



Holey Ha'penny

Classic Recordings of Traditional Music from the North-East of England

Tom Clough - small pipes, Ned Pearson - fiddle, Billy Ballantine - piccolo
etc



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from the North-East of England

Tom Clough
Jake Hutton
Tom Hunter
Billy Ballantine

Northumbrian Pipes 4.1.29
Fiddle, Bewcastle Fells, Cumberland 30.6.54
Fiddle, Bewcastle Fells, Cumberland 30.6.54
Piccolo, Bewcastle Fells, Cumberland 30.6.54
Haydon Bridge, Northumberland 6.7.54
Wark, Northumberland 29.6.54
Mouth organ, Haydon Bridge, Northumberland 6.7.54
Fiddle, Otterburn, Northumberland 8.7.54
Fiddle, Cambo, Morpeth 16.6.54
Pipes, Stuart Shields, Otterburn, Northumberland 11.7.54
Fiddle, Barden Mill, Northumberland 1.7.54
Melodeon, Warenford, Northumberland 7.6.54
Fiddle, Warenford, Northumberland 7.6.54
Jews harp, Whittingham, Northumberland 9.6.54
Pipes, Haltwhistle, Northumberland 1.7.54
Fiddle, Haltwhistle, Northumberland 1.7.54

Jimmy Hunter
Jim Rutherford
Ned Pearson
Joe Hutton
Adam Gray
Willy Taylor

Bob Clark
John Hepple
George Hepple

- 1 Ho'ley Ha' Penny/Elsie Marley
- 2 The Gilsland Hornpipe
- 3 Morpeth Rant
- 4 Proudlocks Hompipe
- 5 Billy Ballantine's Reel
- 6 Father's Polka
- 7 Schottische
- 8 Varsoviana (Old and New)
- 9 Highland Laddie
- 10 My Lodging is on Cold Ground/Bonnie Dundee
- 11 Roxburgh Castle/Devil among the Tailors
- 12 The Roman Wall
- 13 Tom Hepple's Polka (The Girl with the Blue Dress On)
- 14 The Tow House Polka
- 15 The Kielder Schottische
- 16 The Keel Row (with variations)
- 17 Schottische
- 18 My Lodging's on Cold Ground/Blow the Wind Southerly
- 19 Corn Rigs/The Manchester Hornpipe
- 20 The Linehope Lope
- 21 Willy Taylor's Polka
- 22 Nae Good Luck - jig
- 23 Whittingham Green Lane/Ward's Brae
- 24 Bonny North Tyne
- 25 Mosstrooper's Polka
- 26 The Coquet Reel
- 27 Heel and Toe Polka
- 28 The Pin Reel - jig
- 29 Cambo March
- 30 The Ferry Boat
- 31 Malorca/Herd on the Hill/Devil among the Tailors

Tom Clough
Tom Hunter, Billy Ballantine
Jim Rutherford
Billy Ballantine
Billy Ballantine
Ned Pearson
Ned Pearson
Ned Pearson
Ned Pearson
Joe Hutton
Joe Hutton
Adam Gray
Adam Gray
Adam Gray
Jake Hutton, Tom Hunter, Billy Ballantine
Tom Clough
Billy Ballantine, Jimmy Hunter
Billy Ballantine, Jimmy Hunter
Bob Clark
Willy Taylor
Willy Taylor
Willy Taylor
John Hepple, George Hepple
Billy Ballantine
Billy Ballantine
Billy Ballantine
Ned Pearson
Ned Pearson
Ned Pearson
George Hepple
John Hepple, George Hepple

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Produced for Topic by Tony Engle
Originally recorded for the BBC by Peter Kennedy in June and July, 1954

Sleeve design by Tony Engle
Photographs for the front sleeve and copy
photograph of Tom Clough by Colin Ross

The two illustrations on the front sleeve -
(1) The Piping Jockey or A Cumberland Race
(2) Festivity on Allan's admission into the Class of Minstrels taken
from The Life of Jamie Allan in the collection of the Society of
Antiquaries, Bagpipe Museum, The Black Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne

TSDL283

The music on this record has been taken mainly from recordings made for the British Broadcasting Corporation by Peter Kennedy in the summer of 1954. In addition, two tracks (1 and 16) come from an HMV 78 rpm record (HMV B2952), recorded by the legendary Northumbrian small-piper Tom Clough. This record was made at an experimental session for educational purposes in London on January 4th, 1929. The BBC recordings were made as part of a scheme spanning several years to document the traditional music of Great Britain and Ireland and are now in the BBC archives and are also available for listening at the English Folk Dance and Song Society, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1. A large number of these recordings have now been issued on the Topic label.

The instrumental music of the North-East, like that of the rest of England and Ireland, was developed mainly for dancing, the basic rhythms being the polka, reel, jig, waltz, hornpipe and schottische. Peculiar to the region, however, is the rant rhythm, this being somewhere between a hornpipe and a syncopated reel. Up to the present day there remains a tradition of composing new tunes in the traditional style to add to the standard repertoire which itself has been made up over the centuries from local Northumbrian compositions from both the countryside and the city. John Peacock of Newcastle, and William Shield (1748-1829) from Whickham, were among the earliest - and best - arrangers of Northumbrian dance music, and James Hill from Gateshead was one of the foremost hornpipe composers of the 19th century. A fair proportion of the local repertoire is of Scottish ancestry - some of the musicians here live within only a few miles of the border - and this has been boosted by the frequent visits of Scottish country dance bands and by the availability of much Scottish traditional music on record. In addition to this influence from the North, many Irish musicians have had their effect. Many North-Eastern mineowners had estates in

Ireland, bought with the profit from their mines, and they could and did prevail upon their tenants to seek employment in the mines of Northumberland and Durham.

For all the variety of source, the music of the North-East is quite distinguishable from other parts of England, Ireland and Scotland and nothing is more distinctive within its boundaries than the sound of the Northumbrian Pipes. Three pipers are heard on this record and the acknowledged master was **Tom Clough** (born at Newsham, Blyth, August 17, 1881; died August 3, 1964). Both his father and grandfather before him were noted pipers and Tom started early. His father discouraged him at first, perhaps thinking him too young, but Tom practised secretly and surprised him by entering a piping competition. After that his father undertook his tuition and from then on there was no holding him and he rapidly became a master of his instrument, winning so many competitions that he was eventually debarred from them and became a judge instead.

In his day, Tom was known as the Prince of Pipers and invented his own arrangement of keying on a seventeen keyed chanter which he preferred to the standard design, claiming that it was easier to play. The tunes played by Tom Clough on this record, **Holey Ha'penny**, **Elsie Marley** and **The Keel Row**, are all firmly in the Northumbrian tradition and Tom is equally firmly in the piping tradition in playing them with variations as he does. It is his imagination and technique, however, that mark him out.

Joe Hutton is probably the leading small-piper today. A shepherd for the last seventeen years, he now works near the Rothbury Forest in central Northumberland. The tunes he plays here are all standards in the North-East's traditional repertoire.

The third piper, **John Hepple**, plays in duets with his father **George Hepple**, who plays fiddle. Again, the family background is musical, with a history of playing for local

dances. George's grandfather was taught to stepdance by Whinham, a well known travelling dancemaster and composer. The tune **The Ferry Boat** is generally used for an intricate polka dance, from which it has taken its name.

One of the best known musicians from the area is also a fiddle player - **Ned Pearson**, who was gamekeeper on the estate of Sir Charles Trevelyan. As a young boy Ned would steal down his father's fiddle, while he was at work as a joiner, and using a piece of string on a stick as a bow he learned the rudiments. When his father found out he received more regular tuition and eventually joined his father's dance band, at first on the flageolet, but later changing to his first love, the fiddle. Many of his tunes have lost their names but the **Cambo March** is known to have been composed by Whinham, the local musician referred to in connection with George Hepple. Ned's father played a lot at Cambo, to the west of Morpeth, and this tune was learned specially for the dance.

Jim Rutherford, aged 62 at the time of the recording, worked as a forester in the Redesdale Forest and plays a particularly fine version of the **Morpeth Rant**.

Another fiddler is **Adam Gray** who was also a shepherd and a self-taught musician - he made his first fiddle from an old cigar box. When he started he was very influenced by Scottish music and by the Border fiddler, Adam Jackson. However, on moving to join the police force in Northumberland in 1926 he took a great interest in collecting and reviving local tunes, **The Roman Wall** being one such discovery. **Tom Hepple's Polka** is more commonly known as **The Girl with the Blue Dress On**.

Billy Ballantine was another self-taught musician, a piccolo player, and he played for many years at local dances. He composed many tunes, thinking of one at work and jotting a couple of bars down on a matchbox so that he

could remember it when he got home, when he would set to polishing it up. **Billy Ballantine's Reel** was one of these tunes, named after him by a fiddler friend who was much impressed by it. **The Mosstrooper's Polka** relates to the old days of the border raids. **The Coquet Reel** was often used as an alternative tune for **The Morpeth Rant**.

Most of the musicians playing here are now dead and not a lot is known about them. **Jimmy Hunter** played for local concerts in the war years and also broadcast with *Willie Walker* and his band. **Willy Taylor** was another shepherd and worked all his life in the Cheviot Hills. **Bob Clark** is still with us and has played Jews harp since he was at school. He is a farmer who has done much to keep the music alive.

This record, together with two previous Topic releases, *Bonny North Tyne* and *Morpeth Rant*, serves as a documentary of some of the thriving North-Eastern country music over the last half century. Between them the records show the range of music, from the rough but exciting country fiddling developed for local village dances to the highly developed and technically brilliant piping, perhaps more at home in the parlour of farm or town dwelling.

Holey Ha'penny

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