

# Manx Notes 45 (2005)

## “A DANCE TILL FIVE IN THE MORNING” THE MHELLIAH IN 1812

1812

Friday the 25th September.

A very wet day.

Mr Mitford gave a dinner and supper to a hundred reapers etc. A dance till five in the morning; rich Manks broth; a whole mutton and a side of beef. Abundance of garden stuff. This broth the Manks are particular fond of.

When the last bundle of wheat and barley is cut, it is tyd up and ornamented with long streamers of new ribbon.

The person who cuts it has the bundle and dances all night with it in her hand. It is called the Mhelliah, which everybody who has a farm gives, with abundance of strong beer.

Mr Mitford's is the best throughout the whole Island, and for so doing he never wants for workmen.

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On Saturday 3rd October Mr Mitford gave his Mhellia at his estate Airey Kelley. Betsy and Mr Mitford's servant maid went to Airey Kelly to the supper and dance.

**Source:** Diary for 1812 kept by Josepha Dalby of Ballacooley Lodge, Kirk Michael, MNHL, MS 5583 C.

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An addition to Stephen Miller, *“There is dances used on sonday afternoone”*: *Historical References to Manx Folk Song and Dance before 1896*, Preprint ed. (Onchan: Chiollagh Books, 2005).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Available online at <http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/~stephen>