

West Norfolk Music Centre

Celtic Music Group - Andrew Farley – Modified 6-2-2026

Sets, 8 bar repeats, and variations etc.

Sets

In Celtic music, since the early 1900s, tunes are often played in “sets” or medleys of usually three to five tunes. For more information on sets, see this article: <https://www.fiddlingaround.co.uk/sets.html>.

We can vary the sets to suit our taste and ability, and combine any tunes we like. Most of the sets here come from music I have acquired over the years, as they have all worked well at least once.

8-Bar Repeats

Because we have changed how some repeats are played (and because there are a few errors in the transcription), I’ve included a table showing how we will play the repeats.

Tunes are usually arranged in sections, each usually, but not always, 8 bars long (not including any lead-in notes). The first section is called “A”, the second “B”, and if there is a third, it becomes “C”, and so on. Most tunes have two sections. Each section is commonly played twice, making a 32-bar tune.

Some tunes differ. For example, *Dashing White Sergeant* has an 8-bar A section that is repeated twice, followed by a 16-bar B section that is not repeated, before returning to the start as many times as needed. Others, such as *Hundred Thousand Welcomes*, are structured differently but still follow the 8-bar pattern.

In the table, “AABB” means we play the first section twice and the second section twice. In *Dashing White Sergeant*, this becomes “AAB AAB”. The sections are not always marked, but the phrasing of the tunes makes the section clear.

As we sometimes change repeat patterns, please annotate your own copies with any changes, clarifications, or corrections rather than printing a new sheet. The sheets you are given are yours to keep.

Variations

Because many older tunes were passed down orally, different versions exist (see the website [Traditional Irish music on The Session](#) for examples). We generally play the versions I am familiar with, but please suggest alternatives if you prefer them.

MuseScore

I use MuseScore 4 for music notation, which is free software. I also sometimes use EasyABC. If you would like to learn how to use these apps, bring your laptop along and I will help you get started.

Repertoire and Inspiration

Some groups at WHMC practise a few pieces for a while and then change their selection. We won’t do that. Instead, we will follow tradition and build a Celtic folk repertoire. So far we have 11 tunes or sets. We will keep adding new ones, and they will become part of our repertoire month by month as inspiration strikes. See [Home page for Celtic Folk Norfolk](#) for some inspiration.

Backup

“Backup” is the term used for any accompaniment for Celtic music and it provides a “*harmonic framework and rhythmic drive*” and “*will enhance the playing of others, adding to the musicality of the performance*”. I have taken the chords from reliable websites and my own resources. If you play backup (guitar, cello, tenor sax etc.), you may change the chords, but please let us know, as all the backup instruments need to base their parts on the same chords.

Most backup musicians improvise, but I have written a bass line for the sets we play. It is very uncommon to find published bass lines for these tunes, so I have learned to write them myself — and I am still learning!

Sets	Tunes	Arrangements	Erratum and comments
Orange and Blue	Orange and Blue (Strathspey)	AABB	
	Roaring Jelly (Jig)	AABB	
	Dashing white Sergeant (Reel or Polka)	AAB AAB	
My Love is Like...	My Love Is Like A Red Red Rose (Waltz)	AB AB	
	Ye Banks And Braes (Waltz)	AAB	
	My Wild Irish Rose (Waltz, [32 bar A section])	ABB	B part is from bar 93 to the end
My Home	My Home (Slow March, can also be a Waltz)	AABB	Last bar should be just 1 dotted crotchet
	Lochanside (Waltz)	ABAB	
	The Barren Rocks Of Aden (Reel)	AABC	Repeat at bar 53 should not be there. Bar 52 repeat is correct.
	Scotland The Brave	AB	
Mason's Apron etc.	Masons Apron (Reel)	AA BB	
	Soldier's Joy (Reel)	AA BB	
	Fairy Dance (Reel, note 4 bars per sec.)	AA BB	
	The De'il Among The Tailors (Reel)	AA BB	
Lamb Skinet etc.	Lamb Skinet (Jig)	AA BB	
	Jeanie's Blue E'en (Jig)	AA BB	
	Maggie Brown's Favourite (Jig)	ABC	Do we need a repeat at bar 9?
Hundred Thousand	Hundred Thousand Welcomes (March)	As written	There should be no repeat at bar 53
Galway Hornpipe..	The Galway Hornpipe	AA BB	Bar 12 should be A# not A♯
	The Boys of Blue Hill (Hornpipe)	AA BB	
	The Greencastle (Hornpipe)	AA BB	
	Barwick Green (Hornpipe)	A A	Check you have the right version.
	Cooley's Reel	Cooley's Reel (Fast Irish Reel)	AA BB
Coilsfield House	Coilsfield House (Slow Air)	As written	
Brian Boru's...	Brian Boru's March	AA BB CC DD	
Eriskay Love Lilt	Eriskay Love Lilt (Song)	Play 3 times	