**Fact and Speculation about Jimmy Garson's March**

**Fact**: I got this from a London - based ceilidh band of the English "revival", Flowers and Frolics, who recorded it on an LP, "Bees on Horseback", in the late 1970's/early 1980's; box-powered, trombone or other brass, trap-set, the whole nine yards; kickass! Knocked me right back; had to play it. Later I heard a smoother version in the original Am, from an LP by The Rakes, w/ Reg Hall (remember that name) on melodeon. The Rakes were distinguished by being one of the few bands of the time, on the English side, to play fiddle and box together and English and Irish together. (Lucy Farr was one of their fiddlers.) Reg Hall revealed that the origin of this one is actually in the Orkney Islands, off of Scotland. For a long time I "peddled" it to every band I could (see below).

Much later, after much speculation about the tune's origins, I came to learn that Jimmy Garson was a well known musician and dance band leader in the Orkneys. No more definitive information became available (##) until I got ahold of a copy of the CD/booklet combination on the Topic label - TSCD678, in the Voice of the People Series: **Orkney**; Traditional dance music from Orkney; Field Recordings made by Peter Kennedy in 1955, selected and presented by Reg Hall.

There on the cover of the CD and booklet was the picture of **The Garson Trio**: Jimmy Garson, fiddle; Iris Nicholson, piano accordion; John Nicholson, guitar. Playing the CD, I found the tune in question in cut 2, entitled **King William's March** (!!). On page 26 of the extensive booklet it was revealed that King William's March is a version of **King Billy on the Boyne**, picked up by Garson from an (un-named) Irish itinerant fiddle player.

**Speculation**: I wondered why, despite having both the Flowers and Frolics recording and the earlier one featuring Reg Hall and Lucy Farr, I'd never seen any title but Jimmy Garson's March. A simple possibility is that Reg Hall had heard the Peter Kennedy recordings prior to The Rakes LP, remembered the name of the fiddler but not the tune, and named it (as often happens) after the person he got it from. And then much later, after re-visiting the 1955 recordings for the production of the **Orkney**; Traditional dance music from Orkney CD on Topic, discovered the tune history. But another speculation arises from the position in English-Irish history of King William, ie King Billy. Perhaps in a pioneering English/Irish band with Lucy Farr, either Hall or the Rakes collectively decided to keep the great tune, but lose the emotion-laden name(s). If anyone knows more about this process, I'd love to hear about it.

## Despite enquiries made on-island by a former Scotsbroome musical colleague, fiddler Shaun Hubbard, the descendant of an Orkney family who journeyed to her ancestral home

**Medleys**

Salmonberry 1991 recording: Belknap's March (Em) /Jimmy Garson's (Em) /Louise's Parlor (D)

Scotsbroome 1996 - 2001:

Green Mt March (D, McQuillen) or Bannerman's (D, McQuillen) /Jim Barrie's (G) / Jimmy

Garson's (Em)

Jim Barrie's (G) / Belknap's (Em) / Jimmy Garson's (Em)

Pleasures of Home 1998 - 2003:

McQuillen's Squeezebox (D) / Jimmy Garson's (Em) / Louise's Parlor (D)

Sleeping Giant (D) / Jimmy Garson's (Em) / Louise's Parlor (D)

Small Pleasures 2000 - 2005, 2011-2012

Sleeping Giant (D) or Green Mt March (D) / Jim Barrie's (G) / Jimmy Garson's (Em)

Green Mountain March(D)/Benn Weber's March (G, Beemer 1860's ID mss)/Jimmy Garson's

Fresh Cider (later Full Scale)

2013-2014 Long Company (G) / Columbus (D) / Jimmy Garson's (Em)

2014: Comer's March (Am/Em, McQuillen)/Jimmy Garson's (Em) / Louise's Parlor (D)

Jesse, Phil, Jay (later, Sleeping Giant)

2014: Pres Obama's March to the White House (A) / Sleeping Giant (D) / Jimmy Garson's (Em)