



**Tribute to Seamus Creagh
on World Fiddle Day,
20 May 2017,
Scartaglin, County Kerry.**

"Jackie Daly and Seamus Creagh"

Originally released in 1977 by Gael-Linn, CEF 057.

Re-released in 2005 and now repackaged and released again, CEFCD057.

Transcriptions and text by Paul de Grae
for World Fiddle Day, Scartaglin, Co. Kerry,
20 May 2017.

The featured recording for World Fiddle Day 2017 is "Jackie Daly & Seamus Creagh", issued by Gael-Linn in 1977. A marvellous recording by any standards, it was highly influential at the time, making many new converts to Sliabh Luachra music far beyond the semi-imaginary boundaries of the region.

1977 was a watershed year for Sliabh Luachra music. Though many of the important musical figures were still active, and set dancing was flourishing, the music had been largely ignored outside its own area. Precious recordings made in the late 1940s and 1950s for Raidió Éireann and the BBC remained inaccessible in the archives of those institutions. With the exception of Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford's outstanding album "The Star Above the Garter", released by Ceirníní Claddagh in 1968, and one or two tracks on hard-to-find compilation albums of Irish music, no recordings of authentic Sliabh Luachra music existed.

Then suddenly in 1977 a flood of material, of the highest quality, became available. The English company, Topic Records, produced a set of six albums under the title "Music from Sliabh Luachra", starting with Seamus Ennis's 1952 BBC recordings of Pádraig O'Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford. The six albums in the series are:

1. "Kerry Fiddles." Pádraig O'Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford.
2. "The Star of Munster Trio." John, Julia and Billy Clifford.
3. "The Humours of Lisheen." John and Julia Clifford.
4. "Irish Traditional Flute Solos and Band Music from Kerry and Tipperary." Billy Clifford, Matt Hayes and Catherine Ryan.
5. "Music for the Set." Johnny O'Leary.
6. "Traditional Accordion and Concertina Music from Sliabh Luachra." Jackie Daly.

Note that it was left to a left-wing English company to produce these essential albums.

In the same year, Gael-Linn released "Jackie Daly and Seamus Creagh" (with Colm Murphy on bodhrán): fifteen tracks, mostly from the Sliabh Luachra repertoire, including three sets of polkas, one of slides, one of jigs, two of hornpipes, four of reels, three slow airs and a song.

In 1977 there were still not very many albums of traditional music available. What was available tended to be one of two types – either conservative Comhaltas-style albums or more experimental group albums by the likes of Planxty and The Bothy Band. Jackie and Seamus followed neither path. The material on the album is much more diverse than the reel-dominated selections which had become the semi-official national standard, but the absence of accompaniment (except for occasional bodhrán) sets this music apart from contemporary group albums. The cover design by Joe Boske (with photography by Domhnall Ó Máirtín, front, and Bill Doyle, rear) was regarded by some as "a bit hippy-ish", and the two lads certainly had that look about them, but the music they played was "the pure drop", and many of the sets on the album have since become very popular, in Sliabh Luachra and beyond.

Seamus Creagh

Though rightly celebrated as an outstanding interpreter of Sliabh Luachra music, Seamus Creagh (1946-2009) was born in far-off County Westmeath, where he learned fiddle at the age of 12 from a neighbour, Larry Ward. His love of traditional music and song, and the crack that goes with it, was strengthened by excursions to the emerging trad scene of 1960s Dublin; but he put aside the fiddle for a while to play guitar in a ballad group called The Dragons (coincidentally, Jackie Daly was also led astray around this time, playing electric guitar in a showband, The Cymbals – not many people know that...).

But in 1968 he moved to Cork and was again immersed in real traditional music. In 1973 he met Jackie and they soon formed an enduring musical partnership. As well as being inoculated with polka-&-slide virus, he also developed a uniquely sensitive style of slow air playing – doubtless influenced by the singers he encountered in Cúil Aodha and elsewhere. And of course he was an outstanding singer himself.

Along with his exceptional abilities as a musician, Seamus was a charming and gregarious companion, popular and respected wherever his wanderings took him. He spent several years in Newfoundland, where he is fondly remembered by those he met, taught and played with; Féile Seamus Creagh is an annual event there since 2010. After he moved back to Ireland, he and Jackie continued to perform together from time to time.

Seamus's other recordings include his solo album "Came the Dawn" (1993); "Seamus Creagh & Aidan Coffey" (1999); "It's No Secret" (2001) with Con Ó Drisceoil, Hammy Hamilton and Pat Aherne; "Island to Island" (2003) with musicians from Ireland and Newfoundland; and many tracks on other people's albums. His CD for learners, "Tunes for Practice" (2009) is highly recommended, for learners and also for advanced players seeking to expand their repertoire.



The transcriptions

This booklet contains transcriptions of all the dance tunes on the album, omitting only the slow airs and the song; and each set also has a link to a recording on Soundcloud (thanks to PJ Teahan for these). In keeping with the spirit of World Fiddle Day, as well as to honour the memory of a great fiddler and friend to Sliabh Luachra, we felt it was important that as many fiddlers as possible (the younger ones especially, who may be less familiar with this recording) should learn these tunes so that they can play them on the day, take part in the tribute, and indeed keep these tunes in circulation.

With that aim in mind, we have opted for fairly basic transcriptions, generally omitting the ornamentation and variation. In some cases the tunes have been written here in a more user-friendly key (which of course means that playing along with the recording is not possible). These tunes are marked with an asterisk (*) in the list below.

Album track list:

1. Jim Keefe's; The Newmarket (polkas).
2. The Macroom Lasses*; The Rambler in Cork (reels).
3. The Enchanted Valley (slow air). – *not transcribed*.
4. The Bird in the Bush*; The Two Birds in the Bush* (hornpipes).
5. Connie O'Connell's; Cuillinn Uí Chaoimh (jigs).
6. Bill Sullivan's; Oh the Britches Full of Stitches (polkas).
7. A Ógánaigh an Chúil Chraobhaigh (slow air). – *not transcribed*.
8. Sweet Biddy of Ballyvourney; Quille's [Quinn's] (reels).
9. Byrne's Hornpipe*.
10. Follow Me Down*; The Game of Love (reels).
11. Her Mantle So Green (slow air). – *not transcribed*.
12. Johnny Mickey's; Pádraig O'Keefe's (slides).
13. Denis Murphy's; Cleaning the Henhouse (reels).
14. The Tailor Bán (song). – *not transcribed*.
15. The Four Shoves (polkas).

1. Jim Keefe's & The Newmarket Polkas.

Jim Keefe's

5

10

14

The Newmarket Polka (1)

23

28

The Newmarket Polka (2)

36

40

44

48 last time

1. Jim Keefe's; The Newmarket Polka.

The first tune is named after Jim O'Keefe of Ballinahulla, Ballydesmond, a pupil of Patrick O'Keefe and later a music teacher who worked around Kanturk and Newmarket. Jackie Daly learned a lot from him, and also played with him, Pat Cashman, Séan Lynch and others at the Knocknacolan crossroads outdoor dancing platform. The tune is often played with C sharps, for example the setting in the Johnny O'Leary book, where it's called *Jimmy Doyle's (3)*, no. 249.

The second tune is well known in Scotland as *Wha' Wadna Fecht for Charlie?* and *Wha' Saw the Forty Second?* (i.e. the Black Watch Regiment). It's in Kerr's Collection of Merry Melodies, Vol. 2, p34 as a quickstep, *Wha' Widna Fecht*. English North-west Morris dancers know it as *Grand March* or *March Past*. But of course, like many another marching tune, it had to come to Sliabh Luachra to get the proper polka "lift"! It's in the Johnny O'Leary book as *Din Tarrant's (5)*, no. 299.

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/w-f-d-no-i-seamus-creagh-and?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook



Seamus and Jackie at The Gathering Festival, Killarney, February 2007.

2. Macroom Lasses and The Rambler in Cork

Macroom Lasses



The Rambler in Cork



2. Macroom Lasses; The Rambler in Cork.

Two reels from the O'Neill collections: no. 496 and no. 777 in "The Dance Music of Ireland" (DMI). The first tune seems to be a borrowing of *Last Night's Fun* in "Ryan's Mammoth Collection". It can also be played in G, and O'Neill has another setting in that key, *More Power to Your Elbow* (DMI 705). An earlier setting appears as a *Quick Step* in William Shield's ballet-pantomime "Oscar and Malvina" (1791).

The titles of both of these tunes may be the Corkonian O'Neill's invention. He seems to be the first to have printed *The Rambler from Cork*; Canon Goodman collected a related tune in Kerry in the 1860s, *The Union is Welcome to Ireland* (a title which is surely *his* invention) – it has a similar first part but a different second part.

Note: the first tune has here been transposed into the more fiddle-friendly key of G.

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/wfd-no-2-the-macroom-lasses?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

3. The Enchanted Valley.

This air is the first tune in Francis O'Neill's first collection, "Music of Ireland" (MI), published in 1903. According to Donegal fiddler and music scholar Caoimhin Mac Aoidh, it was probably composed by Francis's collaborator James O'Neill (Caoimhin's book on James O'Neill, "The Scribe", is highly recommended).

The transcriptions here are intended for all the attending fiddlers to play on World Fiddle Day; since slow air playing is a solo art, we're not transcribing the slow airs from the album, or the song.

4. The Bird in the Bush; The Two Birds in the Bush.

The Bird in the Bush



The Two Birds in the Bush



4. The Bird in the Bush; The Two Birds in the Bush.

These two tunes are classed as reels, but played here in hornpipe time. The first is attributed to Kerry piper and fiddler Billy Hanafin (1875-?) from Callinafercy, and it is fairly well-known. The second was christened by Pádraig O'Keeffe, reflecting its closeness to the first; a setting from Denis Murphy is transcribed in Breandán Breathnach's "Ceol Rince na hÉireann" (CRÉ), vol. 2, no. 232. On the recording these are played a tone higher than as written here.

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/the-bird-in-the-bush-the-two?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

(on following pages)

5. Connie O'Connell's; Cuilinn Ó Chaoimh.

The first jig is attributed to the late Michael Dwyer in "Farewell to the Gort", an unpublished collection of his tunes put together by his family, and it is there called *Michael Dwyer's Jig*. Via this recording it has become widespread under the *Connie O'Connell's* title (named for the well-known fiddler and composer from Kilnamartyra, County Cork). It appears in Martin Mulvihill's collection as *The Jolly Beggar*. It is also called *The Two-and-Sixpenny Girl* (e.g., CRÉ 3, no. 15), which is the title of a tune in "Ryan's Mammoth Collection" (1883), consisting of the third part of the present tune (as the first part) and another part, unlike either of the other parts here.

Cuilinn Ó Chaoimh is named for a village in County Cork, anglicised as Cullen. The tune is a version of *The Humours of Glynn* (see O'Neill's "Music of Ireland", no. 176).

For clarity, the repeats of the second part of each tune are here written out in full.

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/connie-o-connells-cuilinn-ui?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

5a. Connie O'Connell's.



5b. Cuilinn Uí Chaoimh.



6. Bill Sullivan's; O the Britches Full of Stitches.

Bill Sullivan's



O the Britches Full of Stitches



6. Bill Sullivan's; O the Britches Full of Stitches.

These two polkas have become very popular since Jackie and Seamus recorded them. The first is named after one of the musicians who encouraged the young Jackie. In "The Fiddler's Companion", Andrew Kuntz writes that the second one "is perhaps first mentioned in Irish novelist and Fenian Charles Kickham's novel 'Knocknagow, or the Homes of Tipperary', first published in 1879, in which this ditty is sung by a jew's harp player who first plays the tune for a visitor who has torn his pants, then sings: 'Oh, my breeches full of stitches,/ Oh, my breeches buckled on.'"

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/bill-sullivans-britches-full?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

7. A Ógánaigh an Chúil Chraobhaigh.

The first verse of the song sung to this air is:

"A ógánaigh an chúil chraobhaigh, cad é an taobh ar go mbionn tú,
Nó an bhfuileann tú gan chéile, nó an id' aonar a luíonn tú?"

"Ó táimse gan chéile agus im aonar sea luímse,
Cé hé sin dá fhiafraí, nó an éinne beo 'n tír í?"

(literal translation:)

"O young man of the flowing hair, where can you be found?

Are you without company, do you sleep alone?"

"Oh I am solitary and lie alone,

Who is there I can ask for, anyone in the world?"



Seamus and Jackie in Dan O'Connell's, Knocknagree, on TG4's "Geantraí" programme, 2009.

8. Sweet Biddy of Ballyvourney; Quille's [Quinn's].

Sweet Biddy of Ballyvourney



Quille's [Quinn's]



8. Sweet Biddy of Ballyvourney; Quille's.

The first tune appears under this title in the O'Neill collections (Ballyvourney, in north County Cork, was a familiar haunt of Jackie and Seamus). O'Neill seems to have borrowed it from "Ryan's Mammoth Collection", where it is called *The Irishman's Love*. Joyce published a very similar reel, untitled, no. 51 in his "Ancient Irish Music" (1873), with this comment: "I noted down this tune from Ned Goggin, who has been the professional fiddle-player of Glenosheen in the county Limerick, from the time of my childhood to the present day" (i.e., from roughly the 1830s to the 1870s).

The second tune is correctly called *Quinn's*. Breandán Breathnach has a setting from Denis Murphy with that title (CRÉ2, no. 171b); Breathnach notes: "Seán Quinn was a flute player from Cordal and it was from him that Pdraig O'Keeffe got this and other tunes with 'Quinn' in the title."

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/world-fiddle-day-scartaglin?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook



Seamus and Jackie at The Gathering Festival, Killarney, February 2005.

9. Byrne's Hornpipe.



9. Byrne's Hornpipe.

This seems to have made its first appearance in print in O'Neill's collections, sourced from Sergeant James Early. Jackie and Seamus play it in G, but it's more usually played in D, as shown here.

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/no-9-byrnes-hornpipe-at-world?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

10. Follow Me Down; The Game of Love.

Follow me Down



The Game of Love



10. Follow Me Down; The Game of Love. *(on previous page)*

The first tune is a version of the air of the well-known song, "Follow Me Up [or Down] to Carlow". According to Breandán Breathnach, "In Scotland it is called *Bonnie Annie*. It is printed in the 'Glen Collection of Scottish Dance Music' (i, p;23), from a collection by Dow published c.1775."

Jackie and Seamus's setting is similar but not identical to that in the O'Neill collections (MI 1281, DMI 547), but played in B minor rather than the usual A minor. In the interest of making the tune more accessible, I have written it here in A minor.

Notice that the first part is played single, the less repetitive second part double.

The Game of Love appears in O'Neill's "Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melody" (no. 276); an earlier setting, *Paddy the Piper*, is in "Ryan's Mammoth Collection", and the Gunn ms. from County Fermanagh has it as *The Aberdeen Lasses*. Jackie and Seamus's version does not seem to derive from any of these printed settings. Paddy Cronin played a variant called "The Girls of Farranfore".

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/no-10-follow-me-down-the-game?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

11. Her Mantle So Green.

This is the air of a traditional song popularised by Margaret Barry. The first verse is:

As I went out walking, one morning in June
To view the fair fields, and the valleys in bloom;
I spied a pretty fair maid, she appeared like a queen,
With her costly fine robes and her mantle so green.
Says I, my pretty fair maid, won't you come with me,
We'll both join in wedlock, and married we'll be;
I will dress you in fine linen, you'll appear like a queen,
With your costly fine robes and your mantle so green.

12. Johnny Mickey's & Pádraig O'Keeffe's (slides).

Johnny Mickey's



Pádraig O'Keeffe's



12. Johnny Mickey's; Pádraig O'Keeffe's (slides).

Two fine Sliabh Luachra slides named for two fine Sliabh Luachra musicians, Johnny Mickey Barry (?-1981) concertina, from Toureendarby, near Newmarket; and Pádraig O'Keeffe (1887-1963), fiddle, from Glountane.

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/no-11-johnny-mickeys-padraig-o?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

13. Denis Murphy's and Cleaning the Henhouse.

Denis Murphy's



Cleaning the Henhouse



13. Denis Murphy's; Cleaning the Henhouse.

Two very characteristic Sliabh Luachra reels, played without repeats as is common with such tunes. Denis Murphy's own, slightly different playing of the first tune is transcribed in CRÉ 2, no. 131, as *Callaghan's Reel*, named for Pádraig O'Keeffe's mentor and uncle Cal O'Callaghan; several other tunes in the Sliabh Luachra repertoire are named after the same man. According to Martin Mulvihill, Pádraig O'Keeffe called this one *Now She's Purring*, which meant that "she" (his fiddle) was happy and the music was going well.

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/no-12-denis-murphys-cleaning?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

14. The Tailor Bán (song).

"One of the better known composers of the Coolea area, Seán (Johnny) Ó Tuama (Johnny Nora Aodha) is here analysing himself as a composer before going on to describe his drinking adventures with the Tailor Bán – the pair of them 'very fond of this porter, sure 'tis bulging out both our eyes'. Few people in West Cork would agree with his statement that 'the best of my tunes they are broken, but some others are going quite strong; though lately I've heard it outspoken that some of my notes were wrong'."

(Tomás Ó Canainn in "Down Erin's Lovely Lee: Songs of Cork", Gilbert Dalton 1972.)



Photo by Rick West.

15. The Four Shoves

(1)



(2)



(2) - first part in lower octave



15. The Four Shoves

According to Tim and Rhona McCarthy (well-known set dancing teachers) the original method for dancing the fourth figure of the Sliabh Luachra Set is called "the four shunts" or "the four shoves", where the gent reverses the lady around the set. Hence the name of the polkas.

In the first tune, the first part is played once, the second part twice.

In the second tune, the reverse is the case: the first part is played twice, the second part once. On the recording, the accordion plays the second part an octave higher. On the second and third rounds of the tune the fiddle plays the first part an octave lower (the third round is just the first part played twice). This octave playing is characteristic of Sliabh Luachra dance music.

The first tune is played again after the second one, and after a bodhrán break, it is played again, but a semitone higher. Jackie can explain how that was done!

https://soundcloud.com/1scartaglin/no-13-the-four-shoves-at-world?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

The sequence on the recording is unusual (A = first part, B = second part):

(1)
ABB
ABB

(2)
AAB (accordion in higher octave in B part)
AAB (fiddle in lower octave in A part)
AA (ditto)

(1)
ABB

(bodhrán break)

(1)
ABB (a semitone higher!)
ABB (ditto, to fade-out)