Spootiskerry Ian Burns



[&]quot;Spootiskerry" is a Shetland reel composed by Samuel Ian Rothmar Burns (Ian Burns for short) (1932-1995). It was written in the early 1960s. Ian Burns lived in Tingwall, but the title of this tune is the name of his family croft near the town of Sullom, in the north west of the Shetland Islands. It was originally spelt "Spootskerry", but over the years an "i," an "a," or an "o" has been added, thus "Spootiskerry", "Spoot O'Skerry", or "Spoot Askerry". A "skerry" is a group of rocks a few feet below sea level, but sometimes visible at low tide. Razor clams (*Ensis directus*) are long cylindrical clams having shells with sharp edges and are known in the Shetland Islands as "spoots" – they spit out water as a defense mechanism. Spootiskerry pairs well with the traditional Shetland tune "Willafjord". I learned this at our Monday night jam.