

The Tenpenny Bit

The image shows the musical notation for "The Tenpenny Bit". It is written in 6/8 time and the key of D major (one sharp). The piece is in the A Dorian mode. The score is divided into two systems, A and B. System A consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a boxed 'A'. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Chords are Am, Am, Am, D. The second staff continues with Am, Em7, Am, Em7, then a first ending (1.) with Am and a second ending (2.) with Am. System B also consists of two staves. The first staff starts with a repeat sign and a boxed 'B'. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Chords are Am, C, Am, D. The second staff continues with Am, C, D, then a first ending (1.) with Em7 and Am, and a second ending (2.) with Em7 and Am.

"The Tenpenny Bit", also known as "10 Penny Bit", "Billy's Awake", "Coffee And Tea", "Jan Koop Mij Kermis", "The Ten Franc Piece", "Ten Penney Bit", "The Ten Penny Bit", "The Three Little Drummer Boys" or "The Three Little Drummers" is an Irish (originally), English and American double jig in A Dorian. The parts are played AABB.

From the 16th to the 19th centuries a common term for a small piece of money, especially the lowest denomination of silver coin, was 'bit' (and its variant 'bite'). Thus, 'fourpenny-bit', and the title of this tune, 'tenpenny-bit'. A secondary meaning is 'bit' as referring to a woman, usually in a sexual way. In this sense a 'tenpenny bit' may refer to a prostitute.

Despite the similarity in titles, this tune is not at all like "The Threepenny Bit" which is a reel while this tune is a jig.

This jig is popular in several genres: New England contra dance musicians play it and it is one of the jigs commonly played by English musicians for rapper sword dancing (along with "The Blackthorn Stick" and "Connaghtman's Rambles").

It was printed in Allan's **Irish Fiddler**, S. Johnson's **The Kitchen Musician No. 4: Collection of Fine Tunes** (1983), Kennedy's **Fiddlers Tune Book, vol. 1** (1951), Kerr's **Merry Melodies, vol. 1**, Martin & Hughes' *Ho-ro-gheallaidh* (1990), Miller & Perron's **New England Fiddlers Repertory** (1983), Raven's **English Country Dance Tunes** (1984) and Sweet's **Fifer's Delight** (1965).

It was recorded by John J. Kimmel on **John J. Kimmel. Early Recordings of Irish Traditional Dance Music** (1918), Patsy Touhey on **The Piping of Patsy Touhey** (1919), Frank Quinn and Joe Maguire on **The Wheels of the World** (1926), John and James Kelly with Michael Crehan and Michael Gavin on **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music** (1973) and Aoife Ní Chaoimh and Paudie O'Connor on **Didn't She Dance and Dance** (2014).