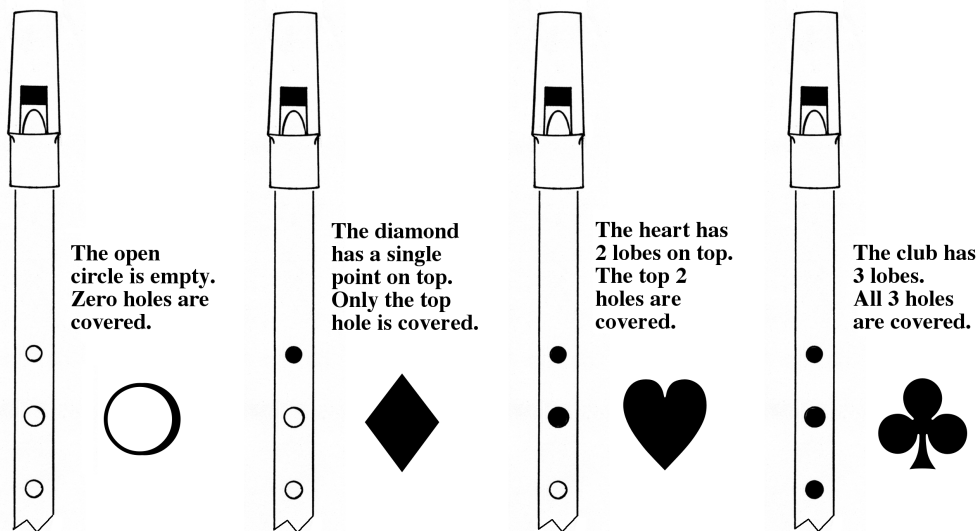## Suit Code: A New Shorthand for Tin Whistle Fingerings

It's *almost* time to start learning tunes. I'll provide standard music notation beginning with Tune 8, but first we'll use a shorthand I've devised for notating tin whistle fingerings. It's called **suit code**, and it makes its first appearance in this book. Suit code depicts whistle fingerings in a simple and streamlined way.

The four suit symbols in the deck of playing cards are familiar to almost everyone. Suit code uses them, plus an open circle, to represent the small number of fingering patterns that each hand uses on the whistle.

Here are the four main fingering patterns. Please refer to the diagram below while reading about them.

• The first pattern — **zero holes covered** — is represented by an **open circle**: ○.
This is easy to remember because the open circle looks like a zero. *Open circle = zero holes covered*.
• The next pattern — **top hole covered** — is represented by a **diamond**: ♦.
This is easy to remember because the diamond has one point on top. *1 point on top = top hole covered*.
• The next pattern — **top 2 holes covered** — is represented by a **heart**: ♥.
This is easy to remember because the heart has two lobes on top. *2 lobes on top = top 2 holes covered*.
• The next pattern — **all 3 holes covered** — is represented by a **club**: ♣.
This is easy to remember because the club has three lobes on top. *3 lobes on top = all 3 holes covered*.

The open circle is empty. Zero holes are covered.

The diamond has a single point on top. Only the top hole is covered.

The heart has 2 lobes on top. The top 2 holes are covered.

The club has 3 lobes. All 3 holes are covered.

In the diagram above I show only the top half of the whistle, which is controlled, of course, by the top hand. But these same fingering patterns are also used by the bottom hand.

In Exercises 4 through 6, we worked with the note B, which is fingered by covering only the T1 hole. Thus the suit code for B can be shown as ♦/○ : a diamond for the top hand and an open circle for the bottom hand.

No doubt you've noticed that the spade (♠) is missing from the diagram above. We'll be using it later, starting on p. 27, to represent the fifth and final fingering pattern, one which is used only by the top hand.

Suit code can also be used with most six-hole wooden flutes. You can download "Suit Code: A Graphic Shorthand for Tin Whistle and Irish Flute Fingerings" using the Audio/PDF url on the title page of this book.

Tune 1: Hot Cross Buns

Audio Files 7 and 8 🎧 *(demonstrating disjunct and conjunct tonguing, respectively)*

Finally, it's time for our first tune! Here are its fingerings, notated with suit code.

○	♦	♥	,	○	♦	♥	,	♥	♥	♥	♥	♦	♦	♦	♦	○	♦	♥
○	○	○		○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
C♯	B	A		C♯	B	A		A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	C♯	B	A
Hot	cross	buns,		hot	cross	buns,		one	a	pen -	ny	two	a	pen -	ny,	hot	cross	buns.