

vote, some calling for armed insurrection.

The so-called Radical War lasted for a few days in April 1820 involving strikes, marches, demands for universal suffrage, and culminated in the Battle of Bonnymuir, the last battle on

Such moves led to the formation of radical groups all over the UK, calling for reform and the right to

Scottish soil.

# The Rights of Man



The March to Reform (Ron Gonnella)

















James "Purly" Wilson (1760-1820, above) was a weaver in Strathaven, Lanarkshire. He was inspired by Thomas Paine's Rights of Man (1791) and started becoming involved in reformist groups. Increasing radical activity in Scotland prompted the government to infiltrate political meetings, installing agents provocateur. On 1st April 1820 these spies encouraged groups to rise against the state; Wilson led a march of 22 men from Strathaven to Glasgow, only to discover that no such uprising existed. Dejected, they made for home, where Wilson was arrected for high treason. He was hanged and beheaded on 30th August 1820.

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# Nigel Gatherer's Workshops





Scottish weavers were always at the forefront of radical action. In 1787 the Calton Weavers went on strike over wages, with six losing their lives when troops opened fire. In 1800 there were food riots and after the 1819 Peterloo massacre in Manchester, James Purly Wilson led an overnight march from Strathaven to Glasgow, beginning the short, doomed radical uprising of April 1820.







**Carron** (James Scott Skinner)

strathspey



Agents provocateurs were now inciting
a general uprising, and
encouraging radicals to march
on Carron Iron Works for
weapons. On the 3rd April
John Craig led 30 men yowards
Carron, but they dispersed
when spotting a patrol. On 4th
April 60 men led by Andrew
Hardie set off, expecting to pick
up supporters on the way.



Bonnymuir (Allan Murchie)

song



- Although our lives were ventured fair to free our fiends from toil and care,
   The English troops we dint to dare, and wish'd them a' good morning.
   It's with three cheers we welcomed them upon the Muir of Bonnie Plain,
   It was our rights from then to gain caused us to fight that morning.
- 2. With pikes and guns we did engage; with lion's courage did we rage For liber - ty or slavery's badge caused us to fight that mornin. But some of us did not stand true, which caus'd the troops them to pursue, And still it makes us here to rue that e'er we fought that mornin'.
- 3. We're a' condemned for to dee, and weel ye ken that's no a lee, Or banish'd far across the sea for fightin' on that mornin'. But happy we a' ha'e been since ever that we left the Green, Although strong prisons we ha'e seen, since we fought that mornin'.

4. If mercy to us all shall be shown from Royal George's kingly crown, We will receive't without a frown, and sail the seas some mornin'. Mercy to us now has been shown from Royal George's noble crown; We're prepared, without a frown, to see South Wales some mornin'.

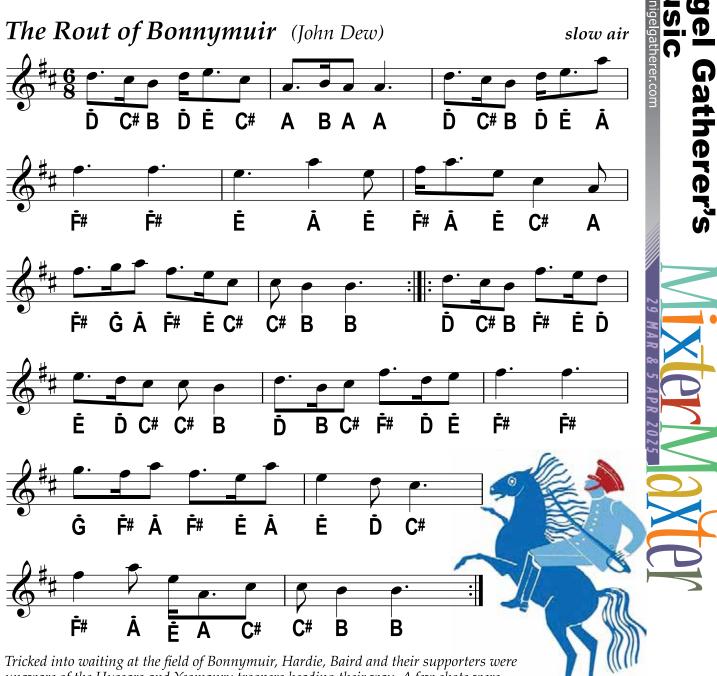
Heading to Carron Iron Works, Hardie's weavers combined with John Baird and his men at Condorrat. A spy told them to wait at Bonnymuir, outside Bonnybridge, but they had been lured into a trap. This is one of at least three songs about the Battle of Bonnymuir, and was written by Allan Murchie while imprisoned for participating. He was eventually transported to Australia.











unaware of the Hussars and Yeomanry troopers heading their way. A few shots were exchanged, but the radicals were quickly subdued. Nineteen men were captured and taken to Stirling Castle. Most were transported to Australia for life, but three men - John Wilson, Andrew Hardie and John Baird - were hanged and beheaded outside Stirling Tollbooth



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The Greenock Volunteers (traditional)



On Saturday 8th April 1820, militia members of the Greenock and Port Glasgow Volunteers were escorting Radical prisoners from Paisley to Greenock. Once there, they were met by hostile supporters of the cause, and at some point they fired indiscriminately into the crowd, killing eight and injuring fifteen. This was the last tragic episode of the Radical War.