

The Egg Hornpipe

Allen Ash Manuscript
As played by Ian Bell

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by a dotted rhythm throughout. Above the first staff, the following chords are indicated: C, Am, D, G, F, C, D, G. The second staff continues the melody and includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). Above the second staff, the following chords are indicated: C, Am, D, G, F, C, G, C, C. The third staff continues the melody and includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). Above the third staff, the following chords are indicated: C, G, Am, Dm, D, G, C, Am, Em. The fourth staff concludes the piece and includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). Above the fourth staff, the following chords are indicated: Am, Em, F, C, G, C, C. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and dotted rhythms, as well as fingerings (e.g., '3') and repeat signs.

Full disclosure: This is one of the first tunes I learned out of the Ash collection when I first got a photocopy of it in 1982. I've been playing it ever since. As I'm going through my now-battered copy of the manuscript in 2016, I find I've lost the page that this tune was on. So here it is from my own playing. I'm sure Allen Ash would recognize it. I play it as a clog-hornpipe in a dotted rhythm throughout.

This tune is more often found under the name "Ricker's" "Richer's" or "The Rackett". It is in "Ryan's Mammoth Collection", "Cole's 1000 Fiddle Tunes" and in other 19th century manuscripts.

"The Egg Hornpipe" is a generic name for a dance performed by stage performers who placed eggs and lit candles on the floor and blindfolded, danced around them, sometimes gathering the eggs onto a handkerchief with movements of their feet, and then picking them up as the grand finale. I have seen references to this dance being done in Canada.