

Irish Dances

Jygges - Irish Jig **Irish Reel** **Jig & Reel** **Shillelagh Jig**

Irish Jig (Time 6/8) Irish Reel (Time 4/4)

Irish Jig - This is a dance from Ireland and there are many accounts of its origin and meanings. It is danced at weddings, festivities and also funerals, and is always danced to the music of the fiddle. Many figures go to make up the dance, and the foot work is intricate, but hands and arms are kept down to the sides. The pattern of the Jig is said to resemble the Tara Brooch of Ireland. The first definite evidence of dancing amongst the Irish comes in 1569 in a State Letter written by one of Queen Elizabeth 1 courtiers in Ireland. He wrote that he had witnessed in Galway the dancing of a Irish Jig by a number of Irish Girls. His description leads one to believe that the dance was similar to the one known in Ireland as Rinnce Fada, The Long Dance.

Shillelagh Jig -This is certainly not an authentic Irish Jig. It is really a comic character dance based on the behaviour of a quick-tempered Irish washer-woman, maybe rousing at her husband.

Another story goes that the Irish washer-woman, having lost her place in the line at the wash-house, proceeds to show her anger by beating her feet and shaking her fists at those around her. The male dancers are fighting with Shillelaghs. They wave them defiantly over their heads, (possibly over someone else's head) or strike the floor, or the heel of their boot.