

NIGEL GATHERER'S Music of the British Isles SERIES

THE MUSIC OF the British Isles is incredibly rich and varied, each village, town and county having its own traditions, sometimes dating back centuries. In this,

my third exploration of British music and song for the BMG, we'll visit various corners of our islands and celebrate both their differences and commonalities.



Major McLean (Niel Gow)

slow air

Em Em D G Am Em

G Bm Em G G

D Am D Em C Bm F#m Em Am

Bm Em G G D Am D

Em C Bm F#m Em Am Bm Em

The image shows the mandolin tablature for the piece 'Major McLean' by Niel Gow. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a mandolin tablature staff below it. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tablature uses numbers 0-5 to indicate fret positions. Above the treble clef staff, chord names are provided for each measure. The piece is marked 'slow air'. The first system has 5 measures, the second has 5 measures, the third has 5 measures, the fourth has 5 measures, and the fifth has 5 measures. The piece ends with a double bar line.



Niel Gow (1727-1807) was one of the most famous fiddlers of all time, being known throughout Scotland even in his own life. He lived in Inver, near Dunkeld, and there is a memorial to him in Dunkeld Cathedral. His son Nathaniel published many collections of tunes played and composed by his father, and these books formed the bedrock of Scottish fiddle repertoire. Niel was in great demand to play for dances and often travelled fair distances to perform.



Speed the Plough (John Moorhead)

Musical score for 'Speed the Plough' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a mandolin tablature staff below it. Chords are indicated above the treble staff. The tablature uses numbers 0-5 for frets and letters T, A, B for strings.

System 1: G G C G Am D7
System 2: G G C G D7 G
System 3: G G C G Am D7 G
System 4: G C G D7 G



John Moorhead (c1760-1804) worked at Sadler's Wells theatre, and wrote this tune under the name The Naval Pillar for a musical play; it was so popular it was used in another musical called Speed the Plough, after which it took that name. Although he was well respected as a composer, he suffered from debilitating mental health problems, and eventually took his own life.



Rochdale Coconut Dance (traditional)

Musical score for 'Rochdale Coconut Dance' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of three systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a mandolin tablature staff below it. Chords are indicated above the treble staff. The tablature uses numbers 0-5 for frets and letters T, A, B for strings.

System 1: G D G D G
System 2: D D7 G D7 G Em Em
System 3: Am G D Em Em Em D7 G D7 Em

BMG16-2



Bacup Coconut Dance (traditional)

Musical score for *Bacup Coconut Dance* in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a mandolin tablature staff. Chords are indicated above the notes.

System 1: G, G, Bm, D, C

System 2: Am, D7, G, Em, G

System 3: G, D, Em

System 4: G, D, G



Both the Rochdale and Bacup Coconut dances have their origins in the mid-19th century. The Britannia Coconutters in Bacup continue this tradition to this day

I learned Dregs of the Mashtub from Christina MacAulay, a Scottish whistle player living in Wales. She learned it from fiddler Bob Evans, who often plays it at Cardiff sessions. He got it from a 19th century collection by Owain Alaw.



Dregs of the Mashtub (Diferiad y Gwerwyn) (trad)

Musical score for *Dregs of the Mashtub* in G major, 3/4 time. The score consists of three systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a mandolin tablature staff. Chords are indicated above the notes.

System 1: D, D, D, D, G

System 2: A, G, A, A D, D, A, G

System 3: D, D, A, G, A, A D



The Oak (Steve Knightly)

Am G Am G

The limbs, the veins, the head and the heart The earth, the roots, the leaves and the bark.

A B 2 2 2 2 2 0 0 4 4 2 2 2 2 2 4 4 2 0

Am G Am G Am

For shelter and shade was the oak tree grown; For church and cradle,

A B 2 2 2 2 5 5 5 4 2 0 2 2 2 5 5

G Am G Am G Am G

hearth and home. With arms so strong they hold the sky

A B 4 0 2 2 2 2 0 0 4 4

Am C

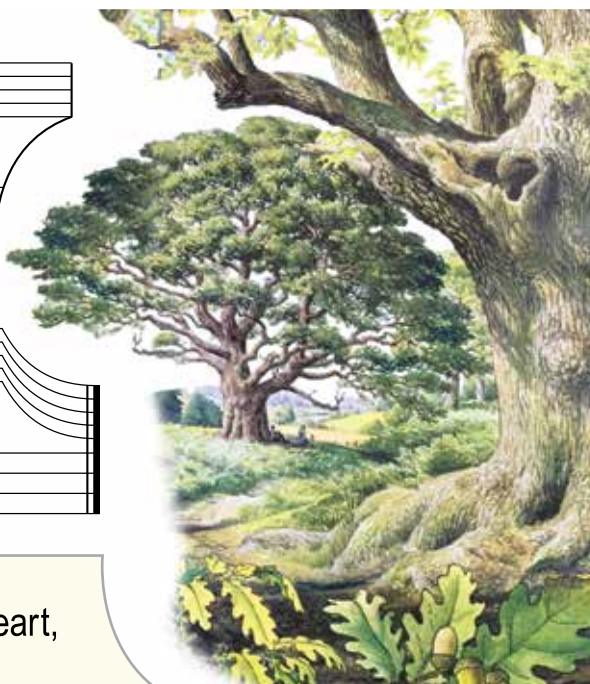
Break the branch and the

A B 2 2 5 5 5

G Am G

heart won't die.

A B 4 0 2



Am G

Ch. The limbs, the veins, the head and the heart,

Am G

The earth, the roots, the leaves and the bark;

Am G Am G

The limbs, the veins, the head and the heart, the earth, the roots, the leaves and the bark.

BMG16-4

Am G Am G Am

2. What can grow if the sea returns? What can live when the

G Am G Am G

plant grain burns? Cut the branch and your crops will fail,

Am G Am G

Tear the leaves and your ships won't sail.

Am *G* *Am*
Ch. The limbs, the veins, the head and the heart, the earth, the roots,
G *Am* *G*
the leaves and the bark; the limbs, the veins, the head and the heart,
Am *G*
The earth, the roots, the leaves and the bark.

Am *G*
3. Seven generations the oak trees grow,
Am *G*
(The limbs, the veins, the head and the heart)
Am *G*
Roots reach deep to the rocks & bones.
Am *G*
(The earth, the roots, the leaves and the bark).

Am *G*
Ch. The limbs, the veins, the head and the heart,
Am *G*
The earth, the roots, the leaves and the bark;
Am *G*
The limbs, the veins, the head and the heart,
Am *G*
The earth, the roots, the leaves and the bark.



This song was written by Steve Knightly of the band Show of Hands



The Flitter Dance (traditional)

Am Am G Em Am Am

G Em Am Am Am Am

Am C G Am Am Am



Peter O'Tavy (traditional)

G Em D D D D⁷ D⁷ G

G Em D D D⁷ D⁷ G G

G Em C G C G Em D

G Em C G Em D⁷ G G

BMG16-6

I got both of these tunes from a recording by English fiddler/mandolinist Dave Swarbrick.



Fly and Dodger (Liz Carroll)

Musical notation for the first system of 'Fly and Dodger'. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in eighth notes. Above the staff are chord markings: G, C, G, C, D. Below the staff is a mandolin tablature with fret numbers: 5 5 5 5 2 0 2, 5 5 5 5 2 0 2, 5 5 2 5 0 2, 5 5 5 2 0 0 2.

Musical notation for the second system of 'Fly and Dodger'. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody continues. Above the staff are chord markings: G, C, G, C, D. Below the staff is a mandolin tablature with fret numbers: 5 5 5 5 2 0 2, 5 5 5 5 2 0 2, 5 5 2 5 0 2, 5 5 5 2 0 5 2 0.

Musical notation for the third system of 'Fly and Dodger'. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody continues. Above the staff are chord markings: G, C, Em, D, G, C, G, D, G, C. Below the staff is a mandolin tablature with fret numbers: 0 5 5 5 5, 5 5 0 2 0, 0 5 5 5 5, 5 5 4 0 0 2 0, 0 5 5 5 5.

Musical notation for the fourth system of 'Fly and Dodger'. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody continues. Above the staff are chord markings: Em, D, Am, C, G, D. Below the staff is a mandolin tablature with fret numbers: 5 5 5 0 2 0, 0 5 5 5 5, 5 5 5 4 0 0 2.



Liz Carroll (born 1956) is one of the most respected Irish fiddler and composer today. She grew up in Chicago in an Irish-American community and started playing fiddle at nine years old. Her tunes have been recorded hundreds of times.

The *Fly and Dodger* was named for "...that boat-lover I married, Charles." and was recorded on her album *Lost In the Loop* (2000).

NIGEL GATHERER'S

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SERIES



Harper's Frolic (traditional)

Musical notation for Harper's Frolic, measures 1-4. Chords: D, D, A, D.

TAB: 0 5 4 4 2 0 0 5 4 4 2 0 5 5 4 5 0 4 4 5 4 5 4 5

Musical notation for Harper's Frolic, measures 5-8. Chords: D, D, A, 1.D, 2.D.

TAB: 0 5 4 4 2 0 0 5 4 4 2 0 5 5 4 5 0 4 5 . 5 0 5

Musical notation for Harper's Frolic, measures 9-12. Chords: D, G, D, A.

TAB: . 0 2 2 5 4 5 3 0 0 3 2 5 5 2 0 5 4 2 0

Musical notation for Harper's Frolic, measures 13-14. Chords: D, G.

TAB: 5 0 2 5 5 4 5 3 0 0 3

Musical notation for Harper's Frolic, measures 15-16. Chords: D, A, 1.D, 2.D.

TAB: 2 0 5 2 0 4 5 0 5 . 5

BMG16-Joint Session

I learned this tune from the playing of the English folksinger and melodeonist Pete Coe, with whom I have done a little bit of playing. It's a well-known tune in English sessions which first appeared in the mid-18th century. It was recorded with great effect by the New Victory Band in 1978.

