

STEPHEN MILLER

THE ALBERT ROAD SCHOOL
MANX FOLK DANCERS
IN PHOTOGRAPHS
(1935)



CHIOLLAGH BOOKS
2018

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Amongst the personal papers of Philip Leighton Stowell now held by the MNHL (MS 09683) are a pair of photographs showing the Albert Road School Manx folk dancers. One is annotated on the reverse to have been taken *c.* 1936 [P2] with the other one undated [P1]. Both, however, date from 1935, when they appeared in the *Isle of Man Examiner* on 24 May 1935 [P1] and 31 May 1935 [P2]. The occasion was the report of the upcoming visit of the Ramsey dancers to perform at the Merseyside Liverpool and District Dancing Festival. As regards putting names to faces, fortunately they are entered on the reverse of the photographs, as well as changes of surnames in the case of the women.

THE NAMES

[P1] Back row: Edward “Teddy” Christian, Donald Maddrell, Tommy Quayle, John “Jack” Fletcher (Headmaster). Middle row: Nora Crellin (pianist), Gwen Taylor (later Foulis), Philip Leighton Stowell, Joan Griffiths, Joyce Thompson (later Terry). Front row: Unknown, George Percival, Gertrude Quayle (later Corkhill), Steven Carine.

[P2] From left to right: Unknown, Thomas “Tommy” Quayle, Edward “Teddy” Christian, George Percival (as The Doctor), Philip Leighton Stowell, Donald Maddrell, Steven Carine.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS

As regards the photographs themselves, [P1] shows the dancers dressed for a performance of The White Boys mumming play along with the adult members of the dancers, together with the then headmaster of Albert Road School. [P2] features the performers themselves, here at the end of The White Boys play having performed the *Daunsyn Noo George*.

THE ALBERT ROAD SCHOOL FOLK DANCERS (1935)

THE SCHOOLCHILDREN

Steven Carine, [P1], [P2]
Edward “Teddy” Christian, [P1], [P2]
Donald Maddrell, [P1], [P2]
George Percival, [P1], [P2] (as The Doctor)
Thomas “Tommy” Quayle, [P1], [P2]

Unknown [P1], [P2]

THE ADULTS

Nora Crellin (pianist), [P1]

Joan Griffiths, [P1]

Gertrude Quayle (Corkhill), [P1]

Philip Leighton Stowell [P1], [P2]

Gwen Taylor (later Foulis), [P1]

Joyce Thompson (later Terry), [P1]

OTHER

John “Jack” Fletcher, [P1] (Headmaster)

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THE LEIGHTON STOWELL BOOK OF MANX DANCES (1981)

INTRODUCTION BY MONA DOUGLAS (EXTRACT)

I decided to give the English Folk Dance Society school [1930] a surprise if I could get a team, perhaps of schoolchildren, to demonstrate one or two Manx dances as an illustration to my lecture, so I went to see Mr J. Killey, Headmaster of the Albert Road School, Ramsey, who I knew had put a Morris team from the school into the Guild competitions. He was interested, and said immediately: “Yes, I have on my staff the very man to help you, he’s very keen on Morris and country dancing—I’ll get him to come and talk to you.”

That was my introduction to Leighton Stowell, and it soon developed into a long and fruitful collaboration which was to prove the beginning of the Manx Folk Dance revival, and later of the Manx Folk Dance Society.

Leighton Stowell had a capacity for infecting others with his own enthusiasm for a subject in which he was interested, and he soon had the Albert Road children very enthusiastic about this new project, which had to be more or less an extra-curriculum activity. He formed a special group which used to practise in playtime and after normal school hours and even on Saturdays, usually in the school playground but with special permission to use the school hall if it was very wet or snowy weather, and I went down nearly every day to help, taking my notes along. We all worked very hard all through that winter, and by the start of the Easter holidays all the boys of the top form had been taught the “Sword Dance” and the mixed team had learnt “Hyndaa yn Bwoailley” and “Eunyssagh Vona.” We were ready for the demonstration—almost; but we still had to choose one boy to demonstrate the solo “Sword Dance.” Finally the choice was made on the voting of the boys themselves, and it was unanimous: Billy Cain, a nephew of the Rector of Bride.

“Introduction,” *The Leighton Stowell Book of Manx Dances* (Manx Folk Dance Society, 1981), 4–5.

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Mona Douglas here recounts how she came to be involved with Leighton Stowell and how Albert Road School in its turn became to the centre of the revival of Manx folk dancing in the Island. Douglas had knowledge of Manx folk dances from her own collecting, Leighton Stowell possessed the necessary dance and arranging skills, and Albert Road School a pool of schoolchildren who could be drawn upon.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2018

THE PHOTOGRAPHS

[P1] THE ALBERT ROAD SCHOOL MANX FOLK DANCERS (1935)



Back row: Edward “Teddy” Christian, Donald Maddrell, Tommy Quayle, John “Jack” Fletcher (Headmaster). Middle: Nora Crellin (pianist), Gwen Taylor (later Foulis), Philip Leighton Stowell, Joan Griffiths, Joyce Thompson (later Terry). Front: Unknown, George Persival, Gertrude Quayle (later Corkhill), Steven Carine. Undated [but 1935].

[P2] THE ALBERT ROAD SCHOOL MANX FOLK DANCERS (1935) (2)



From left to right: Unknown, Thomas “Tommy” Quayle, Edward “Teddy” Christian, George Percival (as The Doctor), Philip Leighton Stowell, Donald Maddrell, Steven Carine. Date annotated c. 1936 [but 1935].