

## Jack Collings, A Singer on the Wireless

“Jack Collings was born in Port Isaac and his brother Tom was also a good singer. He married Eva and lived in Church Hill and had one son, Dennis (later a schoolmaster) and daughters Nona, Beryl, Maureen, Shirley, Velma and Peggy. He was initiated as a Cornish Bard at Perran Round in 1946, taking the Bardic name ‘Pyscador a Gan’ (Fisherman of Song).

Jack launched his career in St Kew School Room. Dr Wilson Gunn, conductor of Wadebridge Male Voice Choir, was struck with the richness of his voice and asked him to sing bass in the choir; 12 years later he gave up fishing. His father, 79 years old, still went searching for the elusive fish in a little lugger, Hilda.

Topical Times (1924) said Jack Collings “gave pleasure with his songs of Cornwall”. At music festivals in 1927 he won 13 firsts and three silver medals. All listened to him in perfect silence as he faded his voice in ‘After the Storm’ and ‘Skipper of St Ives’ (Western Morning News, August 1927).

Jack’s first broadcast, transmitted from the Foster Hall, Bodmin, was with the St Dennis Band before a full audience on a Sunday afternoon. In 1928 he went to London to sing at the annual Devon and Cornish Festival in the Wesleyan Central Hall, Westminster. Two thousand West Country people attended. Jack brought the house down with ‘Pasties and Cream’ and ended with ‘Pasties of Polperro, Polruan, Lansallos and Looe’.

A concert of Clayworkers’ and Fishermen’s Choirs sang to an audience of 600 in Bodmin and this was relayed on the BBC West regional



transmitter to the National wavelength. The wireless reception was excellent and monthly concerts followed. Jack sang with deep feeling of the sea he knew so well and was heard by thousands up and down the country. Said Jack, “I have had letters from so many people I do not even know”.

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