Pdffolio 2019

This is the first instalment from a collection of tunes, mostly from old sources, but not generally available, which are being suggested or contributed by different pipers – many of you will know some tunes that aren't regularly played, but sit well on the Northumbrian pipes.

I've edited some of the tunes where I think there is a mistake in the source, but I've tried to make clear where I've done this. Most of the tunes, but not all, are either Northumbrian, or from Northumbrian sources. I have added some from further afield, if they sit well on the pipes. Most of the tunes aren't currently in print, in these versions, and this is an attempt to start filling that gap.

There will be many other tunes, whether old and hidden, or only played a lot in one session, or newly composed, that are worth sharing. Please send me any suggestions – there may well be enough for another of these before long. One thing that struck me, when I was putting this together, was how many tunes turned up so quickly. These are only the first batch. If future appeals for tunes are this successful, I think there will be enough for another tune book, before too long.

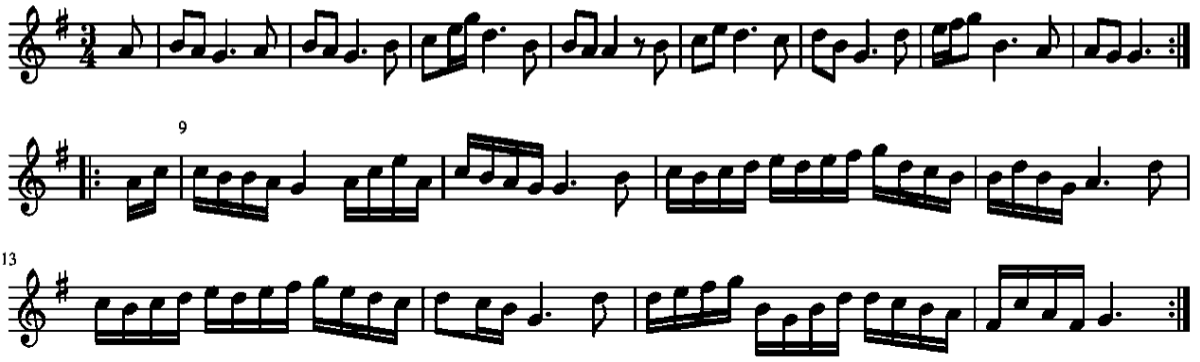
I'd like to thank Chris Ormston, Alan Douglass, Edric Ellis, Iain Gelston, Richard Heard, Rob Say, Matt Seattle, Edmund Spriggs, and Graham Wells for suggesting, or letting me use some of these tunes, suggesting where I might find others, and for their help with the notes. I'd particular like to thank Matt Seattle, whose notes and advice are always helpful, Richard Heard, for sharing the Fenwick manuscript, and Edmund Spriggs for helping me proofread and subedit my early drafts.

John Gibbons

March 2019

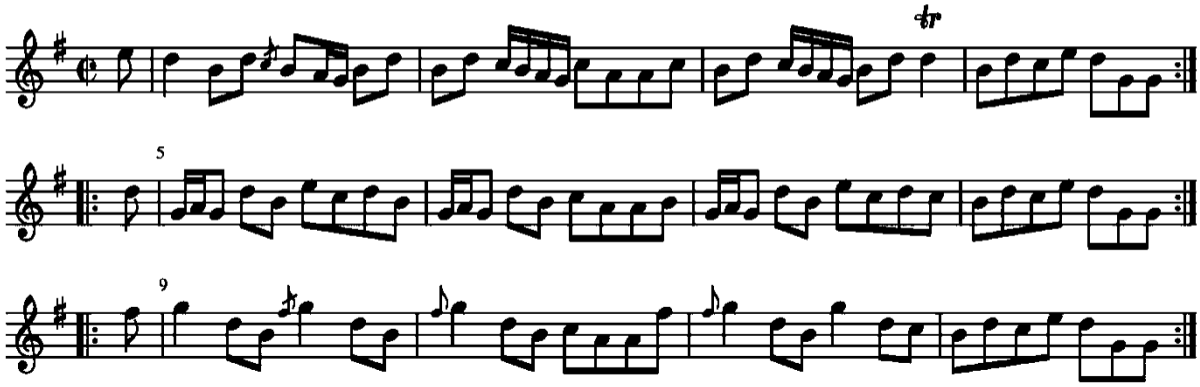
Chevy Chase

As played by Mr. Thos. Green, the Duke of Northumberland's piper



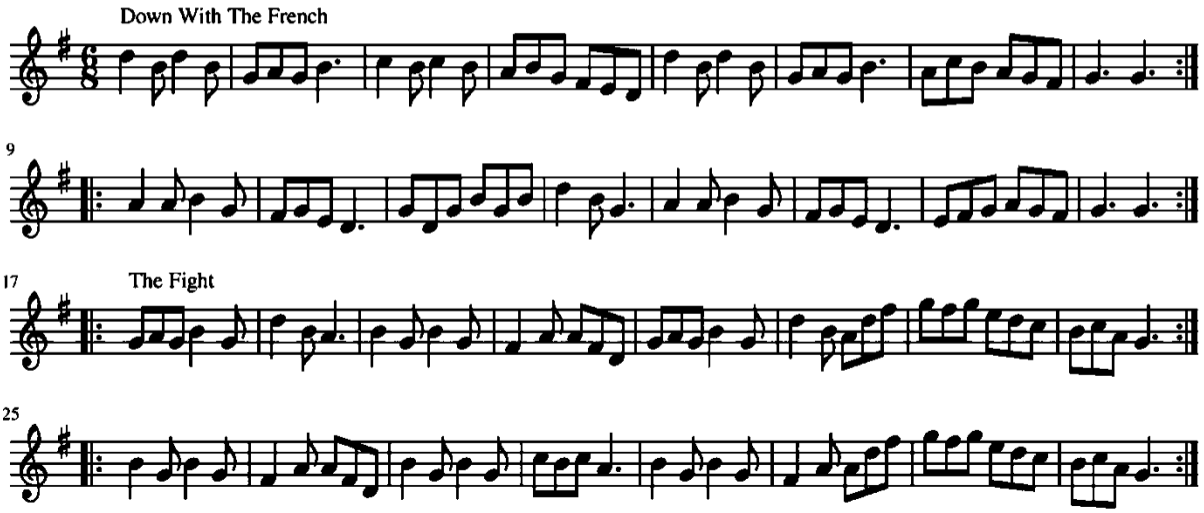
Kempshot Hunt

From Mackintosh's Collection



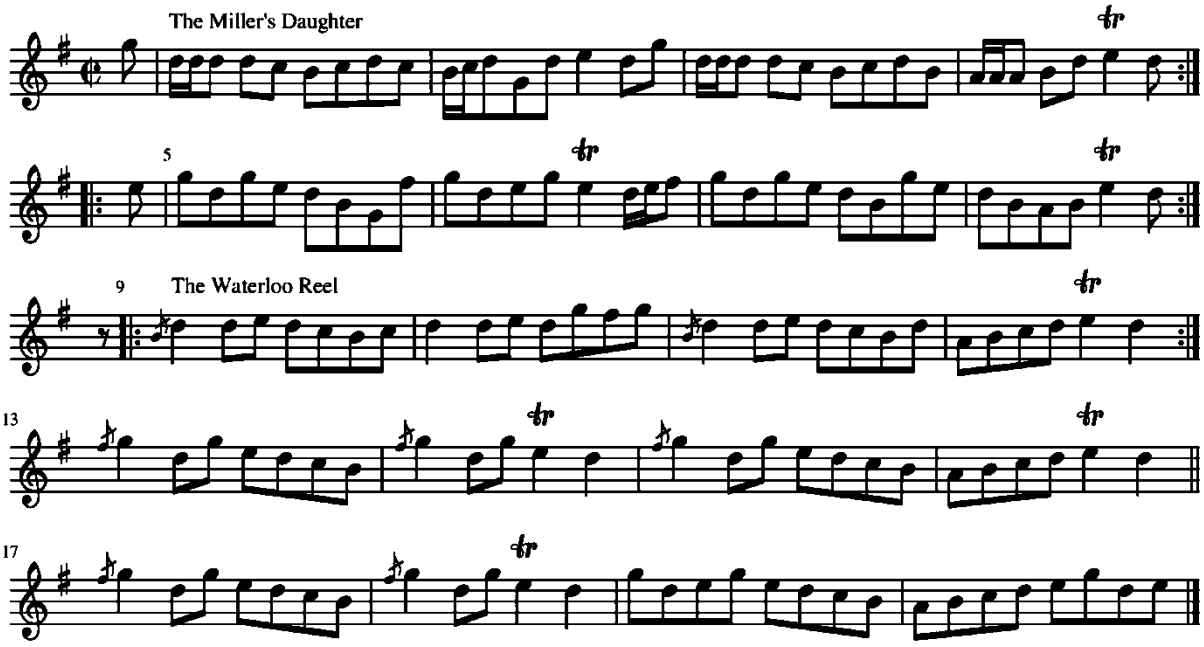
Down with the French - The Fight

From the William Winter MS



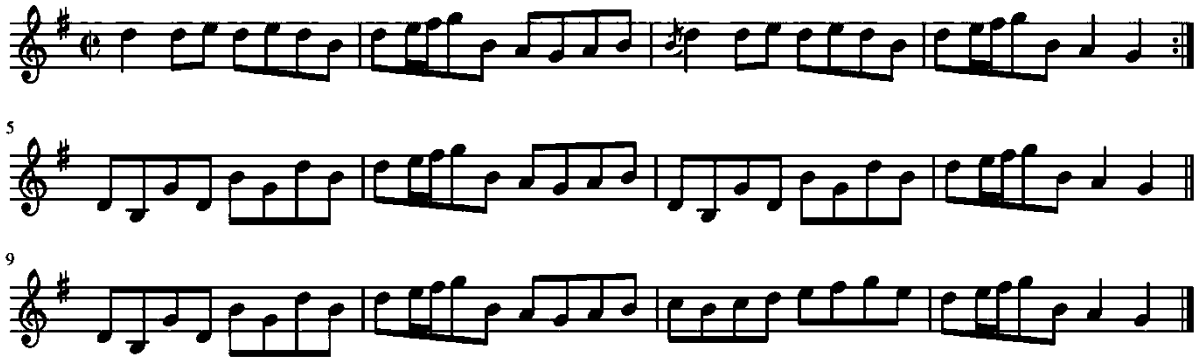
The Miller's Daughter, The Waterloo Reel

From the Fenwick MS



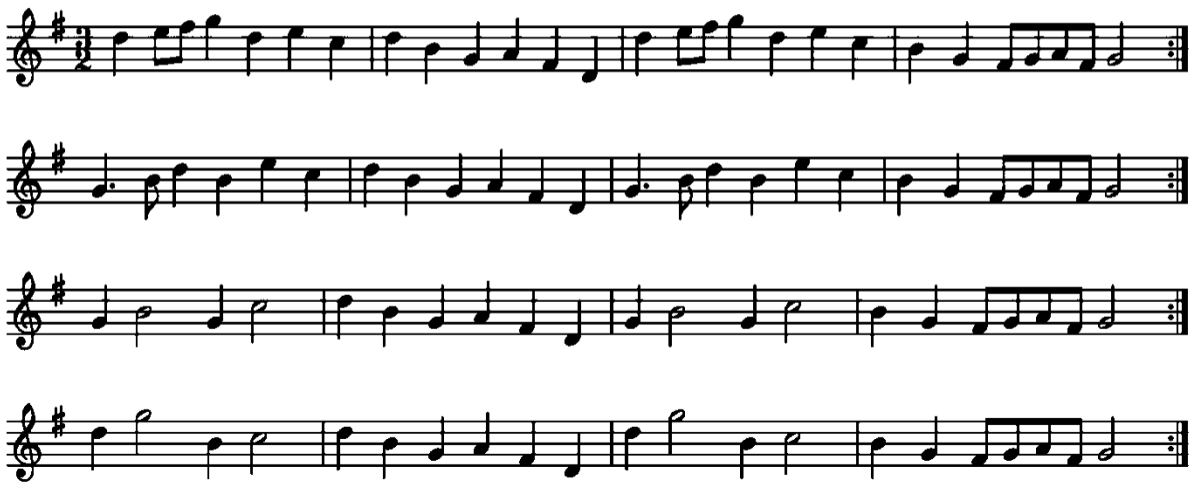
The Nile

From the Fenwick manuscript



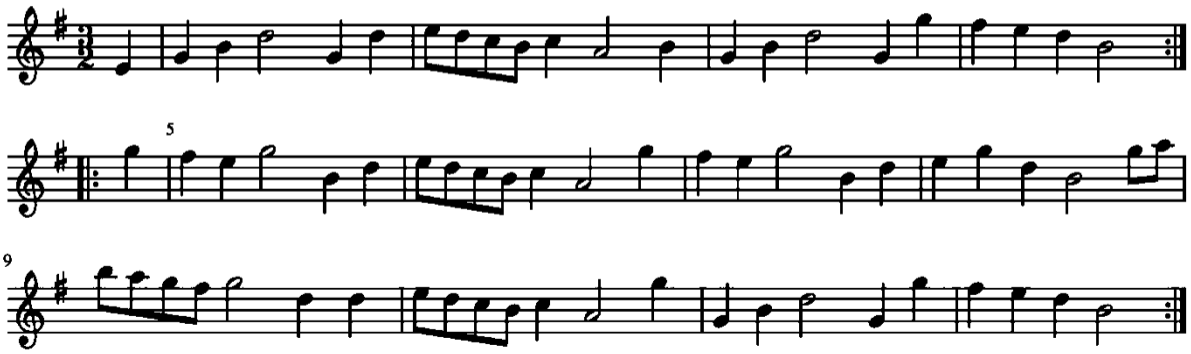
Mr Besford's Birthday Hornpipe

Chris Ormston



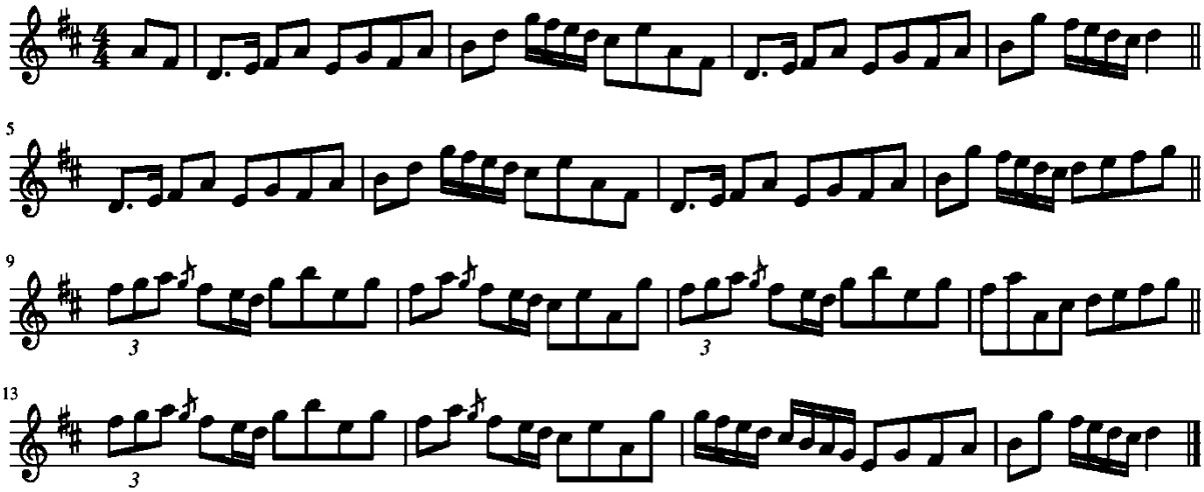
Cady Laddie

from John Johnson's Collection, vol. 3



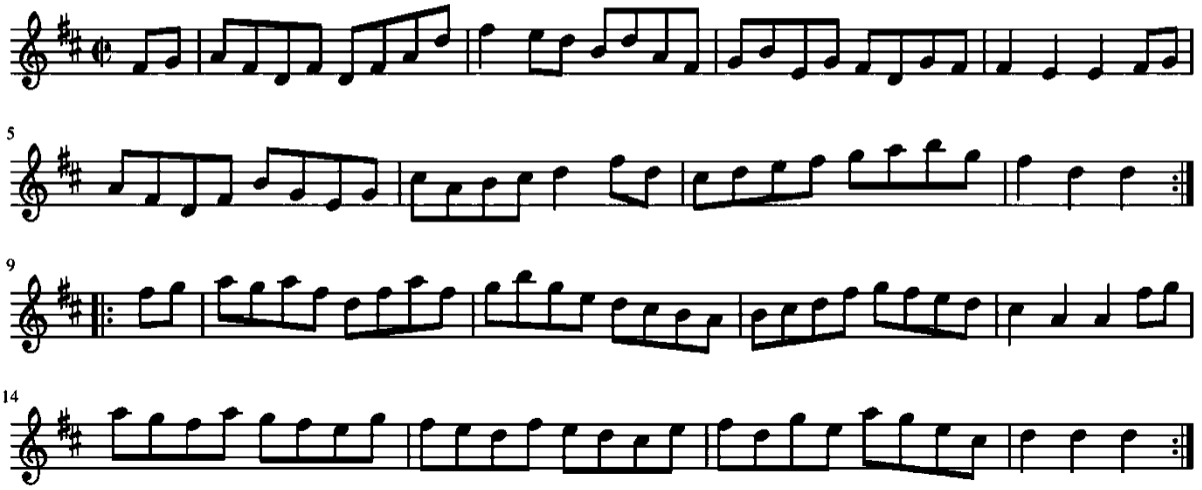
South Shields Volunteers Strathspey

From the Fenwick MS



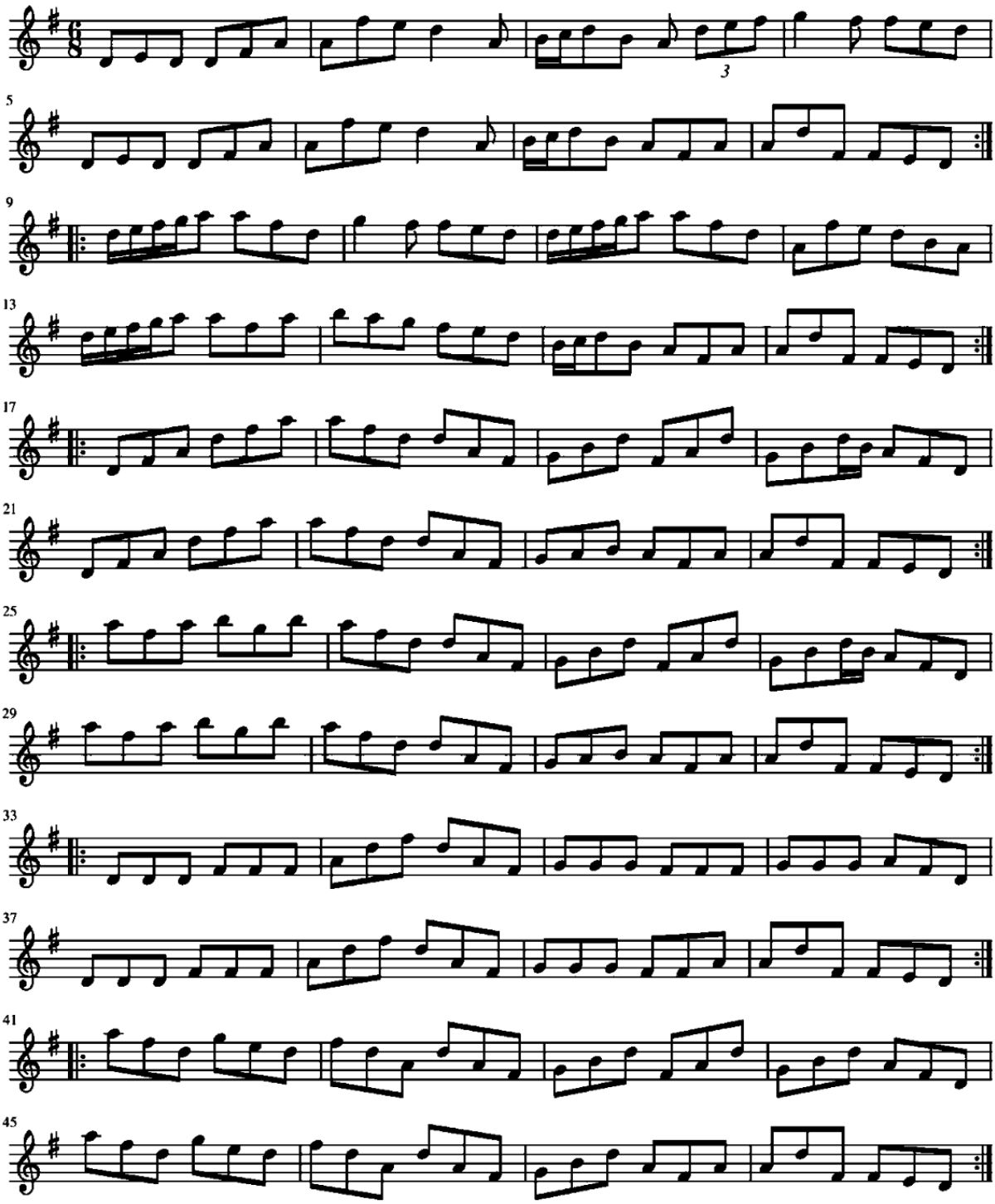
The Low Light Pottins

From the Rook MS



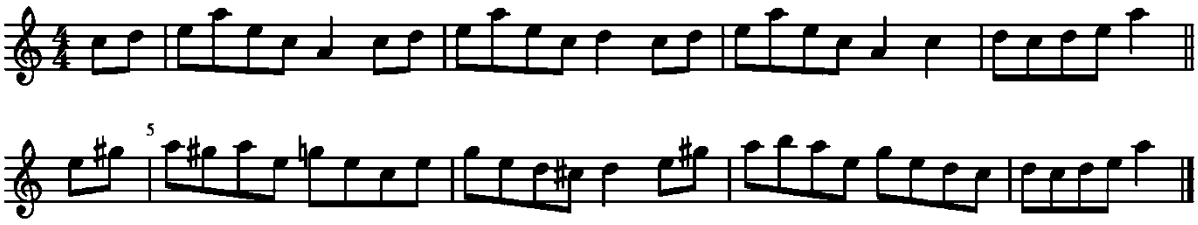
Jockey's a Traytor

From the Winship MS



At Home Wad I Be, And My Supper Wad I See

from John Bell's Collection



At hame wad I be
And my supper wad I see
And marry with a lass
Of my own country.

If I were at hame,
I wad ne'er return again,
But marry with a lass
In my own country.

There's the oak and the ash,
And the bonny ivy tree
How canst thou gan away
And leave me?

O stay my love stay,
And do not gang away,
O stay my love stay,
Along with me.

Notes on the tunes

Chevy Chase This version, from the Fenwick manuscript, is an important view of how a mid-19th century piper understood Chevy Chase, as the basis for a highly decorated variation. In bar 14, the manuscript has a dotted crotchet A, which seems to be a mistake; I have substituted G, as in the tune itself.

The Kempshot Hunt This reel is in A in Mackintosh's collection – it is almost identical in Aird, where it is in G. As written, the grace notes in bars 1 and 9 are short, and before the beat, those in bars 10 and 11 are longer, and on the beat.

Down With The French, The Fight Down with the French is widespread, found in many sources from the mid-18th century onwards, including William Winter's tune book, from West Somerset, where it is in D. The Fight is also taken from this book – the tunes and their titles go well together. I have altered bar 6 of each strain of The Fight, to climb, rather than leap, to the following g.

The Miller's Daughter, The Waterloo Reel. This set of the Miller's Daughter is more ornate than Peacock's. The Waterloo Reel is otherwise unknown. Both are written on the same page of the Fenwick manuscript. The birls on the d in The Miller's Daughter are easier played dc#d.

The Nile. This is one of the dance tunes from the Shields area, pasted into the Fenwick manuscript. The three tunes on this page group very well together. Without an extended chanter, playing the first half of bar 5 an octave higher works well.

Mr Besford's Birthday Hornpipe A hornpipe of Chris Ormston's, in an early 18th century style.

Cady Laddie A nice variant of Mount Your Baggage. John Johnson's Collections were published in the 1750's – the 8 volumes are all transcribed on the Village Music Project website.

The South Shields Volunteers' Strathspey Another of the Shields dance tunes. The original was a fourth lower, in A; in the first strain, the second time bar had only 3 beats as written, so I have read a run of ascending semiquavers as quavers, as in the 4th bar of strain 2. I think this strathspey needs to move quite quickly.

The Low Light Pottins A good rant, perhaps from North Shields? The word 'pottins' is clear to read in the manuscript, but its meaning is obscure. In an entry in the Dictionary of the Scots Language, 'pottin peices' are listed together with, but distinguished from, 'culveringis', which are long narrow-bore cannon. DSL states that the word 'pottin' is only Scots, but some Scots words are found south of the Border, though not in standard English. Artillery would certainly make sense at Clifford's Fort, where the Low Light is sited. One of many good tunes in the Rook manuscript. Rook lived in North Shields for some years, though the MS was written in Cumberland.

Jockey's a Traytor This title seems to be a line from a lyric, fitting the second bar very well. The tune goes over the page in the MS after 1 bar, but isn't continued, so I have written a completion of the last strain. Matt Seattle tells me that other titles are Blue Bonnets Over The Border, and the Carraroe Jig. There are 2 early slow versions without variations, as 'Highland Laddie' in O'Farrell's Collection of National Irish Music, and 'Duplin House', in Gow's 2nd Collection of Strathspey Reels (1788). I haven't found a source for this variation set. This is in D, needing DAd drones. The Winship manuscript is dated 1833, and was compiled in Wark. It can be viewed on FARNE.

At Home Wad I Be, And My Supper Wad I See A song tune, to be taken slowly. It is from John Bell's manuscript, compiled in the early 19th century. That can be viewed on FARNE.

To be continued ….