a whimsical kind of solemnity, singing dirges over her in the Manks language...'

[p. 50] '[At Christmas] 'here is not a barn unoccupied for the whole twelve days, every parish hiring fiddlers at the public charge; and all the youth, nay, sometimes people well advanced in years, making no scruple to be among these nocturnal dancers.'

[p. 60] '[At weddings the bride and groom] ... are preceded by musick [musicians], who play all the while before them the tune "The Black and the Grey", and no other is ever used at weddings. [After the wedding feast, they] ... dance in the Manks fashion and between that and drinking, pass the remainder of the day.'

'[At funerals a wake is held at which the clerk of the parish is obliged to sing a psalm] ... in which all the company join. [The author says that this custom is] 'borrowed from the Irish, as are indeed many others much in fashion with them.'

c. 1720 - 1750

David Craine, M.A., C.P., *Manannan's Isle*, Manx Museum and National Trust (1955).

[p. 145] 'Violins and viols are the only musical instruments mentioned [in the various official records], and the fiddlers who played at the gatherings generally went in two's and travelled long distances to fulfil engagements.

Playing was strictly forbidden on Sundays and other holy days. The definition of the 'Sabbath' varied from time to time. At one period it stretched from sunset on Saturday to Sunday at sunset, or to Monday morning. Saturday evening was always debatable ground and the fear of punishment must have damped the fun of many a social gathering.

... John Shimmin, a well known fiddler of Kirk German, who, after frequently encroaching on the Sabbath limits, disappeared from the Island for some years, on his return in 1723 was immediately clapped into St German's Dungeon for his past offences.

Many mills had licences to brew and were often meeting places for young people. In the 1730's, Baldwin mill more than once came under severe censure for entertaining fiddlers and dancers during forbidden times.'

[p 146] '[On games and pastimes] One game perhaps imported from Ireland and called "Throwing the bullet" was played along the Kirk Malew highways in the early 18th century. Each competing team of two was provided with a ball of stone or iron. A course was fixed along a road, and the partners threw their ball alternately and with an underhand movement. The ball was picked up for succeeding throws at the place where it had come to rest. The game was won by the team which completed the course in the smallest number of throws. The danger to passers by when the "bullet" was being thrown must have made it unpopular with the general public.' [This game still survives in Ireland].

1775

The Methodist Family, 1 February, 1870, account of the preacher John Crook's visit to the Island in 1775 (MM, L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 72).

'Satan summoned up his reserves, and they came, profane and holy alike. Musicians, scraping their noisy catgut whilst he preached attempted to fiddle down the gospel. The rabble yelled themselves hoarse to shout it down, and then, pelting the congregation as they left their meeting, thought to stone it down.'

1785

'Account of a Tour through the Isle of Man', *The Universal Magazine*, January 1785, p. 25, (MM, L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 20).

'I arrived at this miserable place, [from the Liverpool Coffee-House in Peel], about nine o'clock, yesterday evening, after the most delightful ride I ever had in my life.'

'The town of Ramsay (sic) is famous for its bay, which is so extensive and commodious that the largest fleets may safely lie in it during the most severe storm. The inn here is but an uncomfortable house; and the company I was last night obliged to associate with, upon my arrival, was but ill suited to those enthusiastic ideas raised in my mind by the various beauties of my ride. Think how great was my dissatisfaction when, after having travelled through a country filled with some of the most delightful objects in nature, and with a mind so elevated to the highest degree of romance by those objects, I was crammed into a nasty little parlour, darkened with clouds of smoke from tobacco, and deafened with half a hundred harsh voices roaring discordant catches. My romantic ideas immediately vanished. But these merry Manks were not wholly engaged in singing: some conversation passed, among various topics of which, that of their being but little known to the world by their national title, was introduced. The subject was illustrated by the following short story from one of the company:- A soldier, a native of this island, who had lost a limb in the service of Britain, applied to a certain Nobleman for a pension. The Nobleman, enquiring what countryman he was, was answered "a Manksman". "A Manksman!" exclaimed he to a certain Lord who stood near him; "Pray, my Lord, can you inform me to what country the Manksmen belong, for I really do not recollect having heard of them before?" "Oh!", replied the other, "they are, I suppose, the people of one of the petty states of Germany".'

1793

The Manks Mercury, 4th June, 1793 (MM N43).

'DANCING Lessons to commence, given by Mr. Simpson in 'the art of dancing ... and other graceful accomplishments of good breeding.' [Names given of referees in the 'North of Ireland'].

'N.B. A collection of fashionable country dances, of his own publication, may be had of him, or at the printing office.'

The Manks Mercury, 30th July, 1793.

'A GOOD FIDDLE HAND. MUSIC. The respectable inhabitants of this Island may be accommodated with a good FIDDLE HAND by applying to T. Simpson, Douglas. [Terms for lessons] Douglas, 5s; to 3 miles, 7s 6d; if further, in proportion.'

The Manks Mercury, 1st October, 1793.

Ball in DOUGLAS ASSEMBLY ROOM on 14th October. To be opened at 7 with a court minuet after which will be danced Quadrilles, &c. Then will Country Dances become general.'

[N.B. many references may be found in the newspapers of this period to dancing and music masters offering their services].

1797-1798

James Felton, 'A Tour Through the Isle of Man, 1797-98', *The Manx Society* 6 (1861).

[p. 120-121] 'From political ballads, we may catch the sentiments that prevail. Sitting around the blazing hearth one evening with a number of Manksmen, and rocking the cradle of an infant beside me, the toast and song went around, in one of which I recollect the following lines alluding to the sale of the Island:

For the babes unborn will rue the day,
That the Isle of Man was sold away,
For there's ne'er an old wife that loves a dram
But what will lament for the Isle of Man!'

c. 1800

The Methodist Recorder, True Stories of Methodism, Winter Number, Christmas 1895, article on Thomas Crennell, born-again Methodist of Lezayre, b. 1778 d. c.1855. Extract taken from biographical account given by author (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 2: 128).

[p. 19] 'He was born in 1778, and grew up a fearless, godless young fellow. While not a drunkard by any means, he was fond of a drop of drink, and in order to have a "spree" would sometimes climb the mountain side, cut down, and carry to Ramsey, a burden of ling, which he would sell for *jough*, (Manx beer).'

[p. 22] '[He was remembered as having said], 'When you repeat that beautiful prayer of our Lord that contains every blessing we need for body and soul, for time and eternity, never repeat it as if it were inferior to your own, or hastily, like they used to dance [a] *jig e dhorris*'. Jig e dhorris is the reel at the door, the last reel of a set of drunken dancers before breaking up.'

1801

'The Present State of the Isle of Man', *The Monthly Magazine*, c. 1801, (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 26).

[p. 43] 'Almost every Manksman can speak English; their accent is very like that of Ireland, and they may easily be mistaken for Hibernians, by those who have not attended closely to the niceties of pronunciation. Little Manks music is to be met with. There are a few original airs which have much of the wildness of the Irish. To these are sometimes sung ballads in the Manx language.'

[p. 43 - 44] 'Society is divided into two classes, natives and strangers. Into the former, unless by some very fortunate coincidence of circumstances, it is difficult to procure admission. Good introductions, and a long residence, are necessary, before anyone is allowed to obtain an intimate footing: nor is this surprising, when it is considered how many men of broken fortune, and abandoned character have, from time immemorial been duping the honest Manks'.

'[this] .... frequently produces an appearance of inhospitality foreign to their real dispositions. This is more observable in the south of the island, where the influx of strangers is the greatest; and one, unacquainted with the

cause of this reserve, would, perhaps, be induced to give the Manks a character which does not belong to them.'

[p. 44] 'The Manks are fond of dancing, and dance well. Formerly there were regular subscription assemblies at Douglas every fortnight; but, owing to a disagreement with the owner of the rooms, they have been discontinued. Two balls in the year are given at Castletown, one on the king's birthday and one on the queen's; and there are frequent private dances.'

1810

Shepherd's manuscript music books, ex Edward Gawne collection, book E, c. 1801, [date hand written on p. 1], MM MS 437A.

[This MS book contains hand-ruled staves, and the notation of psalms and hymn tunes. However, pp. 38 and 39 contain a tune titled 'An original Manks tune'. The tune is an arrangement of the ballad *Mylecharaine*, and is its first known written form.]

1811

A Review of Wood's 'An Account of the past and present State of the Isle of Man', containing extracts, *The Monthly Review*, pp. 61 - 9, September, 1811, pp. 61 - 9. (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 29).

'Of the deficiency of the Manks education, some notion may be formed by Mr. Woods's acknowledgement that he knows not of a single native who has been or is eminent in learning, or in the arts. Yet, rude as is their country and their institutions, the attachment of the people to a separate government was as great as if they had been a large and powerful nation; and the sale of the sovereignty in 1765 was felt as a severe blow to their pride. Their language is naturally Gaelic, and many of the country-people do not understand a word of English. It follows from this description that a material difference exists between the natives and the strangers who resort here in great numbers'.

1812

Thomas Quayle, *A General View of the Agriculture of the Isle of Man*, London 1812, p. 125.

'The Manks peasantry being much attached to dancing, it is a constant practice on the evening of the day on which the last corn is cut for the farmer to call in a fiddler or two. Labourers, young and old, then assemble; and often the family and friends of the farmer himself join in the merry dance. The reason for fixing the period of this festivity, which is called the mellow (sic) not at harvest home, but on the last day when the corn is cut, is probably because the females share of the labour then ceases, and they disperse. During the dance, a diminutive sheaf, formed by the last cut corn, bound with ribbands, which had been borne in procession from the field by the queen of the mellow, passes from hand to hand among the young women, and in dancing is waved above the head. English country dances are still unknown to them. Jigs and reels, in which four or five couples join, take their place, the fiddler changing his tune, and often playing one of the few national lively airs, preserved from early times, resembling strongly in character the Irish.'

1820

J. Barrow, *The Mona Melodies,* London 1820 (MM J48).

[From the 'Advert': 2] ' It is hoped therefore, that an attempt to rescue from oblivion and to introduce to public acquaintance, these Ancient Melodies, may meet with pardon on the score of its design, and with encouragement on account of its novelty. With respect to the difficulties which the Authors have had to encounter in preparing these Airs for Publication, they have certainly been many, and after all, will form perhaps, their best claim upon general indulgence. It has been observed that the Manks Dialect [of the Gaelic language] can scarcely be considered a written language; the observation is still more applicable to the insular music, written notes are a species of fetters with which such wild and unpolished a Muse appears to have been altogether unacquainted. It has been [a] matter of considerable labor therefore, and discrimination, to

transcribe, in the first place these oral Melodies, (if we may be allowed the term) and afterwards to harmonise them.'

.... 'In conclusion, it is perhaps unnecessary to add, that the words, adapted to the original airs, are entirely new; as the subjects of the Manks ballads were not esteemed to be of sufficient general interest to warrant their translation.'

1830

Newspaper article entitled; 'The Isle of Man, Oh had we some bright little isle of our own, in a blue summer's sea, not far off, yet alone!', concluded: 'so spoke the spectre hound in Mann', *Morning Herald* '1830' [note on folio page reads 'Before 1830']. MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 36.

'Well, then, as thou enterest the Bay of Douglas, two spreading arms of land stretch on each side, as if to welcome and embrace thee, and thou seest right ahead the smoke curling over the town, in whose pleasant bosom thou art to nestle and be comforted after fatigue. Boats will surround thee, and brawney Manksmen will struggle for thy sixpence and thy landing. They may be drunk, or half seas over, but let that not affright thee. You seldom have more than one boat upset at a time. When thou touchest the pier, start not at the crowd of savages, wild savages, that obstruct thy way, or fancy thou art among the Esquimaux. They are bare-headed and bare-legged, to be sure, and roar at thee in a most barbarous jargon of their own. But indeed it is a civilised country – uncouth as thou mayst think them. Have you ever been to Connemara, the land of the tender Dick Martin? The style of dress is just the same, and bare head and bare legs are cool in summer weather.'

'The Manks ladies are handsome, unquestionably handsome, with sharp sensitive eyes, and complexion heightened by fresh air. They are short, but well made, and of those happy proportions with which Fielding seems so well pleased in describing one of his beauties. Their full shapes are nearly bursting through the tight stays which

inclose them. They are very Irish in manner, and much given to laugh and show white teeth – but always in the proper place.'

1837

The Manx Sun, 17th February, 1837 (MM N53).

'New Music – Manx ... shortly will be published ... the Favourite National Manx Air, 'Molly Charrane' (sic), with variations for the Piano Forte. Dedicated, by permission, to Mrs. READY, Lady of His EXCELLENCY THE LT. GOV. of the Island – Composed by Mr. QUARTERMAN, Member of the Royal Academy of Music, London, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Musicians.'

[The editor's note continues: '(The intention is to publish variations of) all the Manx Airs generally known – he having made several Tours round the Island, in order to gain, (as near as possible), the original mode of Singing those Airs.' N.B. No further arrangements appear to have been published.]

The Manx Sun, 5th May, 1837 (MM N53).

[Editorial concerning the publication of 'Molly Charrane'] 'The whole series which Mr Quarterman intends publishing will become very popular, not only in this Island, but also in the United Kingdom .... *'Mylecharaine'* (my italics) will be especially enjoyed.'

John Sayle's Serpent Book, dated September 24, 1837 (MM MS 1234 A).

[Manuscript music book containing 89 pp. of bass parts to Quicksteps, Marches, Waltzes, and Psalm and other anthems. Also includes a selection from Handel's 'Water Music', various local compositions for band, (for example, 'Quick Step' by William Clucas, p. 33), and three versions of *Mylecharaine* on pp. 9, 18 and 76. The version here is the 'march' version, being a variation for band use of the ballad tune. This tune was later attached to the dance now known as *Mylecharaine's March*].

c. 1849

George Quarrie, *The Melliah*, New York 1889 (MM J8 Q2 8915), refers to events of c. 1849.

[From stanza 4 of 'The Dance']

'Now Dawsey's pipe was not alone,
Old Collins fiddle swelled the tone,
And dancin' now in form begun -
The mistress came.
With grace she let them see it done,
And lightly stepped with Jem alone
The dance we'll name.

That Swivvle Hornpipe's rightly named;
The 'jig' and, and far away is famed,
To 'Edinburgh's Flowers' framed,
It went like smook;
Clane dancin' off yer han it claimed,
Not puzzled look.

No bhoy bough hobbles at the sides
Nor sthroogin' out of tune in slides
With ugly sprehts and shame besides,
At bein' wrong,
Like in quadrille each man betides
However strong:
But hit the floor with heel and toe,
Till heaven help the boards below,
And suit yourself, you come or go
To music's time,
Not bob about like peep-a-bo,
Nor sense nor rhyme!
And see the gells, these sthrippers rare,
No blanket trains to thrip you there,
But ankles clane, half stockin' bare,
They foot it lightly;

'Why shut their arms or legs from air?'
They argue rightly!

The fun was now diversified,
As Nannie from the door we spied,
Limping up, soghane betide,
She thus went past me:

Floorin' a clout, she jumped aside,
Took fright, and sang, or rather cried
'Keerie fu Snaighthee.'

Then jig on jig and reel on reel,
Away they flew with hop and squeal,
Sweat must flow unless by steel
The springin's done,
But shirts are damp, and sthrippers feel
Wet to the bone.

But bless your sowl! they're used to sweat!
They're only just beginning yet;
O heavens! see that reekin' set
Just by the wall!
Whoever will this night forget
That's seen it all!

And look! now mark that happy pair,
See Billy bouncin' in the air!
And look at Betsy's streamin' hair
And hear the'r hoochs!
At other time, or otherwhere,
They wouldn't say, I do declare,
Bo to a goose!
O Barley! Barley! madd'ning grains!
Thy blood runs riot through our veins,
For see! the dullest hodden brains
Thou sett'st on fire!
On, fiddles! shriek your maddest strains!
Here reckless pleasure! take the reins,
Till we expire!

Now quicker flew old Collins' bow
Now Dawsey blow! ye divil, blow!
And reel and wheel and quicker go,
Ye merry dancers!

In all this earth, or far below,
Was ever such a perfect show!
O who that answers!

The fiddlers barely get their breath
When music's loudly called for Baith,
And there he is as sure as death
With kick and prance,
Low on the floor, dooin' well, my faith!
The owl Frog dance.

Then reel on reel, and jig on jig,
Away they went again full rig,
With jough and fiddles, who cares a fig
About tomorrow?
Leave afterclaps to common prig
Who looks for sorrow!

But time will go, and fun to boot,
And Melliahs end and follow suit,
This night wound up with good salute,
'Hip, hip, hooray!'
These were the days of Gob-na-schute
And hop tua naa.'

c.1853

A full and particular Account of the Shipwreck and awful Explosion which took place at Kitterland about 8 o'clock on Tuesday, Dec. 28, 1852. Tune, 'To a new Cork trader do I belong', By 'Tom the Dipper' of Castletown. Published by James Brown, North Quay, Douglas, Broadside (MM J46 6547).

[Thomas Shimmin, known as 'Tom the Dipper' because of his professed belief in Baptism, was born in 1801. He was transported to Botany Bay during the 1840s for a 'misdemeanour', and later took up ballad writing and peddling with his 'good wife Ellen'. He usually named a tune to which his ballads could be sung, and his choices of tunes reflect the widespread nature of many tunes extant in the 19th century in the Isle of Man].

1855

(a) 'An Account of the Manx Recruit – a domestic description', *Chambers Journal*, August 11, 1855 (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1:48).

'As to the war, he, [the father of the recruit, named as being 'Hughie Corkill of Ballabasalla' [sic] is somewhat Russian in his sympathies, having a kind of undefined grudge against the English and their Government, which the latter, he thinks, wants to bring the glorious, independent little isle under its official finger and thumb, that it may wring a handsome revenue from the labours of honest Manksmen'.

(b) 'Ballads of the Isle of Man, translated from the Manx by George Borrow', *Once a Week*, January 4th, 1862, pp. 37 -38 (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 54).

'Brown William'

'This ballad was written in consequence of the execution of William Christian, generally called William Donn, or Brown William, from the darkness of his complexion .... The name of Christian is still held in the highest veneration in Man; and the ballad of "Brown William", which gives an account of the betrayal of the poor patriot, and the vengeance taken by the hand of God upon his murderers, is the most popular of all the wild songs of Ellan Vannin.' [An English translation follows of 21 stanzas. This, says Borrow, includes two stanzas of more recent composition. For a detailed analysis of this song, cf. Broderick 1982: 29].

'Mollie Charane [Mylecharaine]'

This ballad is of considerable antiquity, being at least as old as the commencement of the last century. It is founded on a real character – a miser – who by various means acquired a considerable property, and was the first person who ever left 'tocher', that is fortune, to daughter in Man. His name was Mollie Charane, which words interpreted are 'Praise the Lord' [in fact it derives from the Gaelic: Mac Giolla Chiaráin]. He lived and possessed an estate on the curragh, a tract of boggy ground, formerly a forest, on the northern side of the island, between the mighty mountains of the Snefell range and the sea. Two families bearing the name of the miser, and descended from him, still reside upon the curragh, at the distance of about half a mile from each other. The name of the head of the principal family is John Mollie Charane, and that of the other Billy Mollie Charane. In the autumn of the year 1855 I found my way across the curragh to the house of John Mollie Charane .... [he not being at home], I told, [his wife], that my only motive for coming was to see a descendant of the person mentioned in the celebrated song. She then looked at me with some surprise, and observed that there was indeed a song about a person of the family, but that he had been dead and gone for many a long year, and she wondered I should give myself the trouble to come to such a place as the curragh to see people merely because one of their forebears was mentioned in a song .... Amongst other things, she told me that she had a son in Ohio, who lived in a village where the Manx language was spoken, the greater number of people being Manx .... However miserly the Mollie Charane of the song may have been, I experienced no lack of hospitality in the house of his descendant.' [An English translation follows of 5 stanzas].

1857

The Manx Fairy: a new song. Tune, 'Come sit you down by me'. By 'Tom the Dipper' of Castletown. Published by M. A. Quiggin, Douglas, c. 1857. Broadside (MM J46 6549).

1861

A. G. Gilchrist (article on Richard Weaver's tune book, published in 1861), *The Choir*, number 216, December 1927 (MM J48 1X).

[p. 223] 'About a dozen [hymn tunes] are recognisable as folk tunes, and about a score come under the class of popular airs – either of Weaver's own time, or of a date nearer the beginning of the 19th. century.'

[p. 226] 'A minor tune of a different type is the old tine sung to the Methodist revival hymn "The Good Old Way", which used also to be popular in the Isle of Man and which begins "Lift up your hearts, Immanuel's friends" .... I have not been able to trace the origin of this vigorous tune, which sounds like an old march or dance air.'

1862

(a) *The National Magazine* 12, [in pencil] 1862, pp. 177 - 186. No title, (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 56).

'The quay is spacious, and, we believe, convenient for trading purposes, though to pedestrians far from being so, owing to the crowd of cars which usually take up their standing here with their attendant Jehus, who in general style, and colloquial powers, bear a close affinity to their Irish brethren.

'It is a fact, though our Manx friends usually ignore it, that the Irish element appears very strongly mingled with the native. The barefoot children, otherwise decently clad, the thatched cabins, with the adjoining sty, and never-failing three-legged potato pot; and, above all, the unmistakable brogue which assails you, on all sides, are facts not to be gainsayed; and which speak strongly of intimate relations having been at one time established in the sister isle'.

'Laxey, Castletown, Peal [sic] and Ramsey, are the four chief points of attraction, and to which every morning, during the [tourist] season, vehicles of all sorts and capabilities, congregating in the market-place, are

destined; there various drivers loudly asserting, in harmonious clamour, their several claims for preference, of course depreciating at the same time the pretensions of their rivals .... So they tout, and rally, and banter, a little ill language, but more good-humoured jest, and mingled with much of that ever-ready wit which forms another feature of the Irish element aforementioned.'

(b) Correspondence, dated 24 June, [1862], from a reader, Mrs Phoebe Palmer, in *The Christian Advocate and Journal*, 21 August, 1862, (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1: 55).

[Para. 4] 'The Manks language is still spoken in the rural villages; but though in frequent use, there are probably but few who do not understand English.'

1863

A New Poem concerning the Happy Marriage of the Prince of Wales with the eldest daughter of a brother of the King of Denmark, March 10, 1863. Tune 'Jolly Ploughboy'. By 'Tom the Dipper'. 'Printed in Castletown for the Manx Poet'. Broadside (MM J46 6551).

1868

'Christmas Tide in the Isle of Man', in *The Monthly Packet*, c.1868, (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1-55: 68.

[The customs of this season are] '... fast dying out ... But this service [Oie'll Vayree] must seem tame indeed to those old Manx men who remember the time when the church was kept open nearly all night; when the people provided their own tapers, and vied with their neighbours in the quantity they could bring, and when carol after carol was sung by individual members of the congregation'.

'The Manx people do not seem to have any national game; most of the men go out shooting on Christmas day and the boys generally spend the day in playing at "hockey", which they call by some unpronounceable name [*cammag*].'

'In olden times a barn was always given up at this season, and prepared for dancing, in which exercise all the people, young and old, disported themselves for at least ten days. Dancing is still held in great favour by the Manx people, and they have a Manx reel, which is somewhat like a Scotch one; it is danced by four persons, and the slow movement is now and then enlivened by a shout and stamp.

An old Manx rhyme, in referring to the popular taste for dancing, says;

'I ne'er such festivity saw,

As there, where the damsels were hopping;
For dancing is somewhat like law,
When once you begin there's no stopping.'

When the dancing in the barn was over, a curious ceremony was gone through, which was called "Cutting off the fiddler's head". The fiddler knelt on the floor, and placed his head on the knee of some maiden, as though he were going to cry forfeits, he then proceeded to prophesy of certain events, and particularly of weddings, to take place before the next Christmas; he often judged by little signs of affection which he had witnessed during the dancing. If he coupled together the names of a man and a maiden who disliked each other, there was often much weeping; as, though not much thought of on other occasions, on this one the greatest faith was placed in the fiddler's auguries.'

'The stoning of the wren on St. Stephen's Day, is, I believe, not peculiar to this Island; it is an odd custom, and the origin and meaning of it I know not. The day before St. Stephen's Day, an unfortunate wren is caught and stoned to death; he is then hung on a bush. The following day, three boys, one with a piece of crape on his cap, and another ornamented with flowers and some wren's feathers, go about from house to house, carrying the bush, and singing the following lines.

We'll away to the woods, says Robin the Bobbin
We'll away to the woods, says Richard the Robin
We'll away to the woods, says Jacky the Land
We'll away to the woods, says everyone

Each verse has the line four times over.
2. What will we do there, says Robin the Bobbin, [etc.]'

[25 verses are given here. No reference is given here to the 'chorus' part of 'where! oh where!, says Robin the Bobbin [etc.] which is included in contemporary performances].

c. 1870 - 1900

(a) *A New Song to the Glories and Beauties of Port Erin: by Thomas Shimmin, Manx Poet; to the favourite Scotch air, 'As Jenny was milking one morning in May'*, Broadside [c. 1870, no publisher given] MM J46 6881.

(b) *Full and particular Account of the Cottage in the Heather, built by Thomas Shimmin, Manx Poet: air, 'Lass o' Gowrie'.* Castletown: M. J. Blackwell [c. 1870] MM J46 6883, 6553.

(c) Edward Faragher [Ned beg Hom Ruy], 'Account of life in Cregneish' (written c. 1901), *Journal of the Manx Museum*, v, number 68 (June 1943).

p. 97 '[the perree banes* were] coats to work in: the coats were white and bound with black braid, and looked very stylish. But the perree bane is gone out of date for many years ... I often think of the old men of Cregneish when I see the Irish in the west of Ireland with the perree banes, both old and young.'

p. 98 'No doubt the people of Cregneish were not like some others of their neighbours in the little seaport towns, with the perry [sic] bane, knee breeches and carranes, but they were more innocent and kinder to one another.'

p. 99 'Old Etty had one daughter, Margot, whom she left heiress to the farm [in Cregneish]. She was a very good singer and dancer. She lived in the house alone, and it was a great haunt for the young men. She used to learn us to sing and dance. It was a meeting house for both sexes for many years.'

* The perree bane [Manx Gaelic: *white jacket*] a collarless, hip-length garment. Adopted by a Manx dance group formed 1982 as its name.

(d) W.W. Gill, *A Manx Scrapbook*, (first vol.), Bristol 1929.

[p. 209] 'The people gathered in the big barn for the Mheillea, and had a great supper, the men drinking jough and the women drinking tea. They danced the Mheillea Dance and the Fathaby Jig, and lots of other dances.'

(e) Thomas Moore (trans.) 'Reminiscences', 1836-1923, *Journal of the Manx Museum*, 68 (June 1943) pp. 106-7.

p. 107 'The ancient garb for men was a jacket coming [down] to his (sic) thigh and there was a swallow-tail reaching down behind, and brass buttons on. Their breeches were coming to their knees with [*lit.* and] brass buttons above and below their knees, and ribbed stockings and a soft hat. That was their best clothes, perhaps for the Sabbath; the everyday garb was a white perree and knee breeches, stockings and carranes. A bit of the hide was taken to bind the carranes over the top of the foot.'

(f) Dr John Clague, *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh 1850 - 1900*, Castletown c. 1911 (MM E244 30).

[p. 79, from the English translation given] 'The band of reapers went home, and put off their working clothes, and then put on better clothing, to come to the supper of the "mheillea".

After supper there would be dancing, and a fiddler at them [they would have a fiddler] to keep time with the dancing.'

[p. 205] 'The Manx love music, and it took a good share in their feasts. Songs were sung in the taverns, to spend the time.

It was common work in the houses, in the winter, to make nets. Anyone who had a new song was the big man of the house.

Young girls, and young boys, met together in the farmhouses to sing and dance at night.

New songs would be sung at their feasts, and a ballad singer would come to sing new songs. The ballad was often on bad paper, and when the paper would be folded, and kept in the pocket for a long time, there would be holes in the ballad, and the ballad singer was obliged to stop.'

(g) I. Margaret Kelly, *Twas Thus and Thus They Lived*, Douglas 1989.

[p. 206. Extract from 'Memories of old Crosby', a talk given by Robert Samuel Sim, covering the period 1868 - 1916, the latter date being the year the talk was given]

'One of the great events of the year was the parish fair day held on Candlemas Day, February 2nd. It was called "Greeba Fair" and "James Kay's Fair" from the fact it being always held in the neighbourhood of the Highlander [public house, James Kay evidently being the landlord] ... at night ... scenes took place that one looks back upon with horror. A fiddler named Barr from Douglas was engaged and the young farm hands (of which there were considerably more than now) used to gather in great numbers at the inn with a sprinkling also of the fair sex. The whole house was thrown open, even the bedrooms, and every room filled.'

'The drinking, *step dancing* [my italics] the singing of lewd songs, card playing and fighting was carried on to a late hour. To many a young person those fair nights were the first step in a downward career and the tragic end of more than one comes to one's mind.'

[p. 129. From 'Reminiscences of former days', by Thomas Kelly of Ballavitchel, Crosby (1835 - 1899) concerning the Mheillea celebrations].

' ... supper over, there was tapped beer, being generally half a barrel, and never smaller than what was called a quarter cask. In some cases, music and dancing and other innocent amusements were indulged in to the small hours of the morning.'

1873

'A Mona Miscellany', from *The Manx Society* XXI (1873).

[Preface, p. x] 'There are, doubtless, many Manx songs that might still be rescued from oblivion that would throw light upon many a long-forgotten fact, if some one could be found capable and diligent enough to collect them. It may be said that many of these are only of a very homely nature, yet what are the generality of ballads? – written for the day, nevertheless may contain truths that otherwise may have escaped the notice of the historian of after years.'

[p. 192. Article on wedding customs. The author notes many are falling into disuse] ' ... and the particular tune [the *Black and the Grey*, mentioned by Waldron, cf. 1726 above] is now omitted, yet the fiddler still often forms one of the wedding party and proceeds with them to the church.'

1876

James Kerruish (Ballavelt, Maughold), *Music Book for Cornet*, c. 1876 (MM MS J66/5644 A).

[Contains in manuscript various popular waltzes, schottisches and polkas. Includes *Men of Harlech, Aulde Lang Syne, Maggie May* and *Molly Charane*. This is a further version of *Mylecharaine's March*, used to accompany the dance of that name].

1878

'Peel and its fishermen', written by 'an old sailor's daughter' [see text] *Chambers Journal*, December 31, 1878, pp. 781 and 782, (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1:79).

'The mackerel-fishing begins in March on the Irish coast; and the Manx men take their share of it, and return in June for the herring season; the first shoals of these fish also appearing on the coast of Ireland, where the Peel boats meet them.'

'It is the ancient and solemn custom of the Manx fishermen never to cast their nets from Saturday till Monday morning. The fish failed a while back on the Irish coast, and they were saying, observed my informant, "that it must be owing to the Irishmen going out on Saturday nights and Sundays." What was gained that way, he thought was lost in another.'

'Drink was going out greatly amongst the Peel fishermen, and a good thing; it made the men saving and better conducted.'

'The fishing on the western coast of Ireland was all through Mr. Corrin, who happened to be visiting there, and heard from a gentleman how much might be done there with good management in the way of fishing. Returning to the Isle of Man, he fitted out boats of his own; which succeeded so well that other owners did the same; and now the Manx boats go regularly for the mackerel season, which lasts from March to the beginning of June, when they come back to meet the herrings on their own coast.'

'Mr. Corrin has established a net-manufactory on the model of Mr. Stuart's of Musselburgh, and brought young women from Scotland to teach their own people; and now the fishermen's wives and daughters weave the nets, and the children find employment for certain hours of the day in filling the bobbins. Oh! indeed yes Mr. Corrin was very good and sensible.'

'Crime is little known in the island, and least of all amongst the fishermen, who pass six months of the year in the culture of their little farms or holdings, and the other six at sea.'

1879

The Pride and Boast of Mannin Veg; or Little Mona's Isle, a new Song by our Metropolitan Poet, T.S. aged 78. Tune, The Jolly Plough-boy. Blackwell 1879. Broadside (MM J46 6554, 6878).
[This was signed by 'Ellen Shimmin, aged 76, widow of the Manx Poet'].

1881

Chambers Journal, 11 June, 1881, (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1:86, *Ibid.*

> [p. 376] 'Perched high up on Spanish Head lies the village of Craigneesh [sic], a primitive and conservative folk who pride themselves on being the original aborigines of the island. They neither marry, nor give in marriage outside their own circle, and hold themselves as much aloof from the rest of the world as is possible in these days. Inability to speak English is with them considered an accomplishment, though, happily, the progress of education is daily more and more restricting this accomplishment to the elders of the community.'

1884

'Manxland People', in *Cassell's Family Magazine*, April 1884, pp. 314 - 5 (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 1-95).

> [p. 314] '(The Manx language) is still spoken in the country districts, and in the remoter highlands there are still individuals unable to speak any other, but the Manx, though they love it as the old language of their country, and pride themselves upon having something of its phraseology, are too practical a race not to see that its common use would be a hindrance to the prosperity of their country, and it is now fast dying out as a spoken language. The English language alone is the common speech of the country, and as the Manx is not taught in the schools, in another generation it will have become extinct.'

'In the south, the natives are dark-complexioned, with black hair and eyes; in the north, they are fair, with light, often red hair. There are also marked differences in the native languages of the two districts, differences so great as to affect their pronunciation of the English language, and amounting to dialectical peculiarities. So great, altogether, is the difference in speech, and in habits, that it is commonly easy to distinguish between the natives of the two districts.'

'... at the present day, when the island is traversed in all directions by excellent roads, and when the northern district is connected with the southern by a regular railway service, intercourse between the two is still greatly restricted, and the inhabitants of the two districts have comparatively little communication and even less fellow feeling. In olden times, when roads were few and difficult, and when education had done nothing to smooth away local prejudices, friendly communication between the two was almost impossible; and thus was the island was divided into two almost hostile districts whose inhabitants were as strangers and foreigners to each other. Thus it has been about that the natives of the two extremities of the country retain much of the characteristics which distinguished the races when they stood arrayed against each other as invader and invaded.'

'... But these differences may be traced much further and deeper. Their mental characteristics are as distinct as their physical. The "Northside" folk are a keen, shrewd race, strongly resembling their neighbours, the "canny" Scots. They know their own interests, and they look carefully after them.'

'The "Southside folk", on the other hand, are nearer akin to their Irish cousins of the South West – with whom, by the way, they hold frequent and regular intercourse through their mutually engaging in the same fisheries. They are a quite, easy going people, content to take things as they come.'

1892

'A Manxland Ramble', in the *Illustrated London News*, 23 April, 1892 (MM L8 F, Excerpts from journals, folio 2: 115).

'The Folklore of the Celtic population, whose language, still on the tongue of the peasantry, bears near affinity with the Erse and Gaelic, is plaintive, weird, suffused with emotions of awe, wonder, and pity – not gallant and heroic. Manx lyrics have a sorrowful tone, and omens of disaster abound in the quaint fancies of traditional superstition.'

1896

(a) A.W. Moore (ed.), *Manx Ballads and Music*, Douglas 1896.

p. xxxiv [Introduction by the Editor] 'the most diligent comparison has failed to find any close likeness between them [the tunes] and the national airs of the adjacent countries, though their general character is decidedly Irish.

p. xxxv [footnote marked with an asterisk] There were formerly more Manx tunes in existence than there are now, as is shown by the facts that out of the thirteen melodies published in 1820, only three are known at the present day, and that, as I have been frequently assured, many tunes have recently been lost by the death of those who alone were acquainted with them. There are, doubtless, also many tunes now in existence which I have not been able to secure, especially dance tunes, *to which I have not particularly directed my attention* (my italics).'

(b) *Irish Street Ballads*, vols. 1 & 2, Collected & Annotated by Colm O' Lochlainn, first published Dublin 1939.

[The author was born c. 1892. Taken from the 'Commentary' appended to the texts giving cross references to the songs and tunes].

[p. 223] '[*The Boys of Wexford*] 48 Known from childhood. cf. EFSvii, 160, *"Yn Speiy u [er] my Gheaylin" (Manx song)*. Piii, 45 [The Complete Petrie Collection]. D. Devereux said that Wm. Ludwig, the singer, was the first to sing these words to this fine version of the air; for simpler version see *Rossa's Farewell*, No 34.'

A number of ballads given in the two volumes of this collection are also found in Manx tradition, including (vol. 1): 8, p. 16, *Youghal Harbour* "Mraane Kilkenny"], 11, p. 22, *The Piper's Tunes* "The Girls of Balladoole"], 56, p. 112, *My Boy Willie* "The Brig Lily"], (vol. 2): 39, p. 78, *Caroline and Her Young Sailor Boy* "Arrane ny Cloiedeyr-viol"].

1897

(a) Excerpt from the *Mona's Herald*, January 13, 1897. A lengthy letter giving observations on the 'Manx Concert' given in Douglas to promote Manx National Songs, arranged by W.H. Gill, signed by 'Tommy the Wren' from 'Balldin' [Baldwin]. MM J48 1X, Folio, 'Music Hymns Carols', p. 12 [Badly worn].

> ' ... then the white boys came out. What this has got to do with Manx songs I don't know. We've got no white bhoys in the counthry at all. If yer want to see them, yer mus' come to Douglas, an' I am towld yer will find far more in Yorkshire than in Douglas.
>
> '[Miss Jull] sang "Ny Kirree-fo-Niaghtey", in English of coorse. I should have liked morthal to have heard poor ould Phillie the Desert* sing that song in Manx, with his carranes on, as he used to do it so uncommon well. Well the song was rite enough, only she wasn't Manx enough herself over it. She was too Englishified.'
>
> 'An' then young Proctor came on in oilskins an' sou' westher, a reg'lar fisherman, an' sang about two lovers, but it was too slow, but afther this the piece of the evenin' came on, "Hop-tu-naa". My gough, this was the piece that was done well. Aw man, I laughed, and an ould woman beside me laughed; well man, it was good, an' they had three good lusty Manx voices. "That's the thing I like", says I, "why don't they give us more of that". Aw man, it was worth comin' in from the counthrey just to here this.' [It is worth noting here that 'Hop tu naa' was not included in Manx National Songs, and so was not subject to 'arrangement'].

'Well man, as I was comin' home I was thinkin' of some of the foine Manx singers they used to have in my day in Baldwin. There was Bob Clague, Ballaview, who pitched the tunes from a music fork, who was leader of the quire in Kilavan [Keeill Abban] church, an' had a foine treble voice; Tom Carr, who was a great bass singer; Billy Ballshuggal, another bass; John Kelly, the Rheine, who played the clarionet; and Tommy Cain, Ballagrieu, who played the bass fiddle, who used to tell how he was one day playin' the fiddle in a room where there was a woman with a sore breast; and the vibration was so great she had to go out ... and Phillie the Desert, who was always amongst the Christmas singers.'

*Philip Cain, of Baldwin. His holding was nicknamed 'The Desert', supposedly due its poor, unproductive ground.

Carranes were the footwear of country people until quite late into the 19th century in some districts. They were made from a sole of untanned cow hide, fastened at the instep with thongs.

(b) Review of *Manx National Songs, and Manx Ballads and Music*, in the *Manx Sun*, January 16, 1897, 'Music Hymns Carols': 5, *Ibid.*

[Both volumes were not received by the reviewer with equal praise, due] 'to the sadly mistaken views on 'collecting' held by the compilers, [of Manx traditional folk music], who are not, unfortunately, content with giving the world the fruits, pure and simple, of their industry.'

'With long experience, we can safely add we have never previously met with a more painful instance of the "improver" ... in the case of the Messrs. Gill, they have utterly and ignominiously failed to attend to the elementary rules which should be observed by collectors and this failure compels us, with pain to condemn their book as a thoroughly unsatisfactory, meretricious publication and an unnecessary interference with a subject we wish the authors had not touched, or touched not with sacrilegious hands.'

1909

'Manx Folk Song, an interesting lecture by Dr. James Lyon'. Extract from report in the *Manx Music Guild Official Report on the 1909 festival*, 'Music Hymns Carols': 15, *Ibid.*

> 'I am quite aware of the volumes already collected and published; but I am convinced, from what I myself have heard myself in the country districts, that there is much more of your real, beautiful, and native music still awaiting a collector. I daresay most of you know that a collector's task is nowadays by no means an easy one, for there are few people who will stick to the fine old songs of their forefathers – they are much too occupied with modern comic opera or music hall song.'
>
> 'I have no doubt that many of you think "Oh! yes, this is all very nice in theory, but how are we to set to work?" Well, I'll make a suggestion. Wouldn't it be possible to form a Folk Song Committee, with representatives in various parts of the Island? These representatives should be constantly on the lookout for any person likely to be able to sing an old song. Once you have your singer, the rest is easy. All you want then is a little tact – and a phonograph, and when you have finished, your cylinder will contain a faithful reproduction.'
>
> [This was done later in connection with recording the last speakers of Manx Gaelic. No recording of song or music is known to have been made.]

1924

A. G. Gilchrist in *The Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 7, Part 3, No. 28 (1924), 171-2.

> 'The Clague collection is not lacking in good and lively dance tunes, but most of them seem to be of Irish or Scottish origin, and some are well-known in one or other of these countries under other names. They include *Betsy Baker*, *The Bonnie Bunch o' Roses*, Neil Gow's *Fairy Dance*, and other specimens *doubtfully of folk origin* |my italics|.'

ABBREVIATIONS

K.V. Kiaull Vannin
MM. Manx Museum
R.V. Rinkaghyn Vannin