

Manx Notes 78 (2007)

“VARIOUS SONGS WERE COMPOSED IN THE MANX LANGUAGE”

WILLIAM HARRISON ON ADMIRAL THUROT (1868)

ADMIRAL THUROT (4th S. iii. 557.)—Your correspondent Mr Riddell Carre, in his communication on “Border Ballad Scraps,” inquires after “Thurot’s Defeat.” Various songs have been written concerning the career of this celebrated character. Mr Carre will find one, with many interesting particulars connected with it, communicated to the editor, the late T. Crofton Croker, by Mr MacSkimin, in the *Popular Songs illustrative of the French Invasions of Ireland*, published by the Percy Society, 1846, under the name of “The Siege of Carrickfergus.” It appears that Mr Wright, the able secretary of the Percy Society, had a chap-book, printed at Glasgow in 1801 by J. and M. Robertson, Saltmarket, which, among others, contained “The Siege of Carrickfergus; or Thurot’s Defeat.”* As this defeat took place off the coast of this island, it naturally created considerable interest, and various songs were composed in the Manx language, which were great favourites at the time, and may occasionally at the present day be heard chanted forth in some of the country districts. I am endeavouring to rescue these from the oblivion which they appear to be fast fading into, along with other songs and ballads relating to the Isle of Man.

I may remark that MR CARRE will find in Butler’s *Memoirs of Bishop Hildesley*, 1799, some particulars of Captain Elliot’s victory over Thurot. Any songs connected therewith I shall be most happy to see recorded in your pages.

WILLIAM HARRISON.

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* The action took place on February 28, 1760, and Thurot’s three vessels were brought into Ramsey Bay. A near neighbour of mine, since deceased, often told me he perfectly remembered hearing the firing of the cannon during the engagement, and the excitement that prevailed.

Source: William Harrison, “Admiral Thurot,” *Notes & Queries* (4th ser.) v (1869): 47.



An addition to Stephen Miller, “*There is dances used on sonday afternoone*”: *Historical References to Manx Folk Song and Dance before 1896*, Preprint ed.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).¹

¹ Available <www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/~stephen>

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VIENNA, 2007

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