

Manx Notes 718 (2025)

“STICK TO THE OLD MELODY”

(1901) *

As a lover of the observance of old customs, writes “Disgusted,” I was pleased to see many boys carrying gaily decorated bunches of greenery on St Stephen’s Day, and going from door to door singing. Of course not all, in fact, very few, had the least sign of “tune” about them; but why do they not, first of all, stick to the old melody, and, more important still, why do they not learn the words? All that I could distinguish, and I heard many parties of them, was “Hunt the Ran” and “Robbin the Bobbin.” The remainder of the words was slurred over. Two of them had the audacity to come to my door singing the carol to be used before Christmas—that they hoped my pocket was full of money and my cellar full of beer, and because I refused to contribute to their funds they went away calling “Bad house; bad house.” If old customs are to be kept up, let the observance of them be more creditable than on Thursday.

“As a lover” *Isle of Man Times* 28 December 1901: 6d.

“[S]tick to the old melody” and “learn the words” were the watchwords for “Disgusted,” who, whilst welcoming Hunt the Wren on St Stephen’s Day, nevertheless was so disturbed by what he heard that he wrote to the *Isle of Man Times* in protest.

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