CLEMENT HOSKING

by John Coombs (revised May 2015)

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Edwin Clement Hosking (1896-1966) - singer, teacher and folklorist

About ten years ago I was loaned a book by Jeannie Kelso, who I think most of you know, who had been loaned the book by David Kinsela, the organist and specialist in early keyboard music. The book was 'Fine Song for Singing', by an Australian called Clement Hosking, who in the 1930's just before World War Two had been able to spend a summer in the Western Isles of Scotland collecting the traditional songs of the people.

I thought it was one of the loveliest books I had ever read and I wanted a copy for myself. I asked Berkelouw's several times to put me down for a copy if they ever found one, but they never did. About two years ago Graham Aubrey of the Australian Institute for Celtic Studies in Newcastle loaned me a copy which I laboriously photocopied page by page. Then no sooner had I finished that than Neil and Pat Morrison said that as they had a spare copy they would give it to me.

As I asked questions to this one and that I became aware that very little research had been done on the subject of Clement Hosking. Even the article about him in the National Dictionary of Biography <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hosking-edwin-clement-10550> had some huge gaps in it. So, thinking that it is important that this man's memory should not be allowed to pass into oblivion, for his contribution to the preservation of the traditional song and music of the British Isles in this country, I decided that I had better do some research myself, and try and gather as much material about him as I possibly could into one place.

Edwin Clement Hosking was born in Adelaide. His father came from Yorkshire, but his grandfather had been a Cornishman, and Clement's initial introduction to the music of the Celts was as a child listening to his father sing songs and melodies which he had learnt from his father, songs and melodies which appeared to be out of tune on certain notes. When he

grew up and had acquired a greater knowledge of music he realised that these melodies hadn't been out of tune at all, that they probably formed part of a folk tradition of Cornish singing which was never written down and by the early twentieth century had been forgotten.

Clement himself showed an aptitude for singing at an early age. He sang as soloist in church choirs. At sixteen he was awarded a scholarship at a school of music in Adelaide He was a boy chorister in the College Park Choir which performed throughout South Australia. He also sang in the chapel of St. Peter's College in Adelaide.

By the age of 17 he had decided on a musical career, but his ambitions in this direction were delayed by World War One. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in 1916, and after serving in Europe from September 1917 he was discharged in 1919. While he was in the army he was able to spend some time in England and Wales, and was impressed by both the sheer volume of traditional music surviving in the British Isles and by the wide range of styles. About this period of his life he later wrote;

> "The war meant its privations,, but there were many consolations. During visits to London and other places one had many opportunities of hearing how music was performed on the other side. I spent some delightful evenings at performances by the Beecham Opera Company, both at the Aldwych Theatre and Drury Lane, not to mention the concerts. While in England I had the privilege of singing at a few small concerts, as well as in some fine old churches." [1]

He then moved from Adelaide to Sydney to further his career as a singer, studying at the State Conservatorium of music. In 1921 he opened a studio in George Street where he taught singing until 1952, advertising himself as a teacher of voice production, singing and interpretation. He was advised by Archibald Sessions, organist at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York, to try his luck there, but he stayed here, and in 1925 he became Director of Music at what was then the Pitt Street Congregational Church at a salary of fifty pounds per annum. [2] In 1926 he resigned from that position to become musical director of Radio 2GB, where he stayed until 1930.

The world of Radio was very different then to what it is today. Radio stations didn't have large collections of recorded music then, so a lot of broadcasting had to be of live music. At that time 2GB maintained a permanent string quartet, and Clement Hosking formed a choir for 2GB, out of which he also formed two vocal quartets. One of these quartets had to sing eight to twelve songs on air every Wednesday night. This led Hosking to what he described as ' the vast treasury of British traditional music', as a source for the new material he was continually in need of.

The GB in 2GB stands for Giordiano Bruno, who was burnt at the stake for heresy in Rome in the year 1600. Bruno's ideas annoyed just about everybody in the 16th century, but have struck a responsive chord with occultists and spiritual seekers since that time. Theosophists believed that he was a former incarnation of Annie Besant, and the Theosophical Society, which founded and controlled Radio 2GB for many years gave their stations Giordiano Bruno's initials because the letters AB (Annie Besant) were already being used by someone else. The aim of 2GB was to 'theosophise Australia' and the programming was unashamedly highbrow, more so even that 2BL and 2FC, the precursors of the ABC.

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1 from article by Clement Hosking in 'The Australian Musical News', Aug. 1, 1923
2 from 'Green Room Pictorial', June 1, 1924

One program which 2GB listeners could tune into regularly was the Sunday High Mass at St. Alban's Liberal Catholic Pro-cathedral at Redfern, normally presided over by Bishop Leadbeater. Clement Hosking's involvement with Theosophy, and he was a member of the society from 1927 to 1938, led him to the Liberal Catholic Church. From the records of the Liberal Catholic Church kept at St. Francis' church in Gordon, and with the help of the archivist of the Liberal Catholic Church in Sydney, Fr. Laurence Langley, I found that Clement Hosking was baptised at the Chapel at The Manor, the Theosophical establishment at Clifton Gardens, on September 11, 1928. (If he had already been baptised as a child in an Anglican or Methodist church that wouldn't have counted, as the Liberal Catholic Church rebaptises converts from non-Roman Western Churches.)

He was confirmed on November 11, 1928. Then on November 17 he was admitted to what are called Minor Orders and made a subdeacon on the 16th of December. In 1929 on January 6 he was ordained deacon by Bishop Leadbeater and on the 10th of March Bishop Leadbeater ordained him to the priesthood at St. Albans, Redfern. He officiated at Vespers at St. Alban's that night and said his first Mass on Thursday April 23.

He became priest in charge of the Liberal Catholic Church at Chatswood. Unfortunately the parish records are incomplete and I have not been able to find the precise date that he relinquished that position. I felt that it may have been before his trip to Scotland in 1937, but a retired bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, bishop Christopher Bannister, assured me that Clement Hosking, whom he described as 'forthright', continued to officiate as a priest at Chatswood after he returned from his trip. Bishop Bannister could not tell me the date nor the circumstances of his leaving, only saying that he left rather suddenly.

Marie Heald, who is now 85 years old and can remember Clement Hosking when he was priest in charge of the Liberal Catholic Church at Chatswood, describes him as ' a delightful person, a wonderful smile and used to chuckle, tall, but not skinny'. She also says that during this period of his life he was engaged to Florence Beaufoy, who lived at The Manor at Clifton Gardens, but the marriage never took place.

He was also a member of an organisation called the Fellowship of Pioneers, run by the Theosophical Society under the patronage of King George V, to 'celebrate the lives of world benefactors' [3]. This involved Thursday lunchtimes at Adyar House, the Theosophical Headquarters in Sydney, listening to readings from great lives.

Hoskings' interest in the folk music of the British Isles had already been awakened by his childhood experiences, his time spent in the U.K. during World War One, and his need to expand the repertoires of the choir and ensembles he ran for 2GB, but it was the depression years that gave this interest a real stimulus. In his own words 'the ill-wind of the economic depression blew me the good fortune of unusual leisure.' [4] He had left the position of Music Director at 2GB in 1930, and I would suppose that the depression had also led to a drop in the number of pupils coming to his George Street Studio for singing lessons.

This was the time when he moved from being an 'interested visitor' rather than a 'worshipper' [5] at the shrine of folk music. The change was brought about by his acquisition of a copy of the first volume of Margery Kennedy-Fraser's three volume collection entitled 'The Songs of the Hebrides.' His attention had been drawn to the book while in Wales during World War One, but at that time he had done nothing about it.

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3 Jill Roe, 'Beyond Belief' page 300, UNSW Press, 1986
4 Clement Hosking, 'Fine Song for Singing', page 17, Geo.Dash, Sydney, 1951
5 ibid. Page 16

‘Only gradually’, he wrote, ‘did I enter into this treasure house of unlimited store, but the more I studied the songs the stronger became their appeal. I felt they had a sense of reality which I had found in no others. Whether they were nearer to their original form than most such melodies I knew, or whether it was a kind of atavism or racial consciousness, I cannot say, but I found an underlying something in this “stern, stark Hebridean stuff” infinitely appealing, and altogether new to me, though none the less of a world to which I belonged- the Celtic world of my forefathers of long forgotten days. I pored over the letterpress; I began to memorise the legends translated by Kenneth Macleod; I haunted bookshops for further treasures. Fortune smiled on me in my quest, for I came across Alasdair Alpin MacGregor’s “Behold the Hebrides”, with its fascinating photographs, and Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser’s “A Life of Song”, which soon displaced H. Plunkett Greene’s “Interpretation of Song” from its pride of place as a bedside companion.’ [6]

So, as a result of this, in September 1933 he gathered a number of his students and past students together to form the Sydney Folk-Song Choir. Its purpose was to sing the folk-songs of many lands, with the singers dressed in the costumes of the countries to which the songs belonged. Hosking directed this choir until 1952 when it disbanded. The choir did live performances in Sydney suburbs and radio broadcasts as well, with commentary on the songs by Hosking himself.

I suppose it was natural that this led to debate about what was the nature of a folk song. Clement Hosking , for example, didn’t believe that Australia had such things. Russell Ward, an academic at the University of New England, believed that we did, and offered ‘Bold Jack Donohoe’ as an example. I have here a transcript of a lecture on the subject given by Hosking in 1945, and then published in ‘The Education Gazette’, which I will pass around, as I hope it will stimulate some discussion afterwards. The debate must have gone on over a long time. In 1935 the ‘Bulletin’ published a letter by Hosking in which he stated that a song was only considered a folk song in Europe if it came from the peasantry, and asked was there anything peculiarly Australian about songs like ‘Botany Bay’ or ‘The Black Velvet Band.’ [7] In 1958 another Australian author, Douglas Stewart, sent Hosking a letter saying that we did have genuine folksongs. [8]

He made up his mind that he had to visit the Hebrides and experience the musical traditions of the isles first hand. Then he gave up the idea, only to find that it would not go away. Today, a trip to the British Isles can be slotted quite easily to one’s annual holidays, the trip need not take more than 24 hours each way, and the total cost would be only a fraction of the annual income of most Australians. In the 1930’s the trip still took at least six weeks each way and I would think that the total cost would have been many times the annual income of an ordinary income earner.

However, one day Hosking told a journalist from the ‘Sydney Morning Herald’ that he was about to undertake the journey. When this was reported in the ‘Herald’ he didn’t feel that he had any option but to go ahead with it. Hosking does not appear to have ever been a rich man, but there were influential people who appreciated his work. From the Governor of New South Wales, Lord Wakehurst, he received a letter of introduction to Lord Wakehurst’s sister, Lady Strathcona, whose husband owned the islands of Colonsay and Oronsay.

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6 ibid. Page 18

7 Bulletin, 16/3/35 page 35

8 Letters and Press Cuttings, ms 2680, National Library of Australia, Canberra

Letters of introduction were also received from Fr. Sydney Mac Ewan, Heloise Russel-Ferguson, and Angus Macdonald. Angus had been sufficiently impressed by Hosking's singing to be willing to spend time each week for about a year teaching him Gaelic. A committee was formed to help raise funds to cover his expenses. Names on the committee included Dame Mary Gilmore, who wrote the foreword to 'Fine Song For Singing', and William Morris Hughes. A Folk Festival was organised in his honour at the Conservatorium of Music and in August 1937 he embarked on the journey which he would later describe in his book 'Fine Song For Singing'.

The music critic of the 'Glasgow Herald' summarised his visit to Scotland as follows;

> "Last Autumn I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Clement Hosking, a vocalist and teacher in Sydney, New South Wales, who was taking a few months' leave from professional work to come to this country for the study of Hebridean folk song in its native haunts. It was difficult not to envy him this busman's holiday. After visiting some fellow enthusiasts in Glasgow and other places he attended the Mod, and then went to the Outer Hebrides at the beginning of October, where he remained until a few days ago (this was published on January 3, 1938). He is now back in Glasgow, and will shortly return to Australia.
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> While in the Outer Isles he has gathered valuable impressions, has met many interesting personalities, and has lived for three months as a singer, talker and listener among the people. In the course of his visit he has been in North Uist, through Harris and Lewis, has driven over the fords through Benbecula to Lochboisdale, Eriskay and Barra, and was in North Uist again just before returning to Glasgow.
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> Mr Hosking was in a position to profit from all he saw and heard, for he had been cultivating Hebridean song at Sydney for over five years before setting out. To have given over 200 recitals of these songs in that time is proof of enthusiasm and of the interest of the Australians. The majority of the recitals were given in Sydney, some of them being under the auspices of the Gaelic Association of New South Wales.
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> Mr. Hosking has just received word that his Sydney choir is the only choir chosen by the New South Wales government to appear at a pageant to be held next month in the Sydney Town Hall to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the colony. He will not be back in time for this festival, but the choir will be conducted by his deputy, Mr Laurence Macaulay, a Scot who hails either from Edinburgh or Glasgow- Mr Hosking is not sure which.
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> Mr Hosking, while fully appreciating what has so far been done for Hebridean song, particularly by Mrs Kennedy Fraser- it was through her work that his interest was first aroused- believes that the general result is not quite true to the originals. And in Barra he was impressed by the number of songs he heard which the people declared had never been collected- songs with the most intricate rhythms and fascinating variety of melody. 'I am convinced,' he told me 'that the only way such songs could be faithfully secured would be by means of careful recording strictly adhered to. The records would capture the text with

> the tune: and the text, say the people, must be regarded as of equal importance with the melody."

He instanced "Kishmul's Galley" as a good example of an 'art song' which has been evolved from the original folk song, and supported his belief in the greater value of the true version by singing it to me with the simplicity of style and regular pulse that native singers give it. Nor is he entirely satisfied with what his friends in the mod are doing with the native song. The Hebrideans have their own scale of values which they preserve jealously. Mr Hosking never heard any attempt at part singing among them. Yet An Comunn Gaidhealach (The Gaelic League) are willing to sing the old tunes in plain harmony which contrasts not favourably with the artistic results of Mrs Kennedy Fraser, and in treatment is no more true to the spirit of Hebridean song. An Comunn make their arrangements too plainly hymnlike in quality. Mr Hosking would have no arrangements of any kind and cannot feel that songs he has heard in the simple cottages of the Outer Isles are suited to a formal platform performance.

He is taking back with him about a dozen new songs, which, as far as he can learn, have never before been collected. Among his treasured memories is a sense of the indefinable charm of the Hebrides. Many people, as he was leaving for the mainland, said to him in the characteristic quiet way of the islanders, "You'll come back." He would like to think that some among those kindly folk are seers in the full Gaelic sense of the term." [9]

The Glasgow 'Daily Record', on the other hand, advised him not to sing port a bheul (mouth music) with a piano accompaniment. [10]

Some of the information which Hosking collected from the islanders may well have been misleading. In the appendix of songs collected in the Outer Hebrides is a song called "A Cattle Chasing Croon". [11] Hosking was told that this was the song of a mother wanting her small boys to chase some stray cattle from the haystack. Neil Morrison, who himself was brought up on North Uist, has suggested that it was more likely that this song dated from the days when the Highlanders and Islanders still lived by cattle raiding, and was a song of triumph sung while stolen cattle were being driven home. This interpretation is suggested by the line 'oh ho, co leis iad?' (oh ho, whose are they?). After all, in a small island community a woman would not only have known which neighbour owned the cows that were at her haystack, but known the cows' names as well. By the time, however, that Clement Hosking visited the island, the islanders had settled down to become respectable Presbyterians and put their cattle raiding past behind them. If any of them remembered that this was the real origin of the song they may have preferred to keep quiet about it.

Hosking did not immediately return to Australia. His book 'Fine Song for Singing' is vague about dates, but he spent time after that travelling around Britain, and maybe even ventured as far afield as Brittany. He did recitals in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow. In August 1938 for his services to Celtic music he was made a bard of Gorseth Kernow (The Gorsedd of Cornwall), the body which acts as the guardian of the Cornish language and culture. The ceremony took place in Cornwall under the leadership of Morton Nance, one of the pioneers of the Cornish language revival in the early twentieth century. The bardic name he received was 'Kenyas an Enesow' (Singer of the Isles).

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9 "Glasgow Herald", Monday, January 3, 1938
10 Glasgow "Daily Record", Wednesday, February 9, 1938
11 Clement Hosking, 'Fine Song For Singing' , p. 208

A rather garbled account of this was published in 'The Bulletin' in 1945. The journalist assumed that it was the Welsh Gorsedd, the body that controls the National Eisteddfod of Wales, into which Clement Hosking had been received, but Ann Jenkin, the archivist of Gorseth Kernow assured me that it was in fact the Cornish equivalent that had made him a bard. [12]

Years afterwards when he wrote short pieces for the Sydney newspapers one of the pen-names he used was 'Kenyas' ('singer' in Cornish). The other one was 'Maitri', which sounds Theosophical, but I haven't met anyone who can tell me if it actually means anything.

So, sometime later in 1938 he returned to Sydney to take up his life there again. World War II broke out the following year. His contribution to the war effort this time was to be honorary director of the Red Cross Concert Unit in Sydney. He also, in 1944, became choirmaster of Newington College, at Enmore, a position which he held until 1961. The choir was not a voluntary one, and Hosking found keeping the conscript choristers in order very difficult, so a member of the teaching staff had to come along to keep order during practices.

David Kinsela, whom I mentioned earlier, remembers Clement Hosking at this phase of his life. David came to Sydney from Young in 1958 to study at the Conservatorium when he was 16 years old. His first paid job in Sydney was organist at Newington College, which involved accompanying the choir while Clement Hosking was training it. David's impression of him was that he didn't understand harmony. This is interesting in the light of what the music correspondent of the 'Glasgow Herald' said, that the Hebrideans didn't use four part harmony in their singing. It is hard to believe that Hosking really didn't understand harmony, as he had been classically trained and had previously directed both choirs and quartets. Maybe his trip to the Hebrides had left him with the feeling that it wasn't important. Or could it have been that he thought that a choir of unruly adolescent boys wasn't really capable of anything else except bawling things out in unison?

In 1941 Hosking became founder-president of the Celtic Society of Australia, a position which he held until 1965, a year before his death. I have an article which he wrote for the 'Scots Year Book' about the Celtic Society of Australia.

The article is undated, but in his scrapbook, where I found it in the National Library of Australia in Canberra, it appears with several other articles dated 1945 or 1946. 'Bringing the Celts Together' is the heading.

"In the early, dark days of 1941 a number of enthusiasts met in Sydney to form a Celtic Society. Prior to the formation of this new society there were various organisations in Australia to represent the particular interests of different Celtic races and districts. There were the Highland Societies, Burns' Clubs, Gaelic associations, Caledonian Societies, Welsh Societies, Hibernian Societies, Catholic Caledonian Associations, Devon and Cornwall Associations, and so on, almost ad infinitum. Now for the first time in this country an institution had come into existence to contain within itself people from Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Cornwall, and to give these people the opportunity to study the history, literature, art and music of all the Celtic races. From the foundation of this society it was decided that it must be a cultural body and that its meetings would not degenerate into a series of monthly

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12 'The Bulletin' page 6, 10/10/45

dances and entertainments which had been the fate of many similar organisations. To this policy it has faithfully adhered. Once every year, at Christmas, the members hold a party which takes the form of a conversazione with music, and at which they have ample opportunities for the exchange of ideas, but the remaining nine meetings of the year consist of fairly solid lectures with always a supplementary program of Celtic music. The society is fortunate in having attracted to its membership a number of folk who have made a lifelong study of various aspects of Celtic culture, and it is indeed seldom that a 'guest' lecturer is sought. These lectures have covered a wide field. There have been talks on "Highland Superstitions," "Ancient Ireland," "Standing Stones," "Wales," "Ancient Irish Monuments and Their Builders," "The Beveridge Plan compared to that of the Welsh King Howel Dha, 1042," "Celtic Music," "Celtic Art," "The Celtic Revival," "Celtic Folk-lore," "Hebridean Song," and "The Influence of Gaelic on English as spoken in Ireland" to mention a few of them. Another lecture entitled "Killarney, and the Ancient Kingdom of Kerry" was illustrated with nearly one hundred coloured lantern slides made especially for the occasion, and many of the lectures have been outstandingly original. One of our lecturers is a Free Presbyterian minister, two others are Roman Catholic priests, another is a Methodist minister, several are school-masters. Then there is a retired naval commander, and a Scots sea captain who gives us a lecture on such occasions as he can spare when his ship, laden with explosives, is not dodging Japanese bombs in the North. A German sculptress and art lecturer who became naturalised in this country a decade ago because she wanted to belong to a country which is truly democratic, has opened our eyes to the beauty and purpose of Celtic art, while our excursions into the field of Celtic music have been made under the guidance of famous musicians highly qualified to speak on this important subject. The most vital thing which has happened, however, is that our members have come to know and understand each other. Irish members have become firm friends with Scots and Welsh members. Catholic and Protestant forget their differences in the excitement of the pursuit of a common interest. Imperialist and Nationalist cease to quarrel, and it is a great and proud statement to make that in spite of bitterly opposed creeds and political opinions, there has never once been a sign of unpleasantness at any of our gatherings. We have come to the conclusion that the Celt of whatever country, political opinion or religion is a jolly good fellow, and we heartily recommend to fellow-Celts in lands where there is not a Celtic Society to get busy and form one. This would be a step, we are sure, they would never regret." [13]

I understand from Flora Macleod that in the 1950's the Celtic Society was meeting every second month, with a performance by the Sydney Folk Song Choir in the other months.

Clement Hosking was also involved with the International Folk Music Council, the Folklore Association, first of New South Wales, then after 1947 of Australia. He was president of this organisation from 1946 to 1965. He welcomed the arrival of immigrants with non-British backgrounds after World War II, and at one time was vice-president of the New Australians' Cultural Association.

His interest in the folklore brought to Australia by New Australians led him to write another book called "Old Tales in a New Land" which was published in 1958. This book contains peasant traditions and stories from twelve European countries. It is interesting that neither Asian or Aboriginal cultures seemed to impinge on his consciousness at all. These days we're told that Australia is a very old country, it's most of the people in it who are new!

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13 article by Clement Hosking in 'The Scots Year Book' in Ms 2680, National Library of Australia, Canberra

The book that he is best remembered for, ‘Fine Song For Singing’ was published in 1951. It was published by George M. Dash, of 309 George Street, Sydney. The title comes from a line in a poem called ‘Romance’ by Robert Louis Stevenson. The verse goes

> And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
> The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
> That only I remember, that only you admire,
> Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

As well has Hosking’s reminiscences about his journey the book contains the dozen previously uncollected songs which he found while he was in the Hebrides, two of which Neil Morrison will now sing for you.

He also put bits and pieces of folklore into the book, beliefs of the islanders which still survived in the 1930’s and descriptions of their way of life. Remember, of course, that in the 1930’s were still living in the traditional ‘black houses’.

“The Hebrideans” he wrote, “ are not morbid or introspective, as some writers would have us believe. They enjoy a good time as keenly as most people and possess an exhilarating sense of humour which lifts them above what to many would be a life of considerable hardship. Though many of them today live in modern dwellings, until recent times their homes were primitive, but suited to the climate. Many still cling to houses of the old type, known as ‘black house’ or ‘round house’. These simple old buildings are about thirty feet from end to end, with walls seldom more than five feet high or less than eight feet thick- and they never lack warmth. Within the walls is a cavity in which rests the framework of the roof. This is thatched, and often long ropes made of heather are flung across the roof and attached to large stones to act as a further resistance to wind and weather. On this thatch at certain seasons wildflowers grow in profusion, making some of the roofs so gay as to remind one of a smart maiden’s spring hat.

In the centre of the floor a peat fire burns, the smoke makes its way out through the doorways or through the thatch, for there is seldom a chimney in these houses. When the roof is re-thatched the old smoke-impregnated straw provides a valuable manure.

Around the peat-fire in the long winter nights the people gather for the ceilidh- originally a gathering for story-telling only, but nowadays usually for a sing-song. Around this fire are repeated the treasured stories of the past; around it are kept alive the Hebridean songs.” [14]

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14 Clement Hosking, ‘Fine Song for Singing, pp38-9

Hosking relates one story in ‘Fine Song for Singing’ which he had heard from Angus Macdonald.

> “Once upon a time there was (and not so long ago at that) a family in North Uist who lived near a hill of curious shape. Near this hill was a well, and every morning and every evening the good wife would take her bucket there to draw water. One evening there was, when it was already growing dark, as she drew near the well she fancied she heard music. ‘Och,’ she said to herself, ‘It must be a piper playing over yonder.’ Yet, as she listened she thought this could never be pipe music for, though it was soft music it was also near music, faint and eerie, coming from the hill itself. Woman as she was and curious, she put down her bucket and went forward nearer the hill to find the music. Judge of her surprise when, in the side of the hill, she saw a cave which she had never seen there before, and from the cave poured forth a stream of light and music, soft but clear. Then she paused, afraid to go further, but at last, growing ever more curious and forgetting her fear, she ventured into the cave. Louder and louder grew the music as she pressed forward into another but more spacious cave beyond, where she saw hundreds of little figures dancing to music the like of which she had never heard before, so sweet, so soft, so enticing it was. Once again fear stole over her, for she knew full well now she was in the fairies den, and turned to flee ere she was discovered. But she had lingered too long, for now the fairies had surrounded her. Laying many tiny hands upon her, they bore her to a place where one sat who seemed to be their king. ‘Woman of the mortals,’ he exclaimed, ‘how come you to be in the place of the Sidhe?’ adding, as she tried to answer, ‘None who comes to the fairy den may leave save at our pleasure. Here you must stay and act as cook for the fairy folk. When you have baked all the meal in the barley-kist you may return again to the haunts of the mortals.’
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> “Sad at heart was the poor woman to hear these words, but when she saw how small the kist was she smiled to herself, thinking she would soon be free. But, ochone, however much of the meal she baked as much remained in the kist, and, distraught as she was with longing for her dear ones and so full of sorrow, she wept bitterly, and needed nought but her tears wherewith to mix the meal.
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> “One day, a fairy who was helping her at her task asked the reason of her sorrow, whereupon she, through her tears, told him of her husband helpless without her and of her two wee laddies motherless and unattended, knowing not whither she had gone. As she spoke her fairy heart was stirred in a way strange to him, for the little folk know not pity, and making sure no other fairies were nigh he told the secret of the kist. ‘Every day when you have baked the meal throw back the scraps that remain into the kist.’ This she did and every day less and less of the meal remained until at last there was none at all. Then did she demand to be taken before the king, who, when she told her tale smiled and said, ‘Some fairy has given away our secret. None the less, the promise shall be kept. You are free to leave the fairy den, but ere you go I will give you a fairy gift. In future you and yours will be able

> to do twice as much as any other mortal, and this without growing weary.
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> "Then the fairies led the happy woman from the presence of the king back whence she had come; but when, under the open sky, she turned to say 'Farewell', sure there were no fairies there nor no longer a cave in the hill!
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> "'Was it asleep or dreaming I was?' she wondered. 'Was the music I heard but my foolish fancy?' There was her bucket where she had left it, so picking it up and filling it at the well the bewildered woman made her way homeward.
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> "No change there was in her cottage without, but within was a man strange to her and two braw youths. These were never her husband and her wee laddies!
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> "Little had she known that nine long years had passed since that evening when she had left her bucket by the hill. These were indeed her kin and they told her how they had sought for her in vain, but seeing the bucket, had left it where they had found it hoping that some day she would bear it home again. They marvelled to hear all that had befallen her and at the gift bestowed on them by the fairy king." [15]

Hosking then goes on to relate;

> "Though by us a tale like this may be considered fantasy, there is at least a possibility that certain folk in remote places believe in such happenings. In this connection I am reminded of an experience related to me by Miss Jeannie Ranken, of Sydney. Miss Ranken, who was well known throughout Australia for her interest in the Repertory Theatre movement- at one time she was president, I think, of the British Drama League - and spent some time in the Isle of Lewis. She had gone to Edinburgh with a Hebridean friend to see the first performance there of Barrie's 'Mary Rose'.
>
> Neither of them knew anything about the plot and, having arrived late, they had no time to glance at the programme. During the second act Miss Ranken noticed her friend becoming so hysterical that she had to be led sobbing into the foyer. There, in broken words, she said that had she known the nature of the play she would never have come; years before, her sister was supposed to have been stolen by the fairies and had never returned!" [16]

For a few months before I went overseas in the 1970's I attended a Gaelic class that Angus Macdonald was running at nights once a week at the University of Sydney. My memory of him is that I didn't learn much Gaelic, but that it was worth going along just to listen to him talk and tell stories. It was there that I first met Duncan and Flora Macleod.

Jean Bell is another person who can remember Clement Hosking. She was at a workshop on voice production that he ran in about 1958. He used the Northumberland song 'Waly, Waly' as a means of teaching breathing while singing, how, for example, to hold the long syllable in the word 'wide' in the first line without wavering.

Few people who met Clement Hosking after he withdrew from the Liberal Catholic Church in the 1930's ever knew that he had once been a priest in that church. The Rev. Dr. Peter Swain, who wrote a brief biography of him for the 'Dictionary of National Biography' simply wrote that he was 'a man of mystic temperament, he studied Catholicism before embracing Buddhism.' When I asked him had he been aware that Hosking's involvement with Catholicism went way beyond just studying it he said that he had not. Hosking's involvement with the Theosophical Society lapsed after the nineteen thirties too, although he had been a speaker at Lodge meetings and had had articles published in Theosophical journals. But he joined, and remained a member of the Buddhist Society of New South Wales almost until his death in 1966. He ceased to be a financial member after 1963, but was given honorary membership for two years after that. [17]

When he died, of myocardial infarction on October 9 1966 he was cremated with Buddhist rites. A memorial and thanksgiving service was also held for him the chapel of Newington College.

He may have won a certain amount of fame in this world, but success never led to great fortune. He lived for many years as a lodger in the home of the Dunster sisters at Killara, according to Lucy Gartrell, who knew him when she was secretary to the bursar of Newington College in the 1950's, but was living at an aged care unit run by the Methodist Church at Leichardt when he died in 1966.

His personal qualities impressed everyone who came into contact with him. Lucy Gartrell said that she looked back on her talks with him with absolute pride. Everyone whom I have been able to question about him has talked along similar lines.

As a memorial to him, the Celtic Society and the Folklore Association endowed Clement Hosking annual awards for Celtic and Hebridean folk-singing at the City of Sydney Eisteddfod. These awards eventually lapsed, as the sum of money in the fund was too small to keep them going indefinitely.

15 ibid, pp 20-2
16 ibid, pp 22-3
17 Letters and Press Cuttings, NLA MS 2680, National Library of Australia, Canberra

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