

# Manx Notes 709 (2025)

## “MR C. ROEDER’S SECOND CONTRIBUTION TO MANX FOLKLORE”

### KARL ROEDER’S LOST FOLKLORE PAPER (1900)

In the unavoidable absence of the author the Secretary submitted Mr C. Roeder’s second contribution to Manx Folklore.

This consisted of additional material collected during the last three years, and contained a good deal of entirely new matter. In his introduction he traced the origin of the Manxman, and marked the influence of the different races from which the stock was derived; dealing also with the language and Anglo-Saxon dialect.

The origin of the Folklore and Legends he considered to be as follows: Celtic: Manannan Mac Leir, Finn and Ossin, the legend of the Smithy, Finn MacCool, Fynnodderee, Glashan, Glastin, Buggane, Tarroo Ushtey, the Hagiological legends, Lhiannan Shee, some parts of witchcraft, disturbing foundations, Beltaine, the Evil-eye, weather sayings, proverbs, and the three-headed Giant, Cutting off the Fiddler’s Head, Yule festivities, the Legend of Myrescogh Loch, some charms.

Anglo-Saxon (covering Lancashire, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lowlands of Scotland)—the Anglo-Saxon lore is inseparable in most cases from Norse law: White woman, buggane, headless man, horses, coaches, fairies, black dogs, greyhounds, cats, hares, calves, &c.; changelings, wild hunters, fire balls, omens, ghosts, fire wheels, ghost of butterflies, qualtagh, stang-riding, mheil supper, witchcraft; many songs, games, tunes, children’s rhymes, many charms, Jack the Giantkiller.

A strict separation is quite impossible, some of the lore is common to all, the Manx name making the only difference.

Under the head of Sea-lore, he quoted freely from Dr Jakobsen’s *The Dialect and Placenames of Shetland*, which offers many points to stimulate research in the Isle of Man. Mr Roeder had gathered an amount of folklore about Port Erin which he thought went far to prove the close relation between Man, the Shetlands, and the North-East coast of Scotland in this respect. Among new matter were some charms, songs, and weather lore; a section dealt with family and nicknames. Of fairy tales he had already collected a number, and he considered that sufficient material remained to make, if well illustrated, a charming book of Manx fairy tales.

Mr Moore, in proposing a vote of thanks to the author, suggested that he be made a corresponding member of the Society, in consideration of the great pains he had taken, and the able manner in which he had collected Folklore, and also of his services to archaeology in the Isle of Man generally. It would be impossible to discuss the paper fully till it had been published and one had time to study it.

Mr Clinch, Dr Richardson, and others supported the motion, and a small committee was appointed to consider in what way Mr Roeder's valuable paper could be published. It was felt that it should stir up local members to aid in this important inquiry, the materials for which are so rapidly disappearing.

"Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society: Manx Folk Lore."

*Isle of Man Times* 3 March 1900: 6f.

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"A meeting of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society was held yesterday (Friday) in the Masonic Hall, when a paper prepared by Mr C. Roeder, of Manchester, on the subject of 'Manx folklore,' was read."<sup>1</sup> So reported the *Isle of Man Examiner* on 27 January 1900. Roeder's paper was mentioned in the report of the Society's activities at the annual meeting held on 26 April that same year. "Mr Roeder's contribution on Folklore is the most noteworthy. Not only is it the result of great industry and perseverance, but it places on record many things which in a few years' time would have been for ever lost."<sup>2</sup> A.W. Moore proposed a vote of thanks to Roeder and "suggested that he be made a corresponding member of the Society, in consideration of the great pains he had taken, and the able manner in which he had collected Folklore." Another outcome was that "a small committee was appointed to consider in what way Mr Roeder's valuable paper could be published." Nothing never appeared and it would have been a companion piece to his paper from 1897, "Contributions to the Folk Lore of the Isle of Man," that appeared in *Yn Lioar Manninagh*, and ran to some sixty-one pages.<sup>3</sup> The *Isle of Man Times* provided as seen an outline of the contents and these were, as would be expected from Roeder's first paper, wide-ranging.<sup>4</sup> The material itself in some part might not be lost, as 1901 saw the start of Roeder's "Manx Notes & Queries" column in the *Isle of Man Examiner* that ran until 1903 and contains extensive folklore notes that could be drawn from the paper.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anon, "[Douglas] A meeting of ...," *Isle of Man Examiner* 27 January 1900: 4e–g. A further mention is Anon, "Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society," *Manx Sun* 27 January 1900: 4g.

<sup>2</sup> Anon, "The Antiquarian Society: Annual Meeting," *Manx Sun* 28 April 1900: [4]g–h.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Roeder, "Contributions to the Folk Lore of the Isle of Man," *Yn Lioar Manninagh* iii.iv (1897).

<sup>4</sup> Anon, "Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society: Manx Folk Lore," *Isle of Man Times* 3 March 1900: 6f.

<sup>5</sup> For a reprint of the column, see Stephen Miller, ed., *Ghosts, Bugganes & Fairy Pigs: Karl Roeder's Manx Notes & Queries (1904)*, 3rd ed. reset and expanded (St John's: Culture Vannin, 2022).

This not the only lost contribution by Roeder as there is a further one from 1903. The Antiquarians met in the Masonic Rooms in Ramsey for their monthly meeting and “[p]apers were set down to be read on ‘Old Manks Cottages,’ descriptive and etymologically (by Mr C. Roeder, of Manchester) [...]”<sup>6</sup> This is from the *Manx Sun*, and there is a similar mention in passing the *Isle of Man Examiner*.<sup>7</sup> Further detail is given in the next issue of the *Manx Sun*: “The Secretary read a very interesting memoir by Mr C Roeder, giving an account of the building of Manks cottages from the earliest times, and this was fully illustrated with drawings and photographs.”<sup>8</sup> Like the paper from 1900, this one whilst read before the Society never appeared in print.

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#### REFERENCES

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- . “[Douglas] A meeting of ....” *Isle of Man Examiner* 27 January 1900: 4e–g.
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- . “I.O.M. Antiquarian Society.” *Isle of Man Examiner* 14 February 1903: 3c.
- . “I.O.M. Natural History and Antiquarian Society.” *Manx Sun* 14 February 1903: 2g.
- . “[Ramsey] The Natural History Society.” *Manx Sun* 7 February 1903: 3f.
- Miller, Stephen, ed. *Ghosts, Bugganes & Fairy Pigs: Karl Roeder's Manx Notes & Queries (1904)*. 3rd ed. reset and expanded. St John's: Culture Vannin, 2022.
- Roeder, Karl. “Contributions to the Folk Lore of the Isle of Man.” *Yn Lioar Manninagh* iii.iv (1897): 129–91.

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<sup>6</sup> Anon, “[Ramsey] The Natural History Society,” *Manx Sun* 7 February 1903: 3f.

<sup>7</sup> Anon, “I.O.M. Antiquarian Society,” *Isle of Man Examiner* 14 February 1903: 3c.

<sup>8</sup> Anon, “I.O.M. Natural History and Antiquarian Society,” *Manx Sun* 14 February 1903: 2g.