# The Fiddler's Fingerprints:

# A Tune Book from 1850 Aberdeenshire

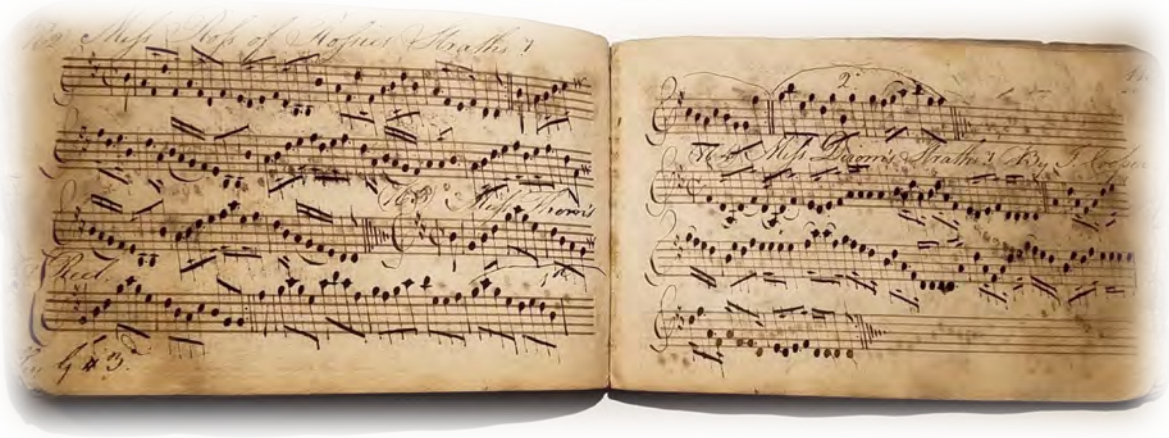

*Photo by Mara Shea*

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by

Mara Shea

30 August 2019

# Declaration

I, Mara Shea, declare that this work submitted for assessment is my own and is expressed in my own words. Any uses made within of the works of other authors in any form are properly acknowledged at the point of their use. A full list of the references employed has been included. All interviews referenced in this dissertation have been recorded, transcribed and used with the permission of the contributors.

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Signature Date

Mara Shea

# Abstract

This study looks at a tune book begun in 1850 by an Aberdeenshire violin teacher and fiddler named Robert Dawson. His tune book ultimately ended up with the family of one of his students, James Thomson. The small book is a perfect size for carrying in a pocket or pouch, and its weathered appearance indicates that it was a working tune book.

Fiddlers, like other musicians, establish tune collections of all or part of their repertoire. The books can be used for performance, for teaching, as an aide-memoire, or as repository for one's own compositions. Tune books can tell us something about the musical repertoire of a region and how tunes might be played at a given time. They may raise – and sometimes help to answer – other questions, like how tunes are learned or transmitted, why tune variants arise, and whether a musician is working by ear or from the printed page.

Dawson's tidy musical notation speaks of formal training, perhaps a classical violin background. He includes ornaments and bowings, as well as a chart of page numbers grouped by key. About a third of the tunes in his book are in flat keys, perhaps looking back to the 'golden age' of Scottish fiddle music in the late eighteenth century. There are, however, features of his tune book that suggest he may have been an 'ear' player as well as a good reader and music copyist.

From 1850 to about 1865, Dawson copied into his book almost two hundred Scottish reels, strathspeys, and jigs. Many of the tunes in Dawson's book were from well-known Scottish composers, and also appeared in printed collections widely available in his time. Many are still familiar today. Others are more obscure and not easily found elsewhere. Dawson's versions of tunes are often slight variants from printed versions. The selection of tunes seems to be representative of a min-nineteenth-century Scottish dance musician's repertoire.

Dawson's manuscript offers a glimpse into a fiddle player's life as he learned, taught, performed, and carried on a tradition. Fiddlers' tune books are not merely interesting historical artefacts; they are the fingerprints of the working fiddlers who created them.

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# Acknowledgements

My very heartfelt thanks to all the contributors to this dissertation, and to everyone who has given me information, support, guidance, and feedback as I worked my way through this project. Many thanks also to Bruce and Alicia Thomson for their kind generosity in allowing me to borrow the Dawson-Thomson tune book and have it scanned; to Richard Bennett and Margaret Bradley, who helped me track down genealogical information about the violinist Robert Dawson; to Ronnie Gibson, for his very helpful research into some of the tunes; to all my supportive and good-humoured classmates; to Dr Lou Hillman and Dr Laura Lengnick, who read final drafts; to the Special Collections staff at the National Library of Scotland and at the University of Aberdeen; to Ewan Grant at the Sir Duncan Rice Library at the University of Aberdeen; to Chris Partington, Elaine Bradtke, and Dr Rebecca Dellow for encouraging me and guiding me to valuable resources; and to Nicolas Le Bigre, Dr Thomas McKean, Alison Sharman, Dr Frances Wilkins, and Professor Ian G. Russell of the Elphinstone Institute. Finally, deep gratitude to my husband, John Barnum, who has supported and encouraged me in this adventure.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1850, Robert Dawson, a twenty-three-year-old violinist and teacher living in Aberdeenshire, began collecting fiddle tunes that he carefully copied into a small notebook. In elegant, almost copperplate script, he wrote his name on the first page of the book, with his address, 'Mans of Coldston' and the date, 'Febr. 4, 1850'. Over the next fifteen years, he accumulated close to two hundred tunes, mostly Scottish reels, jigs, and strathspeys, neatly adding tune numbers and page numbers, and in a small chart at the front of the book, grouping most of the tunes by key.

Almost a century and a half later, Robert Dawson's well-worn music book was discovered in the bottom of a safe in the old post office in Crathie, Aberdeenshire, where a family named Thomson had lived since the 1840s. The Thomsons had been the postmasters in Crathie, serving the Royal Family at Balmoral, since Charles Thomson bought the piece of land around 1840 and built the granite cottage overlooking the River Dee near Balmoral Castle. Charles and his wife, Elisabeth Smith, raised their large family in that house. The connection with Robert Dawson's tune book was James Thomson, the eighth of their eleven children, who ended up owning Dawson's tune book, often writing his own name in it as well. James died of tuberculosis at age 19, in 1865, and the little book stayed with the Thomson family. More historical information and context will follow in Chapter 2.

Why is Robert Dawson's tune book important? While playing through it and talking with other fiddle players and musicians in Aberdeenshire and elsewhere, I realised that the book has a place amongst hundreds of other similar books created by musicians. It might tell us a great deal about what kind of music appealed to people living at a given time in a given region, and what may have fallen out of favour since then. The part of Scotland where Robert Dawson lived was in Deeside, Aberdeenshire. Besides the usual informal music exchange

between a few people gathered socially to enjoy a few tunes, there were opportunities to play at barn dances, balls held at great houses, dances at weddings and other social occasions, competitions, and concerts. Aberdeen was within a day's travel of where he lived. To a fiddler, a tune book could be a valuable item, carried around for reference when remembering tunes or finding one in a certain key, or for writing bits of tunes heard. To us today, it is also a link from our world to past musical lives and experiences.

In this study I will explore some aspects of Robert Dawson's collection, and make some observations on what might set it from other tune books created around the same time period. Some questions that have come to mind and that I will explore in this study are:

- Is this tune book representative of fiddle repertoire in Victorian Aberdeenshire?
- Are there tunes in the collection that are unknown or previously unpublished?
- How does it fit into the genre of fiddlers tune books' in general?
- What was the purpose of the tune book? Was it an aide-memoire, a book to perform from, a teaching tool, a notebook to transcribe tunes being learned? What can we learn about Robert Dawson, its creator and owner, and his world?
- What was the everyday life of an 1850 fiddle player like? Was he likely to be hired for bands who would play for dances and balls? Did he participate in fiddle competitions that were just beginning to be popular in the 1850s? Was he a teacher? The tune book's structure may shed some light on these questions.

In this introductory chapter, I will discuss scholarly research that others have done about fiddle players in Scotland from 1830 to about 1870, contemporaneous with Dawson. I

will also explain my methodology in selecting which of his tunes to examine, and how I gathered information from contemporary musicians. In Chapter 2, I will discuss the historical context of the tune book and of Robert Dawson. Chapter 3 will focus on the tune book itself, first describing its appearance and physical characteristics. The latter part of the chapter will discuss the organisation of the tune book and how it could reflect aspects of everyday life for an 1850 fiddle player. The scope of this study will not permit an in-depth examination of all the tunes Dawson collected. For this study, I am choosing a small number of the tunes he included that, to me, represent something of interest about his version, the musical key(s) and metres used, their arrangement in the manuscript (if there are strathspey-reel medleys, for example), his markings in the manuscript, and whether or not the tune appears in printed collections available at that time. In Chapter 4, I will discuss my conclusions and suggest questions for further research. A list of all the tunes in the Dawson tune book is included in Appendices A and B. They will be sorted according to the order they appear in the tune book, and also alphabetically.

## Literature Review

The instrumental music of everyday life in nineteenth-century Aberdeenshire has, at first glance, not been a lively area of academic interest. Few contemporary published sources describe the non-famous musicians who played for the frequently held balls and assemblies. Scottish newspapers of the nineteenth century describe concerts, occasional competitions (bagpipe and violin, particularly), and balls held by wealthy residents of Aberdeenshire, but with little mention of individual musicians unless they were well-known. This is corroborated by many scholars who have done in-depth research on fiddlers' repertoire and their tune books, some of whose works I will discuss briefly in this chapter.

The core of the general work about fiddle music in nineteenth-century Scotland has been well constructed by Charles Gore, Mary Anne Alburger, Francis Collinson, George Emmerson, Alastair Hardie, James Hunter, David Johnson, John Purser, Simon McKerrell, and others who have explored the history and evolution of Scottish fiddle music from the late seventeenth century to the present day. Much of this foundation work is biographical and historical. Some of the literature seems to assume that because of the large amount of printed music published in Scotland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most fiddle-players were musically literate and learned from printed sources. Others, however, do not completely share this view. George Emmerson, Simon McKerrell, Josephine Miller, and Paul Anderson, for example, all take issue with this point in some fashion.[1] Much of eighteenth-century written and printed music, whether for violin, flute, or some other melody instrument plus keyboard or cello, included arrangements of works by Mozart, Handel, Haydn, Corelli, and other popular European composers. The audience for these arrangements would have been well-trained musicians who not only could read notation easily, but in the case of violinists (not usually called 'fiddlers' in this context) could use more advanced techniques, like shifting into other fingering positions. Even the traditional tunes included in these pieces were often arranged for quartets or small ensembles. Many players were trained to read well, but it is likely, considering Scotland's strong oral musical tradition, that they could also learn and play by ear, not always a useful skill when reading complicated music in an ensemble.

As Simon McKerrell points out, the distinctions between classical ('art') music and traditional ('folk') music in eighteenth-century Scotland were blurred; as he says, 'there was much porosity between various genres of music'.[2] With regard to musical literacy, H. R. N.

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[1] For example, see George Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String: A History of Scottish Dance Music* (London: Dent, 1971), p. 180, where he writes: 'The fiddler learned his tunes by ear and only a few could pick a tune from the book.'

[2] Simon McKerrell, *Focus: Scottish Traditional Music* (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 56–59.

Macdonald discusses the concept of 'schooled' and 'unschooled' fiddlers, as does Ronnie Gibson.[3] The subject of musical literacy is wide, and outside the scope of this study, except to note that many North-East Scottish musicians in the mid-nineteenth century were probably able to read music and also to learn by ear. I will mention the idea of 'bi-musicality' later in this chapter in relating my own experience of straddling the worlds of learning by ear and playing from paper.

Almost all core scholars agree that the 'golden age' of Scottish fiddle music began around 1780 and ended by about 1830. Charles Gore, in *Echoes of a Golden Age*, speaks of that Golden Age as being when a large number of strathspey and reel collections were published, ending after the deaths of Niel and Nathaniel Gow (1807 and 1831, respectively), and of William Marshall (1833).[4] Simon McKerrell also follows this line of thought in his discussion of the Gows.[5] James Hunter writes that the death of William Marshall marked the end of 'one of the great periods of Scottish traditional music'; he also says 'by 1820 the great fiddle era was past'.[6] I would question this last statement, if only to point out that Marshall's large and highly praised volume of fiddle tunes was published in 1822, and while the brilliant activity of the late 1790s and early 1800s may have ebbed by 1830, it did not cease. Other works followed steadily: James Davie's *Caledonian Repository* in 1829, Joseph Lowe's 1844 collection, Surenne's *Dance Music of Scotland* in 1851, and more original works from William Marshall, who continued to compose until his death in 1833. Marshall's last

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[3] There is much more detail about this in a work by H. R. N. Macdonald, 'Traditional Fiddling in Strathspey: The Unschooled Scots Fiddler and His Style' (MLitt dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1976), in Chapter 6 of David Johnson's *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press 1972), and in Ronnie Gibson's blog, scottishfiddlemusic.com, 31 July 2016 <https://scottishfiddlemusic.com/2016/07/31/thoroughbreds-and-wild-horses-of-the-prairie-some-thoughts-on-ideas-about-scottish-fiddle-music/> [accessed 9 July 2019].

[4] Charles Gore, *Echoes of a Golden Age: Rediscovering Scotland's Original Fiddle Music* (Inverness: Highland Music Trust, 2008), pp. 1–18.

[5] McKerrell, *Focus: Scottish Traditional Music*, p. 62.

[6] James Hunter, *The Fiddle Music of Scotland* (Edinburgh: The Hardie Press, 1988), p. xiv.

collection was published posthumously in 1845.[7] Pertinent to my study are the hundreds of small tune books, unpublished and perhaps unappreciated until relatively recently, that were also created in the early 1800s. They often contain original compositions along with well-known tunes from composers like William Marshall, Robert Petrie, Isaac Cooper, the Gows, Robert and Abraham Mackintosh, and others.

Mary Anne Alburger points out the impact of the presence of Balmoral and the Royal Family in Aberdeenshire beginning around 1840, a supportive force that kept musical momentum growing steadily throughout the nineteenth century.[8] Balls, country dances, and concerts were commonly mentioned in newspapers. Fiddle competitions became a response to the concern voiced in a newspaper article from *The Aberdeen Journal* in 1863, that 'Scotch music should not be allowed to fall off […] that music on the violin is quite as essentially national, and deserving of encouragement, as any other class of music'.[9] A search through Aberdeenshire newspapers of the 1850s and 1860s reveals that bagpipe competitions were frequent; fiddle or violin competitions were much rarer until the late 1850s, when the fiddle began to be considered once again as 'national' as bagpipes.

From the viewpoint of local Deeside history and descriptions of landscape and roads, several sources have been particularly helpful in seeing what life and travel along the River Dee was like in 1850. This understanding was important to me, as I wanted to verify, for example, that it would indeed be feasible for Robert Dawson's young student to walk from Crathie to the school at Logie-Coldstone, and I wanted to understand the kinds of travel challenges itinerant musicians might face in 1850. John Grant Michie's *History of Logie-*

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[7] I am very grateful to Ronnie Gibson for sharing with me much of his unpublished research into the continuity, change, and revival of Scottish fiddle music. His blog, <https://scottishfiddlemusic.com/contents/>, is a trove of historical and interpretive reflections. [accessed 19 July 2019].

[8] Mary Anne Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and Their Music* (Edinburgh: The Hardie Press, 1996), p. 170.

[9] 'Great Violin Competition of Strathspeys and Reels', *The Aberdeen Journal*, 30 September 1863, p. 7 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000031/18630930/127/0007> [accessed 14 July 2019].

*Coldstone and Braes of Cromar* picks up where the Rev. John McHardy's description of Logie-Coldstone in the *New Statistical Account* left off in 1842. Michie's book highlights the strong connections between Crathie (where Dawson's tune book lived after 1865), and Logie-Coldstone, and the relationships between some of the McHardy family members (who were related to Robert Dawson).[10] Alexander Inkson McConnochie's *Deeside* is a complement to Michie's work, incorporating local history information and descriptions of buildings and roads that had existed fifty years earlier.[11] Ballater historian Sheila Sedgwick gave me some good insights into the state of roads between Crathie, Ballater, and Logie-Coldstone.[12] Queen Victoria's *Journals*, particularly entries pertinent to travel from Balmoral to nearby towns, also proved helpful, as she mentioned specific places where they rode or walked on their outings and excursions.

For biographical information about Robert Dawson, which is admittedly scant – for instance, we have no idea when or where Dawson died, or where he was buried –David Baptie's work *Musical Scotland, Past and Present* is a good resource. Baptie wrote his encyclopaedic book in 1894, when Robert Dawson was 'supposed to be still alive'.[13] I will include the entire Dawson entry from Baptie in the historical background in Chapter 2. For biographical information about other Scottish musicians living at about the same time as Dawson, the works of Mary Anne Alburger, Moyra Cowie, George Emmerson, and John Glen have all been indispensable.[14] John Glen's 'Biographical Sketches of Early Scottish

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[10] John Grant Michie, *History of Logie-Coldstone and Braes of Cromar* (Aberdeen: D. Wyllie & Son, 1896), pp. 194–95.

[11] Alexander Inkson McConnochie, *Deeside*, third ed. (Aberdeen: Smith & Sons, 1900).

[12] Dr Sheila Sedgwick, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Deeside, Aberdeenshire', EI2019.002, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 23 January 2019.

[13] David Baptie, *Musical Scotland, Past and Present* (Paisley: J. and R. Parlane, 1894), Appendix II, p. 218.

[14] Mary Anne Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and Their Music* (London: Gollanz, 1983); Moyra Cowie, *The Life and Times of William Marshall 1748-1833: Composer of Scottish Traditional Fiddle Music, Clock Maker and Butler to the 4th Duke of Gordon* (Elgin, [n.pub.], 1999); George Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String: A History of Scottish Dance Music* (London: Dent, 1971).

Musicians and Musicsellers', written in 1895, has long been a valuable resource for scholars, as it provides detailed information about many composers and musicians up through the late nineteenth century.[15] The John Murdoch Henderson Music Collection website, part of the North East Folklore Archive, provides biographical material for several nineteenth-century Aberdeenshire fiddle players, including Peter Milne and James Davie.[16] The diaries of dance master Joseph Lowe, written in the 1850s, capture a glimpse of the everyday life of a dance master and violinist working at Balmoral and hiring bands to play for the balls.[17] All of these works provide a context for the time in which Dawson was creating his tune book, and I will refer to them throughout this study.

For thoughts and in-depth discussion about vernacular music and tune books, Vic Gammon's research, although centred around tune books belonging to musicians from England, applies also to Scottish musicians, their personal tune books, and their methods of learning.[18] Rebecca Dellow's recent dissertation about English fiddlers' tune books provides a good social history perspective, exploring musical literacy and the dissemination of tunes throughout a musical community.[19]

Various primary sources are helpful in constructing a 'first-person' account of the Victorian Aberdeenshire context of musicians and their world. Even though they saw print some decades later than when Robert Dawson was creating his tune book, James Scott

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[15] John Glen, 'Biographical Sketches of Early Scottish Musicians and Musicsellers', in *The Glen Collection of Scottish Dance Music: John Glen's 1891–95 Collections, with His Biographies of Composers and Notes on the Sources of the Music*, Duncan Dyker, ed. (Inverness: Highland Music Trust, 2001), pp. 5–14 and pp. 69–85.

[16] The website for the John Murdoch Henderson Music Collection and for the biographies can be accessed at <https://sites.scran.ac.uk/jmhenderson/web/collection/fiddles/index.htm> [accessed 26 July 2019].

[17] Joseph Lowe, *A New Most Excellent Dancing Master: The Journal of Joseph Lowe's Visits to Balmoral and Windsor (1852–1860) to Teach Dance to the Family of Queen Victoria*, Allan Thomas, ed. (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992).

[18] Vic Gammon, 'Manuscript Sources of Traditional Dance Music in Southern England', in *Traditional Dance: Proceedings of the Fourth Traditional Dance Conference Held March 1984 at Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education*, ed. by Theresa Buckland, 4 (1986), pp. 53–72.

[19] Rebecca Dellow, 'Fiddlers' Tunebooks – Vernacular Instrument Manuscript Sources, 1860–c1880: Paradigmatic of Folk Music Tradition?' (PhD dissertation, University of Sheffield, June 2018).

Skinner's autobiography and his books on violin technique allow us to see his approach to a world where the 'national' fiddle music was elevated to a more technical, 'violinistic' status influenced by European classical or formal musical training. Joseph Lowe's diaries from 1852 to 1860 portray the everyday life of a violin and dance teacher who travelled from Edinburgh to Balmoral, and over much of the North-East as well. I am also grateful to Dr Sheila Sedgwick, for many years an archivist and the historian of Ballater and the surrounding area, for her insights into the way things looked and worked in 1850 Deeside. The British Newspaper Archive has been invaluable for finding current accounts of balls, dances, competitions, concerts, library holdings, and for getting a peek into the everyday world of Victorian Aberdeenshire.[20]

## Methodology

As part of my research for this study I interviewed several musicians currently playing in Scotland, some in Aberdeenshire, all of them aware of and interested in the concept of how fiddle players learn and remember tunes. Many of them have had their own tune books in the past, and some still keep the equivalent of one on a computer or iPad, perhaps even on a mobile phone. While technology has changed since Victorian times, the need for the tool remains. Tune books can play an important part in the process of learning and recalling tunes, even when the musician is able to learn easily by ear. I will include excerpts from these interviews where appropriate in this study.

It was while I was interviewing several of these contributors to this study that I began to realise fiddlers' tune books are a genre unto themselves. As a dance fiddler, I took the notion of a personal tune book for granted. Over several decades, I have made a number for

[20] The British Newspaper Archive online can be accessed and searched at <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 24 July 2019].

myself, some just 'cheat sheets' with first bars of each part of a tune, some more elaborate as I wrote out tunes that I wanted to learn. Most dance musicians that I know have some kind of 'book' or reference sheet with bits of tunes. Musicians who use tune books like this are usually musically literate and comfortable with writing some form of musical notation. Their tune books can range from a notebook listing tune titles with a few notes scribbled about keys and chords, to carefully written-out transcriptions with arrangements, bowings, and dynamics (loud-soft markings). They may also contain original compositions by the tune book owners.

To acquaint myself with this (to me) newly discovered genre, and to gain some context, I visited various archives to look at other manuscript tune books from the early nineteenth-century period. The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library in Cecil Sharp House, London, was a good place to find hundreds of these little tune books, many about the same size and shape as Robert Dawson's. They were primarily English tunes there, but even so, the collections included many Scottish tunes, as 'country dances' and the tunes played for them were widely known and popular in both England and Scotland in the nineteenth century. The University of Aberdeen Special Collections Centre contains good examples of manuscript books, as does the National Library of Scotland, where one can quickly see the evolution of the tune books and the music in them from the early eighteenth century up through the end of the nineteenth. The Wighton Collection in Dundee is also a valuable resource for finding manuscripts of old country dances and tunes. Online repositories are becoming more common, as catalogues of manuscripts are made available, and in many cases, the manuscripts themselves have been digitised and are accessible online.[21]

[21] Online catalogues are available for the University of Aberdeen Special Collections <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/>; NLS <https://www.nls.uk/catalogues>; Village Music Project <https://www.village-music-project.org.uk/; and Wighton <http://friendsofwighton.com/resources/database/> [all accessed 16 July 2019].

Many questions arose as I examined manuscripts and talked with contemporary fiddle players. Do musicians who use tune books learn equally well by ear? What are their sources for the music – printed sheet music and tune collections, or aural transmission from other musicians, or both? Transcribing from recordings in our day is not difficult, with an array of software tools to listen, loop, and change playback speeds. In Robert Dawson's time, did a fiddler transcribe tunes in an informal gathering (the logistics of this seem unwieldy and daunting), or was he or she capable of remembering a tune long enough to capture it on paper at a later time? Did they copy music from printed collections? How easy was it for early Victorian-era musicians in rural Aberdeenshire to get access to printed collections and sheet music? Along with reading primary sources like Aberdeenshire newspapers and advertisements from 1830s through the 1860s, I asked several of my contributors about their thoughts on some of these questions, in addition to my original mission of investigating whether or not Robert Dawson's choice of dance tunes was representative of the time and place he lived in. Some of their answers will be included as part of Chapter 2.

## Reflexivity

My own background and experience as a dance fiddler with classical training makes me especially interested in a fiddler's personal tune book. As a music and fiddle teacher, I work with students who are good music readers, and also some who cannot read music at all. Consequently, I teach (and learn) both by printed or handwritten music, and by ear. As a performer, I play for nineteenth-century historical dances in a small ensemble, reading from books of arranged medleys of tunes; I also enjoy playing in baroque ensembles and in Strathspey and Reel groups using written music. At the 'aural' end of the spectrum, I play for contra and ceilidh dances using little or no music (only my own 'tune book' with the first bars of tunes on it to help me remember how they start), playing from memory and with a

good deal of improvisation. So my own musical experience is somewhat similar to that of many nineteenth-century fiddle players, and I suppose there is a degree of 'bi-musicality' at work here, as I move between different musical worlds, speaking a different language in each, and feeling joy in being accepted.[22]

My reason for mentioning this is to suggest that some of my musical contributors might have reacted differently to my questions than if a non-musician had asked them; I could be seen as emic, an insider and accepted as a participant. As an American, and an etic observer of a culture not as familiar to me, my non-Scottish use of English no doubt also coloured some of my contributors' reactions. Having said that, everyone I spoke with was open and interested in my research and had something valuable to contribute. I am very grateful to everyone who so patiently talked and corresponded with me and answered my many questions: **Paul Anderson**, Dr Patricia Ballantyne, Dr Elaine Bradtke, Dr Rebecca Dellow, Alasdair Duthie, Dr Stuart Eydmann, **Iain Fraser**, **Ronnie Gibson**, Kenny Hadden, Jimmie Hill, Bob Messner, Chris Partington, Malcolm Reavell, **Dr Sheila Sedgwick**, Karen Steven, Jim Stott, Anne Taylor, **Bruce and Alicia Thomson**, **Frank Thomson**, and Claire White. While I have not included quotations from all of them in this thesis, their contributions all helped to form a context and to guide my research. (Bold-faced names are recorded interviews archived in the Elphinstone Institute.)

[22] Jeff Todd Titon explores the idea of bi-musicality, reflecting on his own experience of joining an Appalachian fiddle group, in 'Bi-musicality as Metaphor', *Journal of American Folklore*, 8 (1995), 287-97. He comments, using a phenomenological approach that is often at the heart of learning another musical 'style': 'For me, bi-musicality has never just meant lessons in acquiring musical technique. Bi-musicality helps me understand musicking in the world, and my being in the world musically, from a particular viewpoint: the musical knowing that follows from musical being […] There is something in the nature of the musical experience which serves as a kind of metaphor for social relations […] Bi-musicality leads to a particularly active form of musical being and knowing' (pp. 295-96).

# Chapter 2: The Life of a Fiddler's Tune Book

Every musician's book of tunes holds a large part of his or her life, but the mundane details of that life are seldom recorded. When I visited Bruce and Alicia Thomson, who own Robert Dawson's tune book now, and Bruce handed me the book, I was delighted to see and feel its worn, velvety pages in a binding that was still (barely) intact; the elegant handwriting with double 's' written as a long and a short 's'; the tidy musical notation, the odd scribbles on some of the pages in another, less refined-looking hand; and a wide assortment of tunes that I knew, as well as many that I had never heard of. I confess I did not immediately pay much mind to the 'why' or the 'who' behind the book.

In retrospect, I think I assumed that most musicians do keep a book of tunes for themselves. At that moment it was not a particularly significant object aside from its age and that it had a lot of Scottish dance tunes in it that I could play. Robert Dawson, the violinist and teacher who created that book, caught my interest only after I heard Bruce and Alicia Thomson's accounts of what they knew about him through Bruce's family history. Bruce's great-uncle James Thomson had written his own name in that book and was reputedly Dawson's student. I found myself wanting to know who Robert Dawson was and how he and his selection of tunes fit into the Deeside Aberdeenshire musical world.

## 1850 to 1865

The first right-hand page of the book contains the following handwritten information, presumably in Dawson's hand:

'Mr Robert Dawson, Mans of Coldston, Febr. 4, 1850'.

Below it is a partial title, 'Jigs, Re[els]', that looks like it had been partially erased or scraped off. Several other bits of handwriting appear on the same page, some of which look like they

were written by someone else, perhaps with a different pen and ink, or with a pencil.[23] Pertinent information is that the name, place, and year all seem to be in the same hand. (See Figure 1.)

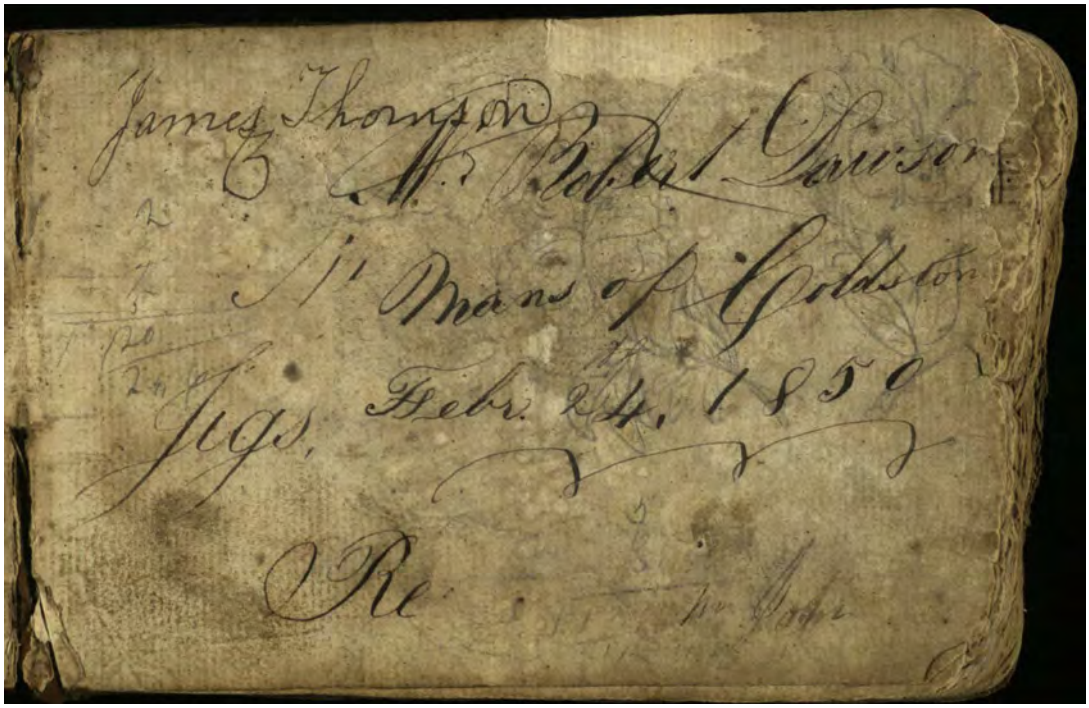


*Figure 1: Title page of Dawson tune book*

Robert Dawson lived at the 'Mans of Coldston' for a number of years. David Baptie includes an entry for a Robert Dawson for whom the information matches:

> DAWSON, ROBERT, born in Strathdon, Aberdeen, about 1826. Violinist of considerable local fame when he resided with his uncle, Rev. John McHardy, at Manse of Coldstone, Cromar. He had previously studied under another uncle, Mr. William McHardy, at the same place. While comparatively young he went to America, but returned a few years after to Upper Deeside to take a wife. He is supposed to be still alive.[24]

[23] Expert analysis of the paper in the tune book is outside the scope of this study, but it would be interesting to see if the watermarks indicate a paper maker and date, and to see if the handwriting of 'Jigs, Re[els]' is the same as Dawson's. If the handwriting is someone else's, that might imply that Dawson (or someone) scraped off part of the page to make a clean surface to write on, and that the book may in fact be somewhat older than 1850.

[24] Baptie, *Musical Scotland,* Appendix II, p. 218.

Robert Dawson's uncle, the Rev. John McHardy, is easy to find in public records, as he was the minister for Logie-Coldstone from 1834 to 1857; he died in 1866. According to John Grant Michie, Rev. John McHardy was the schoolmaster in Crathie and assistant to the minister of Crathie Kirk for eighteen years before he moved to Logie-Coldstone and became the minister there.[25] He, his brother William McHardy, and his nephew Robert Dawson all appear in the first Scotland Census in 1841, so presumably were residing at the Manse when the Census was taken on 6 June 1841.[26] William McHardy was very likely Robert Dawson's teacher, as Baptie mentions in the biographical entry. Figure 2 shows the Logie-Coldstone Manse as it looks today.

*Figure 2: Built in 1783, the Manse at Logie-Coldstone as it looks in 2019 (photo by Mara Shea)*

When Rev. John McHardy resigned his duties in 1857, he was succeeded by his nephew, the Rev. George Davidson (Robert Dawson's cousin). George Davidson's family lived on a farm close to Crathie called Torgalter. This connection to Crathie is important

[25] Rev. John Grant Michie, *History of Logie-Coldstone and Braes of Cromar* (Aberdeen: D. Wyllie & Son, 1896), pp 194–95.

[26] National Records of Scotland, *1841 Census for Logie Coldstone, Aberdeenshire* <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/view-image/nrs_census/1580572?image=3&return_row=8> [accessed 25 August 2019].

mainly because of the other name that appears on the title page of Dawson's tune book – James Thomson. James was Dawson's student, and it was James' family who ended up owning Dawson's tune book. The Thomson family were the postmasters for Crathie and Balmoral from about 1840 until the 1980s. When Bruce Thomson handed me the tune book, he told me that his great-great grandfather Charles built the post office at a fortunate time, when the Royal Family came to Balmoral. The Crathie School next to the post office was a primary school; the secondary school was in Logie-Coldstone, about sixteen miles away. When James Thomson was about ten, he and his brother Albert would walk to the school in Logie-Coldstone each Sunday and return home on Friday.[27]

*Figure 3: The former Crathie Post Office as it looks in 2019 (photo by Mara Shea)*

Sixteen miles seems like a very long walk today, but in the 1850s, that was not extraordinary.[28] As postmasters, the Thomsons may also have had a pony and trap, making the journey somewhat easier. Roads between Crathie and Logie-Coldstone were established

[27] Bruce Thomson, 'Interview about 1850 Dawson-Thomson Tune Book from Crathie, Aberdeenshire', EI2019.005, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 July 2019, 00:03:05.

[28] Dr Sheila Sedgwick, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Deeside, Aberdeenshire', EI2019.002, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 23 January 2019, 00:02:02.

and are marked on Ordnance Survey maps from that time period.[29] Queen Victoria writes in her *Journals* in 1866 that on one of their visits to see Sir James Clark in Tillypronie, they 'took post horses at Ballater & then took the road, passing the Burn of the Vat, going as far as Colston'.[30] This is the same road described by Dr Sheila Sedgwick, the former archivist and Ballater historian, when I asked her about travel in 1850 Deeside.[31]

I have not been able to find records of Robert Dawson travelling to America or returning to Deeside to live, as mentioned by Baptie, but there is a probable date after which he made no more additions to his tune book. On 16 October 1865, Dawson's student James Thomson died at home at the Crathie Post Office, of tuberculosis. He was nineteen years old and according to his death certificate, he had been ill for eighteen months.[32] His parents, Charles Thomson and Elizabeth Smith Thomson, kept the tune book, and it remained in the Post Office until it was discovered by Bruce Thomson in 1985. Perhaps Dawson gave the book to James, and the book stayed with the Thomson family. James was buried at Crathie Kirk; Figure 4 is a photograph taken of his seven brothers at Balmoral Castle after the funeral.

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[29] For example, the Ordnance Survey Six-inch First Edition, 1843–1882, from the National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=13.463333333333324&lat=57.1410&lon=-2.9449&layers=5&b=1> [accessed 6 August 2019].

[30] *Queen Victoria's Journals*, entry for Tuesday 18 September 1866, Volume 55, p. 238 <http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/search/displayItem.do?FormatType=fulltextimgsrc&&QueryType=articles&ResultsID=3129920387856&ItemNumber=18&ItemID=qvj12280&volumeType=PSBEA> [Accessed 8 July 2019]. The road she mentions would be approximately where the B9119 today passes along the west side of Loch Kinord and Loch Davan from Cambus o' May.

[31] Dr Sheila Sedgwick, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Deeside, Aberdeenshire', EI2019.002, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 23 January 2019, 00:02:02.

[32] Death certificate of James Thomson, National Records of Scotland, Statutory Registers, Deaths in the Parish of Crathie and Braemar, County of Aberdeen, 183/25, p. 9.


*Figure 4: James Thomson's brothers at Balmoral Castle after his funeral*[33]

## Re-discovery

Robert Dawson's tune book remained at the bottom of a safe in the old Post Office until Bruce's family cleaned the old house out and sold the property in 2016.[34] It now resides with Bruce and Alicia Thomson in their home at the Knock Gallery, about a half-mile from the old Post Office. The tune book went largely unnoticed until about 2017 when Paul Anderson, a well-known fiddle player living in Tarland, Aberdeenshire, heard about it. He visited the Thomsons to see the book, and brought it to the attention of Dr Tom McKean, Director of the Elphinstone Institute at Aberdeen University. In 2018, Dr McKean told me about the book. I contacted Bruce and Alicia in Crathie and travelled to their home several times to visit and to interview them. They kindly granted permission to have the book scanned and digitised,

[33] Permission granted to use photograph RCIN2160392 from the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019 <https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/1/collection/2160392/alexander-john-charles-thomas-william-albert-and-andrew-thomson> [accessed 29 July 2019]. Bruce and Alicia Thomson have a framed copy of this photograph in their dining room; they told me it was from the time of James' funeral.

[34] https://www.scotsman.com/news/queen-victoria-s-former-post-office-goes-up-for-sale-1-4268495 [accessed 20 August 2019]. In an interview, Bruce Thomson talks about finding the book in the old safe before the house was sold: 'Interview about 1850 Dawson-Thomson Tune Book from Crathie, Aberdeenshire', EI2019.005, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 July 2019, 00:00:36.

preserving Robert Dawson's collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scottish dance tunes.

## Who Are Tune Books For?

North-East Scotland enjoyed a wealth of published music from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, with an extensive list of well-known printed music collections printed from about 1760 until about 1840. Many of the tunes in Dawson's tune book are also in collections that were available in the 1840s and 1850s, for example, the Gow *Repository of the Dance Music of Scotland* in four parts (1799, 1802, 1806, 1817), J.T. Surenne's *Dance Music of Scotland* (c. 1840), Archibald Duff's *Collection of Strathspey Reels* (1794), James Davie's *Caledonian Repository* (1829), and Joseph Lowe's collections (1844-45). Dawson also includes in his tune book compositions by well-known Scottish composers like William Marshall, J. Pringle, Robert Petrie, and Isaac Cooper. Many he attributes to their composers, but there are dozens more that have no attribution. He may not have known who wrote the tunes, particularly if he learned them by ear, or if they were not credited in a collection of music.

The audience for these printed collections was mostly likely not the casual farmer-musician or teacher. As Paul Anderson explains, most musicians would not have been able to afford published collections of music like that published by the Gows, for example. They would be more likely to seek out two- or four-page published sheets that would cost much less:

> They were expensive things for folk, at that time. So, I suspect the kind of cheaper sheet music might have been – because I've got a few old collections, they're just like a couple of Scott Skinner sheets, you know,

> they've got several tunes on them. They're much more readily available and affordable.[35]

He goes on to suggest who the target audience might be for published collections, if not musicians themselves:

> Published collections would have been an expensive luxury for many players and it was really the gentry class who subscribed for copies in the time of Marshall and Gow.[36]

Subscription lists for published music show a variety of people, usually from the region, who were interested in purchasing one or more copies of someone's book to help defray the cost of printing. Many of the subscribers are titled (Lady Abercromby, Capt Bridgnow, Doctor Dauney, Sir James Gordon of Letterfourie, for example, all appear in the subscription list for Isaac Cooper's 1806–07 publication of his *Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, and Irish Jigs for the Piano Forte & Violin*).[37] Keeping in mind what Paul Anderson had said, however, I was interested to observe how many musicians and dancing-masters were listed in Cooper's subscriptions.[38] Another popular collection, Archibald Duff's *Collection of Strathspey Reels*, was published in 1794; his subscribers were predominantly merchants, teachers, farmers, gardeners, dancing-masters, and musicians, with no gentry listed.[39] Its price of six shillings (Cooper's was five shillings) might have been beyond the reach of the casual fiddle player, but perhaps manageable for dance-masters, teachers, and musicians. Music books like Cooper's and Duff's collections may very likely have been

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[35] Paul Anderson, 'Interview about the Discovery of the Dawson-Thomson Tune Book at Knock Gallery, Crathie', EI2019.003, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 22 March 2019, 00:12:03.

[36] Email correspondence with Paul Anderson, 5 June 2019.

[37] Cooper's book is in the Glen Collection at the National Library of Scotland (NLS), and can be downloaded from the NLS website: <https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/archive/102743151> [accessed 14 July 2019]. The list of subscribers is behind the title page.

[38] Mary Anne Alburger also points out the large number of musicians and dancing-masters on subscriber lists in *Scottish Fiddlers and Their Music* (Edinburgh: The Hardie Press, 1996), pp. 91–92.

[39] Duff's book is part of the Glen Collection, and can be downloaded from the NLS website: <https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/archive/105815861> [accessed 14 July 2019].

shared amongst Aberdeenshire fiddle players who were musically literate. As Paul Anderson points out, the cheaper sheets of music with a few tunes on them would be easier for most musicians to buy, and there was likely a good deal of sharing in the process of learning tunes. That sharing process might be through paper, and it might also be by aural transmission.

Although some fiddle players in nineteenth-century Aberdeenshire were comfortable reading and writing musical notation, there were undoubtedly others who were not as easy with reading music, and who would prefer to learn by listening to someone playing a tune. This aural learning skill – of hearing someone play a tune several times and gradually being able to join in and play it on one's own – can be common to both musically literate and non-literate players. For literate musicians, the next logical step in the learning process would probably be to remember as much as possible and notate the new tune in some fashion in a personal tune book.

William Marshall, the renowned composer and violin-player who died a few years after Robert Dawson was born, is recorded as having a very good memory for tunes:

> The melodies of Marshall cost him little labour in the production, and were frequently the results of one effort. He generally took up his Violin when some happy thought struck him, and almost at once mastered the object he had in view. He seldom came back upon his compositions with the view of retouching or refining them […] He, however, was himself far from thinking them perfect, and generally submitted them to an ordeal, from whose decisions he seldom dissented. This was to his wife who, though no musician, had a good natural taste. In the evenings he played his tunes to Mrs Marshall, and what she condemned, he condemned, but when she approved, he immediately wrote down the favoured airs, which he did with great facility and rapidity from memory.[40]

[40] J. MacGregor, 'Memoir of William Marshall, Composer', included in *The Marshall Collections: Six Collections of Music by William Marshall (1748–1833) of Fochabers, Moray, Scotland* (Inverness: Highland Music Trust, 2007), Preface to Volume 2 of *A Collection of Scottish Melodies*, 1845, i–viii (vi).

## Getting the Music

The ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl writes, 'a musical system, its style, its main characteristics, its structure, are all very closely associated with the particular way in which it is taught, as a whole, and in its individual components'.[41] In his discussion, he talks about how music is composed and transmitted:

> Pieces composed without notation and also transmitted aurally probably account for the majority of musical artifacts in the world. […] But there is also music written by a composer and then passed on orally, something obviously true of much popular music. […] It may be that certain structural limitations are necessary if a piece is to be transmitted aurally. Dividing music into elements, I suggest that some of these must retain a degree of simplicity, repetitiveness, and stability, so that others may vary.[42]

What happens when musical variations occur? How does one musician alter a simple tune, for example, to put his or her own fingerprints on it, consciously or not? A natural thing that happens when a musician learns a tune by ear is that it morphs slightly with repetition, as if the player is making it fit his own sense of musicality. Nettl discusses variations in much depth and mentions 'interpersonal relations' as an important factor in the teaching and learning of music. He talks about the transmission of music:

> The way in which a musician – concert pianist or indigenous singer – changes and perhaps develops a conception and therefore a performance of a piece […] is surely a type of transmission, and, in just about all cases (classical, popular, folk), it is specifically aural transmission.[43]

Josephine Miller observes,

> […] the function of oral transmission, a characteristic often assigned hegemonic status by practitioners of traditional music despite Scotland's

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[41] Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-Three Discussions*, 3rd ed. (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press), p. 295.

[42] Nettl, *Ethnomusicology*, p. 297.

[43] Nettl, *Ethnomusicology,* p. 295. Nettl makes a distinction throughout his book between 'aural' and 'oral'.

> long history of literate musicians and published tune and song collections, is also an important consideration.[44]

Vic Gammon, discussing manuscript books of English dance tunes, points out that there are three different ways in which tunes are transmitted: 'by print, by manuscript, and by ear'.[45] Did Robert Dawson have access to printed or manuscript collections of music? Living at the 'Mans of Coldston' with his uncles, one of whom wrote the history of Logie-Coldstone in the *New Statistical Account* in 1845, he may have had a good library at his disposal.[46] Bruce Thomson confirms that there would have been a library at the Logie-Coldstone school, which was the secondary school for the area.[47] There is evidence that at least one significant musical collection was owned by Rev. Charles McHardy, the minister of Crathie, as he is listed as a subscriber for Robert Petrie's *Second Collection of Strathspey Reels*, published in1796.[48] The important connection here is that Dawson's uncle, Rev. John McHardy, was the assistant to that same Rev. Charles McHardy at Crathie Kirk from 1816–1834. Sixteen of the tunes in Dawson's collection are also in Petrie's *Second Collection*, and many are very similar to the Petrie versions. It seems likely that Dawson was familiar with this collection.

There were other ways Dawson may have encountered tunes outside of the Manse. A search in the British Newspapers Archives for 'circulating libraries' yields a number of advertisements for them in Aberdeenshire, and many towns had a lending library where one

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[44] Josephine L. Miller, 'The Learning and Teaching of Traditional Music', in *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology,* ed. by J. Beech et al., 14 vols (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), X: *Oral Literature and Performance Culture*, 288–304 (p. 288).

[45] Gammon, 'Manuscript Sources', p. 58.

[46] J. Gordon, ed. 'Logie-Coldstone', *The New Statistical Account of Scotland,* 15 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1845), XII, p. 1070 <https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk:443/link/nsa-vol12-p1070-parish-aberdeen-logie-coldstone> [accessed 14 July 2019].

[47] Bruce Thomson, 'Interview about 1850 Dawson-Thomson Tune Book from Crathie, Aberdeenshire', EI2019.005, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 July 2019, 00:09:00.

[48] Robert Petrie, *A Second Collection of Strathspey Reels &c for Pianoforte, Violin, and Violincello* (Edinburgh: Walker, 1796). The list of subscribers appears behind the title page of the book.

could borrow books, music, and newspapers by paying a small subscription fee to the library, as illustrated in the advertisement shown in Figure 5.[49]

BOOKS, &c., FOR PRESENTS.

D. WYLLIE & SON have at present an Extensive Stock of

1. ANNUALS and other ILLUSTRATED BOOKS.
2. STANDARD BOOKS, in Plain and Elegant Binding.
3. POETRY, by all the Popular Poets, in Plain and Elegant Bindings.
4. BOOKS FOR YOUTHS of both Sexes, and JUVENILE BOOKS.
5. BIBLES, PRAYERS and CHURCH SERVICES, in Morocco and Velvet Binding, with Silver and Gilt Clasps, &c. &c. A beautiful and extensive variety.
6. LADIES' and GENTLEMEN'S ANNUAL POCKET BOOKS; LETT'S and other DIARIES; ABERDEEN, EDINBURGH, and various LONDON ALMANACS; HOUSEKEEPERS' BOOKS, &c., for 1851.

A variety of Stationery Articles, suited for Presents, such as PORTFOLIOS, WRITING CASES, &c. &c. &c.

NEW BOOKS, PERIODICALS, MUSIC, and NEWSPAPERS, supplied with great regularity.

D. WYLLIE & SON'S

**Public Circulating Library.**

The beginning of the Year presents a suitable time for commencing a Subscription. The Catalogues and Lists of New Books may be seen on application.

111, Union Street, Aberdeen,
24th Dec. 1850.

*Figure 5: Advertisement on page 4 of the Aberdeen Press and Journal, 25 December 1850*

It is possible Dawson found the Gow *Repository* or Isaac Cooper's collections in a circulating library. It is also possible that borrowing books and sheet music from other musicians was another source of his tunes. David Russell points out that in England, large groups of non-professional musicians would share in the cost of a printed book which would then be circulated among them.[50] It is a tempting thought; however, it seems unlikely there was a large enough organised group to do this in Deeside. It is more probable, as Paul Anderson suggested, that they either shared inexpensive sheets of music on occasion, perhaps their own manuscript copies, or learned tunes aurally.

Many musically literate fiddle players, particularly if they grow up surrounded by traditional and dance musicians, learn tunes both by ear and by reading. It is a little like growing up in a bilingual family; they can be quite comfortable learning and playing a tune from printed music, and also hear and remember one well enough to write it down later. Iain Fraser, a well-known Scottish fiddler and teacher who uses both methods, comments:

> I suppose if you were to start comparing it with learning a language, […] our first language that we learn is done by ear. And therefore, there may well be a capacity that we all have, to remember quite a lot by that process.[51]

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[49] This issue of the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* can be accessed at the British Newspaper Archive, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000031/18501225/007/0004?browse=true> [accessed 20 July 2019].

[50] David Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840–1914: A Social History*, 2nd edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 173.

[51] Iain Fraser, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Fiddlers' Tune Books', EI2019.004, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 June 2019, 00:22:40.

In Chapter 3, I will point out how one tune may have many variations – all still recognisable as the same tune, but each musician may hear or remember a slightly different version of it and transmit it to paper differently. Remembering something heard and reproducing it exactly can be difficult; aural transmission of tunes is almost guaranteed to yield some variations from the 'original'. Learning music aurally is a skill that takes practice. Listening to a fiddler playing an unfamiliar strathspey or reel two or three times through might be enough to get the flow of the tune to stay in one's head, but retaining it accurately is a somewhat daunting exercise for many of us. Iain Fraser shares a story that he heard from Ed Miller, who sings old and new ballads and songs of many verses.

> Ed talks about a singer, a border shepherd he first met in the 1960s in folk clubs, who then became reasonably kind of popular as a performer of old folk songs […] and he said he watched him one time go up to a person who had just been singing a ballad, of probably I don't know how many verses and he said, 'Look, I'd love to learn that song. Can you just sing it again?' And so the guy obliged, and he sang the song again and Willie – Willie was his name – and he said, 'Okay, can you just – see that third verse – can you just give me that third verse again?' So the guy sings the third verse, and this is Ed's description of Willie, saying, 'Okay I think I've got it.' […] So maybe we underestimate our own abilities […] perhaps it would be possible for someone to learn a song or a tune by ear, then a few days later decide they want to write it down.[52]

## Are Tune Books Important?

Dr Stuart Eydmann, while he was Traditional Artist in Residence at the University of Edinburgh, wrote a blog in which he explored the importance of the fiddle in the Scottish music revival. In it, he describes his delight at being handed an old manuscript book, much like Dawson's 1850 tune book, of a similar age, and how he feels these books fit in to social and folk traditions:

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[52] Iain Fraser, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Fiddlers' Tune Books', EI2019.004, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 June 2019, 00:23:02.

> Any old tune book is of significance as it brings insights into not just repertory but also of popular taste, creativity and musical interests. Manuscript tune books are highly important. Many, like this one, contain popular tunes taken down from printed collections, but also contain unique material that never found its way into commercially produced anthologies. [53]

When I first met with Iain Fraser to talk about fiddlers' tune books, he pulled out of a plastic bag a long, narrow, hand-stitched tune book that someone had given him. Picking up the soft, weathered book was like looking over someone's shoulder to see the page of music he was playing from – two hundred years ago. There was no date in it, but it could have been about the same time or a little earlier than Dawson's collection. It was a collection of Scottish dance tunes, interspersed with a few tutorial pages showing fingerings and a bit of music theory. Like Dawson, the author of Iain's tune book had quite neatly written out a selection of well-known tunes, but unlike Dawson, he had arranged his one tune to a page, presumably to make reading from the book easier, without the need to turn pages. Dawson's layout, as I will show in Chapter 3, is not as easy to read from as the book that Iain brought to show me.

Personal tune books are probably rarely meant to be published. They are a musician's repository of tunes liked and learned, perhaps taught to others. Many Scottish fiddle tune book collections contain older, well-known tunes, either traditional (unknown composer) or written by late eighteenth-century composers of some fame like William Marshall, the Gow family, or Robert Mackintosh. In most of the personal, handwritten tune books that I have found in archive collections, alongside the old familiar tunes and some newer ones there are often tunes composed by the owner of that book. Some of these tunes are clearly marked, for example, in the 1813 Duncan McKercher manuscript as 'by Dun. McKercher' or 'DMK'.[54]

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[53] Stuart Eydmann, 'In the Fiddler's Hand', from his blog, *The Fiddle in the Scottish Music Revival* while he was Traditional Artist in Residence at the University of Edinburgh (posted 21 March, 2015) <https://www.blogs.hss.ed.ac.uk/revival-fiddle/2015/03/21/1269/> [accessed 18 June 2019].

[54] Duncan McKercher, A *Collection of 426 Scottish Tunes, Including Strathspeys, Reels, Jigs, etc. by Duncan McKercher of Dunkeld*, (Aberdeen, Special Collections Library, MS 2424, c. 1846). For example, 'Lady Glenlyon's Strathspey', is noted as 'by D McKercher, Dunkeld, May 22nd 1846' (p. 46).

Another example would be the attribution 'by RS, 1817' in an early nineteenth-century tune book created by Robert Scott.[55] Some tunes are unattributed, however, and if the tune is not identifiable by searching for it in various databases and collections, one could surmise that it was composed by the creator of the tune book.

Such is the case with the Robert Dawson tune book. It contains mostly well-known tunes of the time, with a fair number hardly known today. He does not put his own name to any of the tunes in his notebook, but there are two with no title. There are also several tunes with a title and no attribution, but whose melodies do not appear in Charles Gore's *Scottish Fiddle Music Index*[56] or in other printed collections I have examined that might have been easily available to Dawson in the 1850s, although a more thorough search is needed. These unnamed tunes may possibly have been composed by Robert Dawson himself, but it is also quite possible that he simply did not know the name of the tune.

Each tune book is created by an individual musician, for a purpose that suits his or her needs. It is a little world of its own; it has its own context. The purpose for each book might reveal something about the life of the person who compiled it – the 'who' and the 'why' behind the book. Was it an aide-memoire – a reminder to the player how a tune should go? Was its owner a formally trained violinist who played for dances and who wanted to learn some tunes found in a printed collection? Was it someone who was self-taught, perhaps an amateur trying to teach himself about music notation by writing down scales and fingerings, and some tunes he already knew by ear? Were they tunes learned by ear and transcribed

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[55] Robert Scott manuscript, Sir Jimmy Shand Collection JS1, MS Music Book, ink on paper, approx. 30 pp, inscribed 'R. Scott, 1813'. Scottish airs and dance tunes, melodies only. Wighton Database, Dundee Central Library. <https://archive.org/details/Shand1/page/n23> [accessed 12 June 2018]. A section of the manuscript book beginning on page 23 where several tunes written by Scott appear has an inscription in the margin, 'Robert Scott, AD 1818'. Presumably Scott kept this book as his personal tune book for a number of years and continued adding to it.

[56] Charles Gore, *The Scottish Fiddle Music Index: The 18th and 19th Century Printed Collections* (Musselburgh, Scotland: 1994).

later? Were they copied from another collection? Handwriting, organisation, scribbled marginalia, choice of tunes, 'errors', and variations – these are all clues to the person who made the book.

I asked Iain Fraser what he thought might be important about a fiddler's tune book.

> IF: So for me the important part of that is the connection I can make back to other tunes that have been lost from the tradition, some kind of check and balance that says well yeah we actually did play these tunes for dances –
>
> MS: Yes –
>
> IF: And maybe it was 1850 or whatever, you know, and so they are still being played. And for me, it's kind of like a little piece of information that might be useful in terms of like, repertoire choices […] I think at one point, I think maybe you said in an email that it didn't feel like it was formulated in a way that you could just play from it for dancing, because you'd have to turn pages.
>
> MS: Exactly.
>
> IF: And so, it's almost like a quick kind of flash-card equivalent, isn't it. That you just think, 'Oh yeah, I'll just…' and sometimes I'll do that now anyway – I'll prop up a book and just [nods and points at imaginary book] 'Oh yeah – right.'
>
> MS: 'Right, that's how it goes.'
>
> IF; These ones, yeah. That's how it goes, yeah. And um, so it's like a reference. […] And so the interesting thing for me is, I suppose, now that you've said it, is that I'm kind of interested […] to know who that guy is and where he was operating.[57]

Paul Anderson, a well-known fiddle player living in Tarland, Aberdeenshire, agreed that fiddlers' tune books like this one are intriguing and worthwhile investigating:

> I think it's quite important, this little book, that there could be previously unpublished music in it that could be repertoire that's currently out of print. But if nothing else it probably gives a very good snapshot of the repertoire that was current in that area, through the Deeside, at that time. So though it was certainly significant enough. As far as I could tell, that's a fairly typical

[57] Iain Fraser, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Fiddlers' Tune Books', EI2019.004, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 June 2019, 00:00:38.

> small book, that a lot of fiddlers would have had their own repertoire written into their own books.[58]

Ronnie Gibson, music director of the Aberdeen Strathspey and Reel Society, reflected on what the tune book might be about, and agreed with Iain Fraser about how just a glance at something can help jog the memory of the musician who plays largely by ear:

> We'd expect it in the first instance to be a record of tunes that he liked, and wanted, even just an aide-memoire. I mean – you know, Mara – the dance band musician or, you know, it's all from memory a lot of the time, so you really just need a wee note you can refer to.[59]

I asked Dr Elaine Bradtke, an archivist at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library in London, about her thoughts about fiddlers' tune books like Robert Dawson's:

> Like any sort of manuscript they are important historical artifacts. They let us know what tunes were in circulation at least within the reach of the tunebook's owner. They sometimes provide interesting insight into how tunes and titles changed in transmission. Occasionally you can almost follow a trail between sources. Musically it can be interesting to compare the tunes with published works. [60]

In the next chapter I will look more closely at Dawson's book and what it tells us about him. I will discuss the book itself – what it looks like, what it contains, how it fits into the context of other nineteenth-century tune books, and what kind of repertoire it represents. The repertoire may be a clue to Dawson's work life as a dance band musician and teacher, perhaps even as a participant in fiddle competitions. To provide a meaningful context for him, it might be useful to know what was expected of a dance musician in Victorian Aberdeenshire, so I will draw upon a few accounts from that time and add some insights

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[58] Paul Anderson, 'Interview about the Discovery of the Dawson-Thomson Tune Book at Knock Gallery, Crathie', EI2019.003, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 22 March 2019, 00:01:50.

[59] Ronnie Gibson, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Tune Books and Fiddle Repertoire in Scotland', EI2019.001, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 1 April 2019, 00:03:25.

[60] Email correspondence with Elaine Bradtke, 20 July 2019.

from contemporary dance musicians as well. Is it possible to see a connection between his tune versions and others', and perhaps to determine if he was looking at a specific collection? Is there an order to his book, and a purpose behind the tunes he chose? Ultimately, what can we find out, if anything, about Robert Dawson through his tune book?

# Chapter 3: A Tune Book and the World of the Musician

In the archives of the University of Aberdeen, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, and the National Library of Scotland, tune books from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries abound, in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and bindings. Their magic is that they are each unique, a piece of a musician's life bound in paper, holding a unique repertoire of tunes.

## Physical Characteristics: Dimensions, Folios, and Binding

Like many of these tune books, Dawson's was small, about 7 inches wide and 5 inches high, with board covers and a leather binding, just the right size to be held in one's hand or carried around easily in a small bag, perhaps in the same bag as a fiddle (see Figure 6). It had pre-printed music staves on each page. The groups of pages, or signatures, are sewn together, with hard board covers and a leather spine now dried and cracked with age. The edges of the pages have been rubbed away, probably from being carried in a pouch or sporran, making page numbers impossible to read until page 56 (see Figure 7 on page 32).

*Figure 6: The tune book size relative to my hand*
*(all photos of Dawson manuscript by Mara Shea)*

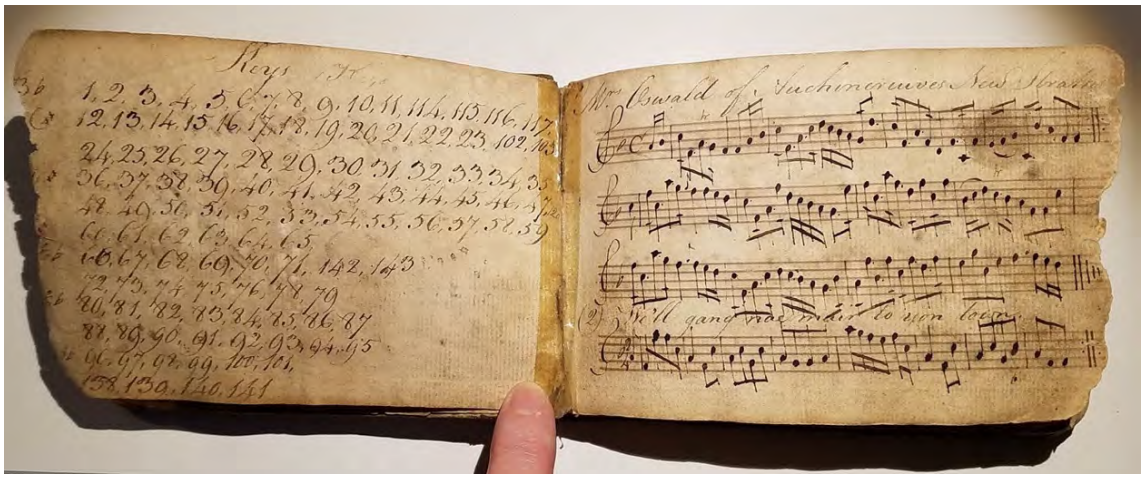


*Figure 7: Two-page spread showing key chart and worn page edges*

Blank tune books were relatively easy to obtain in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Notices appear frequently in Aberdeen newspapers advertising the sale of blank music books and stationery.[61] The paper in the Dawson tune book is chain laid, watermarked, but the origin of it is difficult to discern. The watermark appears to have a design and a name, perhaps 'Hooke & Son' (see Figure 8). It is high rag content, heavy paper that despite its age and much usage, has held up reasonably well. On some pages, it looks like the paper is separating into layers. A paper and book-making historian would be needed to pin down a date for its manufacture, but it is almost certainly before 1850, as that is when Dawson inscribed it.

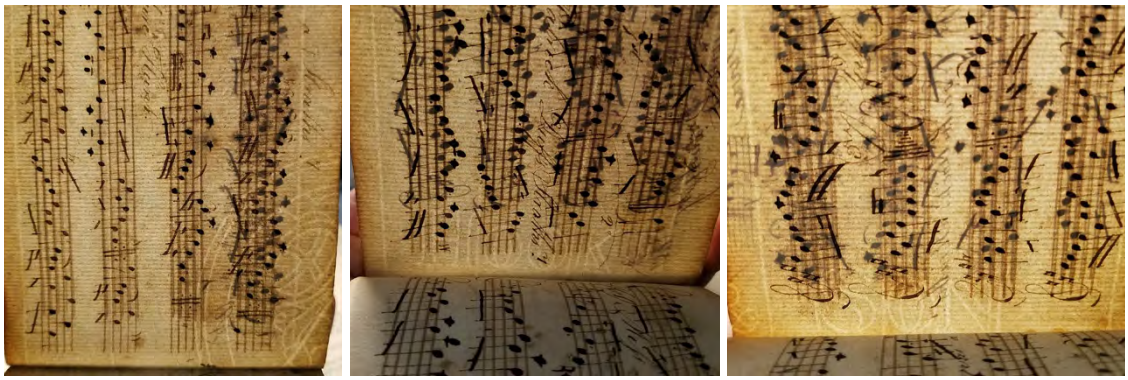

*Figure 8: Watermarks*

[61] For example, the *Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday, 28 August 1850, p. 1.

The tune book contains 182 tunes on 144 numbered pages (74 folios plus pasted-down sheets on front and back covers). In addition, there are several unnumbered pages on which different people at different times have written names, numbers, and dates. Dawson's detailed notations in his neat handwriting indicate he probably had a solid knowledge of violin technique and music theory.

## A Working Tune Book

A survey of a selection of Scottish musicians' (mostly fiddlers') tune books housed in libraries and archives, indicates that late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century tune books often contain a blend of traditional Scottish and European dance music. Their contents are not only country dance tunes like reels, strathspeys, and jigs, but also quadrilles, minuets, gavottes, bourrées, airs, and waltzes, following the 'new dancing fashions […] spreading to Scotland from continental Europe and England'[62] and the social preferences of the time. Some books contain songs, or religious music such as psalms and hymns. Many are hybrids, containing dance music and also instrumental and vocal arrangements of traditional tunes and songs for various instruments, often interspersed with pieces by Handel, Purcell, Corelli, and Mozart. David Johnson discusses at some length the blurred line between classical violinists and folk fiddlers, and the violin repertoire between about 1750 and 1800:

> There was an enormous boom of dancing in Scotland, which called into being a completely new repertory of fiddle dance music. But the violin continued as a classical music instrument, which could be used for playing Corelli sonatas and Haydn symphonies as well as folk-tunes; and by the end of the eighteenth century there were musical societies in most sizeable towns in the country, giving regular amateur classical music concerts. Thus every facility was available for the literate folk-fiddler to dabble in classical music, if he wished. Conversely, the classical violinist could dabble in folk music.

[62] Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String,* p. 93.

> As a result, the two categories of player became intermixed, and in the process folk music absorbed many elements of classical style.[63]

This process worked both ways. Johnson's works explore Italian and European influences on musical collections, analysing sonatas, variation sets, and minuets by Scottish composers, and discusses original compositions as well as traditional tunes made into minuets.[64] He also mentions some eighteenth-century techniques like scordatura (changing the normal pitch of violin strings), which may have evolved apart from classical music.[65] This idea of bi-musicality, of straddling different musical worlds, is a recurring theme in the eighteenth-century, continuing into the early nineteenth century. The late 1700s sees Scottish dance music coming into the foreground; Johnson discusses the growth of patronage between 1770 and 1810 of folk musicians and composers like Niel and Nathaniel Gow, William Marshall, Robert Petrie, John Morison, and Isaac Cooper, among others, who all published dance tune collections of Scottish reels and strathspeys.[66] By 1820, however, mazurkas, waltzes, and quadrilles had come into fashion, 'none of which had any connection with Scottish folk music'.[67] A generation later, the musical landscape of dance halls and assembly rooms shifted again to include a more traditional Scottish repertoire, and by the time James Scott Skinner appeared in the 1860s, the traditional repertoire of reels, strathspeys, and jigs began to blend with a virtuosic, classically trained style and technique.

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[63] David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2003), p. 111.

[64] David Johnson, *Scottish Fiddle Music in the Eighteenth Century: A Music Collection and Historical Study*, 3rd edition (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2005), pp. 146–47.

[65] Johnson, *Music and Society*, pp. 119–20.

[66] Johnson, *Music and Society*, pp. 127–129.

[67] Johnson, *Music and Society*, p. 129.

## Reels, Jigs, Strathspeys, and Strathspey-Reels

A little background information about tune types – reels, strathspeys, and jigs – might be useful. Most Scottish traditional dance tunes are structured to be either sixteen bars or thirty-two bars. This follows the pattern of many dances, which are often described and taught in four- or eight-bar phrases that add up to thirty-two bars. The most common types of Scottish dance tunes are reels (notated in 4/4 or 2/2 metre), jigs (in 6/8 metre) and strathspeys (in 4/4 metre).[68] A thirty-two-bar jig or reel is often a repeated eight-bar A part (the first part of the tune), and then a repeated eight-bar B part (the second part of the tune), making a tune structure that is AABB (8+8+8+8). Strathspeys very often have an A part that is written as four bars, repeated, so the A part is played twice to make eight bars. The B part is usually written out as eight bars, with no repeat. To make a thirty-two-bar strathspey, then, musicians would need to play the tune twice through (AAB,AAB).[69]

Strathspeys very likely derived from reels, and they feel a bit like stretched-out reels at a slower tempo, with a dotted rhythm and characteristic 'Scots snaps' (the crisp 'long-short, short-long' rhythm that sounds pointed and angular).[70] Notation of the metre is usually 4/4 for strathspeys, and 'cut time' or 2/2 for reels, but this is often inconsistent in both printed and manuscript notations. As strathspeys became popular in the latter part of the eighteenth century, it was common to see in manuscripts and printed music a tune that looks like a reel,

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[68] For an explanation of reels and strathspeys, see Francis Collinson, 'Reel', *Grove Music Online* <https://doi-org.nls.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23050> [accessed 10 July 2019]; also 'Strathspey', *Grove Music Online* <https://doi-org.nls.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9871561592630.article.26909> [accessed 10 July 2019]. Collinson discusses the technique of the Scots snap characteristic of strathspeys in *The Traditional and National Music of Scotland* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 221.

[69] Dance deviser and dance master Hugh Foss describes the structure of reels and strathspeys and their relationship to dances popular in eighteenth-century Scotland in an essay, '#9, The Tune: Structure', one of a series of essays published as *Roll Back the Carpet: We Agree to Differ* ([n.p.]: Scottish National Dance Co., 1975), pp. 19–20. There is also a helpful explanation of reel, jig, and strathspey rhythms in J. P. Flett and T. M. Flett, *Traditional Dancing in Scotland* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 87–90.

[70] William Lamb discusses the origins of the strathspey and the strathspey-reel, relating them to dance, song, and Gaelic language. He shows examples of the strathspey rhythms in 'Reeling in the Strathspey: The Origins of Scotland's National Music', *Scottish Studies*, 36 (2013), 66–102 (pp. 67–68).

with no dotted notes at all, but with a notation 'Strathspey' somewhere in the title or next to it. Often these dual-identity tunes could be played either way, and it was (and is) common to play a strathspey version of the tune first, followed by a reel version of the tune. The fact that they are musical cousins might explain why many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reels had the same structure as a strathspey, and like strathspeys, were often played through twice.

An example of this strathspey-reel duality appears on page 89 of Dawson's tune book. Following a D minor strathspey called 'John Roy Stewart', he includes an untitled one also in D minor (see Figure 9). As Dawson notated it, it looks like a reel, with none of the dotted rhythms associated with a strathspey. As Iain Fraser pointed out in our discussion of the tune book, however, while it may be a strong strathspey, it also makes quite a commanding-sounding reel.[71] It is very likely that it is one of those 'strathspey-reel' tunes that can go either way, and Dawson's tune book has quite a number of them. Others include 'Lenox's Love to Blantyre', 'Reel of the Mearns', 'Because He Was a Bon[n]y Lad', and 'Banff Ladies'.

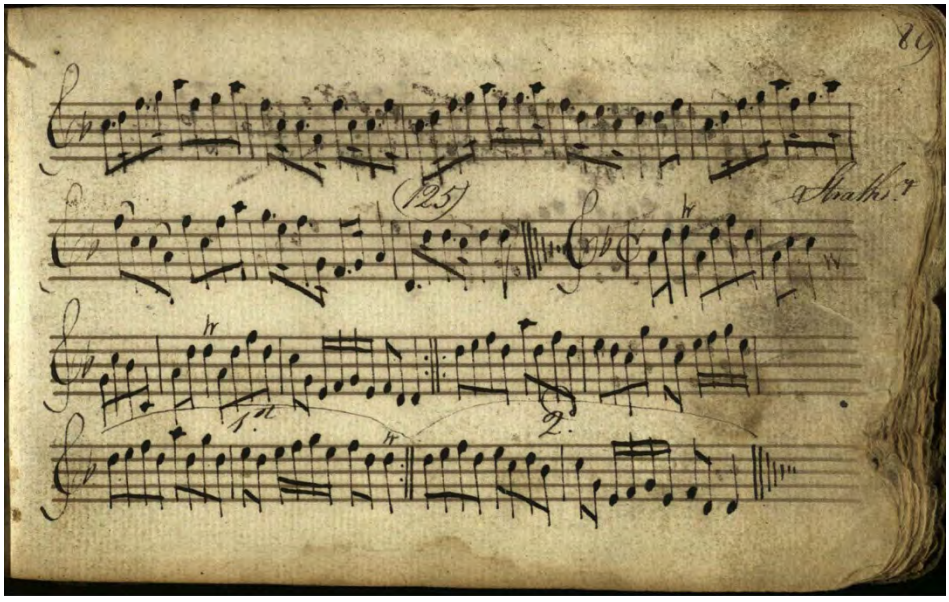

*Figure 9: Unnamed D minor strathspey-reel*

[71] Iain Fraser, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Fiddlers' Tune Books', EI2019.004, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 June 2019, 00:14:13.

Depending on the tune, it is not hard to turn some strathspeys into reels. 'Banff Ladies', shown in Figure 10, is an interesting example of this.

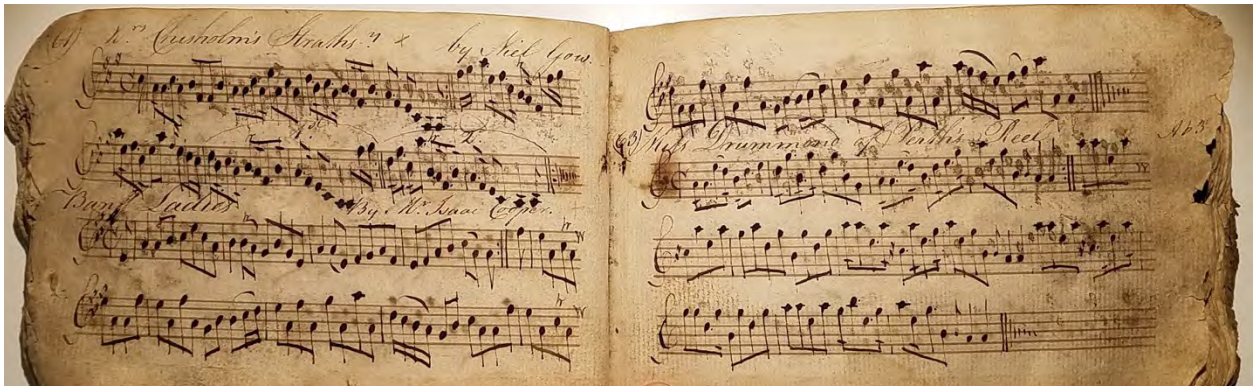

*Figure 10: 'Banff Ladies'*

Dawson notates 'Banff Ladies' as a reel in A major, and he attributes it to Isaac Cooper, a well-known musician-composer from Banff. He seems to have liked Cooper's tunes; he includes six Cooper compositions in his book. No tune called 'Banff Ladies', however, appears in either of Cooper's collections published in 1783 and 1806. Some research revealed an answer to this mystery: the tune was not written by Cooper. It actually appears to be a 'reel' version of a strathspey called 'Miss Bigg of Benton's', composed by Abraham Mackintosh and published in Mackintosh's collection in about 1800.[72] Mackintosh's strathspey is shown in Figure 11.

[72] Abraham Mackintosh, *A Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, Jigs, &c, Arranged as Medleys* (Newcastle: A. Mackintosh, [n.d.]), p. 22. I am very grateful to Ronnie Gibson for tracking down and identifying this tune, and for tracing its tangled genealogy, which might make an interesting study on its own.

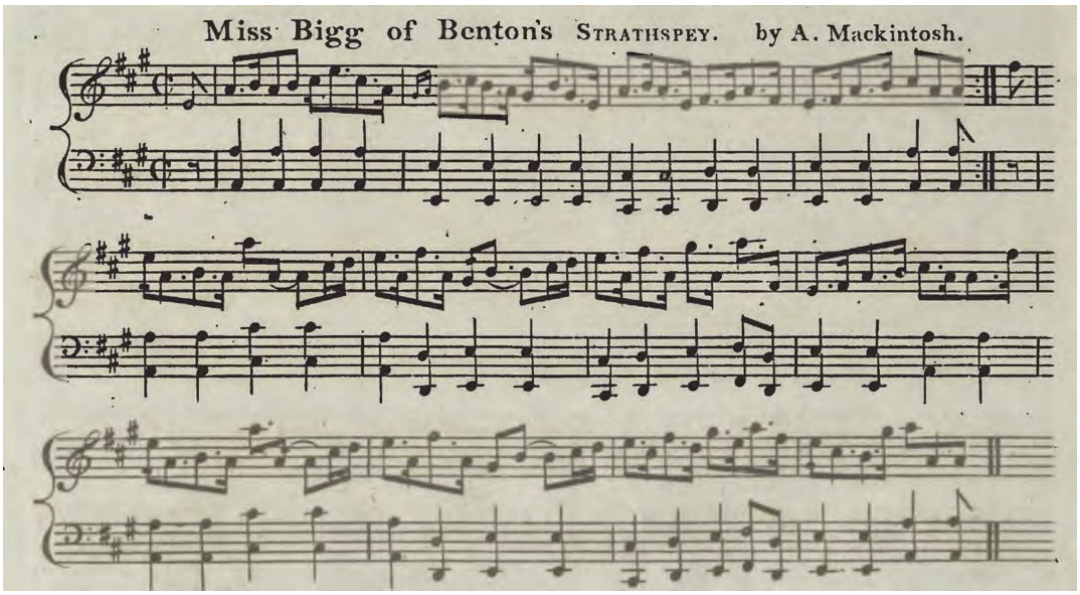


*Figure 11: The ancestor of 'Banff Ladies' – 'Miss Bigg of Benton's'*

Ronnie Gibson talks about the experience of first playing a strathspey and then moving into a driving reel, as a strathspey-reel medley:

> The thing is, it's part of this separation from the function of dancing to the repertoire in its own right, that the strathspey and the reel have come to be seen as two separate things. I mean, really, in performance, they're a single complex, so it's not the case that we're picking the strathspey and the reel – it is rooted in the dance practice where we go from the slower time to the [*inhales with a smile, gestures with both hands upward*] quicker time and – it's really exciting, it's like if you ever have to play a set of strathspeys, or even just a set of reels – it's nice! But you get that change from the strathspey to the reel and the [*inhales, smiles*] *energy!*[73]

That sense of moving from one mood into another with a breathtaking lift is an emotion many dance fiddlers feel when they are all musically conversing together. What Ronnie said resonated with me and brought up memories of being 'in the zone' or 'in the groove', as some dance fiddlers call it today. To describe this kind of feeling, Jeff Titon uses a term from

[73] Ronnie Gibson, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Tune Books and Fiddle Repertoire in Scotland', EI2019.001, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 1 April 2019, 00:32:45.

a phenomenological context, 'music-in-the-world'– the experience of completely losing sense of a separate self while playing with others.[74]

Besides reels and strathspeys, dance musicians working in Robert Dawson's time would have been asked to play other, quite different types of tunes for a variety of balls and less formal dances. A typical Scottish evening of dancing at a ball would include several country dances, a few quadrilles,[75] reels, jigs, and perhaps a waltz. Queen Victoria in her *Journal* wrote several descriptions of these evening dances, mentioning one that included a 'Perpetual Jig', which must have been a particularly energetic dance.[76] Musicians needed to have a wide repertoire and be comfortable with different dance styles, but by the 1850s, no longer needed as thorough a knowledge of classical ensemble arrangements. Robert Dawson may have been a musician who straddled musical worlds, but his tune book contains only Scottish traditional dance tunes. Judging from the contents of his collection, his repertoire might have allowed him to fit into a dance band quite easily.

## Dance Musician: Playing for Balls and Dances

Aberdeenshire in 1850 was blessed with excellent violinist-fiddlers like Willie Blair at Balmoral, Peter Milne in Tarland, Alexander Walker of Newe, Alexander (Sandy) Skinner (the older brother of James Scott Skinner), Forbes Morrison, Archibald Menzies, and Joseph Lowe, the dancing-master and teacher at Balmoral from 1852 to 1860. Unfortunately, there were many more whose names never made it to newspapers; in our interview, Iain Fraser

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[74] Jeff Todd Titon, 'Knowing Fieldwork,' *Shadows in the Field, New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, ed. by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 25–41 (p. 32).

[75] For an explanation of the quadrille, introduced after 1815, see Andrew Lamb, 'Quadrille', *Grove Music Online* <https://doi-org.nls.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.22622> [accessed 12 July 2019].

[76] Queen Victoria's *Journals*, Tuesday, 29 September 1857, quoted in Joseph Lowe, *A New Most Excellent Dancing Master: The Journal of Joseph Lowe's Visits to Balmoral and Windsor (1852–1860) to Teach Dance to the Family of Queen Victoria*, ed. by Allan Thomas (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992). p. 98.

commented, 'I guess we can't assume that every nineteenth-century fiddler's been documented'.[77] George Emmerson lists a dozen or so fiddlers who, as he said, 'before the days of recorded sound, could leave only a reputation'.[78]

Robert Dawson would very likely have known of these musicians; it is possible he even played with them in some of the small bands that were frequently asked to play for dances and balls. The everyday life of a freelance musician was not easy, however. A good picture of the status of an early nineteenth-century musician emerges in Thomas Wilson's *A Companion to the Ball Room*. Space only allows a short excerpt from a long, heartfelt essay in defence of 'Ball Room Musicians', but it will give a flavour of what life was often like:

> Their being considered as obliged to play for hire for their Employer's Amusement, they are frequently treated worse than their servants, and never, or seldom spoken too [*sic*], but in an imperious haughty manner, generally addressing them, and speaking of them, by the names of fiddlers, endeavouring thereby to shew a superior consequence in themselves […] Musicians are seldom payed for their playing, without their Employers complaining of the high price of their Labour […].[79]

Things had not improved much by the time Skinner was playing in the mid-nineteenth century. He describes playing for barn dances as a child in 1850 with Peter Milne, having to walk 'eight or ten weary miles' each way (carrying a bass) to play for a dance that went on until four in the morning.[80] Newspapers often published short articles about dinners and celebrations involving lengthy toasts (often fully transcribed) followed by eight or ten hours of dancing that went on until dawn. Joseph Lowe describes a fairly typical Balmoral Ball in

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[77] Iain Fraser, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Fiddlers' Tune Books', EI2019.004, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 June 2019, 00:03:05.

[78] Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String*, pp. 94–95.

[79] Thomas Wilson, *A Companion to the Ball Room, Containing a Choice Collection of the Most Original and Admired Country Dances, Reels, Hornpipes, Waltzes, and Quadrills[…] And a Dissertation on the State of the Ball Room* (London: D. Mackay, 1820), p. 233.

[80] Quoted at much more length in Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String*, p. 172. Skinner's series of articles originally appeared in the *People's Journal*, in 1923.

his journal entry for 20 September 1858. It reveals something about a musician's life and the demands of travelling and playing a Royal gig with three fellow musicians:

> Left Inverness with Mr Bushey, Balfour and Millar on the 19th September 1858 to play a Ball at Balmoral on the 20th. Got to Aberdeen for breakfast. It being Sunday, had to stop all day in Aberdeen, then took the train up Deeside to Banchory on the Monday morning and then the coach from Banchory to Balmoral. Got there by 3 o'clock, put our instruments into the orchestra then went to secure beds in the village. Got dressed and back to the Castle by nine o'clock. Went into the orchestra and tuned and waited till ten when the Royal Party came into the Ball Room. As they entered we played God Save the Queen. We were then asked to play a Quadrille, then followed a Reel to the bagpipes, then another Quadrille, then a Reel, then a Country Dance, a Reel to the bagpipes, an Irish Jig, then Sir Roger de Coverley which finished the Ball, we then went to the Stewards' Room and had a good supper and plenty of wine and then off to the village to bed.[81]

Lowe, originally from Brechin and employed by the Royal Family at Balmoral, attended balls even when he was not acting as dancing-master or musician. When he took the lead, it seems that things ran smoothly. He describes an evening at Balmoral when he was not assigned to be the band leader for a ball; musicians and another band leader from Aberdeen were asked to play for that occasion. The evening did not start or end well. Lowe arrived to discover that Queen Victoria had asked him to sit in with the band. The band leader, Mr Granty, was quite unhappy about that, but as Lowe said, 'I made friends with him, and went into the Orchestra amongst fourteen strangers and took my seat beside the Leader and played off the same book with him'. He describes 'a very trying situation' as he saw at the very first quadrille that his fellow players knew very little about playing music for quadrilles and country dances, did not know the tunes, and could not read well; he took the lead and saved the evening. Lowe abandons his usual straightforward, concise prose style as he writes this entry; he goes on for an entire page sketching the excruciating incompetence of most of the

[81] Lowe, *A New Most Excellent Dancing Master,* p. 107.

fourteen players but resisting the temptation to excoriate them. He ends that day's entry by writing,

> Of course the music was not at all effective and could not have given satisfaction and I felt very sorry that I had anything to do with it. I went in with the others to a capital supper and plenty of wine. I left them at it and got home to bed by two in the morning.[82]

Things did not always go smoothly at the Castle, but the food apparently was excellent.

Frank Thomson is an accordionist who lives in Aberdeen; he has played for Ghillies' Balls at Balmoral for about thirty-five years, in the same ballroom where Joseph Lowe would have played. I asked him about the programming for the dances and what his experience as a band leader had been like. He pulled out his mobile phone and showed me two photos of programmes, one from 1972 and the other from 1993:


*Figure 12: Programmes from Balmoral Ghillies' Balls in 1972 and 1993 (photos by Frank Thomson)*

Looking at the programmes, I could see that they were remarkably similar; I asked Frank about that.

[82] Lowe, *A New Most Excellent Dancing Master,* pp. 96–7.

> [Frank Thomson] Yes, and they're all very, very well-known dances, as you can see, so you can do it standing on your head, because you play these dances all the time.
>
> [Mara Shea] And those are all pretty much the same dances you showed me, the 1972 one –
>
> [FT] Yes, they're all the same. They haven't changed in thirty-five years, and I would suspect they will be the same now.[83]

No more quadrilles on today's programmes, but the 'South American' (samba) was popular in the 1970s – superseded in the 1990s by the foxtrot. However, a version of 'Strip the Willow', 'Eightsome Reel', and 'Dashing White Sergeant' could easily have been on a programme in 1850. Dr Patricia Ballantyne, a dance historian, lists some of the dance repertoire that might have been on mid-nineteenth-century ball programmes at Balmoral or various country houses and estates:

> Some of the popular country dances in the 1840s include Calver Lodge, Circassian Circle, Dashing White Sergeant (a longwise country dance, not like today's dance), Eightsome Reel (not like today's dance which did not appear until the 1870s), Flowers of Edinburgh, Fairy Dance, Haymakers Jig/Sir Roger de Coverley, Jenny Dang the Weaver, Kenmure's Up and Awa', Merry Lads of Ayr, Meg Merrilees, Morpeth Rant, My Love She's But a Lassie Yet, Rory O'More, Soldier's Joy, Speed the Plough and Triumph. Quadrilles – the most popular were Paine's and Lancers but by that time there were many. Dancing masters traded on teaching the latest quadrilles. They were very popular and I doubt that there would have been a dance anywhere that didn't include some.[84]

Was Robert Dawson a violinist who might have been asked to play at a formal ball at Balmoral or the estates nearby? Perhaps; he seems to have had the technical training for it, but his tune book is devoted to reels, strathspeys, and jigs that could be used for country dancing. What it does *not* contain are quadrille sets, waltzes, or arrangements for ballroom

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[83] Frank Thomson, 'Reminiscences of playing for Balmoral Ghillies' Balls Since the 1970s', EI2019.006, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 26 July 2019, 00:27:53.

[84] Email correspondence with Dr Patricia Ballantyne, 15 July 2019.

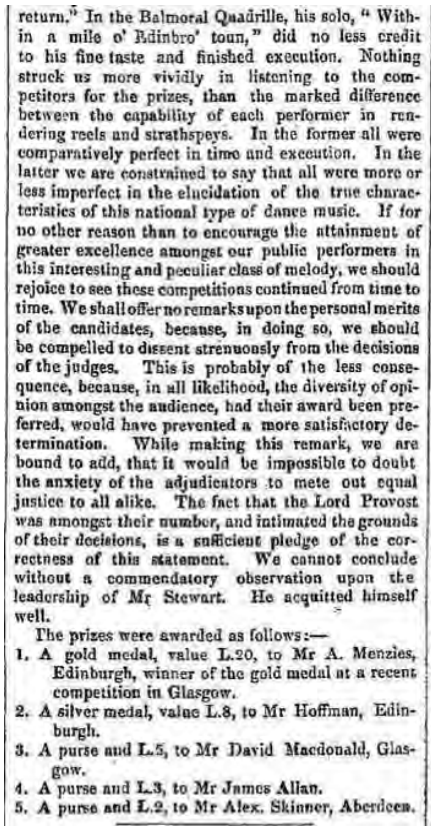
dances. Assuming that he could read music at the same level of ease as he could write it, if he were asked to play for a ball, he would likely have read from a book prepared for the musicians in the band, or perhaps, as Frank Thomson suggested, played from memory, and from a familiar repertoire:

> [MS] So, as the band leader, are you invited as a band, or do you get the invitation to 'would you have a band' and then you select people?
>
> [FT] I select the people I would normally play with, who are known to me, and they're musicians – we can sit down and play without having to read music all night.[85]

Robert Dawson may have been able to play many tunes he had learned well and did not need written music for. Being able to play without relying on sheet music is a useful skill for any musician who needs to be flexible and fit in musically with a group of other players. It would also have been a necessary skill for violinist-fiddlers who wanted to participate in the competitions that were gaining popularity in the mid-nineteenth century.

## Competitor: Solo Playing

Along with playing for balls and dances, taking part in competitions was another way violinist-fiddlers could not only show that they could convincingly play the 'national music', but they could earn some money as well. The prizes and medals for the top competitors would have been an attractive goal for violinists (see Figure 13).



return." In the Balmoral Quadrille, his solo, "Within a mile o' Edinbro' toun," did no less credit to his fine taste and finished execution. Nothing struck us more vividly in listening to the competitors for the prizes, than the marked difference between the capability of each performer in rendering reels and strathspeys. In the former all were comparatively perfect in time and execution. In the latter we are constrained to say that all were more or less imperfect in the elucidation of the true characteristics of this national type of dance music. If for no other reason than to encourage the attainment of greater excellence amongst our public performers in this interesting and peculiar class of melody, we should rejoice to see these competitions continued from time to time. We shall offer no remarks upon the personal merits of the candidates, because, in doing so, we should be compelled to dissent strenuously from the decisions of the judges. This is probably of the less consequence, because, in all likelihood, the diversity of opinion amongst the audience, had their award been preferred, would have prevented a more satisfactory determination. While making this remark, we are bound to add, that it would be impossible to doubt the anxiety of the adjudicators to mete out equal justice to all alike. The fact that the Lord Provost was amongst their number, and intimated the grounds of their decisions, is a sufficient pledge of the correctness of this statement. We cannot conclude without a commendatory observation upon the leadership of Mr Stewart. He acquitted himself well.

The prizes were awarded as follows:—

1. A gold medal, value L.20, to Mr A. Menzies, Edinburgh, winner of the gold medal at a recent competition in Glasgow.
2. A silver medal, value L.8, to Mr Hoffman, Edinburgh.
3. A purse and L.5, to Mr David Macdonald, Glasgow.
4. A purse and L.3, to Mr James Allan.
5. A purse and L.2, to Mr Alex. Skinner, Aberdeen.

*Figure 13: Article from the Caledonian Mercury, 27 March 1856, p. 3*

[85] Frank Thomson, 'Reminiscences of Playing for Balmoral Ghillies' Balls Since the 1970s', EI2019.006, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 26 July 2019, 00:27:26.

Some newspaper opinion pieces and reviews of the time speak quite critically not only about the technical ability of the players, but also their interpretation of what the writer perceived as a 'national style'. In the *Caledonian Mercury*[86] article shown in Figure 13 on page 44, the author points out that while the reels were played perfectly, the strathspeys – an 'interesting and peculiar class of melody' – fell short of his expectations. The strathspey, unique to Scotland, had perhaps emerged as a more eloquent national music than the European music that had prevailed for decades.[87]

Few articles appearing in newspapers in the 1850s mention which tunes were played in competitions or solo performances. However, on the front page of *The Perthshire Advertiser* from 10 January 1856, the announcement for a 'Grand Festival of Scottish Music' lists under 'Reels and Strathspeys' the following tunes that would be played by soloists on the programme for 16 January 1856:

> *First Set of Reels and Strathspeys:* Dainty Davie – Cameronian Rant – Lady Doune – I'll gang nae mair to yon Town – John Roy Stewart – Sir David Hunter Blair.
>
> *Second Set of Reels and Strathspeys:* Tullochgorum – Flora McDonald – Miss Drummond of Perth – Merry Lads of Ayr.[88]

All these tunes but one, 'Tullochgorum', are in Dawson's tune book. 'I'll Gang Nae Mair', 'Dainty Davie', and 'Sir David Hunter Blair' all appear next to each other over two pages. Several tunes on that programme seem to have fallen out of favour; rarely does anyone now play 'Dainty Davie' or 'Lady Doune' in country dances or in sessions. They appear in many

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[86] *The Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh), 27 March 1856, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000045/18560327/009/0003?browse=False> [accessed 12 July 2019].

[87] William Lamb discusses the origin and development of the strathspey in 'Reeling in the Strathspey: The Origins of Scotland's National Music', *Scottish Studies: The Journal of the School of Scottish Studies*, University of Edinburgh, 36 (2011-2013), 66–102 (pp. 67–68).

[88] *The Perthshire Advertiser and Strathmore Journal*, January 10, 1856, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000458/18560110/002/0001?browse=False> [accessed 13 July 2019].

nineteenth-century collections, however, and they were in Dawson's repertoire, perhaps suggesting that he might have played them at competitions.

The very last tune in the book, on page 144, may have been a competition piece as well. It does not appear in Dawson's chart that lists pages organised by keys at the beginning of the book, so the tune may possibly have been added to the book later. It is a tune in an Isaac Cooper collection, called 'The Millar of Drone Altered by Mr I. Cooper'. Mary Anne Alburger discusses the original, unaltered 'Millar of Drone', composed by Nathaniel Gow.[89] Gow's version is shown in Figure 14.

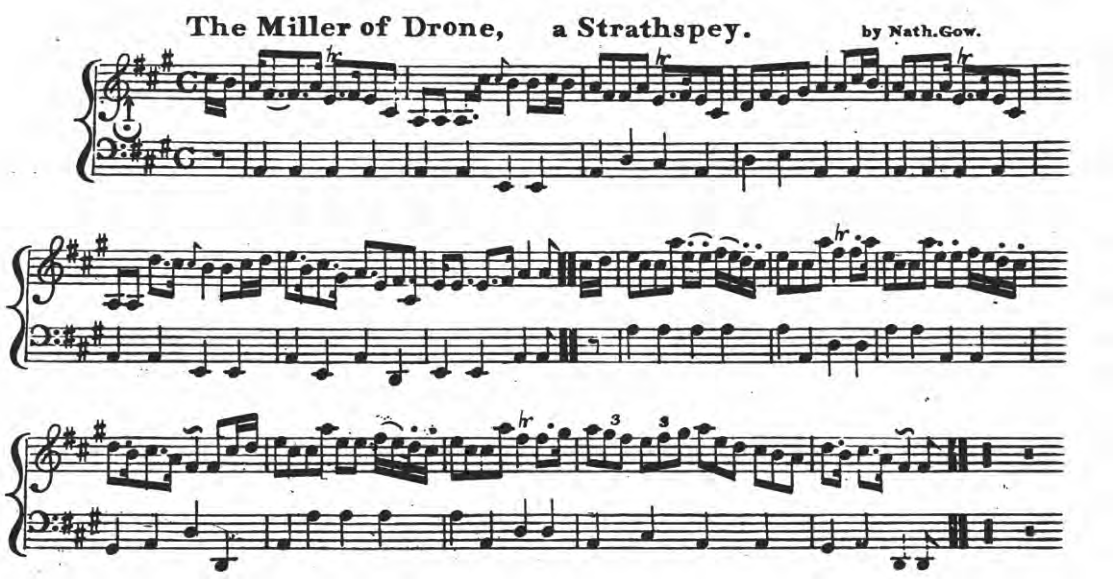


*Figure 14: 'The Millar of Drone' (Gow)*

Cooper added a number of elaborate, virtuosic ornaments to Gow's tune in his 'altered' version, making it more of a performance or concert piece (see Figure 15), and Dawson copied this verbatim – except for two Scots snaps – into his tune book, including Cooper's grace notes, bowings, and articulations (see Figure 16). This, and the fact that he included a half-dozen of Cooper's compositions in his tune book, may indicate that he had

[89] Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers*, p. 131. The tune appears in Gow's *A Complete Repository of Slow Strathspeys and Dances*, ed. by Niel and Nathaniel Gow, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Purdie, 1799, 1802, 1806, 1817), II: *A Complete Repository of Scots Tunes, Strathspeys, Jigs, and Dances* (1802), p. 25.

access to a Cooper collection, or perhaps that he was able to see a piece of sheet music with Cooper's version of 'Millar of Drone'. If he was inclined to play solo, and to perform in public, he may have thought to use it as a concert piece.

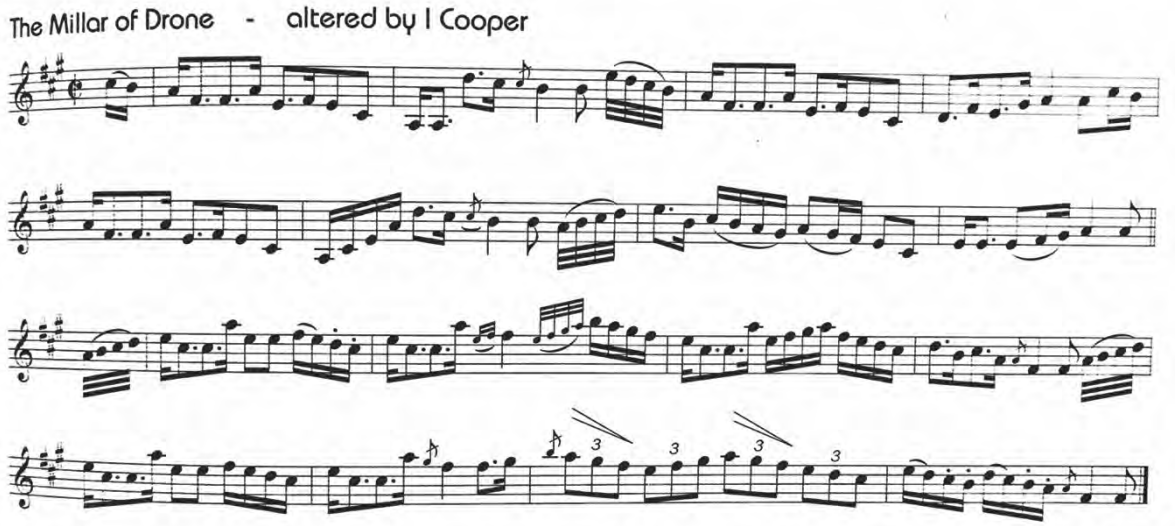


*Figure 15: 'The Millar of Drone – Altered by I Cooper' (Cooper)*[90]

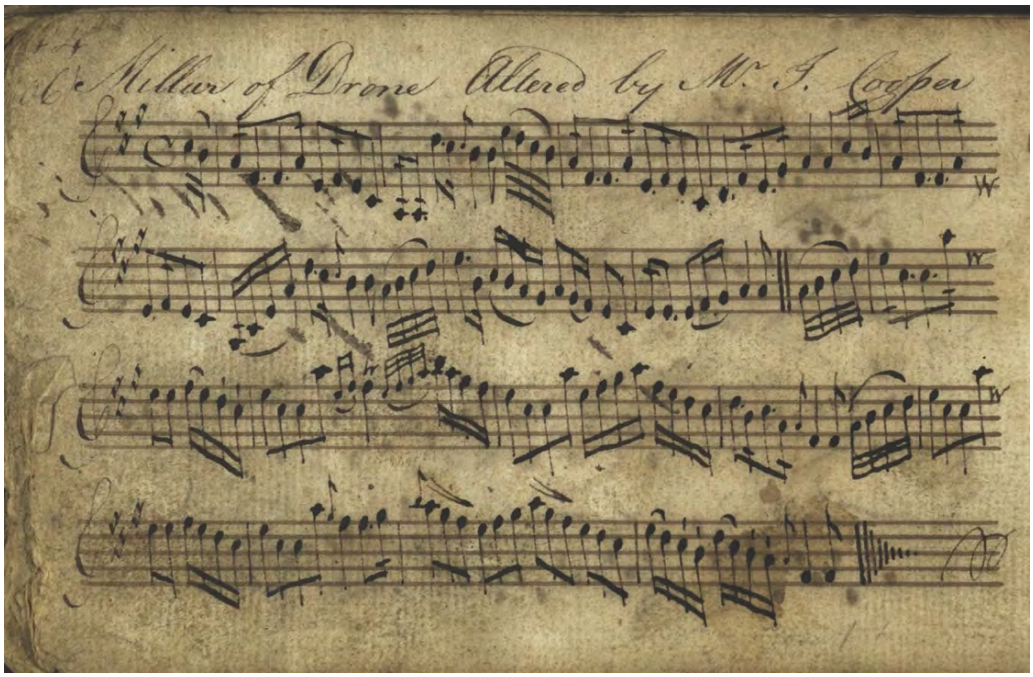


*Figure 16: 'Millar of Drone Altered by Mr I. Cooper' (Dawson)*

[90] Cooper, Isaac, *Thirty New Strathspey Reels for the Violin or Harpsichord Composed by Isaac Cooper* (1783). Published in *Highland Collections: The Music of Seven 18th and 19th Century Fiddler-Composers from the Highlands of Scotland* (Inverness: Highland Music Trust, 2005), p. 65.

A verbal account of a possible solo performance by Robert Dawson comes from Dr Sheila Sedgwick, who at age ninety-five has been the local historian for the area of Aberdeenshire around Ballater for more than thirty years. Having had many years of opportunity as an archivist to read documents and records belonging to Invercauld and Balmoral Castles, she remembers reading in the Balmoral records some years ago about a 'big musical evening' at the castle in the 1870s, when 'one of the Dawsons' played the violin for Queen Victoria. She says, 'I know he went and he was invited again because it was so…pleasing to her'.[91] As Dr Sedgwick recalls, one of the pieces played was the song 'Will Ye No Come Back Again'. If it was Robert Dawson who played, he apparently played well enough to please the Queen – and to come back again.

## Teacher: Passing Along Musical Skill and Tradition

Teaching would be another way for a violinist-fiddle player to make a living. Robert Dawson was James Thomson's teacher, although we do not know for how long. His role as a teacher may have influenced his organisation of the tune book. It is quite possible that the tune book was his primary teaching tool for James, and that he gave the book to James to work from. James wrote his own name in it in several pages, and on one it looks as if Dawson may have written James' name as well (see Figure 17 and Figure 18).

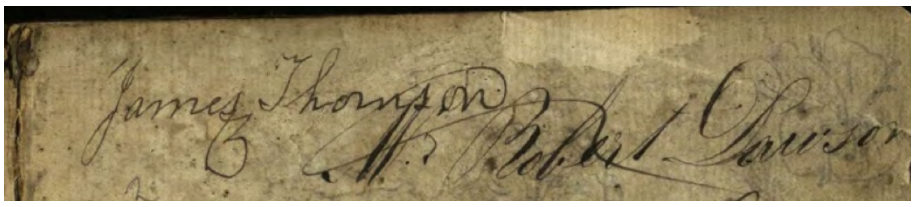

*Figure 17: James Thomson's possible signature*

[91] Dr Sheila Sedgwick, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Deeside, Aberdeenshire', EI2019.002, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 23 January 2019, 00:04:50. The Balmoral records that Dr Sedgwick refers to have not yet been located.

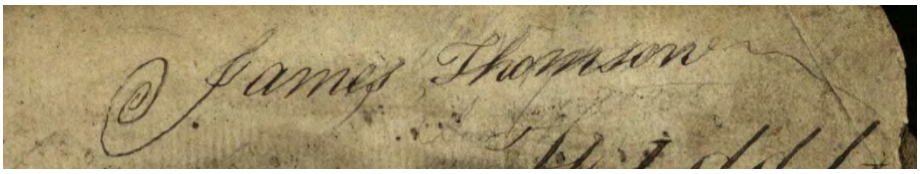


*Figure 18: James Thomson's name, perhaps in Dawson's handwriting*

**Organising the Book as a Teaching Tool – The 'Keys' Chart**

As a teacher, Dawson may have assembled his tunes with a strategy in mind, perhaps harking back to an earlier era. William Marshall's 1822 collection of original compositions contains a large number of tunes in less-common keys, particularly flat keys. Alburger mentions a well-known anecdote about Marshall, in which he responded to criticism that some of his tunes were too technically difficult to play: 'his answer was that he did not write music for bunglers, and as all his tunes could be played, he advised them to practice more, and become better players'.[92] Perhaps Dawson wanted to encourage his students not to play like bunglers, and to tackle more technically difficult scales and keys.

Dawson's tune book may also have been an attempt to emulate published books of music, which were often organised with groups of tunes in the same key appearing together. This method of organisation is easier to achieve in print, however, than in a bound manuscript book where tunes are added sporadically.

In Dawson's book, tunes do appear in groups by key, but that is not the rule throughout. He does not arrange the tunes by any easily discernible pattern – not by alphabetical order, level of difficulty, or tune type. He seems not to have made a list of its contents; at least there is no evidence of one. The binding, although extremely well-worn, still holds the pages together with apparently none missing. In place of a list of contents, a

[92] Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers*, p. 84.

chart entitled ‘Keys’ appears at the front of the tune book, suggesting he might look for tunes by their key, not by the type of tune or by title (see Figure 19).

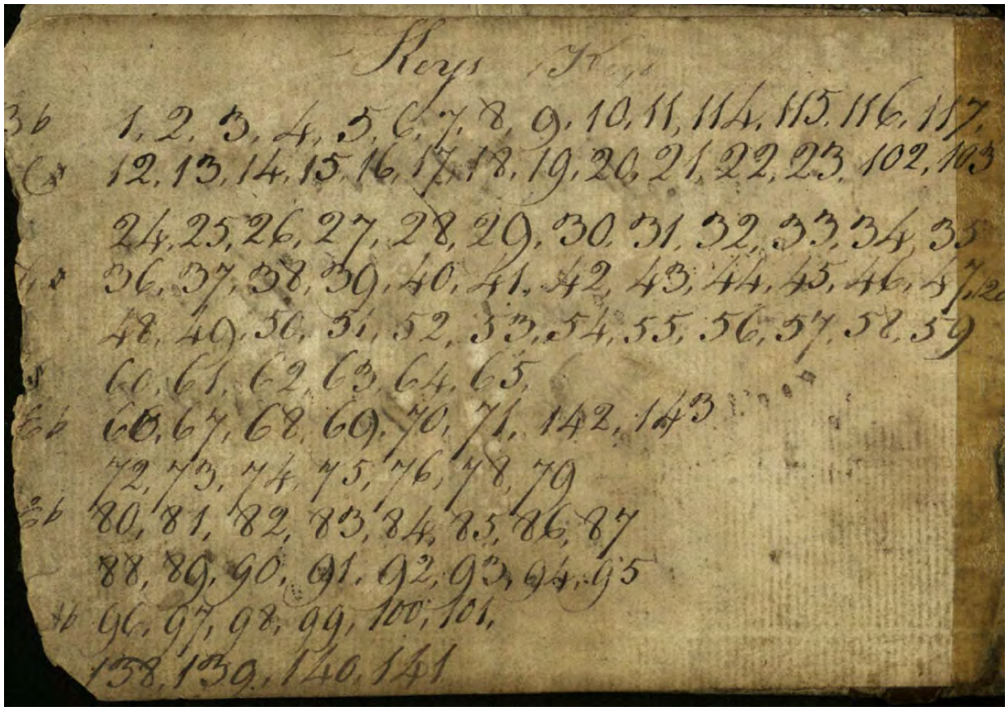


*Figure 19: Dawson’s chart of page numbers by key*

In looking more closely at the ‘Keys’ chart, I realised it holds more mysteries than I had initially thought. It is not a straightforward listing of page numbers by key. Some of the pertinent information has been worn away at the left side of the page, but it looks as if Dawson was listing the notes in each scale that would be technically troublesome because of intonation and fingering (C minor would need A flats, B flat and G minor would need E flats, etc.). He begins at the top of the page with the key of F, which has a B flat and is often avoided by fiddle players who struggle with intonation. In general (there are exceptions), moving from left to right on each line, his page numbers seem to follow a progression through scales having the same root note (like A for an A major scale) that have no unexpected sharps or flats (accidentals), followed on the same line by page numbers with tunes that do have accidentals. As a fiddle teacher myself, I wondered if this method was a

way to lead a student to understand how a left-hand finger must move backward or forward to achieve the right intonation for modal scales such as mixolydian (a major scale with a flatted seventh) or dorian (a natural minor scale with a raised sixth). This would suggest Dawson was familiar with alternate scales, or modes, that do not follow the usual rules. Another slight puzzle occurs after page 103, when he omits two large chunks of page numbers (#104–113 and #118–137) from his chart, perhaps because they are yet more tunes in D, A, and F major (he has many tunes in those keys early in the book); it looks like he simply ran out of space on the lines to list any more.

The keys chart suggests to me that the tune book was very likely a way to teach music in various scales, and to make a student aware of notes that change the key, and therefore the sound or musical colour of the tune. Playing in flat keys was (and sometimes still is) avoided by elementary players; providing a trove of tunes in F major, B flat major, G minor, and C minor would increase a student's technical ability and improve intonation.

**Teaching Intonation and Technique**

The largest groupings of tune keys at the beginning of Dawson's tune book are F, D, C, A, and G major. The next sizeable chunk is in B flat and several other flat keys like G minor and C minor. Table 1 shows the distribution of tunes in Dawson's tune book by their key and type. Blue-shaded rows are the flat keys (using one, two, or three flats) that many fiddle players avoid. About a third of all the tunes in his book are in flat keys.

| Key | Strathspeys | Reels | Jigs | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A major or A mixolydian | 14 | 14 | 4 | **32** |
| A minor | 3 | 1 | 0 | **4** |
| B flat major | 11 | 9 | 0 | **20** |
| B minor | 0 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| C major | 7 | 7 | 1 | **15** |
| C minor | 2 | 3 | 0 | **5** |
| D major | 23 | 19 | 4 | **46** |
| D minor | 1 | 1 | 0 | **2** |
| E minor | 1 | 3 | 0 | **4** |
| F major | 12 | 14 | 2 | **28** |
| G major | 5 | 10 | 5 | **20** |
| G minor | 3 | 2 | 0 | **5** |
| **Totals** | **82** | **84** | **16** | **182** |

*Table 1: Distribution of tunes by type and key*

If Dawson was indeed using this book to teach from, he was working hard to instil a good sense of intonation and precision in his students, and he was challenging them. As Iain Fraser said when we talked about the tunes and Dawson's training:

> The fact that there are some tunes that are written in flat keys makes me think that he was a pretty good fiddle player, and he may not always have been playing for dancing, but maybe, actually just playing, like a performance on stage.[93]

Later in our conversation, as we looked through the tune book at specific tunes, I asked Iain if he thought that Dawson might have been taught as a classical violinist. He thought for a moment before he answered:

[93] Iain Fraser, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Fiddlers' Tune Books', EI2019.004, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 June 2019, 00:07:35.

> It feels like that's a reasonable kind of assumption to make, just from the detail. It doesn't feel like it's just a vague, just slapped something down little aide-memoire, it's more detailed.[94]

Being comfortable with more difficult keys, noting things like critical bowings, dynamics, and ornaments (see Figure 20, for example) – these characteristics point to someone who had a good teacher, and who wanted to pass along that technique to others.

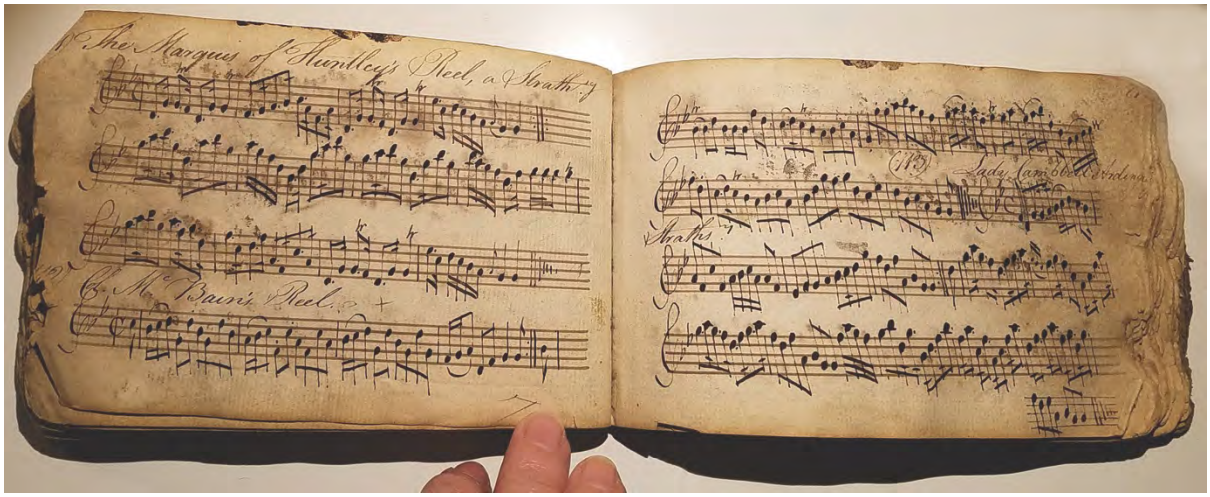


*Figure 20: Example of ornamentation and bowings*

## How Robert Dawson Structured His Book

Although he was a teacher, Dawson did not structure this tune book as a method book, that is, progressing from easy to difficult pieces. He seems to have been more interested in repertoire, and the use of less common scales and keys. It would appear that he did not use the book to actually read or perform from; tunes flow over pages, often requiring page turns. In creating his book, he numbered the pages before he wrote in the tunes, and also assigned tune numbers before writing in the tunes. The reason for writing in tune numbers at the start is unclear, unless he was thinking he would be copying down tunes all of the same length;

[94] Iain Fraser, 'Interview about Nineteenth-century Fiddlers' Tune Books', EI2019.004, Elphinstone Institute Archives, 20 June 2019, 00:13:04.

this strategy failed him when he encountered tunes of more than the usual two parts, as in the pages shown in Figure 21.

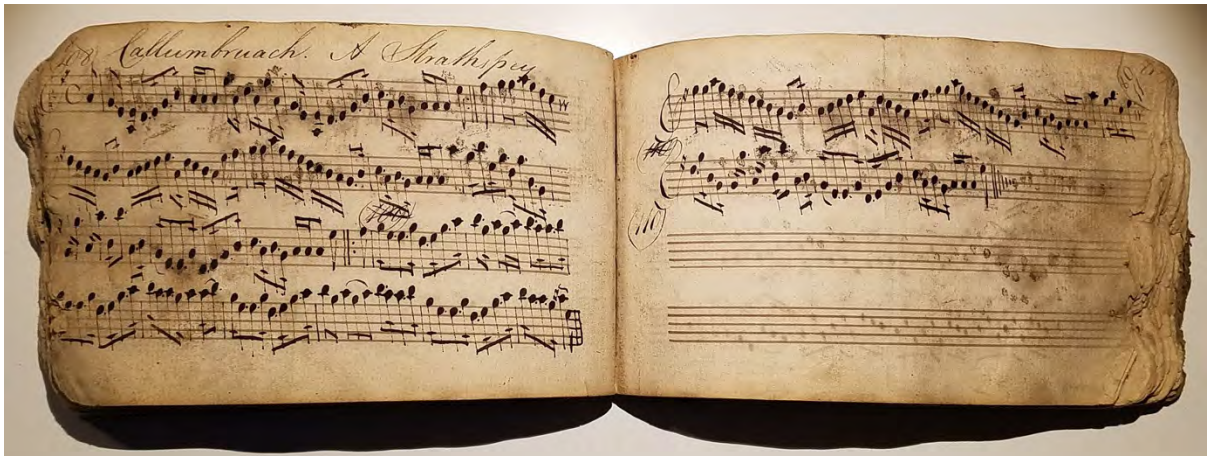


*Figure 21: 'Callumbruach', a four-part tune, possibly copied from an edition of Isaac Cooper's Collection from about 1806*

'Callumbruach', numbered 108, has four parts. Dawson had to scratch out his original number 109 in the center of the page to continue the third and fourth parts of the melody, and even then he underestimated. The tune needed to spread into the space allotted for tune number 110. He had already written 110, scratched that out, and then re-wrote 110 after he had completed the transcription of 'Callumbruach'. Consequently, there are no tunes numbered 109 or 110 in the book.

'Callumbruach' is a tune with versions seen in other collections, including Isaac Cooper's.[95] The spelling of its Gaelic title has many variants. Cooper spells it 'Callembruach' and Dawson substitutes a 'u' for the 'e'. However, Dawson's transcription is identical to that in the Cooper collection, including the bowings and ornaments. This might be a clue that he was using his tune book to help him learn tunes that looked or sounded interesting.

[95] Isaac Cooper, *Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, and Irish Jigs* (Edinburgh: J. Johnson, c. 1806), p. 11. A digitised copy of the original book is available for download from National Library of Scotland digital archives at <https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/archive/102743151> [accessed 19 June 2019].

Beyond grouping tunes so he could find tunes in certain keys or to help a student learn how to play well in more difficult scales, there may be an aesthetic factor in this organisation scheme, as well, that harks back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the Gow *Collections*, Nathaniel Gow has placed a note at the top of pages where medleys of strathspeys and reels appear:

> The following are a choice collection of the best original Scotch Dances arranged as Medleys, a Strathspey and Reel following alternately in their respective keys, as the frequent changing the Key more or less has been found to offend the Ear.[96]

If the idea of changing keys between tunes was considered offensive to an early nineteenth-century ear, and if Dawson had a copy of Gow's *Repository*, it is possible he absorbed that idea even if it dated from several decades earlier. In contrast, today's musicians often like to create sets of tunes that travel through a range of keys.

## Older Tunes and Variants

Many of the tunes in Dawson's collection seem to have fallen out of favour today, or perhaps never really became popular enough to appear in major collections. 'Dunnichen House' is a little-known tune in Archibald Duff's collection from 1794. Robert Dawson copies it verbatim into his tune book, as he did with 'Callumbruach'. Archibald Duff's collection may have been easily accessible to Dawson, as Duff was from Montrose and lived in Aberdeen for some time. Figure 22 shows 'Dunnichen House' in Duff's printed collection, and Figure 23 shows Dawson's identical transcription.

[96] This note occurs wherever pages of medleys occurred in the Gow collections, for example, on page 8 of the *Repository of the Dance Music of Scotland, Part 1* (1799), and on page 21 of the *Repository, Part 4* (1817). They are downloadable from <https://imslp.org/wiki/Gow's_Repository_of_the_Dance_Music_of_Scotland_(Gow%2C_Niel)> [accessed 16 July 2019].

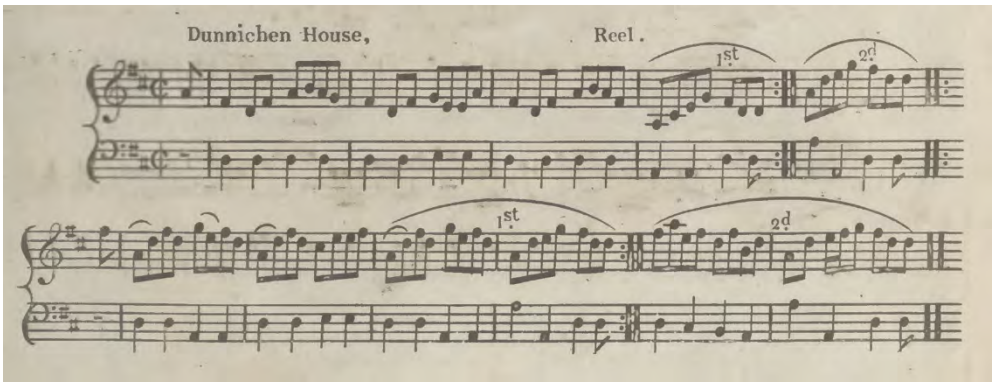


*Figure 22: 'Dunnichen House', from Archibald Duff's collection (1794)*

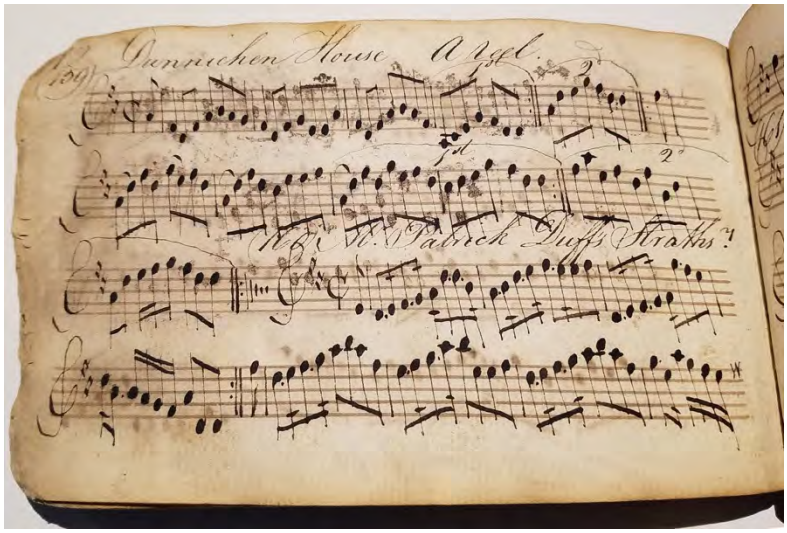


*Figure 23: 'Dunnichen House', from Dawson's tune book*

Other less-known tunes in the Duff collection that appear in Dawson's tune book and are remarkably similar to Duff's versions are 'Miss Burnett of Fasque's Strathspey', 'Miss Ross of Rossie's Strathspey,' and 'Miss Thom's Reel', all composed by Archibald Duff. 'Miss Thom's' may be an example of haste in copying on Dawson's part. In his transcription, he indicates the tune in D, but it clearly is meant to be in G; the tune is also missing notes in beats 3 and 4 of bar 2. Duff's version has the key and the notes correctly written. Dawson's 'Miss Burnett of Fasque's Strathspey' is identical to Duff's version except for the penultimate bar of the second strain, or B part. Where Dawson has four notes written as quavers for beats 1 and 2, Duff has made them dotted rhythms, the first beat being a Scots

snap (semiquaver-dotted quaver, dotted quaver-semiquaver). For this very slight variation, it is possible that Dawson neglected to make the dotted rhythms, or that he simply preferred his rhythmic variation.[97]

A tune in Dawson's book that caught my interest is called 'Is Your Graith in Order', apparently a straightforward sixteen-bar strathspey in D major. Dawson calls it 'An old Strathspey' when he writes its title (Figure 24).

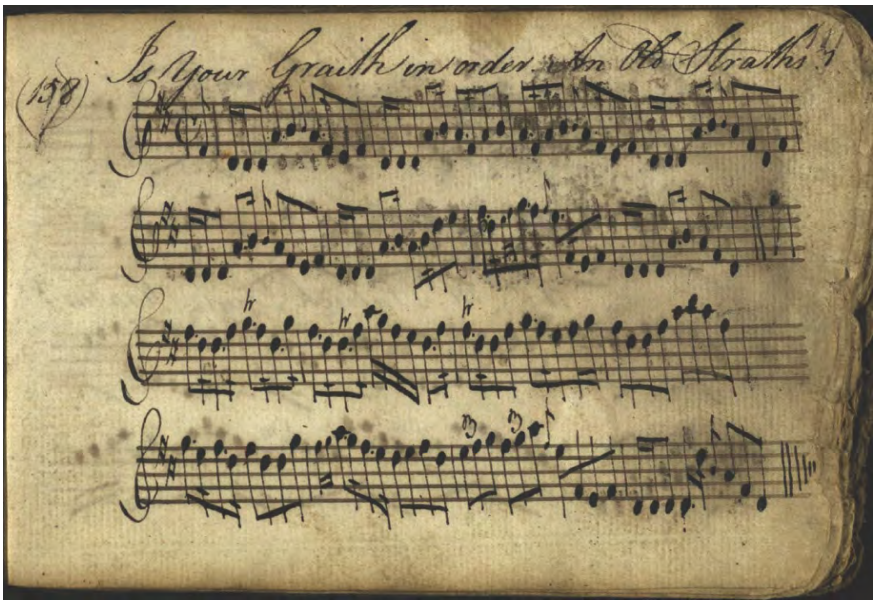


*Figure 24: 'Is Your Graith in Order' (Dawson)*

It is quite straightforward in Dawson's book. When compared to versions published by Davie or Gow, however (see Figure 25 and Figure 26), it becomes obvious that Dawson's might serve a different purpose:

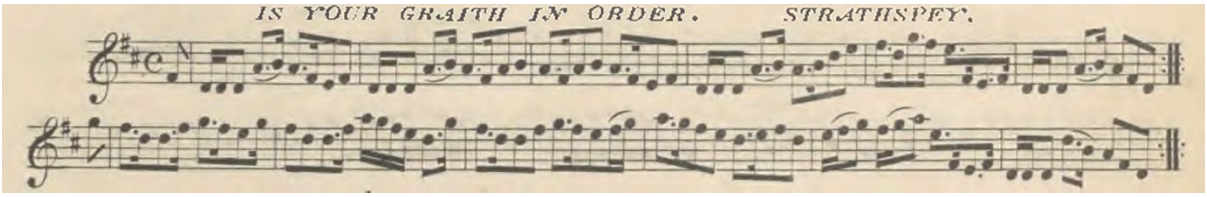


*Figure 25: 'Is Your Graith in Order' (Davie)*

[97] As a historical note, Miss Burnett of Fasque was a subscriber to Archibald Duff's published collection.

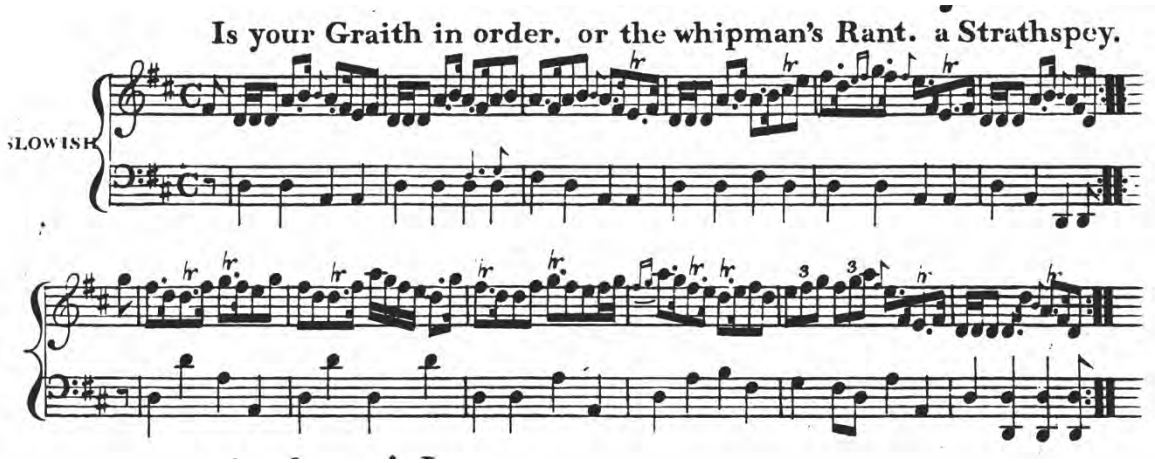


*Figure 26: 'Is Your Graith in Order' (Gow)*

Davie's and Gow's versions are in six-bar phrases in both the first and second strains (the first and second halves of the tune).[98] Dawson has rewritten his version to be in the more expected eight-bar phrases. Jimmie Hill, a dance historian and Scottish country dance teacher in Edinburgh, pointed me to Thomas Wilson's *Companion to the Ball Room*, published in 1820, where a possible answer might lie:

> A *Strain* is that part of an Air terminated by a double Bar, and usually consists, in Country Dances, of four, eight, or sixteen single Bars ; sometimes it contains twelve Bars. In Cotillions, we find occasionally *Strains* of Six Bars ; but this latter *Strain* is extremely unfit for a Country Dance Figure.[99] [italics in source]

If 'Is Your Graith in Order' was played for the kind of dance called a cotillion, the six-bar phrasing could be appropriate; it is possible that Robert Dawson took the 'old Strathspey' and crafted it to fit a country dance, which needed eight-bar strains. It is also possible that he learned it that way from other musicians who played it for country dances and wrote it in his tune book as an unusual variant.

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[98] Davie's *Caledonian Repository*, III, p. 83; Gow's *Complete Repository*, I, p. 4.

[99] Thomas Wilson, *A Companion to the Ball Room,* p. xi. I am grateful to Jimmie Hill for his insight into this tune.

## Country Dance Tunes

At least two dozen of the tunes in Dawson's book are country dance tunes that were popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many of these tunes exist in other collections, often as slightly different variations. For example, a tune called 'Through the Wood of Fivie' (as spelled by Dawson) is used for a dance devised by John Young in 1740; it appears in several collections, including a manuscript copy of William Christie's collection, dated 1820 (see Figure 27).[100]

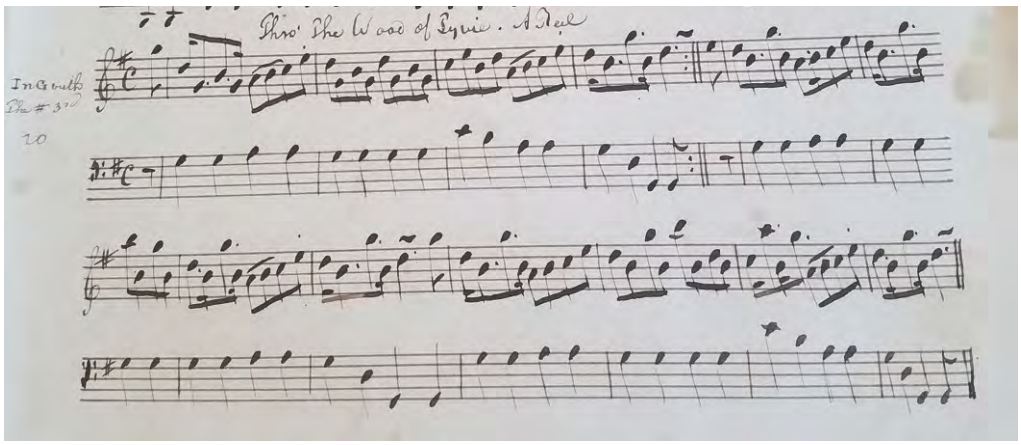


*Figure 27: 'Thro' The Wood of Fyvie - A Reel' (Christie)*

Christie's version is in G major, with enough Scots snaps to suggest that it could easily be played as a strathspey. The tune also appears in J. T. Surenne's 1851 collection, in G major, with very similar notation to Christie's, with some piano fingerings and articulations marked (Figure 28).[101]

[100] Music manuscript book containing chiefly Scots music and formerly owned by William Christie, Marnoch, Banffshire, folio 5 (National Library of Scotland, MS 21771).

[101] *The Dance Music of Scotland*, arranged and edited by J. T. Surenne, 6th edition (Edinburgh: Wood and Co., 1851), p. 64. Downloadable from the National Library of Scotland at <https://digital.nls.uk/special-collections-of-printed-music/archive/91239396> [accessed 5 July 2019], or in newly typeset notation from the Highland Music Trust at <https://www.heallan.com/surenne.asp> [accessed 23 July 2019].

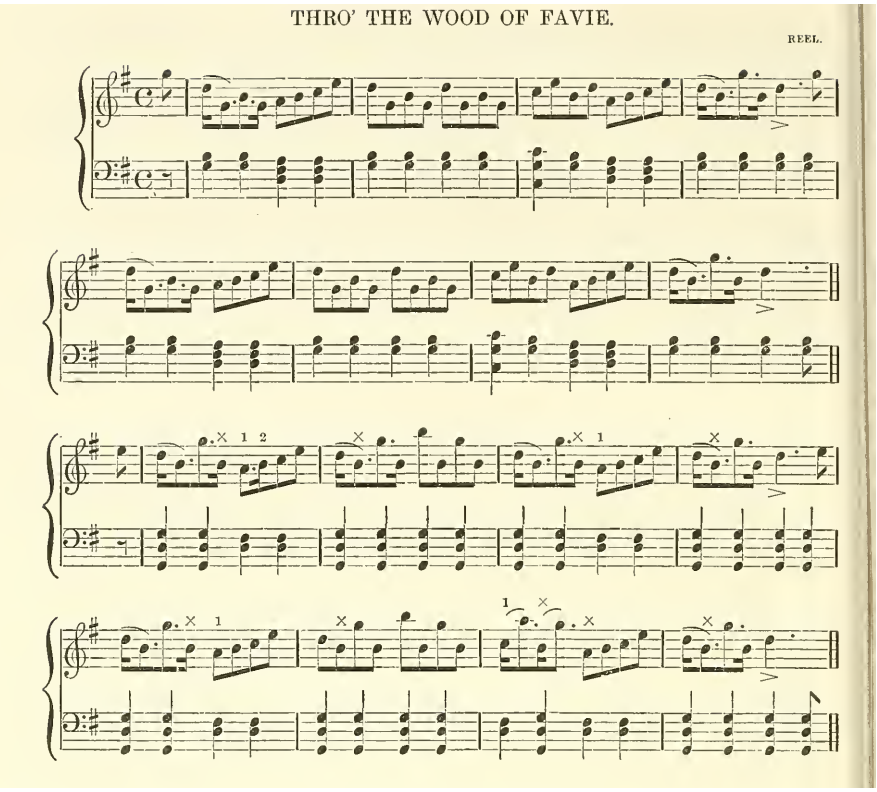


*Figure 28: 'Thro' the Wood of Favie' (Surenne, 1851)*

In contrast, Dawson's version, shown in Figure 29, is in A major, with no snaps, but different ornaments (like the 'triplet' in the very first beat – two semiquavers and a quaver). Besides putting the tune in a different key, he makes a few other changes. He alters the ending of the first phrase and rewrites it in a hand-drawn musical staff above the corrected bar. He also suggests a bowing quite different to what Surenne marked in his version. He makes several other corrections to his original transcription, perhaps not quite as neatly as he did in the first line, but still readable. The number of corrections might suggest that he learned the tune aurally, and then found a different version of it and wrote in changes later.

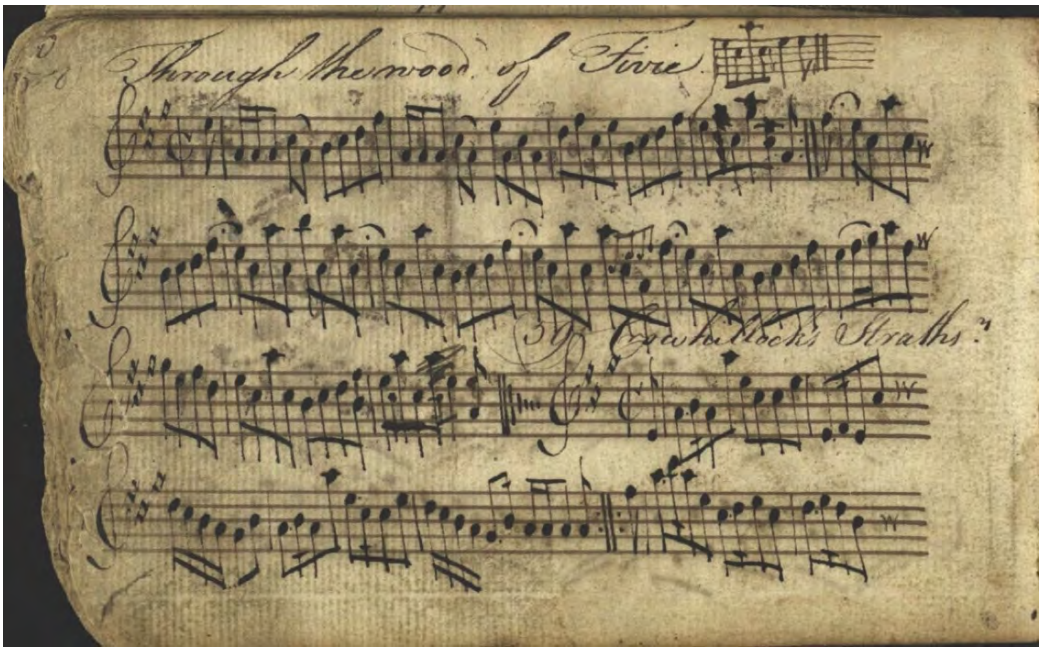


*Figure 29: 'Through the Wood of Fivie' (Dawson)*

Dawson often transcribed his tunes in a key different to versions in other collections. One of them, a jig called 'The Irish Girl', appears twice, once in G and once in A. The reason for this is unclear; he might have heard a tune played, without having sheet music to learn from, and mentally put it in another key when he put it to paper some time afterwards. He may even have preferred it in the key he chose, or the tune might resemble another tune he knew in a different key. In the case of 'Through the Wood of Fivie', a very close musical cousin called 'Keep the Country Bonny Lassie' appears in several well-known books: for example, Robert Bremner's, Robert Petrie's *Second Collection* (1796), and Part 2 of the Gows' *Complete Repository*.[102] All three collections –Bremner, Petrie, and Gow – have 'Keep the Country' in A major, as Dawson does in 'Through the Wood of Fivie'.

[102] *A Collection of Scots Reels or Country Dances*, ed. by Robert Bremner (London: Bremner, 1757), p. 32; Robert Petrie, *A Second Collection of Strathspey Reels &c for Pianoforte, Violin, and Violincello* (Edinburgh: Walker, 1796), p. 12; and *A Complete Repository of Slow Strathspeys and Dances*, ed. by Niel and Nathaniel Gow, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Purdie, 1799, 1802, 1806, 1817), II: *A Complete Repository of Scots Tunes, Strathspeys, Jigs, and Dances* (1802), p. 25.

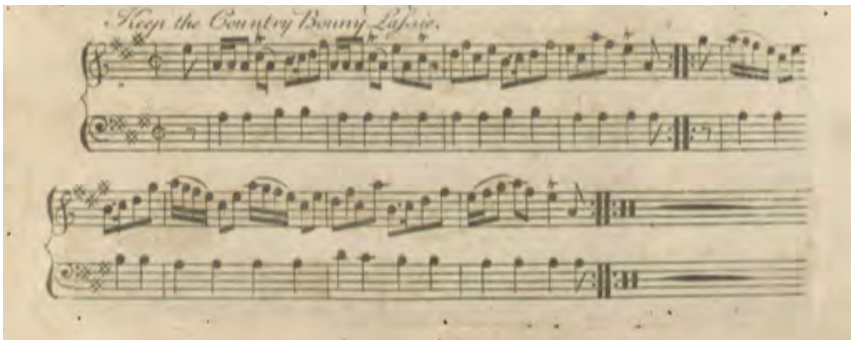


*Figure 30: 'Keep the Country Bonny Lassie' (Bremner, 1757)*

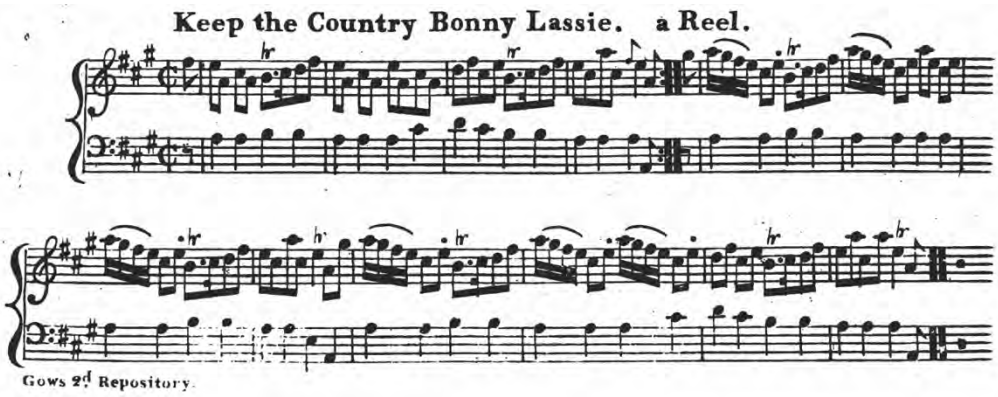


*Figure 31: 'Keep the Country Bonny Lassie' (Gow, 1802)*

The country dance tunes that Dawson includes in his tune book all appear in many other collections. Perhaps not surprisingly, variants abound. In the Preface to 'Part Second' of their 1802 *Complete Repository*, Neil and Nathaniel Gow acknowledge the proliferation of variations, suggesting that their book will help standardise Scottish tunes:

> The original Scotch Strathspeys, Reels and Jigs, of which this Collection consists, are brought forward with a veiw [*sic*] to serve as a Standard of those National Tunes and Dances, for we cannot avoid mentioning, that in every part of Scotland where we have occasionally been, and from every observation we were able to make, have not once met with two Professional Musicians who play the Same notes of any Tune. This being the Case, the Standard now proposed, will we hope, appear abundantly apparent; and that a conformity in playing those tunes, may with great propriety be adopted.[103]

[103] Preface to *Part Second of the Complete Repository of Original Scots Tunes, Strathspeys, Jigs and Dances*, edited by Niel and Nathaniel Gow (Edinburgh: Robert Purdie, 1802), p. 1.

The Gows' hope was only partly fulfilled. Popular tunes naturally change slightly as hundreds of musicians learn them, play them for dances, and teach them to others. The country dance tunes in Dawson's tune book include many that we recognise and play today, and many others now rarely encountered: 'Dainty Davie', 'Soldier Laddie', 'Lenox's Love to Blantyre', 'The Wood of Fivie', 'The Birks of Abergeldy', 'Jenny Dang the Weaver', 'Lassie with the Yellow Coatie', 'Keep the Country Bonnie Lassie', 'The Crooked Horned Ewe', 'Col. McBain's Reel', 'Tibby Fowler o' the Glen', 'Knit the Pocky', 'The Isle of Skye', 'Lady Harriet Hope's Reel', 'Fight About the Fireside', 'The Honeymoon', 'The Fairies' Dance', 'Pease Straw', 'I'll Make You Be Fain to Follow Me', 'Off She Goes', 'Greig's Pipes, 'Merry Lads of Ayr', 'We'll Gang Nae Mair to Yon Town', 'Lord McDonald's Reel', and 'St Patrick's Day in the Morning'.[104]

Tune variants sometimes cause anxiety among musicians who are uncomfortable processing a tune by ear. There is a degree of security in knowing the tune one is playing exists, unchanging, on a page. The written music as a 'text', however, can get in the way of creativity and interpretation. Jeff Todd Titon says:

> A difficulty with texted representations of folklore, then, is that because folklorists do so much trafficking in texts – we transcribe and interpret them, we publish them – texts have a nasty habit of reasserting equivalence; the text comes to stand for the folklore.[105]

The performance of the music is the folklore; the text it is based on is a suggestion. Titon says later in the same article, 'The formal rigidity of text seem[s] to ossify the living process of performance.'[106] We will never be able to hear an 1850 fiddler's performance of any of the

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[104] I am using Dawson's titles and spellings for the country dances listed here, and am referring to a booklet compiled by Iain Goddard, *A Chronology of Scottish Country Dances: Useful in Arranging Programmes Representing the Dances Current in the XVIII and XIX Centuries; Being a Listing of the Dates and Publishers of Nearly 300 Scottish Country Dances from Those Times* (Hamilton, Massachusetts: [n.pub.], 1975).

[105] Jeff Todd Titon, 'Text', *Journal of American Folklore*, 108 (1995) 432–448 (p. 433).

[106] Ibid., p. 436.

music texts in his tune books, but the variety of melodic paths, bowings, and ornamentations in many collections gives us a clue that there was a lot of individual interpretation going on. In the conclusion of his article on text, Titon says,

> Texted, language seems to be a reasonable translation; the stuff of thought, it represents thought. Notated, music is only a fair translation; its realization requires much more in the way of context.[107]

Karen Steven, an Aberdeenshire-based dance fiddle player, writes about using sheet music when she teaches and performs:

> If reading sheet music, I will often find that I previously had the tune in my subconscious. That will often be a more historical version of the tune and I will focus on that, rather than perhaps a more modern take on the tune that might appear in a newer tune book, even if the new book contains old, traditional tunes. In my classes, I will teach the older version of the tune that I have previously learned, either from, for example, Alasdair Fraser, or from an older tune book. I always advise in classes, to use the sheet music only as a memory aid and to rely on their audio recordings. Often, as you know, the sheet music is just the bare bones of a tune anyway, in traditional music. What brings the tune to life, is applying all the bowings, ornamentations, and stylistic techniques that don't feature on the written page.[108]

Robert Dawson, like most fiddle players, probably used the music in his tune book as a guideline, not regarding it as etched in stone. His transcription, very neat and tidy for the most part, does contain errors. Some inconsistencies and omissions throughout Dawson's tune book might imply haste in copying out a tune; he sometimes neglects to add accidentals (sharps or flats not normally in the scale the tune is in). It is difficult to know whether he actually played them that way, or whether it was a mistake. As I played Dawson's versions of these tunes, I often felt that – to be musically satisfying – the accidentals should be there. I checked other collections where the tunes appeared. In many of them, the tunes in question

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[107] Ibid., p. 446.

[108] Email correspondence with Karen Steven, 23 July 2019.

appear with accidentals marked, so it is possible that Dawson simply neglected to include the sharp or flat signs. If he was using the tune book as a teaching tool, this kind of omission might indicate that he was using the notated music only as a guideline for his student, and that he was working largely aurally. Otherwise, if he were reading the music, he would probably have noticed the missing sharps or flats, or erroneous key signature.

Related to the concept of key signatures and transcription, another tune in Dawson's book, its title in barely legible, faded script, is 'Lee Mills'. The tune as Dawson notates it looks straightforward at first glance. In playing it, however, I noticed that the notes written for the two lowest strings of a fiddle do not sound like they fit the melody at all, particularly in bars 3 and 15 (see Figure 32):

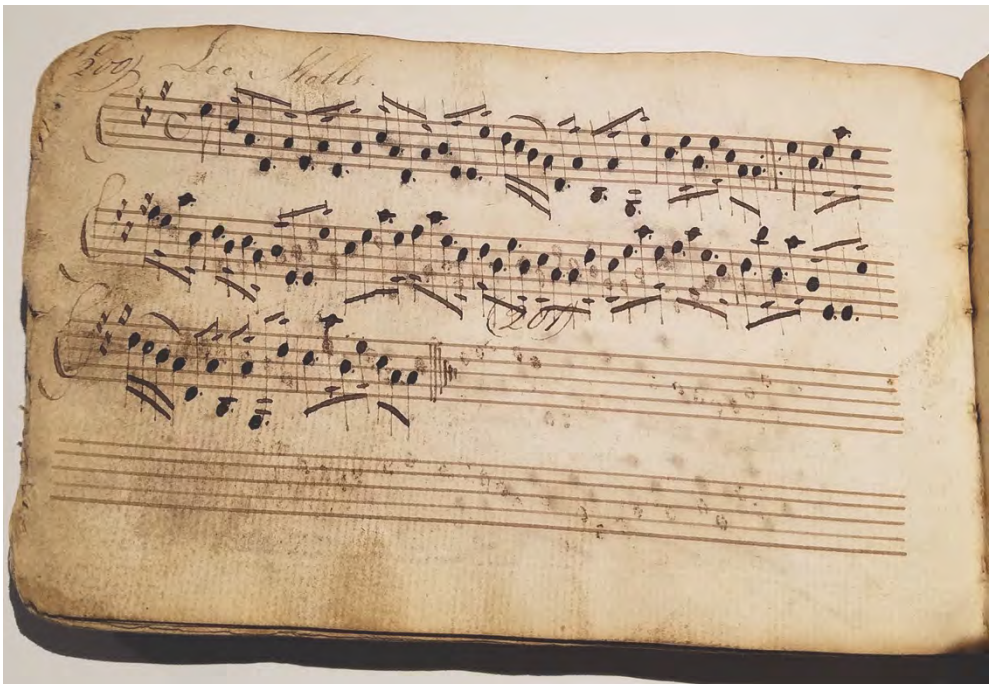

*Figure 32: 'Lee Mills' (Dawson)*

The only other apparent source for the tune is the John Bowie collection from 1789.[109] Dawson's version is identical to Bowie's, except that Bowie has included a 'scordatura' tuning diagram at the beginning of the tune. Scordatura (Italian for 'mistuning') is the practice of tuning a stringed instrument so that open strings have a pitch different to standard tuning. This allows a fiddler to take advantage of open strings, making it easier to play difficult intervals and also creating a very resonant sound. One of the most common alternative tunings was to raise the pitch of the two lower strings one step (A-E-A-E instead of G-D-A-E), and this is the marking that Bowie includes in his printed version of 'Lee Mills' (Figure 33):

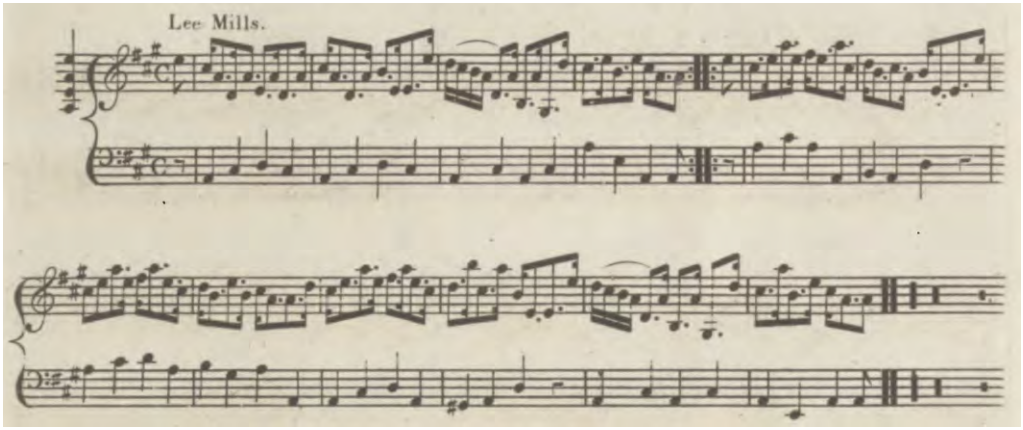


*Figure 33: 'Lee Mills' (Bowie, 1789)*

Why Robert Dawson did not include that marking in his version is unclear. When I asked Ronnie Gibson for his thoughts on it, he responded:

> As to Dawson's relationship with it [scordatura], either he knew to re-tune, or was less discerning about the tunes he wrote into his book...but surely not? He must have known to re-tune.[110]

[109] John Bowie, *A Collection of Strathspey Reels & Country Dances &c., with a Bass for the Violoncello or Harpsichord* (Edinburgh: James Johnson, 1789), p. 23. I am very grateful to Ronnie Gibson for tracking down this elusive and little-known tune, and for his help in identifying Dawson's transcription as scordatura.

[110] Email correspondence with Ronnie Gibson, 1 August 2019.

Alburger, Emmerson, and Hunter all discuss the use of scordatura in Scottish tunes and point out that it was a fairly common practice in the eighteenth century.[111] It is not unlikely, in that case, that Dawson might have copied that tune and neglected to add the scordatura marking. It *is* unlikely that he would have played it without re-tuning, as to do so would have resulted in what Alburger describes as 'musical gibberish'.[112]

The similarity of the version of 'Lee Mills' in Dawson's book with the version in the 1789 Bowie collection suggests that he had access to the Bowie collection. Further evidence for this is the tune preceding 'Lee Mills' in Dawson's tune book, 'The Crieff Meeting', which is also in Bowie's work (see Figure 34 and Figure 35 on page 68). Dawson's version is identical to Bowie's, including ornamentation, except for one important omission: Dawson neglects to indicate that the tune has no G sharps. It is in the key of A (normally three sharps), but it is in a mixolydian mode (leaving out the rightmost sharp, thus flatting the seventh note of the scale). If played as Dawson wrote it, the tune would sound rather peculiar. He may have known the tune so well that, as in his omission of scordatura markings in 'Lee Mills', he would have known to change the G sharps to naturals and make the key A mixolydian:

[111] Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers*, pp. 54-55; Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String*, pp. 174-75. Hunter has a well-illustrated explanation of the use of scordatura in his introduction to *The Fiddle Music of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Chalmers, 1979), pp. xxiii-xxiv. For more detailed information about the use of scordatura and alternate tunings, see the entry for 'Scordatura', *Grove Music Online*, <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.nls.idm.oclc.org/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000041698?rskey=M31pOE> [accessed 12 August 2019].

[112] Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers*, p. 54.

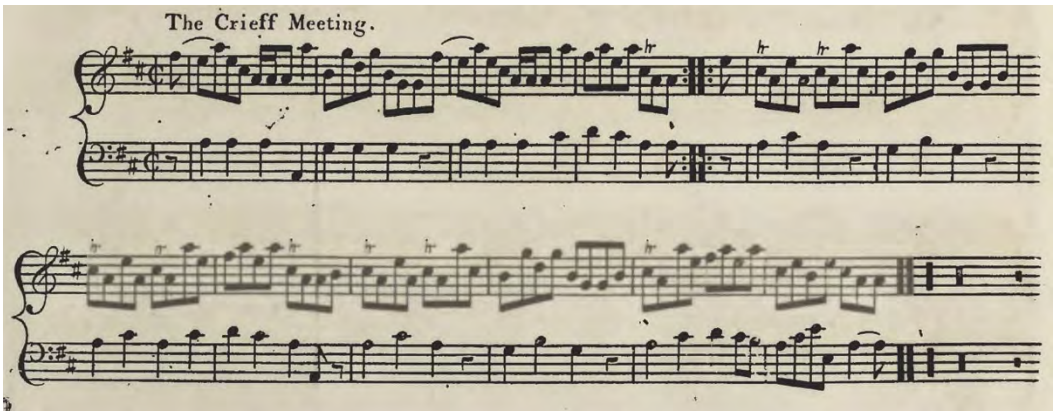


*Figure 34: 'The Crieff Meeting' (Bowie)*

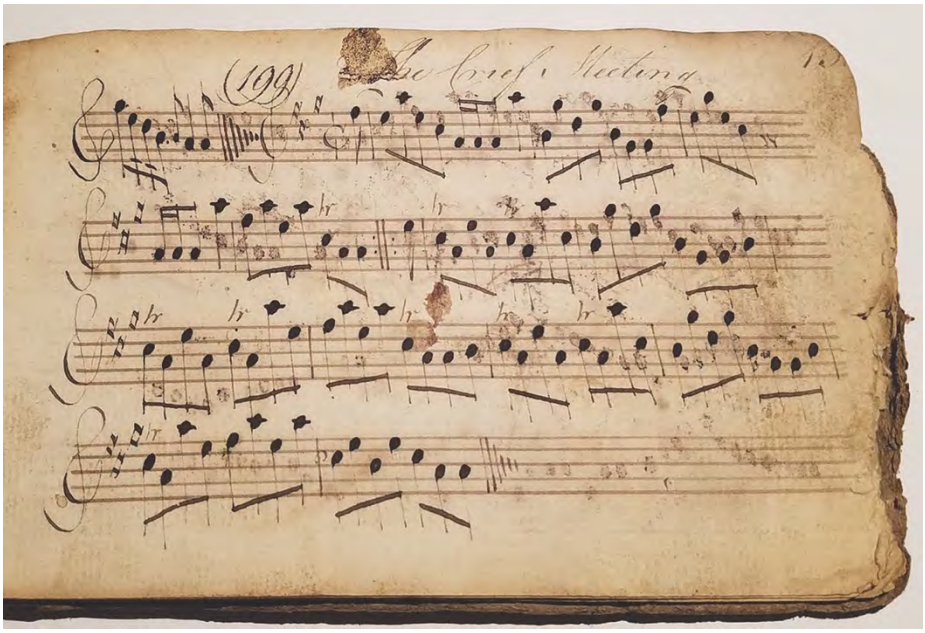

*Figure 35: 'The Crieff Meeting' (Dawson)*

## What the Tune Book Reveals about the Fiddler

Robert Dawson's compact tune book contains a fair amount of information aside from the 182 tunes that he has included. He seems to have been a good violinist with formal training in music, demonstrated by his neat handwriting and use of standard musical notation and symbols. He was a teacher, and the organisation of his tune book may indicate that he was constructing a repertoire of tunes for a student, grouping many of the tunes by key. Organising them in this way would also help him find a specific tune, useful if he were called

upon to be a solo performer or a member of a band. The fact that tunes run from page to page and often require page turns might mean that he did not intend to use the book when performing, but it would serve well as a memory aid, and just writing the tunes would help him memorise them.

He may have copied some of the tunes from printed or manuscript sources, or after he had heard them played by others. Many tunes seem more carefully transcribed than others; some have corrections and added bars of music squeezed in, which might indicate he learned them by listening and wrote them down later. For some he has added ornaments, bowings, and dynamics that he may have thought were important (or perhaps some were in a written source), and many of the bowings show a sensitivity to phrasing and danceability.

He selected tunes from the 'Golden Age' Scottish composers like William Marshall; Robert Petrie; Niel Gow and his sons Nathaniel, John, and William; Isaac Cooper; John Pringle; Robert and Abraham Mackintosh. The tunes he chose are all Scottish reels, strathspeys, or jigs; he did not include slow airs, quadrille sets, polkas, waltzes, or other ballroom dances in this book. Many are old favourites that remain in our repertoire today, but just as many have fallen into obscurity. Dawson may even have copied in a few tunes that are unfamiliar and are not in any collections, and perhaps included some of his own compositions. More research is needed to investigate those possibilities.

In constructing his tune book, Dawson seems to have tried to be methodical, perhaps attempting to emulate one of the printed collections he had seen. His optimistic strategy of writing page and tune numbers first and adding the tunes after did not always work well with longer tunes, or if the tunes contained many semiquavers; these required more space than his optimistic numbering allowed. He was generally careful about putting in time signatures, but

his metrical notation for reels and strathspeys is often ambiguous (4/4 time and 2/2 or cut time seemed interchangeable); however, that was often the case in other collections as well.[113]

Despite imperfections, the book almost looks like a printed tune book. Dawson appears to have liked details that many musicians in their personal tune books either ignore or are not aware of. His book reveals a sketch of a working musician in a rural part of Aberdeenshire in early Victorian Scotland. He had much in common with working musicians today, and his tune book is similar to those in our own time created and used as a memory aid by hundreds of fiddlers playing at ceilidh dances and joining in pub sessions.

[113] William Lamb, 'Reeling in the Strathspey', pp. 67–68.

# Chapter 4: Conclusions and Questions

Robert Dawson's tune book is typical of many that were created by mid-nineteenth-century musicians in Scotland. Their owners probably never assumed their books would be considered at all important, except to themselves. The tune books are a record of many things: music of interest, hints about sources of music, methods of learning and teaching, and what kind of musicians they were. Some of the books are well-organised and neatly made, and others look as if several people scribbled tunes in them at various times in handwritings varying from polished to childlike. Fiddlers' tune books originate with one creator, and often are handed on to students or other musicians (who might add to them), or the book ends up at the bottom of a drawer somewhere to be discovered a century later. Probably, most musicians do not consider their personal tune books to be perfect or publishable; just a repository for tunes they thought were interesting or worthy of copying down.

Dr Elaine Bradtke offers some observations on the general purpose of fiddlers' tune books, based on her own experience as a musician and an archivist:

> From what I've seen of similar books, it appears that some were used as teaching tools – the instructor would write out a tune for the student to learn at each lesson, sometimes there were scales or other pedagogical material. Others were used as personal collections of tunes that the person wanted to learn or remember (your modern musician probably has a pile of photocopies or pdf files accumulated from various sources for the same reason).[114]

She goes on to talk about Robert Dawson's tune book, who he might have been, and why his tune book was so comparatively neatly written:

> I'd suspect it might have belonged to a working musician, rather than one who played for his own pleasure. There's something more serious going on

[114] Email correspondence with Elaine Bradtke, 20 July 2019.

> here than just a collection of favourite tunes.[…] It's also very tidy, it almost feels to me as if this was a fair copy from something rougher. My own books for instance have blank lines, partial lines, crossings out, etc. This is emulating a published book (even if it is drawn from several sources).[115]

Dawson's handwritten tune book is indeed tidy compared with many other similar manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland or other archives; perhaps it was a compilation of rougher, scribbled first drafts that long ago vanished. While printed music books were targeted for the world at large – at least for those who could afford to subscribe to them or buy them – handwritten tune books created by individual musicians reflect a more personal repertoire and purpose. That purpose might be as a tool to teach oneself or someone else, as a memory aid, as a scrapbook of favourite pieces of music, and as a place to record new melodies or arrangements. They might also be one of several tune books belonging to a musician, each for different purposes, so finding one book may reveal only one piece of a larger picture.

Many tune books are small enough to be quite portable, intended to be carried in a satchel or case of some kind. Most of these have 'landscape' oriented pages, wider than they are high, often with only one tune per page. These seem to be the workhorses of the itinerant musician, typically well worn from much handling and carrying. Others are in larger 'portrait' orientation, perhaps twelve inches high and eight inches wide, with three or more tunes per page. These would not as easily fit in a bag and are less portable; they would look more at home on a music stand. Dawson's tune book is a workhorse –compact, well-used, perhaps often carried in something (a sporran, perhaps?) that wore the page edges off over years of use.

[115] Email correspondence with Elaine Bradtke, 20 July 2019.

Dawson lived in a rural, sparsely populated community about 35 miles west of Aberdeen, and about ten miles northeast of Ballater. He spent his early years in a manse with a well-educated pair of uncles, and apparently received a good education, particularly in music. His handwriting is clear and readable, as is his musical notation. In constructing his tune book, he was methodical. About a third of the tunes were in keys with flats rather than standard open-string keys, more difficult to play because of the need for precise fingering and intonation. Including so many tunes in more difficult keys would indicate that he was trained as a violinist, and perhaps expected his students to achieve some good technical ability. He may have been part of local dance bands and ensembles, and he may have performed in fiddle competitions, but if he did, there is no obvious record of it in newspapers. He is hard to find in public records and reminiscences, but we know a little more about this shadowy fiddle player and teacher through the pages of his tune book.

The tunes he chose seem to be for country dancing – reels, strathspeys, and a few jigs. Unlike many of the tune books of that time period, his did not include arrangements for European 'ballroom' dances like quadrilles, minuets, polkas, gavottes, galops, and waltzes. There are no additional instrumental parts, harmonies, or bass lines, often included in printed collections or in tune books more at home on a music stand. His collection is strictly for a working fiddler, and for a quite competent player. It contains much of the music one would hear being played in his time and place for dances, for competitions, and for listening.

There is still much that can be explored about this book; there are more mysteries to unravel. It might be interesting to look at all the tunes he included, a task which exceeds the scope of this study, and to determine how many are previously unpublished. Of the 182 tunes in his book, I have mentioned about thirty, concentrating on a handful to see Dawson's interpretations or possible influences. The unnamed D minor strathspey-reel (tune #125 discussed on page 36) may possibly be a composition by Dawson; more research is needed to

determine that. Some of the tunes in his book are rarely heard today but do appear in other early nineteenth-century collections. Many tunes in very widely distributed collections like the Gow *Repository* still remain in the current Scottish repertoire. The provenance of Dawson's tune book is a bit intriguing, as well: examining the watermarks and paper in it might reveal whether the paper was manufactured before 1850, as the title page appears to have been partially scraped or erased and then smoothed out so it could be used for Dawson's purposes. Could the book have originally belonged to his uncle and violin teacher, William McHardy?

There is more to find out about other fiddlers' tune books, too. It would be interesting to compare two or three manuscript tune books of the same time period and area, to see how repertoires differ or overlap. Some of the more obscure tunes in Dawson's book might turn up in other tune books and printed collections. Tunes often have multiple titles, and some melodies bear little resemblance to others with the same name; for example, Dawson's 'Isle of Sky' seems to be a completely different tune to the one in the Gow *Second Repository* (1802) but is almost a clone of the version in Robert Petrie's *Second Collection of Strathspey Reels* (1796).

Tune books preserve a small piece of the world a fiddle player inhabits, telling us about what music was popular at the time, what dances might have been on programmes or played for country dances, how tunes and titles varied among collections, and even perhaps hinting at how words might have varied subtly in pronunciation.[116] These books offer a glimpse backwards to a time in which a fiddle player lived and worked, learned, travelled, played music, taught, and carried on a tradition. Looking at an old tune book can make one

[116] For example, the Christie manuscript has 'Thro' The Wood of Fyvie', Surenne spells it 'Thro' the Wood of Favie', and Dawson writes 'Through the Wood of Fivie'.

reflect on what we leave behind us. As a fiddler friend of mine wrote me recently, after reading a draft of this dissertation:

> I was led to reflect on my own tune-books, the spiral-bound music-stand books I began writing in long ago for my own use as well as for teaching purposes, not to mention the many folders of dance tunes I've collected over the years, and to wonder what someone would make of them.[117]

Robert Dawson's tune book is only one of many that preserve a little piece of Scottish fiddle tradition. Like all of them, it is a unique snapshot of one player's repertoire. Fiddlers' personal tune books are more than just important historical artefacts. They are the fingerprints of the fiddler.

[117] Email correspondence with Ted Ehrhard, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 12 August 2019.

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# Appendix A: List of Tunes as They Appear in Robert Dawson's Tune Book

**Explanatory notes:**

Spelling of tune titles is as Robert Dawson wrote them. Page numbers are not readable or visible until page 56.

**Types:** J = jig; R = reel; S = strathspey

**Metre:** C is 'common' time or 4/4 time; ¢ is 'cut time' or *alla breve* (2/2).

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | Mrs. Auchincruive's New Strathsy. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| | 2 | We'll Gang nae mair to yon town | R | 2/4 | F, 1 flat |
| | 3 | Dainty Davie | R | C | F, 1 flat |
| | 4 | Sir David Hunter Blair's Reel | R | 2/4 | F, 1 flat |
| | 5 | Dutchess' Slipper, The | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 6 | Lenox's Love to Blantyre - A Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 7 | Atholl House | R | C | F, 1 flat |
| | 8 | Lady Harriet Hope's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 9 | Earl Moira's Welcome to Scotland - A Strathsy. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 10 | Cameronian's Rant or Blackwater Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 11 | Jackson's Bottle of Punch | J | 6/8 | F, 1 flat |
| | 12 | Miss Heron of Heron's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 13 | Lady Jean Montgomerie's Strathsy. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 14 | Lord Airley's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 15 | Honourable Mrs Maule of Panmure's Strathsy. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 16 | Bogin Lochy | R | ¢ | Em, 2 sharps |
| | 17 | Queensberry House, or Welcome Charley Stewart | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 18 | Miss Lucie Campbell's delight, a Strathsy. | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| | 19 | Reel of Fife | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| | 20 | My Wife's a Wanton Wee Thing | J | 6/8 | D, 2 sharps |
| | 21 | Jenny's Bawbee | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 22 | Caledonian Hunt, The | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 23 | Pease Straw Pease Straw | R | no metre | D, 2 sharps |
| | 24 | Back of the change House | R | C | D, 2 sharps |
| | 25 | O'er the Water to Charlie | J | 6/8 | D, 2 sharps |
| | 26 | Mr Hunter's Blackness Strathsy | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| | 27 | Reel of the Mearns, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 28 | Corrimony's Strathsy. | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| | 29 | Miss Helen Grant's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 30 | Marquis of Huntley's Highland Fling | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 31 | New Peir of Peterhead Strathsy. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 32 | Lady Lucy Ramsay's Strathsy. | S | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 33 | Fife Hunt, The | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 34 | Lady Loudon's Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 35 | Merry Lads of Ayr | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 36 | Lady [Caroline] Montague's Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 37 | Fight About the Fireside | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 38 | Bridge of Ballater Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 39 | Anderson's Rant | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 40 | Loch Errochside A Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 41 | Miss Forbes' Reel | S | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 42 | I'll make you be fain to follow me | J | 6/8 | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 43 | Miss Campbell of Monzies Reel | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 44 | Welcome to your foot again | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 45 | Double Kisses Double Kisses | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 46 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| | 47 | Mrs Moneypenny's Reel | R | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 48 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| | 49 | Niel Gow, A Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| | 50 | Perthshire Hunt, The | R | no metre | A, 3 sharps |
| | 51 | Miss Stewart of Grandtully's Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| | 52 | Miss Stewart's Reel | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 53 | Irish Girl, The | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps |
| | 54 | Ranting, Roaring Highlandman, The | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 55 | Lord Alex. Gordon's Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| | 56 | Because he was a bony lad | S or R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 57 | Perth Shire Volunteers Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| | 58 | Through the Wood of Fivie | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 59 | Crowhillock's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 60 | Kempshot Hunt | R | C | A, 3 sharps |
| | 61 | Mrs Chisholm's Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| | 62 | Banff Ladies | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 63 | Miss Drummond of Perth's Reel | S | ¢ | Am, no sharp or flat |
| | 64 | O'er Boggie | R | ¢ | Am, no sharp or flat |
| | 65 | Sae Bra'ly as I was kissed the streen | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps (?) |
| | 66 | Lochiel's Reel | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 67 | Whistle o'er the leave o't | S | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 68 | Duke of Gordon's Birth day, The | S | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 69 | St. Patrick's Day in the Morning | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 70 | Mrs Oswald of Auchincruive's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 71 | Irish Girl, The | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| | 72 | Lassie with the Yellow Coatie, The | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 73 | Loch Earn | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 74 | Boat of Logy, The | S | C | G, 1 sharp |
| | 75 | Lord McDonald's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 76 | Soldier Laddie | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| 56 | 77 | Chace, The | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 56-57 | 78 | Miss Elisabeth Gleig's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 57 | 79 | Auld Wife Ayont the Fire, The | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 58 | 80 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 58 | 81 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 59 | 82 | Pady's Resource | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| 60 | 83 | Corns are shorn, the fields are bare, The | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| 60 | 84 | Bridge of Perth, The | R | ¢ | A, 2 sharps |
| 61 | 85 | Mr Charles Douglas' Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 62 | 86 | Carrack's Rant | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 63 | 87 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 64 | 88 | Montrose Assembly Reel | R | ¢ | Bm, 2 sharps |
| 64 | 89 | Miss McDonald Strathmartin's Jigg | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps |
| 65 | 90 | Miss McDonald Strathmartin's Jigg, parts 3-4 | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps |
| 66 | 91 | Mrs Menzies of Culdanes Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 66 | 92 | Miss Robertson of Tullybelton's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 67 | 93 | Lady Harriot Hay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 68 | 94 | Isle of Sky, The | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 68 | 95 | Neil Gow's Recovery, a Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 69 | 96 | Miss Edmonston's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 70 | 97 | Lady Susan Hamilton's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 70-71 | 98 | Miss Vearie Hay's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 71 | 99 | Lord Eglintoun's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 72 | 100 | Lady Mary Ramsay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| 72-73 | 101 | Dunkeld Hermitage Reel | R | ¢ | Em, 1 sharp |
| 73 | 102 | Dunfermline Races | R | ¢ | Ambiguous notation |
| 74 | 103 | Miss Maule of Panmure's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 74-75 | 104 | Tibby Fowler o' the Glen | S | ¢ | Am, 1 sharp |
| 75 | 105 | Miss Johnston's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 76-77 | 106 | Strowan Robertson's Rant - A Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Em, 1 sharp |
| 77 | 107 | tune numbered 107, no tune | | | |
| 78-79 | 108 | Callumbruach, A Strathsʸ. | S | C | Am, 1 sharp |
| 79 | 109 | no tune numbered; scratched out | | | |
| 79 | 110 | tune numbered 110, no tune | | | |
| 80 | 111 | Marquis of Huntley's Reel, A Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Gm, 2 flats |
| 80 | 112 | Col. McBain's Reel | R | ¢ | Gm, 2 flats |
| 81 | 113 | Lady Campbell Ardkinglass Strathsʸ. | S | C | Gm, 2 flats |
| 82 | 114 | Sir Ranald McDonald's Reel | R | ¢ | Gm, 2 flats |
| 82-83 | 115 | Crooked Horned Ewe, The | S | C | Gm, 2 flats |
| 83 | 116 | tune numbered 116, no tune | | | |
| 84 | 117 | Garden Sheal, A Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 84 | 118 | numbered tune, but continuation of 117 | | | |
| 85 | 119 | Humours of Panteen, The | J | 6/8 | D dorian |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 86 | 120 | Miss Preston Fernton's Reel | R | no metre | D, 2 sharps |
| 86 | 121 | Countess of Loudon's Reel, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 87 | 122 | numbered near end of Countess, but no tune | | | |
| 88 | 123 | Birks of Abergeldy, The | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 88-89 | 124 | John Roy Stewart | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 89 | 125 | [unnamed] Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Dm, 1 flat |
| 90 | 126 | Drummer laddie, The | R | ¢ | Dm, 1 flat |
| 90 | 127 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 91 | 128 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 92 | 129 | Hon'ble Mrs John Ramsay's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 92-93 | 130 | Miss Burnett of Fasque's Strathsy. | S | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 93 | 131 | Capt. McDuff of Ballenloan's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 94 | 132 | Capt. McDuff's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 94-95 | 133 | Miss McLean of Duart's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 95 | 134 | Master F. Sitwell's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 96 | 135 | Lady Elizabeth Lindsay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Cm, 3 flats |
| 96-97 | 136 | Mrs Garden of Troup's Reel | R | C | Cm, 3 flats |
| 97 | 137 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 98 | 138 | Mrs Duncan's Reel | R | ¢ | Cm, 3 flats |
| 98-99 | 139 | General McDonald's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Cm, 3 flats |
| 99 | 140 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 100 | 141 | Miss Augusta Charter's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Cm, 3 flats |
| 101 | 142 | No tune; not numbered in MS | | | |
| 101 | 143 | Miss Abercromby's Reel | R | ¢ | Cm, 3 flats |
| 102 | 144 | Mr Buchan's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 102-03 | 145 | Jenny dang the weaver | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 103 | 146 | Off She Goes | J | 6/8 | D, 2 sharps |
| 103 | 147 | Honeymoon, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 104 | 148 | Lady Mary Montague's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 104-05 | 149 | Miss Flora McDonald's Reel | R | ¢ | E dorian, 2 sharps |
| 105 | 150 | Mrs Rose's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 106 | 151 | Greig's Pipes | R | C | D, 2 sharps |
| 107 | 152 | Had the lass till I win at her - a Reel | R | ¢ | A mixolydian |
| 107 | 153 | Fairies' Dance, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 108 | 154 | Miss Honeyman's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 108 | 155 | Miss Stewart of Aberard's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 109 | 156 | Mrs Laird of Strathmartin's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 110 | 157 | Earl of Dalhousie's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 111 | 158 | Is Your Graith in order - An Old Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 112 | 159 | Dunnichen House A Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 112-13 | 160 | Mr Patrick Duff's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 113 | 161 | Miss Dundass of Arniston's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 114 | 162 | Miss Ross of Rossies Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 114-115 | 163 | Miss Thom's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 115 | 164 | Miss Dirom's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 116 | 165 | Lady Baird of Saughtonhall's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 116-17 | 166 | Miss Gordon of Nethermuir's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 117 | 167 | Knit the Pocky | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 118 | 168 | Captn. Francis Wemys' Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 118-19 | 169 | What the devil ails you - A Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 119 | 170 | Miss Susan Campbell Monzies Strathsʸ. - Slow | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 120 | 171 | Miss Jessie Hunter's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 120-21 | 172 | George McKenzie's Reel | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 121 | 173 | Miss Eliza Scott's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 122 | 174 | Miss Hope's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 122-23 | 175 | Miss Shank's | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 123 | 176 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 124 | 177 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 124 | 178 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 125 | 179 | The Masson Laddie | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 126 | 180 | Green Fields of America, The | R | C | G, 1 sharp |
| 126 | 181 | numbered tune, but continuation of 180 | | | |
| 127 | 182 | Skene of Skene Straths, The | S? | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 128 | 183 | Lord Strathhaven's Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| 128-29 | 184 | Victory - A Reel by Isaac Cooper | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 130 | 185 | Mr Garden's Welcome to Troup House - A Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| 130-31 | 186 | Tikerly [?] | J | 6/8 | F, 1 flat |
| 131 | 187 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 132 | 188 | Charles Gray Esq.r of Carse's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 132-33 | 189 | Miss Tinker's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 133 | 190 | Miss Forbes of Pitsligo's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 134 | 191 | Miss Davidson's Reel | R | C | F, 1 flat |
| 134-35 | 192 | Lady Down's Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| 135 | 193 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 136 | 194 | Mrs Mary Garden of Troup's Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| 136 | 195 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 137 | 196 | Huntley Lodge Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 138 | 197 | High Road to Linton, The | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 138-39 | 198 | Marquis of Huntly's Welcome to Peterhead A Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps (?); A minor? |
| 139 | 199 | Crief Meeting, The | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 140 | 200 | Lee Mills | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| 140 | 201 | numbered, no tune | | | |
| 141 | 202 | Miss Clementina Sarah Drummond of Perth's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 142 | 203 | Brechen Castle | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 142-43 | 204 | Countess of Sutherland's Reel | R | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 143 | 205 | Lord Ramsay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 144 | 206 | Millar of Drone Altered by Mr. I. Cooper | S | C | A, 3 sharps |

# Appendix B: Complete List of Tunes in Alphabetical Order

**Explanatory notes:**

Spelling of tune titles is as Robert Dawson wrote them. Page numbers are not readable or visible until page 56.

**Types:** J = jig; R = reel; S = strathspey

**Metre:** C is 'common' time or 4/4 time; ¢ is 'cut time' or *alla breve* (2/2).

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 89 | 125 | [unnamed] Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Dm, 1 flat |
| | 39 | Anderson's Rant | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 7 | Atholl House | R | C | F, 1 flat |
| 57 | 79 | Auld Wife Ayont the Fire, The | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 24 | Back of the change House | R | C | D, 2 sharps |
| | 62 | Banff Ladies | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 56 | Because he was a bony lad | S or R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 88 | 123 | Birks of Abergeldy, The | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 74 | Boat of Logy, The | S | C | G, 1 sharp |
| | 16 | Bogin Lochy | R | ¢ | Em, 2 sharps |
| 142 | 203 | Brechen Castle | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| | 38 | Bridge of Ballater Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| 60 | 84 | Bridge of Perth, The | R | ¢ | A, 2 sharps |
| | 22 | Caledonian Hunt, The | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 78-79 | 108 | Callumbruach, A Strathsʸ. | S | C | Am, 1 sharp |
| | 10 | Cameronian's Rant or Blackwater Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 93 | 131 | Capt. McDuff of Ballenloan's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 94 | 132 | Capt. McDuff's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 118 | 168 | Captn. Francis Wemys' Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 62 | 86 | Carrack's Rant | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 56 | 77 | Chace, The | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 132 | 188 | Charles Gray Esq.r of Carse's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 80 | 112 | Col. McBain's Reel | R | ¢ | Gm, 2 flats |
| 60 | 83 | Corns are shorn, the fields are bare, The | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| | 28 | Corrimony's Strathsʸ. | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| 86 | 121 | Countess of Loudon's Reel, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 142-43 | 204 | Countess of Sutherland's Reel | R | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 139 | 199 | Crief Meeting, The | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 82-83 | 115 | Crooked Horned Ewe, The | S | C | Gm, 2 flats |
| | 59 | Crowhillock's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 3 | Dainty Davie | R | C | F, 1 flat |
| | 45 | Double Kisses Double Kisses | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| 90 | 126 | Drummer laddie, The | R | ¢ | Dm, 1 flat |
| | 68 | Duke of Gordon's Birth day, The | S | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 73 | 102 | Dunfermline Races | R | ¢ | Ambiguous notation |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 72-73 | 101 | Dunkeld Hermitage Reel | R | ¢ | Em, 1 sharp |
| 112 | 159 | Dunnichen House A Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 5 | Dutchess' Slipper, The | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 9 | Earl Moira's Welcome to Scotland - A Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 110 | 157 | Earl of Dalhousie's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 107 | 153 | Fairies' Dance, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 33 | Fife Hunt, The | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 37 | Fight About the Fireside | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| 84 | 117 | Garden Sheal, A Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 98-99 | 139 | General McDonald's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Cm, 3 flats |
| 120-21 | 172 | George McKenzie's Reel | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 126 | 180 | Green Fields of America, The | R | C | G, 1 sharp |
| 106 | 151 | Greig's Pipes | R | C | D, 2 sharps |
| 107 | 152 | Had the lass till I win at her - a Reel | R | ¢ | A mixolydian |
| 138 | 197 | High Road to Linton, The | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 92 | 129 | Hon'ble Mrs John Ramsay's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 103 | 147 | Honeymoon, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 15 | Honourable Mrs Maule of Panmure's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 85 | 119 | Humours of Panteen, The | J | 6/8 | D dorian |
| 137 | 196 | Huntley Lodge Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 42 | I'll make you be fain to follow me | J | 6/8 | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 53 | Irish Girl, The | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps |
| | 71 | Irish Girl, The | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| 111 | 158 | Is Your Graith in order - An Old Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 68 | 94 | Isle of Sky, The | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| | 11 | Jackson's Bottle of Punch | J | 6/8 | F, 1 flat |
| 102-03 | 145 | Jenny dang the weaver | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 21 | Jenny's Bawbee | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 88-89 | 124 | John Roy Stewart | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 60 | Kempshot Hunt | R | C | A, 3 sharps |
| 117 | 167 | Knit the Pocky | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 36 | Lady [Caroline] Montague's Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| 116 | 165 | Lady Baird of Saughtonhall's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 81 | 113 | Lady Campbell Ardkinglass Strathsʸ. | S | C | Gm, 2 flats |
| 134-35 | 192 | Lady Down's Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| 96 | 135 | Lady Elizabeth Lindsay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Cm, 3 flats |
| | 8 | Lady Harriet Hope's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 67 | 93 | Lady Harriot Hay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| | 13 | Lady Jean Montgomerie's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 34 | Lady Loudon's Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 32 | Lady Lucy Ramsay's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| 104 | 148 | Lady Mary Montague's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 72 | 100 | Lady Mary Ramsay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| 70 | 97 | Lady Susan Hamilton's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 72 | Lassie with the Yellow Coatie, The | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 140 | 200 | Lee Mills | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| | 6 | Lenox's Love to Blantyre - A Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 73 | Loch Earn | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 40 | Loch Errochside A Strathsʸ. | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| | 66 | Lochiel's Reel | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 14 | Lord Airley's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 55 | Lord Alex. Gordon's Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| 71 | 99 | Lord Eglintoun's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| | 75 | Lord McDonald's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 143 | 205 | Lord Ramsay's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| 128 | 183 | Lord Strathhaven's Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| | 30 | Marquis of Huntley's Highland Fling | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 80 | 111 | Marquis of Huntley's Reel, A Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Gm, 2 flats |
| 138-39 | 198 | Marquis of Huntly's Welcome to Peterhead A Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps (?); A minor? |
| 95 | 134 | Master F. Sitwell's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
| | 35 | Merry Lads of Ayr | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| 144 | 206 | Millar of Drone Altered by Mr. I. Cooper | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| 101 | 143 | Miss Abercromby's Reel | R | ¢ | Cm, 3 flats |
| 100 | 141 | Miss Augusta Charter's Strathsʸ. | S | C | Cm, 3 flats |
| 92-93 | 130 | Miss Burnett of Fasque's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| | 43 | Miss Campbell of Monzies Reel | R | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| 141 | 202 | Miss Clementina Sarah Drummond of Perth's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 134 | 191 | Miss Davidson's Reel | R | C | F, 1 flat |
| 115 | 164 | Miss Dirom's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 63 | Miss Drummond of Perth's Reel | S | ¢ | Am, no sharp or flat |
| 113 | 161 | Miss Dundass of Arniston's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 69 | 96 | Miss Edmonston's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 56-57 | 78 | Miss Elisabeth Gleig's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 121 | 173 | Miss Eliza Scott's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 104-05 | 149 | Miss Flora McDonald's Reel | R | ¢ | E dorian, 2 sharps |
| 133 | 190 | Miss Forbes of Pitsligo's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 41 | Miss Forbes' Reel | S | ¢ | C, no sharp or flat |
| 116-17 | 166 | Miss Gordon of Nethermuir's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 29 | Miss Helen Grant's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 12 | Miss Heron of Heron's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 108 | 154 | Miss Honeyman's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 122 | 174 | Miss Hope's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 120 | 171 | Miss Jessie Hunter's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 75 | 105 | Miss Johnston's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 18 | Miss Lucie Campbell's delight, a Strathsʸ. | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| 74 | 103 | Miss Maule of Panmure's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 64 | 89 | Miss McDonald Strathmartin's Jigg | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps |
| 65 | 90 | Miss McDonald Strathmartin's Jigg, cont'd | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 94-95 | 133 | Miss McLean of Duart's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 86 | 120 | Miss Preston Fernton's Reel | R | no metre | D, 2 sharps |
| 66 | 92 | Miss Robertson of Tullybelton's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 114 | 162 | Miss Ross of Rossies Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 122-23 | 175 | Miss Shank's | S | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 108 | 155 | Miss Stewart of Aberard's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
|  | 51 | Miss Stewart of Grandtully's Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
|  | 52 | Miss Stewart's Reel | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 119 | 170 | Miss Susan Campbell Monzies Strathsʸ. - Slow | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 114-15 | 163 | Miss Thom's Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 132-33 | 189 | Miss Tinker's Reel | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| 70-71 | 98 | Miss Vearie Hay's Reel | R | ¢ | Bb, 2 flats |
| 64 | 88 | Montrose Assembly Reel | R | ¢ | Bm, 2 sharps |
| 102 | 144 | Mr Buchan's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 61 | 85 | Mr Charles Douglas' Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 130 | 185 | Mr Garden's Welcome to Troup House - A Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
|  | 26 | Mr Hunter's Blackness Strathsʸ. | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
| 112-13 | 160 | Mr Patrick Duff's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
|  | 61 | Mrs Chisholm's Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
| 98 | 138 | Mrs Duncan's Reel | R | ¢ | Cm, 3 flats |
| 96-97 | 136 | Mrs Garden of Troup's Reel | R | C | Cm, 3 flats |
| 109 | 156 | Mrs Laird of Strathmartin's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| 136 | 194 | Mrs Mary Garden of Troup's Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
| 66 | 91 | Mrs Menzies of Culdanes Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
|  | 47 | Mrs Moneypenny's Reel | R | C | C, no sharp or flat |
|  | 1 | Mrs Oswald of Auchincruive's New Strathsʸ. | S | C | F, 1 flat |
|  | 70 | Mrs Oswald of Auchincruive's Reel | R | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| 105 | 150 | Mrs Rose's Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
|  | 20 | My Wife's a Wanton Wee Thing | J | 6/8 | D, 2 sharps |
| 68 | 95 | Neil Gow's Recovery, a Strathsʸ. | S | C | Bb, 2 flats |
|  | 31 | New Peir of Peterhead Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
|  | 49 | Niel Gow, A Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
|  | 64 | O'er Boggie | R | ¢ | Am, no sharp or flat |
|  | 25 | O'er the Water to Charlie | J | 6/8 | D, 2 sharps |
| 103 | 146 | Off She Goes | J | 6/8 | D, 2 sharps |
| 59 | 82 | Pady's Resource | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
|  | 23 | Pease Straw Pease Straw | R | no metre | D, 2 sharps |
|  | 57 | Perth Shire Volunteers Strathsʸ. | S | C | A, 3 sharps |
|  | 50 | Perthshire Hunt, The | R | no metre | A, 3 sharps |
|  | 17 | Queensberry House, or Welcome Charley Stewart | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
|  | 54 | Ranting, Roaring Highlandman, The | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
|  | 19 | Reel of Fife | S | C | D, 2 sharps |
|  | 27 | Reel of the Mearns, The | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |

| Page No. | Tune No. | Tune Title | Type | Metre | Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 65 | Sae Bra'ly as I was kissed the streen | J | 6/8 | A, 3 sharps (?) |
| | 4 | Sir David Hunter Blair's Reel | R | 2/4 | F, 1 flat |
| 82 | 114 | Sir Ranald McDonald's Reel | R | ¢ | Gm, 2 flats |
| 127 | 182 | Skene of Skene Straths, The | S? | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |
| | 76 | Soldier Laddie | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| | 69 | St. Patrick's Day in the Morning | J | 6/8 | G, 1 sharp |
| 76-77 | 106 | Strowan Robertson's Rant - A Strathsʸ. | S | ¢ | Em, 1 sharp |
| 125 | 179 | The Masson Laddie | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| | 58 | Through the Wood of Fivie | R | ¢ | A, 3 sharps |
| 74-75 | 104 | Tibby Fowler o' the Glen | S | ¢ | Am, 1 sharp |
| 130-31 | 186 | Tikerly [?] | J | 6/8 | F, 1 flat |
| 128-29 | 184 | Victory - A Reel by Isaac Cooper | R | ¢ | F, 1 flat |
| | 2 | We'll Gang nae mair to yon town | R | 2/4 | F, 1 flat |
| | 44 | Welcome to your foot again | S | C | C, no sharp or flat |
| 118-19 | 169 | What the devil ails you - A Reel | R | ¢ | D, 2 sharps |
| | 67 | Whistle o'er the leave o't | S | ¢ | G, 1 sharp |