

Johnny Cope

Verse

Chorus

1. Cope sent a challenge frae Dunbar,
Sayin "Charlie meet me an' ye daur;
An' I'll learn ye the airt o' war,
If ye'll meet me in the morning."
Chorus
O Hey! Johnnie Cope are ye waukin' yet?
Or are your drums a-beating yet?
If ye were waukin' I wad wait,
Tae gang tae the coals in the morning.*
 2. When Charlie looked the letter upon,
He drew his sword and scabbard from,
Come, follow me, my merry men,
And we'll meet Johnnie Cope in the morning.
 3. Now Johnnie, be as good as your word,
Come, let us try baith fire and sword,
And dinna flee like a frichted bird,
That's chased frae its nest i' the morning.
 4. When Johnnie Cope he heard o' this,
He thocht it wouldna be amiss,
Tae hae a horse in readiness,
Tae flee awa in the morning.
 5. Fye now, Johnnie, get up an' rin,
The Highland bagpipes mak' a din,
It's better tae sleep in a hale skin,
For it will be a bluidie morning.
 6. When Johnnie Cope tae Dunbar cam,
They speired at him, "Where's a' your men?"
"The de'il confound me gin I ken,
For I left them a' in the morning."
 7. Now Johnnie, troth ye werena blate,
Tae come wi' news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait,
Sae early in the morning.
 8. In faith, quo Johnnie, I got sic flegs
Wi' their claymores an' philabegs,
Gin I face them again, de'il brak my legs,
So I wish you a' good morning.
- *Note:**
ie:, go to the battle field at Prestonpans where the open coal fields had been

"Johnny Cope" (in Gaelic "*Seanin Ua Copa*"), also known as "Fye to the Coals in the Morning", "General Coope" or "Hey Johnny Cope" is a Scottish (originally) and Canadian reel, hornpipe, march in G Mixolydian/Minor (Aird, Gatherer, Johnson, O'Neill/1915), A Mixolydian (Gunn), A Dorian (Cranford, Plain Brown), A Minor (Johnson/2003, O'Farrell) or B Minor (Miller & Perron). The parts are played AB (Bayard), AABB (Johnson/2003, Miller & Perron, O'Neill/1850, Perlman, Doyle, Roche, Winstock), AABBC (Gunn), AABBCDD (Aird, Gatherer, O'Farrell) or AAB'CCDDEEFFAABB' (Johnson).

The tune is still played by Scottish regiments as their reveille. It is a satirical melody which commemorates the 1745 Jacobite rebellion when Sir John Cope (d. 1760) and the English were defeated by the Scots under Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Prestonpans, on the 22nd of September, 1745. In 1745, when Prince Charles landed in the highlands, Sir John was commander in chief in Scotland and he bravely resolved to march into the Highlands to oppose him. The rebels secured Edinburgh and when they learned that Cope was marching to the city's relief they marched to meet him. Both armies neared each other at Prestonpans late in the day, separated by marshy ground and it was resolved to wait until the next day to begin hostilities. During the night however, Prince Charlie was appraised that a passage or ford was to be had through the marshy ground and the rebels resolved to filter through at night and take the English forces by surprise in the morning. At 4 a.m., the entire Jacobite force began moving three abreast along the Riggonhead defile, east of Cope's position. Cope's pickets detected the Scottish movement and Cope's forces were turned to confront them. As the Highlanders began their charge, his artillerymen fled, leaving the guns to be fired by their officers. The two dragoon regiments on the flanks panicked and rode off, exposing the infantry in the center. Attacked on three sides, they were overrun in less than 15 minutes. Government losses were from 300 to 500 killed or wounded and 500 to 600 taken prisoner. The Jacobites estimated their own casualties as 35 to 40 dead and 70 to 80 wounded. A court of inquiry was convened to look into the debacle and the result was that the common troops were blamed for the rout and Cope and all his officers were exonerated.

Adam Skirving, a local farmer, visited the battlefield later that afternoon where he was, by his own account, mugged by the victors. He wrote two songs, "Tranent Muir" and the better known "Hey, Johnnie Cope, Are Ye Waking Yet?", using well-known tunes which still feature in Scottish folk music and bagpipe recitals.

The tune is similar to "Mount and Go" in this section. It appears in many variations, vocal and instrumental, in Scotland, Canada and America. An instrumental version is given in "Johnny Cope 1". It was printed in Aird's **Selection of Scotch, English, Irish and Foreign Airs, vol. 2** (1785), Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** (1981), Buchan's **101 Scottish Songs** (1962), Doyle's **Plain Brown Tune Book** (1997), Gatherer's **Gatherer's Musical Museum** (1987), William Gunn's **The Caledonian Repository of Music Adapted for the Bagpipes** (1848), Johnson's **Scottish Fiddle Music in the 18th Century** (1984), Johnson's **Kitchen Musician No. 20: A Twenty Year Anniversary Collection** (2003), Johnson's **Kitchen Musician No. 16: A Further Collection of Dances, Marches, Minuetts and Duets of the Later 18th Century** (1998), Köhler's **Violin Repository, vol. 1** (1881), MacDonald's **The Gesto Collection of Highland Music**, McLachlan's **The Piper's Assistant** (1854), Miller & Perron's **101 Polkas** (1978), O'Farrell's **Pocket Companion, vol. 3** (c. 1808), Winstock's **Songs and Music of the Redcoats** (1970) and Wood's **Oxford Song Book, vol. 2**.

It has been recorded by Alastair McDonald, Ewan MacColl, The Corries, Jean Redpath, Planxty, Natalie MacMaster, The Tannahill Weavers, Charlie Zahm, Emerald Rose, Planxty, Back o' the Moon, Ceolbeg and many others.

"Johnnie Cope" has been arranged many times, most notably by Ludwig van Beethoven and also by Ken Johnston for the National Youth Choir of Scotland and the National Boys' Choir.