The Shropshire Tune Archive

20 English dance tunes collected by John Kirkpatrick

2017

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The Shropshire Tune archive came about after a number of discussions with Shrewsbury Folk Festival's director Alan Surtees. We both felt that collecting tunes with a local connection was a worthwhile task, and putting them "in one place" would assist tune players and educators in Shropshire and beyond.

As the first of what we hope will be many instalments, we were lucky to draw on the knowledge and experience of John Kirkpatrick – one of the great folk players and historians of our time. I also offer a sincere thanks to Joy Lamont and Sandra Surtees for their endless support. Whether for education or the sheer pleasure of playing these tunes, I hope you will enjoy the collection!

Sadly, Alan Surtees passed away before the collection could be aired but it will remain, along with many other great things in the world of folk music, a testament to his energy and passion in supporting the living tradition of our music.

Izzy MacLachlan, Education Director, Shrewsbury Folk Festival

SHROPSHIRE TUNES COLLECTION

Notes by John Kirkpatrick

Shrewsbury Quarry (No.1) is the only dance tune given in Charlotte Burne's book from the 1880s - "Shropshire Folk Lore". The tune was played in procession on the way to The Shrewsbury Show, held at Kingsland, and consequently for dancing once all had arrived. The usual name for the tune is *La Belle Catherine,* and it is included in almost every collection of dance music throughout the nineteenth century.

Several of the other melodies with place names in the title come from the masses of country dance collections (each dance given with its appropriate tune) that poured off printing presses from the middle of the seventeenth century till the First World War. From these we have **The Shropshire Lass** (No.2 – 1713), **The Shropshire Round** (No.3 – circa 1650), **The Shrewsbury Rakes** (No.4 – 1756), and **Oswestry Wake** (No.5 – 1728).

The same source also gives us **General Hill's Favourite** (No.13 – circa 1812). He was born Rowland Hill at Hawkstone in 1772, was commissioned into the army in 1790, and rose through the ranks during the Napoleonic Wars to become Wellington's right hand man, eventually becoming elevated to the peerage in 1814, and commander in chief of the British Army in 1829. The monument erected in his honour as Lord Hill, 1814 – 1816, which still dominates the skyline of the county town, is the tallest Doric column in England and is two feet fatter than Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.

Shrewsbury Waltz (No.6), **The Ironbridge Hornpipe** (No.7), and **Wellington Hornpipe** (No.8) all come from an amazing hand-written manuscript compiled by John Moore, an amateur fiddler who worked as a seedsman and nursery man in Wellington in the 1830s. With about 150 dance tunes included, as well as many sacred pieces, it is a fascinating record of what a working musician was expected to have in readiness. From his pages we also have **The Reform Quickstep** (No.17), **Mad Moll** (No.18), **Master Tommy's Married** (No.19) and **The Sylph** (No.20). Mr Moore's books also included different versions of La Belle Catherine, Shropshire Round, and Three Jolly Sheepskins.

William Titley was a carpenter who lived in Pave Lane, near Newport, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and who played flute, piccolo, and fiddle. He was in great demand for dances, and was frequently summoned to play for a clientele in Shrewsbury who could afford to send a horse and cart to pick him up. Like John Moore, he compiled a book of dance music in his own hand, and from this we have an unnamed polka, now renamed in the compiler's honour as **William Titley's Polka** (No.9), **The Victorine Polka** (No. 10), and **The Strolling Players** (No.11).

Lumps of Pudding (No.12) comes from an article in The English Folk Dance and Song Society's Journal from the early 1930s, with a very detailed account of a dance on the village green at High Ercall in 1686. An extremely long and complicated dance, for six in a set, is described, with different tunes being used at different moments during the dancing. This is the only tune given in the article, as the others were "not of the slightest interest".

Three Jolly Sheepskins (No.16) was collected by Cecil Sharp from the fiddler James Lock in Newport in 1912. There are countless other versions of the tune – John Moore knew it, and printed versions date back to at least 1698. It was used to accompany The Sheepskin Hey, a figure where three people would dance around three hats (presumably, originally, sheepskins) on the floor in a perpetually changing order, until someone went wrong and had to buy the other two a drink! It was a popular party game in this part of the world.

Dennis Crowther – The Clee Hill Poet - was a popular and locally much loved entertainer, singer, and musician who kept his audiences around South Shropshire in fits of laughter right up until his death a few years ago. As a boy between the wars he had gone round with the village gang bashing out a few tunes to earn some extra coppers for Christmas. As long as you could play the tunes, there was no need for titles! Hence **Dennis Crowther's No. 2** (No.14) and **Dennis Crowther's No.3** (No.15). Fascinatingly, the original of Dennis' No 3 turns out to be called *The Moldavian Schottische*, and is included in William Titley's tune book mentioned above.

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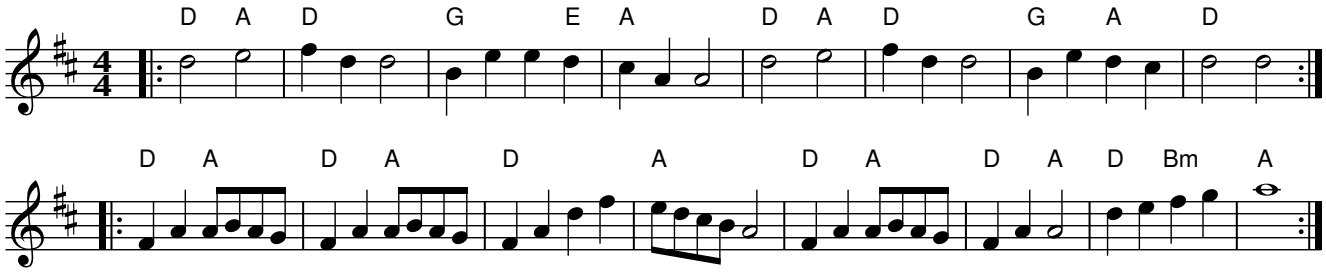
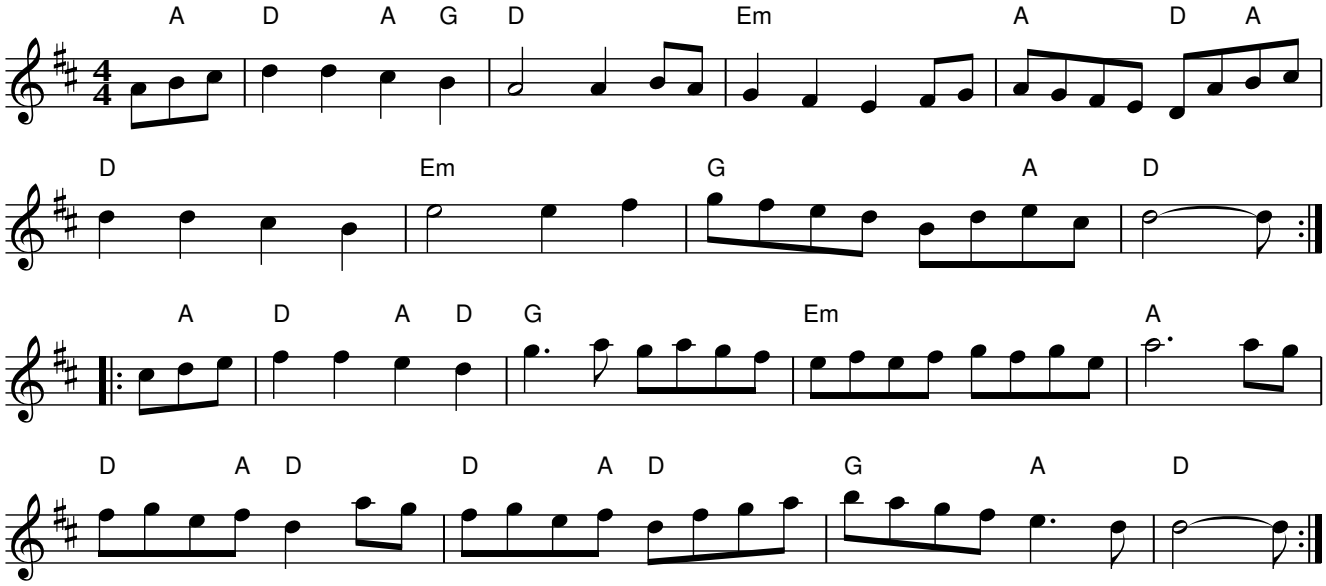
Shrewsbury Quarry

arr. John Kirkpatrick



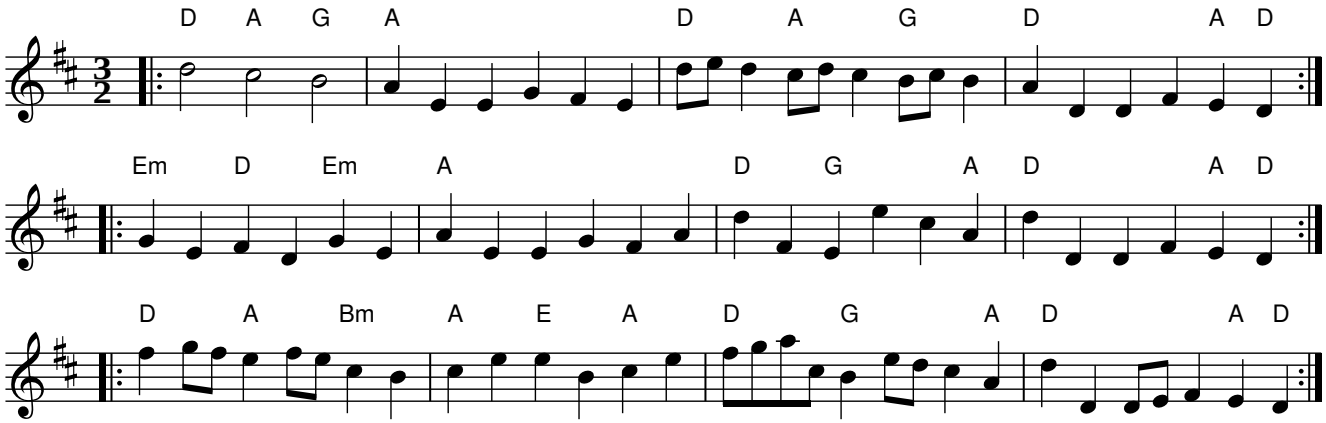
The Shropshire Lass

arr. John Kirkpatrick



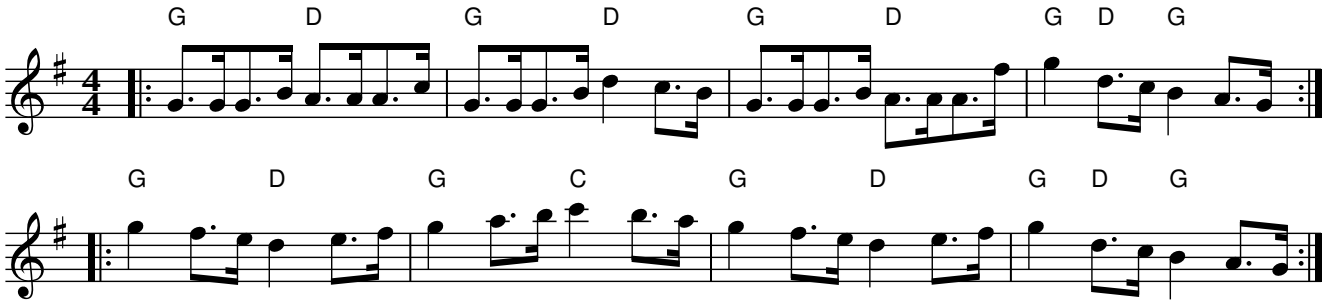
The Shropshire Round

arr. John Kirkpatrick



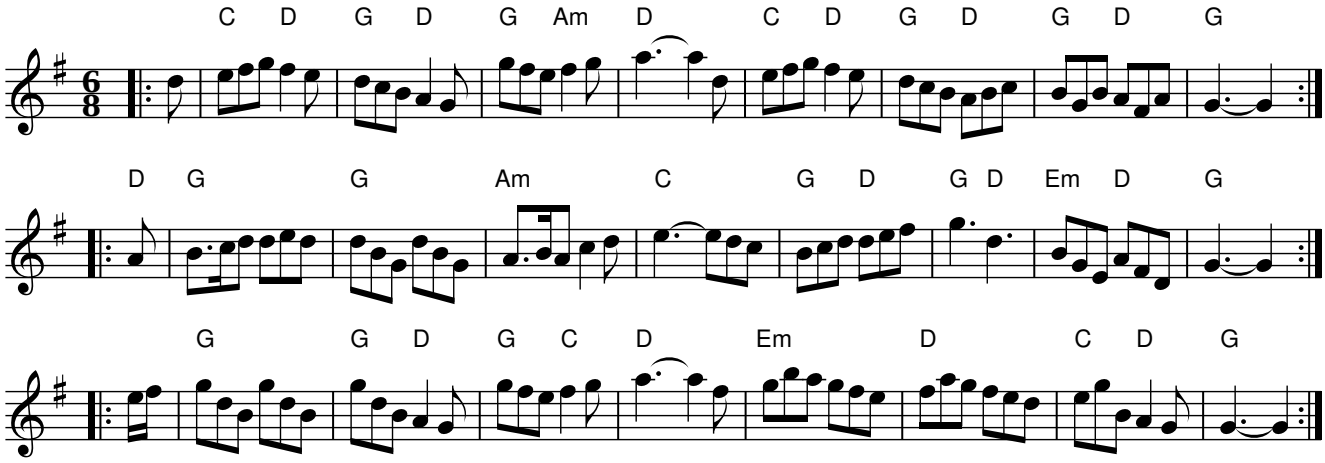
The Shrewsbury Rakes

arr. John Kirkpatrick



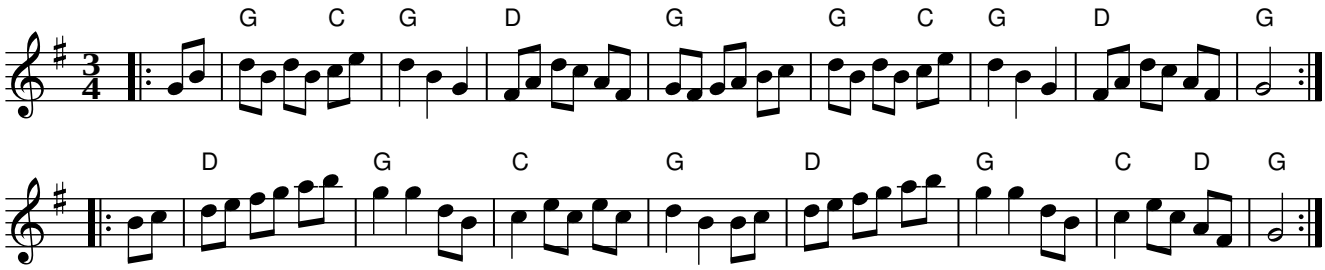
Oswestry Wake

arr. John Kirkpatrick



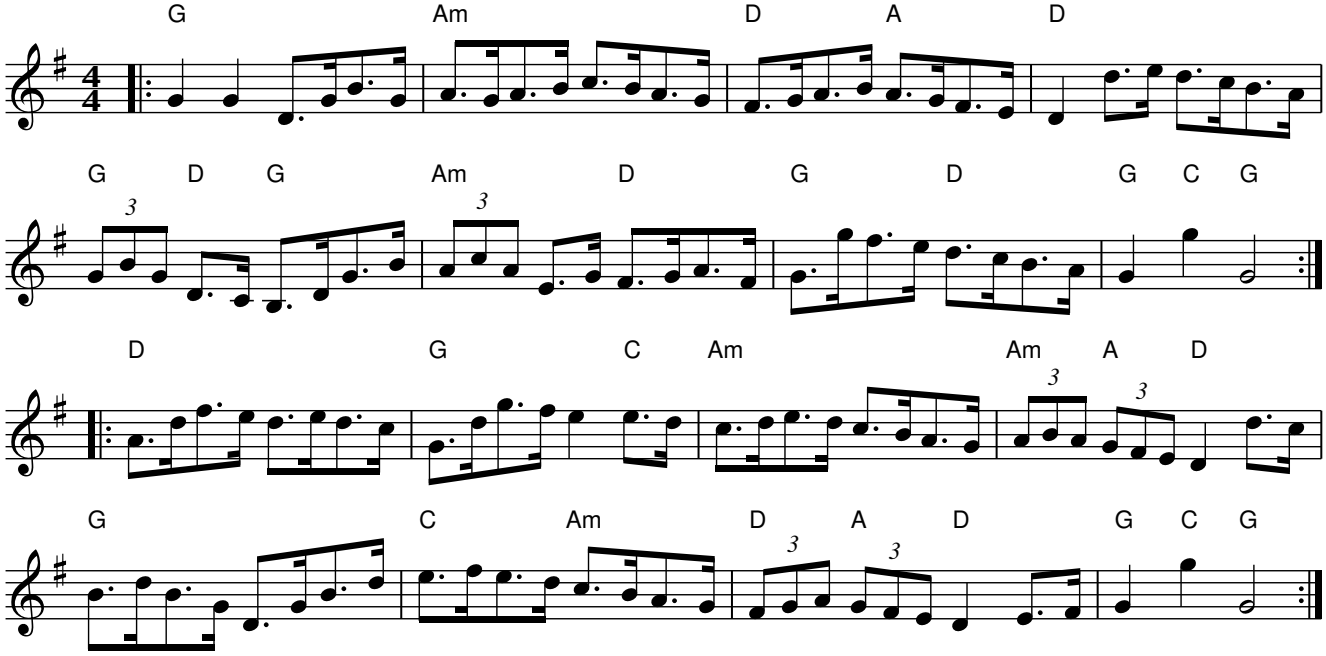
The Shrewsbury Waltz

John Moore ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



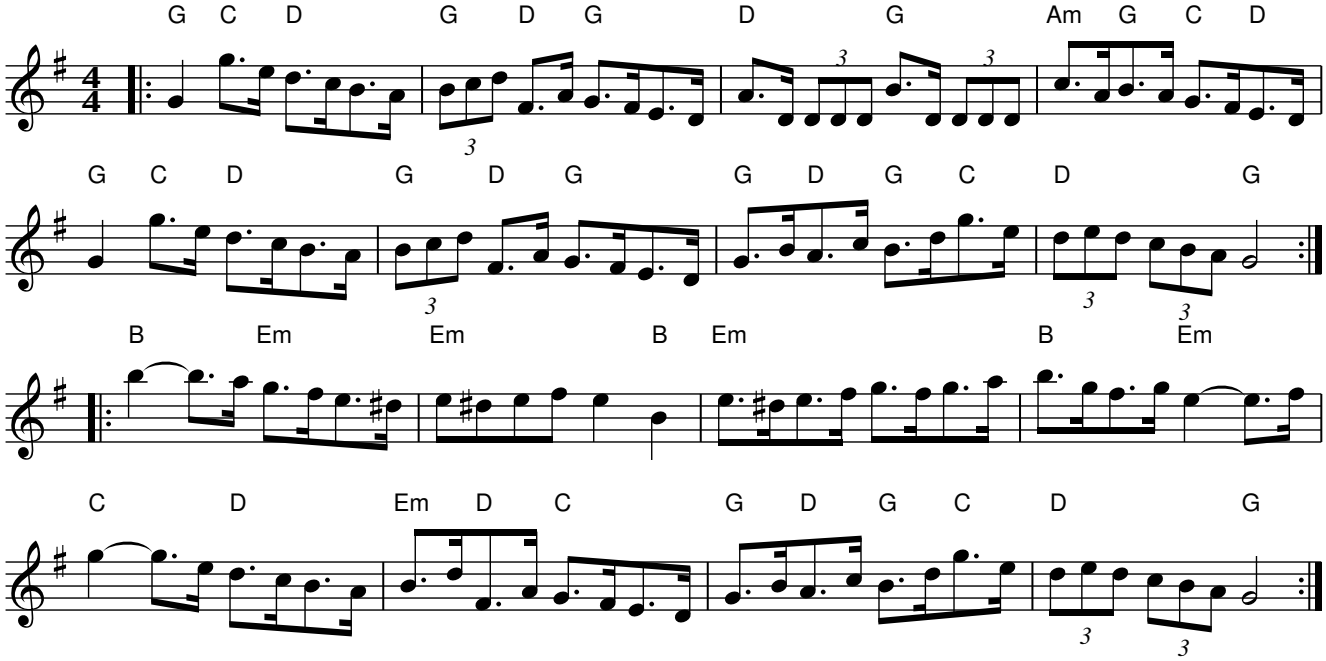
The Ironbridge Hornpipe

John Moore ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



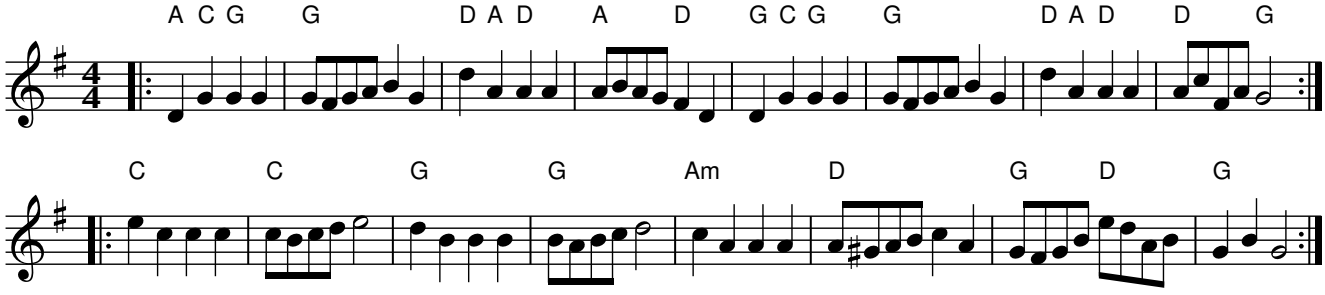
The Wellington Hornpipe

John Moore ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



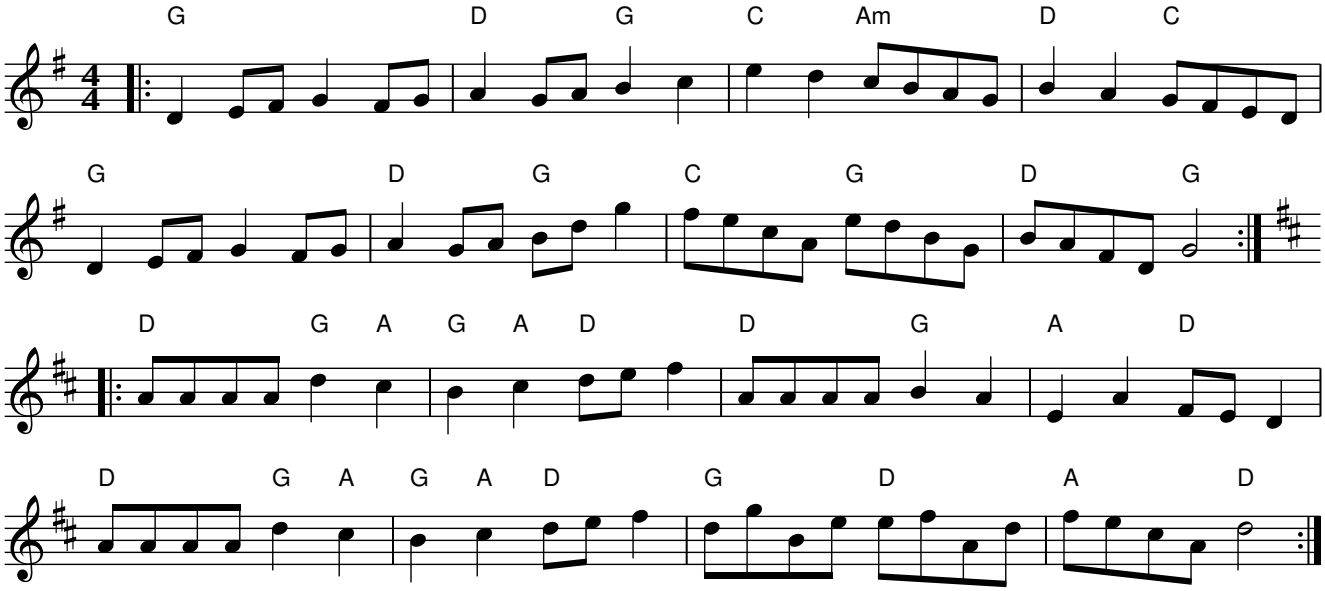
William Titley's Polka

William Titley ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



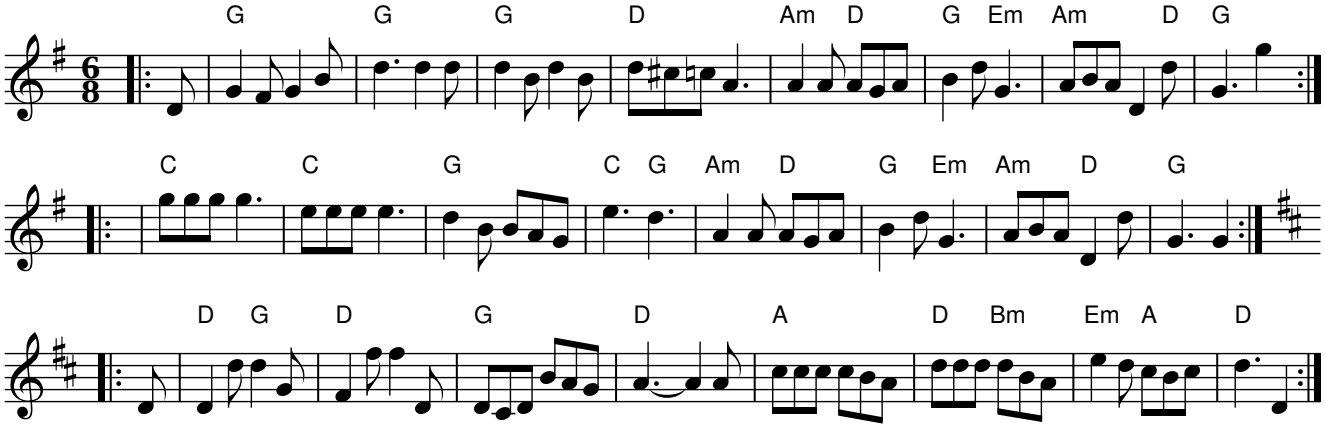
The Victorine Polka

William Titley ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



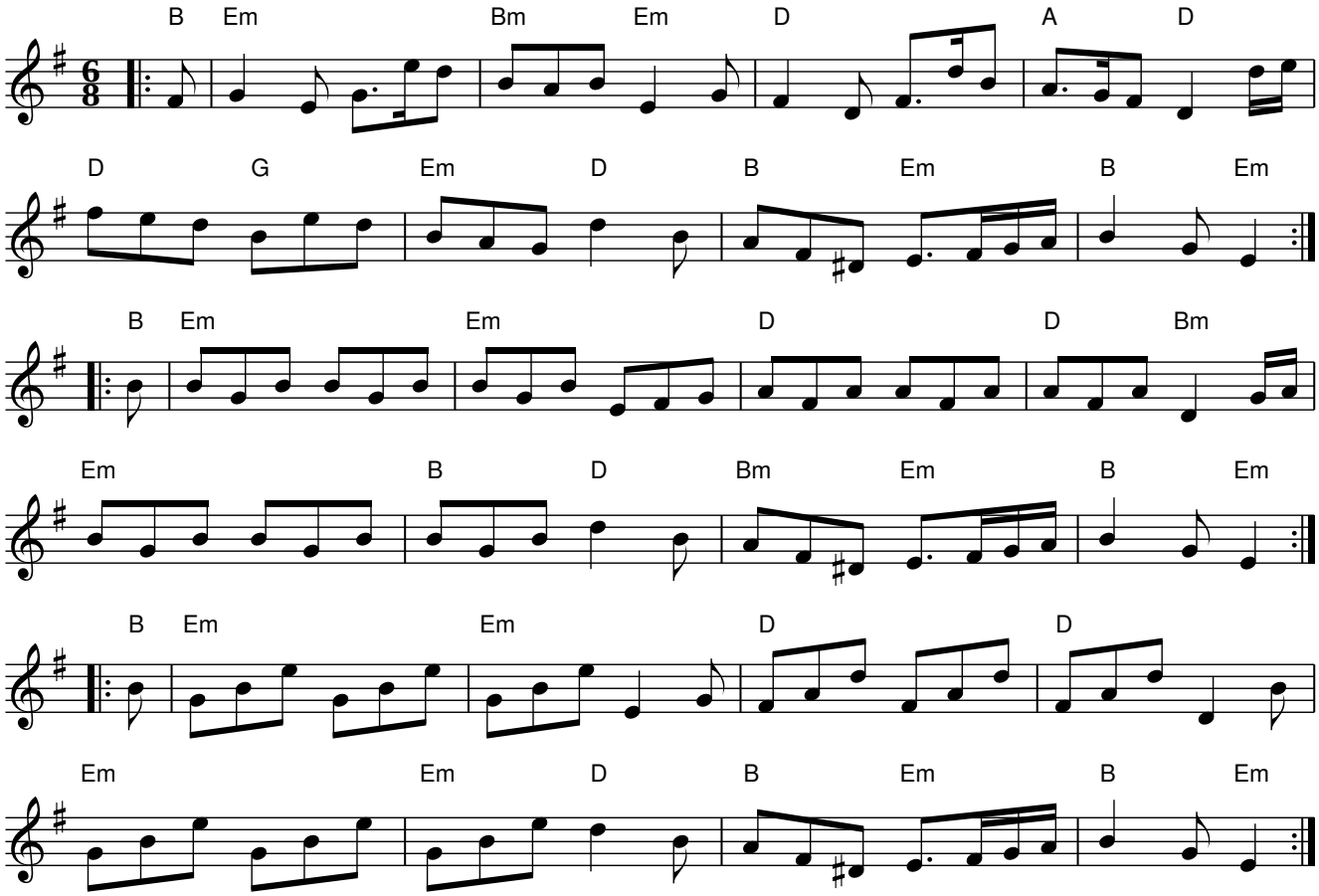
The Strolling Players

William Titley ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



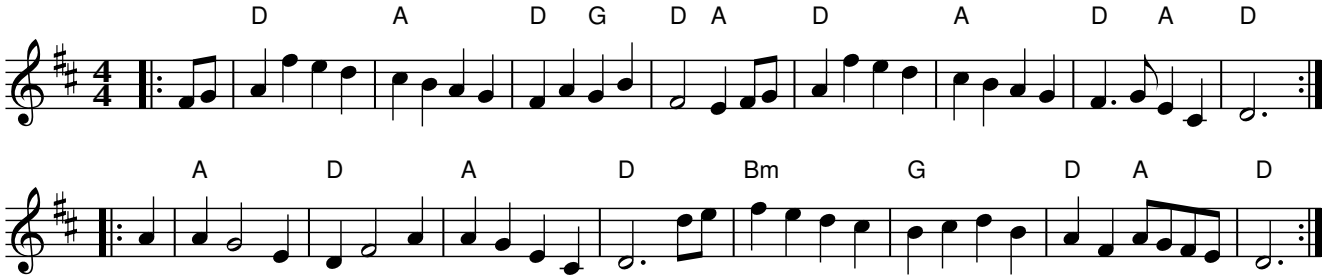
Lumps of Pudding

arr. John Kirkpatrick



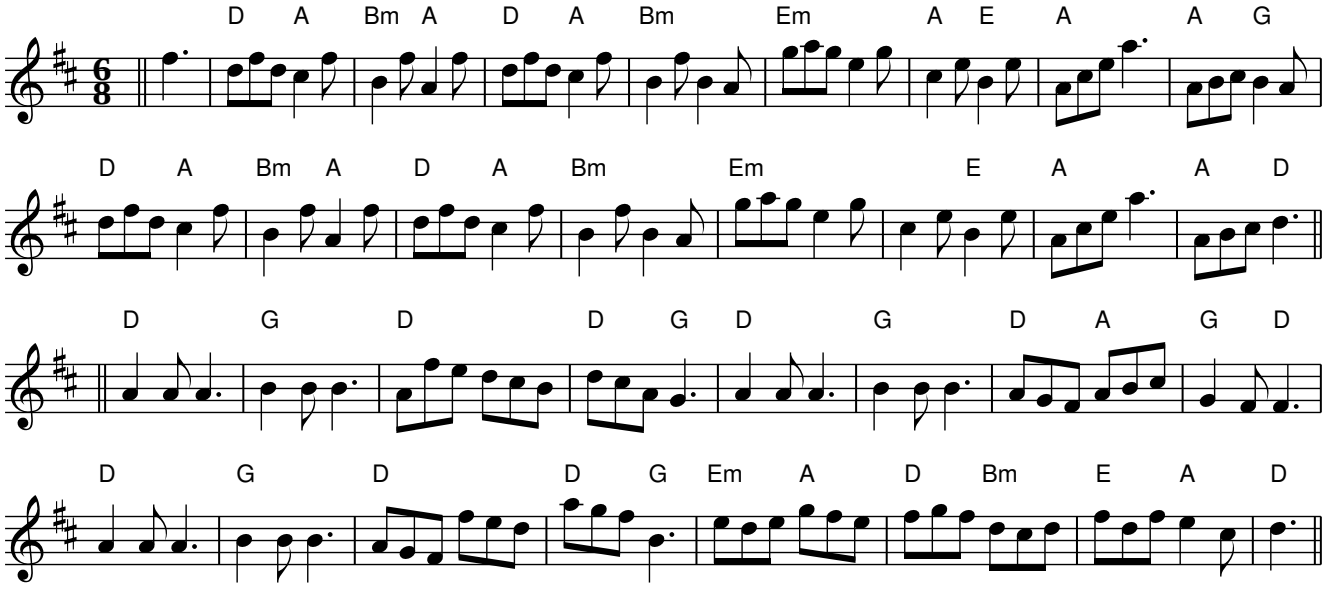
General Hill's Favourite

arr. John Kirkpatrick



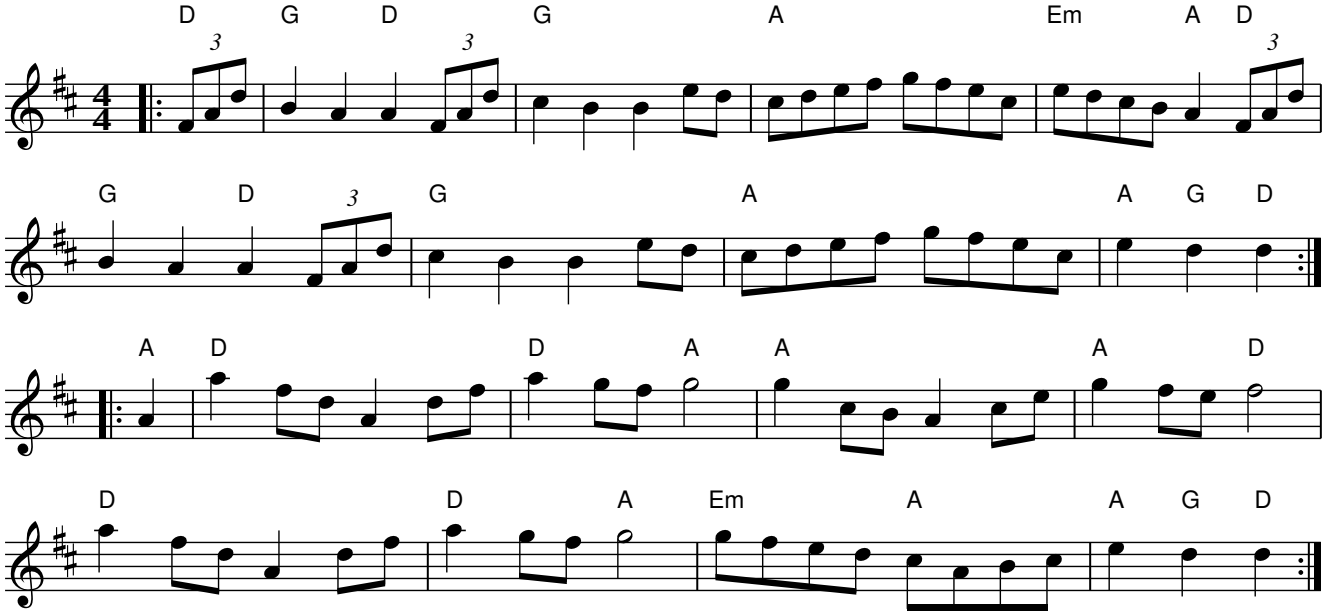
Dennis Crowther's No.2

from Dennis Crowther, arr. John Kirkpatrick



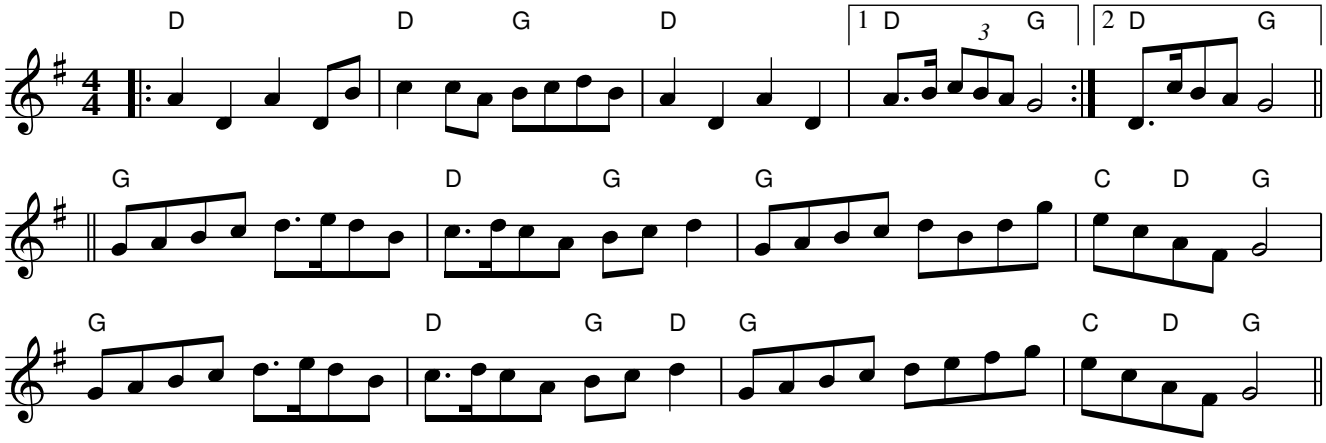
Dennis Crowther's No.3

from Dennis Crowther, arr. John Kirkpatrick



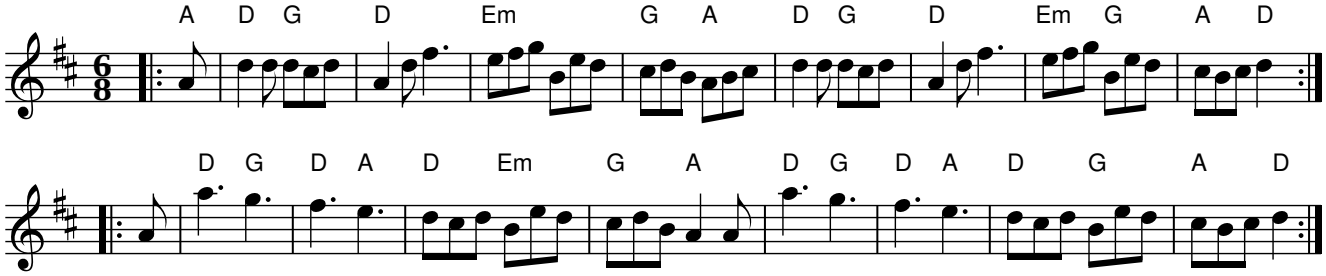
Three Jolly Sheepskins

from James Lock, arr. John Kirkpatrick



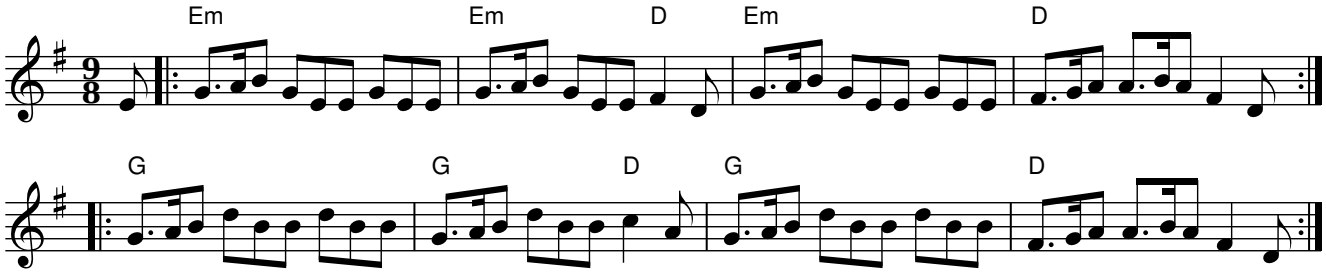
The Reform Quickstep

John Moore ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



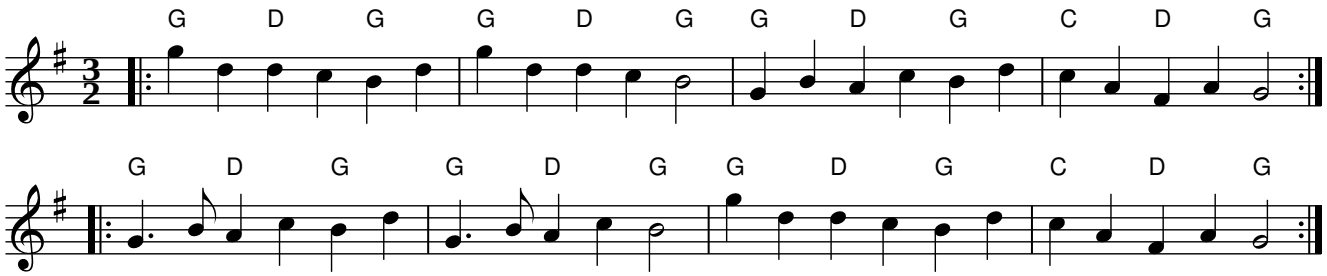
Mad Moll

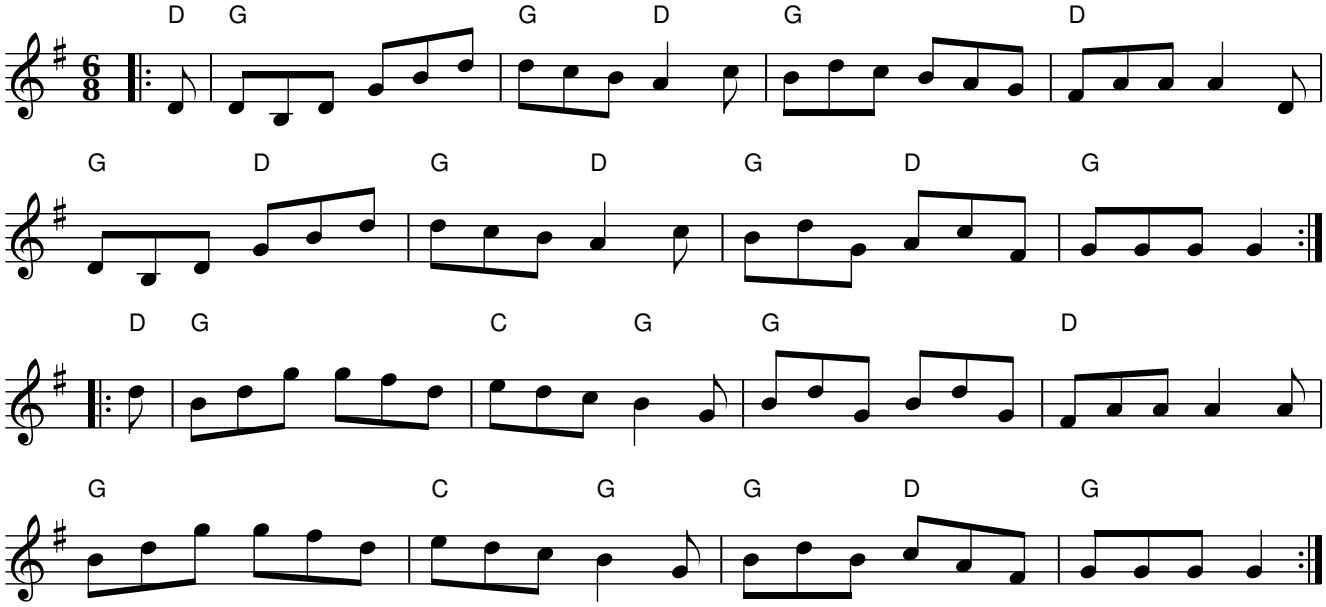
John Moore ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



Master Tommy's Married

John Moore ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick



The Sylph

John Moore ms. arr. John Kirkpatrick