

Daeed blein neayr's phaart Ned Maddrell / Fortieth anniversary of the death of Ned Maddrell

Hooar Ned Maddrell baase daeed blein er-dy-henney yn vee shoh chaie, er yn çhiaghtoo laa as feed jeh mee veanagh y yeurey 'sy vlein 1974. Va Ned yn peiagh s'jerree va Gailck ghooghyssagh echey voish yn lught-thie echey. V'eh kiare feed blein as shiaght-jeig dy eash tra phaart eh. T'eh grait ec jerrey e heill dy row eh yn peiagh shinney ayns Mannin, Nerin ny Nalbin as Gailck echey, myr va'n Gaaue Juan Kneen roish. V'eh ruggit ayns 1877 ayns y Chorvalley eddyr Purt le Moirrey as Creneash. Ec y traa shen va'n Ghailck hannah er-gerrey dy laue marroo ayns y chooid smoo jeh'n ellan, agh va'n sleih shinney ayns ynnydyn fadane lheid as Creneash loayrt ee foast, as va ny eeasteyrn jannoo ymmyd jee neesht myr glare er-lheh daue hene.

Ga dy row Gaelg ec mummig as jishag Ned, t'eh jeeaghyn nagh row ad loayrt ee rish y chloan. Va ymmodee sleih goaill nearey jeh çhengey ny mayrey as credjal nagh row ee gys ymmyd erbee: 'cha jean ee cosney ping dhyt'. Traa shoh va ymmodee jeh'n chloan eer ayns Creneash goll er troggal ooilley-cooidjagh mee-hushtagh jeh'n ghlare ghoovie. Veagh Ned er ve myr shen er-be dy ghow eh toshiaght dy cheau lane traa marish e naunt Paaie tra v'eh ny lhiannoo aeg. Cha row monney Baarle ecksh as hooar eh ram Gailck woe. Hie eh dys yn eeastagh tra v'eh queig bleeaney jeig dy eash, as hooar eh magh dy row yn Ghailck vondeishagh ry-hoi taggloo rish ny shenn eeasteyrn; agh ayns traa gerrit va'n shenn sleih ersooyl as cha row peiagh erbee oddagh eh loayrt Gailck rish, ga dy beagh eh taggloo rish Yernee as Albinee nish as reesht tra v'eh ec mooir.

Ayns 1947 haink Eamonn de Valera, ard-shirveishagh Nerin, dys Mannin as cur shilley er Ned. Tammylt ny lurg shen hug de Valera oayllee veeal-arrish voish Nerin dys Mannin dy recortys Ned as yn earroo beg dy leih elley va er-mayrn as Gailck oc voish y chlean. Er shen va sleih ayns Mannin greinnit dy yannoo recortysyn ad hene. 'Sy laa t'ayn jiu ta shin forçhanagh dy vodmayd geaishtagh rish ny recortysyn shoh, as ta feallagh er-mayrn ny mast'ain ren loayrt rish Ned as e choasanyn. Kyndagh rish shoh cha vel yn Ghailck ghooghyssagh er jerraghtyn ooilley-cooidjagh as ta foilliagh jeh Gailck Ned Maddrell ry chlashtyn 'sy Ghailck ta goll er loayrt 'sy laa t'ayn jiu, daeed blein lurg 'baase' yn ghlare ain.

Ned Maddrell died forty years ago last month, on the 27th December 1974. Ned was the last person who learnt native Manx from his family. He was four 97 years old when he passed away. It is said that at the end of his life who was the oldest Gaelic-speaker in Ireland, Scotland and Man, as the Gaaue (John Kneen) had been before him. He was born in 1877 at Corvalley between Port St Mary and Cregneash. At this time the Manx language was near enough dead in most of the island, but the older people in remote places such as Cregneash spoke it still, and the fishermen used it as a private language among themselves.

Though Ned's parents had Manx, it seems they did not speak it to the children. Many people were ashamed of the native language and considered it to be useless: 'it won't earn you a penny'. By this time many children even in Cregneash were being raised altogether ignorant of the mother tongue. This would have been the case for Ned were it not for the fact that he began to spend considerable amounts of time with his aunt Peggy when he was a small child. She had very little English and he got a lot of Manx from her. He went to the fishing when he was fifteen years of age, and found that Manx was useful for speaking to the older fishermen; but in a short time the old people were gone and there was no-one he could speak Manx to, though he used to speak to Irishmen and Scots now and again when he was at sea.

In 1947 Eamonn de Valera, the prime minister of Ireland, came to the island and visited Ned. Later de Valera sent folklore experts from Ireland to record Ned and the other remaining native speakers of Manx. This encouraged people in the Isle of Man to make their own recordings. Today we are fortunate that we can listen to these recordings, and there are individuals among us who conversed with Ned and his contemporaries. Consequently the native Manx has not altogether perished and traces of Ned Maddrell's speech are to be heard in the Manx spoken today, forty years after the so-called 'death' of our language.