

The Lads of Wamphrey

from *Minstrelsey of the Scottish Border* Walter Scott 1803

Twixt Girth-head and the Langwood end,
Lived the Galliard, and the Galliard's men;
But and the lads of Leverhay,
That drove the Crichton's gear away.

It is the lads of Lethenha',
The greatest rogues amang them a';
But and the lads of Stefenbiggin,
They broke the house in at the rigging.

The lads of Fingland, and Helbeck-hill,
They were never for good, but aye for ill;
Twixt the Staywood-bush and the Langside-hill,
They stealed the broked cow and the branded bull.

It is the lads of the Girth-head,
The deil's in them for pride and greed;
For the Galliard, and the gay Galliard's men,
They never saw a horse but they made it their ain.

The Galliard to Nithsdale is gane,
To steal Sim Crichton's winsome dun;
The Galliard is unto the stable gane,
But instead of the dun, the blind he has ta'en.

"Now Simmy, Simmy of the Side,
Come out and see a Johnstone ride!
Here's the bonniest horse in a' Nithside,
And a gentle Johnstone aboon his hide."

Simmy Crichton's mounted then,
And Crichtons have raised mony a ane;
The Galliard trowed his horse had been wight,
But the Crichtons beat him out o' sight.

As soon as the Galliard the Crichton saw,
Behind the saugh-bush he did draw;
And there the Crichtons the Galliard ha ta'en,
And nane wi' him but Willie alane.

"O Simmy, Simmy, now let me gang,
And I'll never mair do a Crichton wrang!
O Simmy, Simmy, now let me be,
And a peck o' gowd I'll give to thee!

O Simmy, Simmy, now let me gang,
And my wife shall heap it with her hand."
But the Crichtons wad na let the Galliard be,
But they hanged him hie upon a tree.

Well Pass, Durisdeer



O think then Willie he was right wae,
When he saw his uncle guided sae;
"But if ever I live Wamphray to see,
My uncle's death avenged shall be!"

Back to Wamphray he is gane,
And riders has raised mony a ane;
Saying—"My lads, if ye'll be true,
Ye shall a' be clad in the noble blue."

Back to Nithsdale they have gane,
And awa' the Crichtons' nowt have ta'en;
But when they cam to the Wellpath-head,
The Crichton's bade them 'light and lead.

And when they cam to the Biddes-burn,
The Crichtons bad them stand and turn;
And when they cam to the Biddes-strand,
The Crichtons they were hard at hand.

But when they cam to the Biddes-law,
The Johnstones bad them stand and draw;
"We've done nae ill, we'll thole nae wrang,
But back to Wamphray we will gang."

And out spoke Willy of the Kirkhill,
"Of fighting, lads, ye'se hae your fill."
And from his horse Willie he lap,
And a burnished brand in his hand he gat.

Out through the Crichtons Willie he ran,
And dang them down baith horse and man;
O but the Johnstones were wondrous rude,
When the Biddes-burn ran three days blood.

"Now, Sirs, we have done a noble deed;
We have revenged the Galliard's bleid;
For every finger of the Galliard's hand,
I vow this day I've killed a man."

As they cam in at Evan-head,
At Ricklaw-holm they spread abroad,
Drive on my lads! it will be late;
We'll hae a pint at Wamphray gate.

For where'er I gang, or e'er I ride,
The lads of Wamphray are on my side;
And of a' the lads that I do ken,
A Wamphray lad's the king of men.

Biddes Burn, on map as Bidhouse Burn, head of Evan Water alongside M74. Bidhouse Knowe (Biddes-law), grid ref NT010313. The events took place in 1593.



Morton Castle



Roman Fortlet, Well Pass, Durisdeer



Bidhouse Burn 2012