

South to Scotland

South to Scotland is a string quartet arrangement of four fiddle tunes of my own composition. The sequence of tunes is:

- 1) *Heatheryett* (air) I wrote this for my dad, a keen golfer, who is buried in Heatheryett cemetery overlooking Ladhope Golf Course in Galashiels.
- 2) *Master of the Mountains* (strathspey) commemorates the ascent of North Eildon hill by my son Aidan (then aged 5)
- 3) *The Bottle Brig* (strathspey) is the bridge across the Tweed that you cross when going from Galashiels to the delights of Tweedbank and Melrose, and on even as far as Jedburgh. It has its local name from the story that, on its construction in 1826, a bottle of coins and newspaper cuttings was put inside it.
- 4) *Border Line* (reel) celebrates the return of a railway to the Borders. Currently running from Edinburgh Waverley to Tweedbank, it's hoped it will eventually extend as far as Carlisle, replacing the old Waverley line closed in the 1960s.

I chose the title *South to Scotland* as a nod to a hornpipe composed by the great fiddle player and composer Ian Hardie, which he called *North to England*. This was owing to the fact that, from his house in Kirk Yetholm, England lay to the north.

The tunes in *South to Scotland* reflect in different ways significant parts of my own life here growing up and living in the Borders. The title is a reminder to those for whom our country starts in Edinburgh or Glasgow, that, if you travel south towards the border, you are in Scotland too. The tunes are written with local themes and Scottish idioms. They follow a conventional Scottish progression from air to strathspey to reel. In this case there are two strathspeys, the first more melodic and gentle, the second driving and rhythmic, leading into the final reel, "Border Line".

Eric Falconer