

### Musical Notes for Book 51

#### **Andy Nicol:**

Andy comes from a dancing background and has lived in the UK, NZ & USA. During a more passionate time for music and dancing, Andy wrote down a few of the tunes that were playing in his head. This tune was one of those. At one point a few years ago, Helen Russell referred to her first granddaughter as *Miss Marshall of Melbourne*. That sounded like a promising title and prompted Andy Nicol to compose the dance tune. The jig is intended to be joyful and lively just like an active youngster. It is appropriate that this tune has been chosen for the dance with a title also invoking fun.

#### **Ian Muir (Prestwick):**

Ian has been involved in playing the accordion for Scottish dancing in all its forms for the past 40 years. Scottish Country Dancing, Ceilidh and Old Time dancing have been the mainstay of his long career in music. As well as playing for dancing, he has performed solo in Scottish Variety theatres throughout the country. He formed his own Scottish dance band in 1984 and has been a regular contributor on BBC Radio Scotland's 'Take the Floor' programme not only as a bandleader but for 2 summer seasons as the programme's presenter. He combines playing duties with his tutorial role as principal accordion tutor in the Scottish Music Department at the prestigious Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, a post he has now held for 21 years.

The tune *Humpty's Great Fall* was composed after a New Year party at Neil MacMillan's house during which accordion player Ian Anderson in (mid-tune) crashed to the floor as the wooden chair he was sitting on broke into many pieces, hence the title, Humpty being Ian's nickname!

#### **Don Bartlett:**

Don Bartlett is of English, Irish and Scottish heritage. A fourth generation Canadian, he has lived his entire life in Ontario, when he was 12 years old, his mother made him join a children's Scottish Country Dancing class. He enjoyed the dancing and was drawn to the music, particularly the sound of Stan Hamilton's band.

Although Don had not progressed very far with piano lessons, he wanted to learn to play the SCD tunes. Jean Anderson, one of Bobby Brown's sisters, advised Don to play a rhythmic accompaniment with his left hand instead of using the written accompaniment. He followed Jean's advice and became adept at playing the dance tunes on the piano. He continued dancing and playing with much encouragement from many kind dancers in the Toronto area, and in 1968 at the age of 20 played for the first of several times for Miss Milligan when the venerable Stan Hamilton was not available! He must not have done too badly, because in 1970, when Don was attending Summer School for one week as a dancer, Miss Milligan asked him to fill in for a missing musician.

## Book 51: Notes on Composers and Tunes

Don joined “Angus MacKinnon and The Scots-Canadians” dance band as pianist, and in 1972 formed his own band, “Don Bartlett and The Scotians”. He continues to play solo piano for classes and dances.

Over the years Don has composed numerous tunes, which he is pleased to share. The tune ***Kathleen Bartlett of Go Home Bay*** is a tribute to Don’s mother, who opened a wonderful door in his life by forcing him to learn Scottish Country Dancing. Go Home Bay is a small water-access community in Ontario where Kathleen spent her summers. Kathleen loved young children and devoted much of her life to caring for them as a nursery school teacher.

### **Seonaid Lynn:**

Seonaid grew up in Edinburgh in a house filled with music, starting piano and violin lessons while still at primary school. For most of her working life, her musical activities focused on singing and piano playing. Her interest in playing fiddle was rekindled after she attended her first RSCDS Summer School in St Andrews. She now plays regularly for classes for her local Branch and, with other musicians, plays for dances and workshops. Singing still features strongly in her musical life, and she also directs an adult choir in Edinburgh.

Seonaid enjoys writing dance music, and this is the second of her compositions to be used in the Society's books. She also has a tune published in the Edinburgh Branch 90th Anniversary Book. **Miss Gibson of Maybole** is Seonaid’s great-niece Jacqui and the tune was written for her 16th birthday.

### **James Scott Skinner:**

James Skinner was born in Arbeadie, Aberdeenshire in August 1843. His father, William Skinner, a dance teacher, had been a gardener. Skinner’s elder brother taught him to play tunes on the violin and to play a bass line on the cello. By the time he was eight, Skinner was playing the cello at dances with local fiddler Peter Milne (1824–1908). As there were no village halls, dances were usually held in barns. Young Skinner often had to trudge many miles to play at these dances. For this, Peter Milne paid him five shillings a month. A boys' musical touring group called "Dr Mark's Little Men" visited Aberdeen in 1855, and eleven-year-old Skinner signed up for a six-year apprenticeship on cello and violin. The Manchester-based group performed throughout Britain. Shortly before his apprenticeship was due to finish, he left Dr Mark's Little Men in 1861 and returned to Aberdeen. After some months touring with the New Orleans Theatre Company, he took a course of dancing lessons from ‘Professor’ William Scott, who lived near Aberdeen. They got on so well that Skinner adopted ‘Scott’ as part of his professional name, calling himself J. Scott Skinner.

In 1862 Skinner took part in Highland dancing competitions in Ireland. He won first prize in a Sword Dance competition, accompanying himself on the fiddle and beating John McNeill, an acknowledged champion. The following year Skinner won a violin competition in Inverness. That same year, he became a professional dancing-master. He held his first classes at Strathdon, Aberdeenshire. His growing reputation eventually led to work at Balmoral Castle, Queen Victoria’s Scottish retreat, where he taught dancing to more than

100 tenants and children. Skinner's first published composition 'Highland Polka' appeared in a magazine when he was only 17, and it was the first of more than 600 compositions to reach print, many of which he published himself. His collections of music have become one of the principal sources of tunes for Scottish musicians the world over.

By the 1870s Skinner was giving concerts all over the North-east of Scotland. The programmes normally included some of his own compositions as well as virtuoso violin solos by composers such as Paganini. In 1893 he joined a tour of the United States and Canada with the well-known piper and champion Highland Dancer Willie MacLennan. MacLennan died suddenly of meningitis, and the tour flopped. The company had to ask certain wealthy, expatriate Scots for help to get back to Scotland. On his return, Skinner decided to adopt Highland dress, both on and off the stage. He gave up dance and devoted his remaining years to performing and composing.

Skinner, one of the very first Scottish artists to be recorded, made his first recording in Glasgow in 1899. By 1905 he had embarked on a recording career, which lasted until 1922. In this way his music spread worldwide. During this time he continued to perform in concerts throughout Scotland. In 1911, at Sir Harry Lauder's suggestion, he formed 'The Caledonian Four', who performed at the opening of the London Palladium.

Skinner died on 17 March 1927. His many friends and admirers raised a subscription for a marble memorial at his grave in Allenvale Cemetery, Aberdeen, unveiled in 1931 by Sir Harry Lauder, an old friend. The memorial includes a bronze bust of Skinner, a violin, and some bars from one of his most famous compositions, *The Bonnie Lass o' Bon Accord*.

*The Alenford Weaver* appears in Skinner's *Logie Collection* published in 1888.

From notes by Pat Ballantyne <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/scottskinner/introduction.shtml>

### **Ian R Muir:**

Ian started playing the accordion at school when he was 12 and playing for dances with his own band at the age of 14. At the age of 17 he was lucky enough to be invited to join McBain's Band, one of the South's most popular Scottish country dance bands at the time. In 1985 he formed his own band, which plays under the name of Craigellachie. Ian is a keen composer. Many of his compositions have been published and recorded by other Scottish dance bands, and several have been adopted as originals for dances. As a solo musician, Ian has played the accordion for classes and day schools and has been a member of the Summer School staff for many years. He is currently the Musical Director of the Society.

*Hamilton's Drums* is a jig written for Graham Hamilton, drummer in the Craigellachie band and long-standing friend.

### **Isaac Cooper:**

Isaac Cooper was born ca. 1755. The year of his death is even less certain, with sources giving dates ranging from 1810 to 1820. He spent some years in Edinburgh, teaching

dancing and a wide range of wind and string instruments, as well as composing dance music. His music was sold widely in Scotland and also in London. Isaac Cooper was noted as an excellent teacher and a man of great versatility of talent. An idea of his abilities may be learnt from an extract from an advertisement of his on 30th March 1783.

*'We think few professors of the present day will undertake one half of what he promised to do, yet we believe he was capable of performing all. In addition to his giving lessons in dancing, he gave instruction 'on the harpsichord or pianoforte, violin, violoncello, clarionet, pipe and tabor, German flute, the fife in the regimental style, the hautboy, French organ, the Irish organ (bag) pipe; how to make flats, sharps, and the proper chords with the brass keys; and the guitar after a new method of fingering (never taught in this country before), which facilitates the most intricate passages. He likewise begs leave to inform all who have a taste for Highland reels that he has just now composed thirty Strathspey reels for the violin and harpsichord, with agreeable and easy basses, all in the true Strathspey style. His motives for publishing these were his observing the public so much imposed upon by people who have published reels and called them new, and at the same time were only old tunes and new names, and most of them on the wrong key.'*

Isaac married Miss Rebecca Reid, sister of Captain Reid, Inverichney, and is said to have died suddenly while playing his favorite tune, "Robin Adair".

Isaac Cooper composed several tunes which have become firm favorites today, among them ***Miss Forbes' Farewell to Banff***.

***Mrs Grant*** and ***Miss Isabella Reid's Reel*** appear in "A Collection of Strathspeys, Reel and Irish Jigs for the Piano Forte and Violin"

From *The Annals of Banff* and HMS database.

### **Peter Elmes:**

A self-taught musician with dance music "in his blood", his maternal grandfather was a fine cornet player in dance bands and brass bands in country districts of Scotland during the early 1900s.

Peter has been organising and leading dance bands in Wellington, New Zealand, since the early 1960s, specialising in SCD music, but also covering Ballroom, Old Time, Irish and Modern. His group has been the resident band at numerous New Zealand Summer Schools and Weekend Schools, and four Australian Winter Schools. Peter plays a five-row C-system button accordion.

Peter was a Scottish country dancer for several years before deciding to concentrate on playing the music. He has played for many SCD classes and demonstration teams, including every season of the Linden Club's weekly class since 1980.

## Book 51: Notes on Composers and Tunes

Peter has composed about 50 dance tunes, mainly for SCD. Most of these were compiled by Charlie Todd and published by the National Accordion and Fiddle Clubs in 2007.

In 2005 he received a 'Branch Award' to recognise outstanding service to the N.Z. Branch of SCD.

The original for New Year Jig emerged through working for many years with the devisor, Maureen Robson. From time to time she has invited him to compose tunes for several of her dances, leaving the choice of tune title to him. His first thoughts for New Year Jig were "Maureen's Jig", but when he was advised that Fergie MacDonald had already composed a tune with that title, it became **Maureen Robson's Jig**.

### **Anselm Lingnau:**

Born and raised in the Rhine-Main area of Germany, Anselm started taking piano lessons at age 7. After joining a Scottish country dance class in early 1991 and having been interested in Scottish music for some time already, it wasn't long before he started begging his dance teacher for some music books.

Anselm currently lives in Mainz, Germany, and works as a software engineer to help finance his SCD addiction. Anselm is a dancer, a teacher, a deviser of dances, as well as a dance musician, playing for classes, functions, and workshops. In addition, he operates the Strathspey mailing list and website and currently serves as the convenor of the Society's Membership Services Committee.

**Heike Nagorny** runs the Proitzer Mühle (Mill of Proitze), a residential training centre in the German state of Lower Saxony, where Anselm has taught several SCD workshops and played for various others. The tune came about as part of "Dancing at the Mill", a collection of dances and tunes compiled and published by Anselm around the year 2000, celebrating people and places associated with the Proitzer Mühle.

### **Robert Gourlay:**

Robert Gourlay lived near Nairn and played the violin. During the 1940s and 1950s, as was the custom in many households, Robert took part in the musical gatherings which took place in the family home of the Scott family. Also taking part in these sessions were Franck Grant and Archie Buchan. He wrote tunes for them all, and in 1990 they were recorded by fiddler James Banks in order that they would exist not only as manuscripts but also as sound recordings. During the 1950s and 1960s he played regularly for the Forres Branch classes being accompanied on the piano by Miss I M Banks. (Mickie Banks's Aunt). . James Banks played for many years with the Aberdeen Strathspey and Reel Society. Robert played the violin. A number of Robert's tunes survive in manuscript form, and many will be familiar with the two recommended tunes for Holyrood House published in Book 22: **Forres Country Dance** and **Holyrood House**.

**Mickie Banks** was a family friend of Robert Gourlay. Music played an important part of the Banks' family life and in the 1940s and 50s musical evenings were held regularly at the family home. Some evenings were devoted to purely Scottish music, whilst others were classically focused. Mickie was an engineer and was one of those taken hostage by Saddam Hussein in the Kuwait war. After being released he sadly contracted cancer and died early in his 50s. His widow lives in Banchory and still plays fiddle with the Banchory Reel and Strathspey Society.

### **Judith Smith:**

Judith grew up in the NE of Scotland, where she played with the Elgin Strathspey & Reel Society. Classical music studies took her to the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. Here she remained for 20 years working as a freelance classical violinist. During that time, meeting Dave Hall led to a renewed interest in playing traditional Scottish music and an introduction to playing in Scottish dance bands. Judith returned to live in Scotland, where she plays with Iain MacPhail and teaches instrumental music in East Lothian, which involves a lot of arranging repertoire for string ensemble & ceilidh band. Judith is based in Kingussie, plays with the Badenoch Fiddlers and enjoys returning to Elgin to play in the annual Fiddlers' Rally. She also writes the odd strathspey, reel or jig when someone requests an original tune for a dance.

**The Chicane** was written following a band trip to Monte Carlo after a section of the famous car rally course.

*With many thanks to all of the composers who supplied biographical notes.*

### Tune Types:

Over the years, having given talks on the types of Scottish dance music, teachers and dancers have often asked me to categorise the original tunes for dances in terms of their tune types. Although this is not an exact art and is open to different interpretations I believe that dancers, teachers and musicians need to appreciate the differences that the tune types bring to the dance and the music I hope that you find this useful.

<b>Composer</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Tune type notes</b>
Andy Nicol	Miss Marshall of Melbourne	Double jig
Ian T Muir	Humpty's Great Fall	Hornpipe
Don Bartlett	Kathleen Bartlett of Go Home Bay	Traditional Strathspey
Seonaid Lynn	Miss Gibson of Maybole	Double Jig
James Scott Skinner	The Alford Weaver	Single Reel – 'B' music more like a double reel
Ian R Muir	Hamilton's Drums	Single Jig
Isaac Cooper	Mrs Grant	Traditional Strathspey
Peter Elmes	Maureen Robson's Jig	Single Jig
Anselm Lingnau	Heike Nagorny	Sits between a traditional Strathspey and a 'slow air/pastoral' type.
Isaac Cooper	Miss Isabella Reid's Reel	Double Reel
Robert Gourlay	Mickie Banks	Double Jig – features the 'Scottish Snap'
Judith Smith	The Chicane	Double Reel