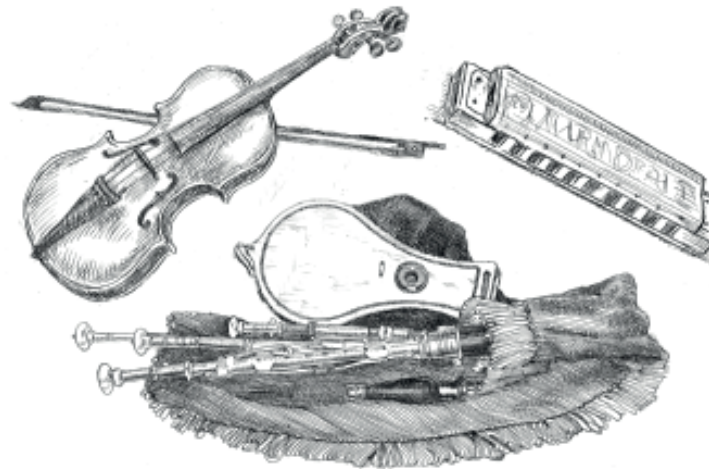


THE SHEPHERDS

THE MUSIC OF ARCHIE DAGG, WILL ATKINSON AND WILLIE TAYLOR

A Selection for Sidmouth, 2026

Edited by Alistair Anderson, Andrew Burn, Graham Dixon,
Mike Nelson, Kathryn Tickell and Greg Smith
with original drawings by John Holder



Joe Hutton's March

Archie Dagg



One of Archie's most popular session tunes. The Rothbury course playarounds would often end with this tune following Jack Armstrong's Rothbury Hills. It is published in the Northumbrian Pipers' Third Tune Book. Archie said in interview with Graham Dixon: "I think that Joe Hutton is the best piper I've heard. March, jig, hornpipe etc - Joe can play them all in real good time. He doesn't race."

Graham Dixon, interview notes

The Foxglove Hornpipe

Archie Dagg



The Lady's Well

Archie Dagg

Slow air



This beautiful air remains a popular session tune. It was reportedly written for a local Coquetdale play: The Seven Nuns, by Kate Collingwood.



Lady's Well, west of Rothbury, rumoured to be associated with the Anglo-Saxon St Ninian.

Photo: Alex Barrass

Elsey's Waltz

Archie Dagg



Along with Swindon, this is perhaps the most frequently-played of Archie's tunes in sessions. Joe Hutton can be heard playing it (with Swindon and The Foxglove Hornpipe) at the Cullercoats Bay Hotel, in 1979, recorded by Phil Ranson, accessible on the FARNE archive. The same collection includes Joe Hutton and Will Atkinson playing the tune at the Keele Folk Festival in 1979. The tune is named for Elsey Burleigh, first wife of David Burleigh the pipemaker.

Coplech Burn Hornpipe

Archie Dagg



This was one of the last tunes he wrote – named after a stream that flows through Rothbury. The similarity of the A section to Billy Pigg's Old Drove Road is often remarked on, but the B section is completely different.

Swindon

Archie Dagg



Swindon is a hamlet near Hepple, in the parish of Rothbury, where Archie and Ella retired to. 'His favourite tune, his most musical. "My tunes are plain sorts of things – it depends on a good artist and what they put into it... Joe (Hutton) is the best piper I've known and plays it very nice." '

Graham Dixon, interview notes

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93 Not Out

Will Atkinson



Alistair Anderson recalls Will recommending that this tune is “best played as a stately pipe march rather than a fast jig”. Players can decide on their own preference, as the tune works equally well either way.

Alistair records how the tune came about, how it was finalised, and how it was named:

‘On one of my frequent visits to Will Atkinson [in hospital] he was messing around with a tune and I asked if that was one of his and his reply was “Well it might be”. He had ideas for several phrases but was having difficulty remembering the first phrase as he moved on to the next, so I scribbled down each phrase and would play them back to him when he asked so he could sort out where to put each bit and adapt them till he got it how he wanted it. Effectively I was just a human tape recorder.

When he had got it to his satisfaction and we had played it together a few times I asked what he was going to call it. He was uncertain, so as it was not long after his 93rd birthday and he had been watching cricket on the TV when I arrived, I suggested ‘93 Not Out’. He liked the title so that is what stuck.’

The Glen Aln Hornpipe

Will Atkinson



This tune, one of his best-known, won the New Tune competition at the Morpeth Gathering in 1968, with maximum points. Glen Aln, where Will worked for thirty years, is just below Broome Hill Farm. Will can be heard playing it in the Phil Ranson collection, accessible on the FARNE archive.

Kyloe Burn Reel

Will Atkinson



Kyloe Burn is a tributary of the River Aln. It flows near to Broome Hill Farm where Will and Bella lived in the 1970s. Will commented: "This is an especially good mouth-organ tune with plenty of 'bouncy runs' and it should flow just like water in a little stream."

(A Commemorative Book of Will Atkinson's Tunes and a Wee Bit More, Ernie Gordon, 2023)

Will Atkinson's Schottische

Trad., as played by Will
Atkinson (see comment
and note on page 47).

The musical score for "Will Atkinson's Schottische" is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The music is written in a single melodic line. The second staff ends with the word "Fine". The third and fourth staves are repeat sections, each beginning with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The fifth staff also begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The sixth staff contains two first endings, marked "1." and "2.", and concludes with the instruction "D.S. al Fine". The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and triplets, as well as dynamic markings like accents and slurs.

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Alistair J Sim

Willie Taylor



The Pearl Wedding

Willie Taylor

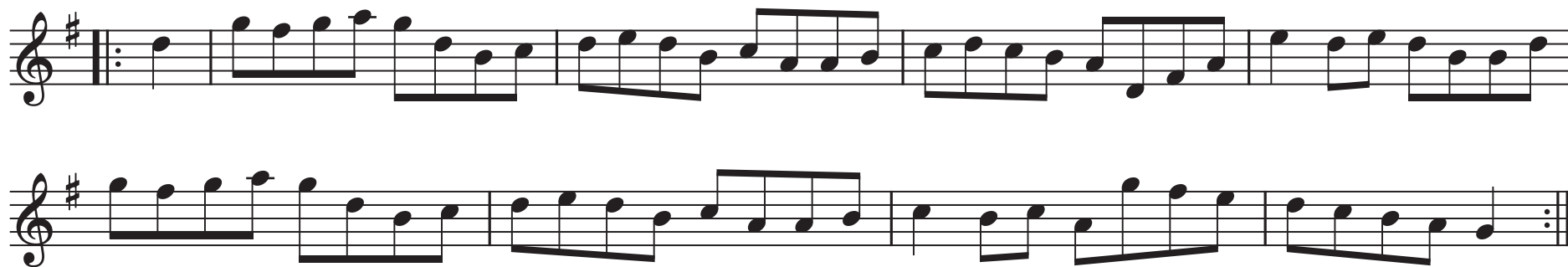


This tune was written for Willie and Nancy's Pearl Wedding. Another popular session tune, recorded by The Shepherds on their Harthope Burn album.

Nancy Taylor's Reel

Willie Taylor





This remains a popular session tune. It's played by The Shepherds on their Harthope Burn album, along with The Pearl Wedding (page 83) and Tich's Reel (page 86). It was written for Willie's wife, Nancy, and may be regarded as one of a group of 'family tunes', along with those named for their son, Neil, Neil's wife, Christine, and Willie and Nancy's grand-daughter Emma, which appear on the following pages.

Wee Kerry's Welcome to the Dene

Willie Taylor



Written to celebrate the birth of his first grand-daughter.

Farewell to the Dene

Willie Taylor



Willie wrote this tune when he and Nancy left Middleton Dene.

Tich's Reel

Willie Taylor



Composed for guitarist Tich Richardson, who, along with his brother Dave, was a Northumbrian musician and member of Boys of the Lough. He often visited the Rothbury Traditional Music Festival.

The Shining Pool

Willie Taylor



The Shining Pool is a little way upstream from Linhope Spout.