

Dance On!

Steppin' Out With Hielan' Toe



**A Glimpse of Irish Dance • Northumbrian Dance
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Issue 5 - March 2005**

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Editorial

The copyright issue rages on! Now we even have lawyers arguing about it! It would appear to be an extremely grey area, with many different interpretations of the Copyright Act. As soon as we have the definitive answer we'll let you know!

We're desperately short of CDs for review, so any Dance Bands out there who want to promote their CDs to our readers, please send them to Campbell Hunter, 37 Carronvale Road, Larbert, Stirlingshire FK5 3LG. It doesn't matter if they're not recent, as long as they're still available to buy.

We're looking forward to Orkney at the end of the month, and then we'll be getting geared up for Newcastleton in June. Remember if you let us know about your dance event we'll publicise it for you.

We really appreciate readers sending us dances for publication. If you also send music, please make certain that you have the permission of the composer (and don't fold sheet music - we need to scan it flat).

Every day we're getting new subscribers to *Dance On!* so tell your friends about us, and keep sending us articles. Next month we'll hear how John Sikorski got on when he went to meet the cast of Riverdance recently in Glasgow. We'll also have some extracts from "Pas-de-Bas", a book written by the late, great, Bobby MacLeod.

Happy dancing!

Karin

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Take The Floor

5th March Neil Kirkpatrick SDB
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12th March The West Telferton Caledonian Dance Band
(NAAFC Musselburgh Concert)

19th March James Coutts SDB
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2nd April Fiddlers 3+2 SDB
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Orkney Travels Take III

By Rob Corcoran

I'm penning this late at night on the return ferry from Kirkwall to Aberdeen – I'm a good sailor but there's no problem as it's a good sea and the boat is skimming along like a B&Q trolley. Did you know Dame Ellen MacArthur is building a place quite near me on Skye? Yes, she has ancestors from Luib, halfway up the island, and reckons her love of the sea comes from them. Must be right as she was brought up in landlocked Derby.

It was a quick visit to Orkney to continue preparations for the Dance Festival at Easter. However I timed it to be able to attend the Tullimentan 2005 event – an Arts Forum organised exhibition of all things and people artistic. This in itself was based round a visit from the HI-Arts Roadshow – HI-Arts being the Inverness based group which promotes the arts in the Highlands and Islands.

I found it fascinating to listen to the presentations from the group and to hear about some of the things happening up here on the edge of the known world. For example did you know that there were nineteen *professional* theatre companies operating in the Highlands and Islands? Professional mind – must be something in the air, and it's no wonder that community drama is so rampant.

The HI-Arts projects were something to wonder at too. Their Writers' Network project offers mentoring to authors, and budding writers can have their work assessed by secret panels of the great and good. Wow, imagine if we could have something like that for dance devisers! Perhaps we already do in the pages of Dance On!

There were so many branches of "the arts" represented at Tullimentan and being assisted by HI-Arts that one felt a little humble as a mere *dancer*. Don't know why. The Dancing Master of old earned considerable respect (and money) because he brought his own and the latest popular dances both to the big house and to the remoter areas. They were known by all, not just by the dancing community – which of course was the whole community. There are few like that today.

Which of course leads neatly on to Jessie Stuart! Such a well-travelled lady who, as I float on the North Sea, is heading to Leeds to teach classes, before racing off somewhere else, and somewhere else again before landing in Orkney for Easter. Dame Jessie Stuart. Can someone have a word with Number 10 about that? Or B&Q?

Yes, Jessie leads the team who will be coming up to Orkney in just a few weeks for the early Easter weekend and the first Orkney Dance Festival. She will be working hard teaching Old Time as well as Scottish Country Dance and as I tap away one of her classes already has 72 attending. Sign up now or be disappointed!

One of our leading authors, Mats Melin, is flying – literally – over from his Ethnochoreology course in Ireland to be with us and his classes in Step and particularly Orkney dance are proving massively popular. Dancers from Orkney and from "sooth" alike are queuing up to learn more about dances like The Axum Reel and The Stronsay Lancers.

Also taking a flying leap is Maria Leask from Shetland to

teach some of her home dances devised and danced between 1850 and 1960. Maria has been to our Island Fling in Skye to demonstrate these and they always prove popular.

From much closer to home, local resident Maureen Findlay runs a successful Highland Dance school in Kirkwall and she has agreed to run taster sessions for adults and children.

One special request was a session on Lancers and Quadrilles and that well-known dancer Karin Ingram will be bringing The Student Lancers and The Lion Standard Quadrilles to the local debate.

And this writer brings Shetland's own Papa Stour Sword Dance a little closer to its home base – continuing the march from the Borders over the last few years. Who knows, one day I might get to show "my version" in Shetland, though the island of Papa Stour has been in the news recently for all the wrong reasons.

Some things completely different are happening at Easter weekend in Kirkwall. We have Flamenco classes, proving very popular, Salsa from South America, and Arabic Dance from Egypt and Turkey. These will bring something exotic to the proceedings, if such a thing were needed, as Orcadians certainly know how to enjoy themselves AND give their guests a good time!

Looking back at that list of tutors – don't you think that the Dancing Master/Mistress is alive and kicking? I certainly do. Bring your Easter eggs with you! Must dash, we're about to dock.

Steppin' Out With Hielan' Toe

An Introduction To The Step Dance Group from Ross-shire

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was responsible for firing up the imaginations of three people from Ross-shire one year. They went along to try out step dance and became hooked – they never realised just how much until they got home and started seeking out other places to get more of the good stuff. Cape Breton had become one of the homes of step but it was revitalised in the Highlands by tutors Harvey Beaton and Mary Jane MacDonald. Other dance tutors also took part in the resurrection of step dance; including Frank McConnell, Sandra Robertson, Caroline Reagh and Mats Melin (who constitute the successful dance group "Dannsa"), as well as Rae MacColl from Skye.

Step never died out completely in the Highlands, but has seen a gradual comeback and interest, particularly with young people who are sometimes keen musicians and take part in the Fèisean movement. So how has this interest spread? It requires involvement on all levels, especially in a rural community. "Hielan' Toe" are certainly doing their bit to spread the word about step dance in Ross-shire and beyond.

The fantastic thing about step dance is that it can be as intricate or as simple as suits the individual, and therefore lends itself to a variety of abilities and ages. Originally step dance was not meant for performance, but for personal enjoyment at ceilidhs in the old croft houses. This meant that individuals could create their own steps. There are of course steps taught now that will go with reels, jigs or strathspeys – but once the basics are taught, anything is possible.

The group of individuals who became "Hielan' Toe" seemed to

find themselves on a mission – to seek out places where step dance workshops were on offer and to take part as much as possible. This included some of the members heading off for South Uist to Ceòlas and to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Balnain House in Inverness offered workshops through Step 2000 as did Fèis Chille Mhoraig. Fèis Rois of course was also a great source for steppers, with Frank and Sandra as regular tutors. Unfortunately Balnain closed and left the group without a venue, so they decided to meet at one of the member's homes along with fiddler Mark Wilson from Inverness to practise. The group became known as "The Kilmorack Dancers".

At the showcase of Step 2000, they renamed themselves "Hielan' Toe" and became a constituted body; from January 2002 they were busy performing around the Ross-shire and Inverness areas for fundraisers and concerts, and occasionally going over to the east coast to Aberdeen with ceilidh band Reel Din. They also began to deliver workshops in step for the public and took part in the Inverness Day of Dance.

Their interest in step is very much about being together, and enjoying each other's company. They like the dancing, the music, trying out new ideas and making up new moves, and sometimes the fiddlers join in with suggestions too. There are now twelve performing members (all voluntary) in Hielan' Toe and around sixty members on the mailing list. The core of the group, the Committee, includes Sheila, Anna, Thelma, Esther, Pat, Elaine, Hugh and Tara. These members have taken the time to find funding to deliver workshops on a regular basis in Ross-shire to teach people about step dance and to have them actively take part.

The workshops they provide are for children and adults, and they are delivered with great attention paid to the needs of newcomers

By Jelica Gavrilovic

to the shuffle, hop and kick of stepping. The ones held regularly in Muir of Ord are generally taught by members from Dannsa and now fiddlers Roz Bell and Carol Irvine have joined Mark as regular accompaniment for the steppers, which makes all the difference to being able to teach effectively.

This year Hielan' Toe are also taking step around the small halls of Ross-shire and going right out to the west coast to Achiltibuie, Poolewe and Lochcarron as part of the tour and taking ceilidh band, Hackum Plackum with them for the evening sessions.

They hold a 2-hour workshop in the afternoon in a small hall in the outer reaches of Ross-shire for families and then ask folk to come back for an evening ceilidh where members of Hielan' Toe perform various pieces including an impressive sword dance, "Papa Stour", taught by Rob Corcoran, and of course, everyone is encouraged to get up and dance by Selwyn the MC.

The small hall sessions have been well-attended both by locals and regular fans of step dance. Hielan' Toe members had to undergo a series of training sessions with Frank McConnell before they began, as they have been left totally on their own this time to teach – and they are good! It takes a certain amount of dedication and hard work to organise a session, and then find the energy to teach and perform too, but Hielan' Toe do it with professionalism and passion.

If you want to find out more about Hielan' Toe and their workshops please contact Anna on annarchie89@hotmail.com.

Step Dance Workshops & Family Ceilidhs with Hielan' Toe and Hackum Plackum:

March 12th Poolewe village hall on the West Coast

April 16th Lochcarron village hall on the West Coast

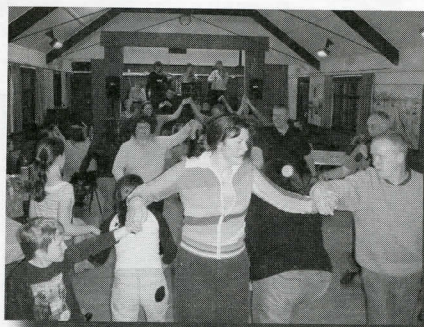
May 7th Achiltibuie (Coigach hall) on the West Coast



2001 Sabhal Mòr Ostaig Workshop, L-R Anna, Elaine, Thelma, Esther, Harvey Beaton & Margo



Celebrating receiving funding in 2002



Ferintosh Family Ceilidh, Feb 05



Elaine & Esther dancing "1st of August", a dance from South Uist at the Strathconon Ceilidh in January 2005



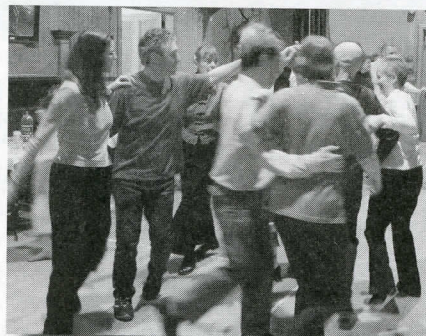
Day of Dance, Inverness 2002



Elaine, Thelma, Tara & Esther dancing "Valentines" at Day of Dance 2003. Mark is playing fiddle.



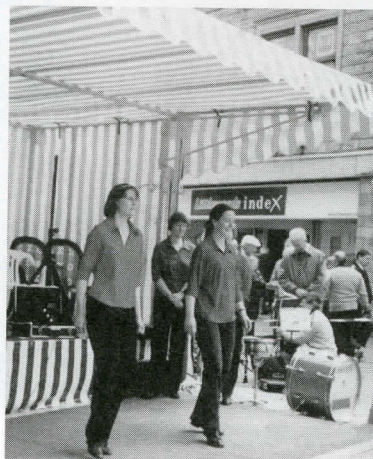
Fiddlers Carol, Roz & Mark



Strathconon Family Ceilidh Jan 05



Day of Dance, Inverness 2002



Elaine & Esther, Inverness



Ceol Beo 2002

Irish Dance

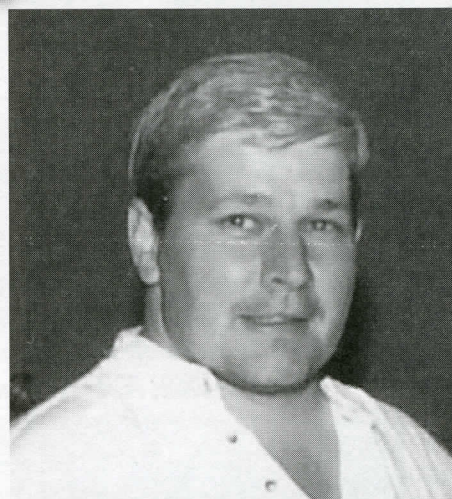
Traditional Irish dance has been around for centuries, but ask anyone in modern times what they know about Irish dancing and the deafening response is "Riverdance" or "Lord of the Dance"!

Without doubt the influence of these two fantastic shows has catapulted Irish dance into the big time and to the forefront of Celtic Dance around the world. Due to the transient nature of the Irish workers, the traditional dance can be found all over the world and hence the overwhelming demand continues for both of the shows. To some it is the best thing to come out of Ireland for some time, but to others it appears to be the thin end of the wedge and a move away from traditional dance.

Irish dance in its traditional form was based around solo step dance for the more accomplished dancers, and group dances (which allowed for a greater participation) for some of the less talented. A common sight today, and back through history, is the "Dance Master", the teacher of the traditional dance to both individuals for solos and to the group. These Masters travelled their regions teaching and, when we look at Eire now, the various regions boast their own Masters in the guise of the different dance schools based in the Counties of Ireland. It is believed that the Dance Masters were responsible for introducing the lack of arm movement, which is synonymous with Irish dancing, one of the objections often voiced against the modern shows. However there is evidence to suggest that early Irish dance showed this flair of spontaneity, which was later perceived to lack the strictness demanded by the Masters. History also shows that the Dance Masters were fiercely competitive and were often

known to dance challenges against rival Masters. When we consider both "Riverdance" and "The Lord of the Dance" we can see evidence of the "challenge" style with the lead dancers utilising their feet to compete with their opposite number. Michael Flatley, probably the most famous dancer of modern times, was traditionally trained but adopted this more flamboyant and spontaneous approach to great success.

As Irish dance developed we can draw similarities to other Celtic dancing, the use of barrels and tables to permit performances in places with limited space and the transition from soft shoe to hard shoe dancing. The modern shows have both types of dance, however they do show that the method and styles have developed over the history of Irish Dance. Along with the success of these shows has come a welcome return of



By Julian Whiting



Dancers in Mitzen, Cork © Julian Whiting



Julian with Jacintha O'Sullivan ©Imokilly People

young men and boys to the dancing fold to join the ladies who have maintained their culture for so long. The growth of Irish dance has also helped other cultures to gain a much-needed foothold and pushed the discos a little farther from the front of the queue.

As with all types of dance the Irish are constantly striving to improve and evolve. By maintaining the dance competitions we are assured that the tradition and phenomenon of Irish dance will continue.

One thing that always sparks the imagination with Irish dance is the beautiful costumes worn by the lady dancers. The costumes worn today commemorate the clothing of the past. Basically the dresses are based on the peasant dress worn some two hundred years ago. Modern dresses are spectacularly adorned with Celtic designs, often with copies of the Tara brooch worn on the shoulder. The brooch holds a cape, which lies over the back

of the dancer. Each School of Dance has its own unique and distinct dancing costume and the colours and styles often relate to the region the dancers are from. Traditionally male dancers wore plain kilts and jackets, less spectacular than the ladies but nevertheless steeped in history. Again the men have a folded cape draped over their shoulder. The effect of the modern shows can be seen in the style of dress adopted for some performances, ladies emulating Jean Butler and the men with the satin shirts and Celtic design belts. Both male and female dancers wear the hard and soft shoe. The costumes are designed to fulfil stages of development within the hierarchy of Irish dance; young beginner dancers have a style that gradually builds to the fine costumes worn by the senior and more experienced dancers. As with other cultures, the tradition of Irish dance is maintained by the gathering of young and old to dance and



Imokilly Dancers with Asteveryn © Imokilly People



Dancers in Mitzen, Cork © Julian Whiting

play music. An informal evening is called a ceili where townsfolk gathered with neighbours to revive and pass on the tradition. Wherever there was a fiddle player the potential to celebrate dance was not far away and so the ceilis and dances of today were born. Irish dance is based around individual step dancing and the sets. The step dancing incorporates both soft and hard shoe styles, usually danced to a reel or jig but not a specific tune. In competition an individual will perform a set of movements but not necessarily know the music before it is played. The art of the dance is to complete the movements maintaining the rhythm without the dance being pre-choreographed. The sets involved everyone and each of the regions/counties has its own "sets". Many tunes have dances to them that vary from county to county, which can make learning the dance (and remembering which region it is from) a bit of a nightmare. Due to the profound success of the new shows, Irish dance has become more accessible and, by looking on the Internet it is now quite

easy to find schools of dance in Britain and in fact all over the world.

The speed, rhythm and glamour of Irish dance has made it one of the most exciting forms of Celtic dance in the world and, by maintaining the mix of old and new, it is still fresh and vibrant. It is not only the dance that has benefited but also music – The Corrs have taken the Celtic sound to new levels and this can only be good for all the other countries making up the Celtic community.

I am looking forward to visiting Cork, the European City of Culture 2005, in August, to take part in the International Folk Festival and perform alongside one of the finest young Irish Dance Schools, The Imokilly Dancers under the tutorship of Jacintha O'Sullivan. The group has visited many festivals, including Lowender Peran in Cornwall and has the vibrant mix of old and new to satisfy all tastes and further my argument that there is considerable room for all styles of dance to exist.

If I can help with any issues raised in this article please contact me via the Editor.



Imokilly Dancers with Asteveryn © Imokilly People

A Glimpse of Irish Dance

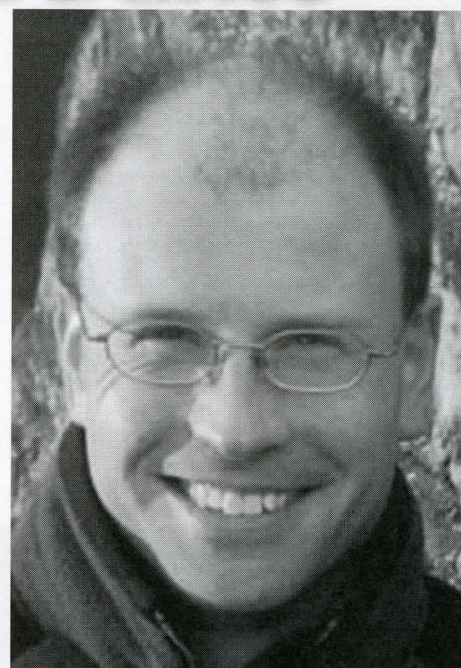
With St Patrick's Day coming up I thought I'd look at one aspect of Irish dance that I have explored since coming to Ireland.

"What is Sean Níos step dance?" was one of my first queries when coming to Ireland. To begin with, I find the term "Sean Níos" (Gaelic for "old style") a conflicting one! What is old style? The dance style is very much alive and has increased in popularity in the last few years. More young people, including many girls, are taking up a style of dance that used to be the dance domain of mature men.

Sean Níos used to refer particularly to the distinctive regional style of dancing of the Connemara *Gaeltacht*. "This area would include the Aran Islands off the coast of Galway and also a small but significant pocket in the *Gaeltacht* of Ráth Cairn, in County Meath, in the east of the country, which was

settled by people from the Connemara." (Brennan 1999, p.71). However, other areas of Ireland, for example Clare and Cavan, have styles similar to that of Connemara, and seem to be generally referred to as Sean Níos dancing as well today.

It is the reel that dominates this style of dance, even though individuals, past and present, dance in jig and hornpipe time too. The main characteristic of Sean Níos dancing is the more flat-footed positioning of the feet. The main body weight is held over the heels and very little elevation of the body is applied. As this dance style is very individual, some dancers prefer dancing mainly on the balls of their feet while others keep their weight over their heels and others, again, mix the two, so the range is quite considerable. The dancers tend to move about as the venue permits and to their liking. Their bodies may sway from right to left and certain arm and hand movements



By Mats Melin

(for example, raising them up to the side at shoulder level) are also used if that is part of that particular dancer's style (Brennan 1999).

I have personally studied the dance style with several dancers over the past months, but in particular with Páraic Ó hObicín from Connemara, travelling up to Spiddal from Limerick on a weekly basis to discover that the style of dance is quite different to the Cape Breton and Scottish step dance styles that I am used to. To begin with, when you learn from Páraic Ó hObicín is that there are no 2, 4, 8 bar sequences, most things are in 3, 5, 7, 6, and 9 count and bar sequences! The style is VERY close to the floor with hardly any elevation and your body weight is over your heels. So if you slightly flex your knees and lean ever so slightly forward you get it. The step sequences are very individual, never repeated the same twice and the rhythms follow the music to perfection.



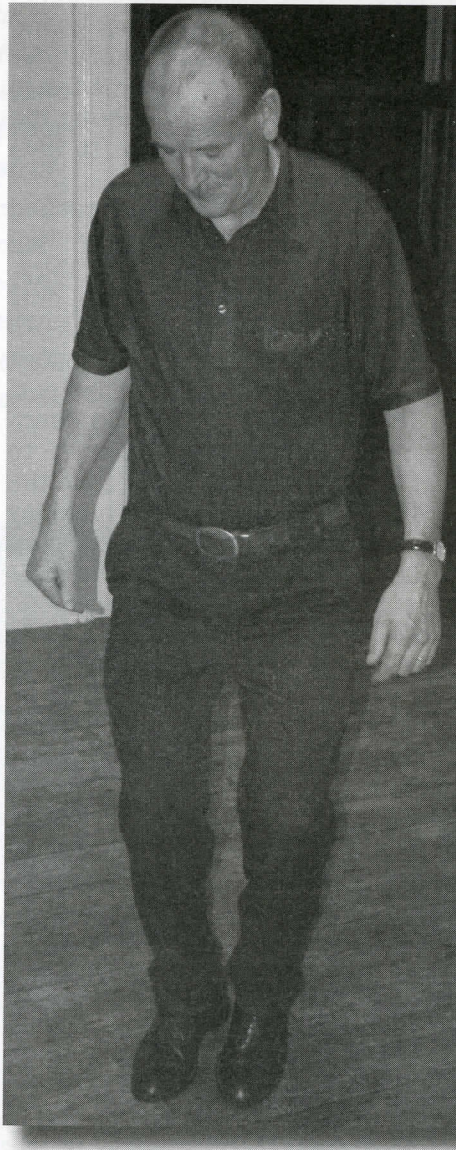
The Gathering Dance – some of the 98 sets on the floor!

*Glenside Ceili Band*

It is impossible to copy Páraic Ó hObicín's style exactly, and he would not like you to do so either. You must find your own style and use the steps and alter them as the music tells you. All takes time to get used to, but I must admit it is a very liberating feeling, absolutely no constraints to what you can do and if you want to finish dancing on bar 6 and half you can! There are many styles of Sean Nós dance out there; each is individual to the particular dancer in question. No one really dances like anyone else. Even Páraic Ó hObicín's daughter Sonia has a style very unlike her father's; she has put her own stamp on it – great stuff in my book. I am continuing to explore Irish dancing, so I am now recovering after a Set Dance in Killarney at the 6th Annual Gathering on Saturday night where the evening saw at least 98 sets (of 4 couples in a square) on the floor, with another 10-15 Sets' worth of dancers having a break! A wild night indeed, with about 1000 people attending. Not bad for a Saturday night dance.

References

Brennan, Helen. *The Story of Irish Dance*, 1999.

*Páraic Ó hObicín*

The Fiddler of Dooney

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Mocharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With 'Here is the fiddler of Dooney!'
And dance like a wave of the sea.

W.B. Yeats



The Glories of the “Three Beat Pas de Basque”

By Finlay Forbes

When I was first initiated into the mysteries of Scottish Country Dancing, the Pas de Basque was a light, subtle affair that gave the dancer the appearance of floating on air. Having said that, my early efforts rarely gave any such impression even with the accompaniment of Maestro Shand for inspiration. As I was to discover, the secret lay in treating the second and fourth beats as being lighter than the first and third. By some strange quirk of fate, bandleaders did (and still do) this quite naturally when they arranged their bass lines.

After I had been dancing for some time, I went on a refresher course on which I discovered that I had been Pas de Basquing incorrectly for years. Somewhere along the line, the rulebook had been changed and the Pas de Basque was now a ground-hugging affair with three strong beats and one weak one. I am sure that it is pure coincidence that the “Revised Standard Version” of the step was more suited to those of advanced years with weakened knee joints and reduced lifting power in the ankles. After all, attributing such a change to anything other than coincidence would imply that the decision makers were effectively seeking to prevent others from dancing in a style that was now beyond their own declining physical powers. Clearly such things could never be (could they?).

There is little point in debating the aesthetics of the three beat Pas de Basque against those of its precursor. In matters such as these, beauty is very much in the eye of the beholder. The problem lies not so much with appearance as with the practicalities of fitting the step to the music. The Three Beat Pas de Basque works reasonably well in reel time provided that the music is sufficiently slow and the

night is still sufficiently young for any serious muscle fatigue to be some way off. Where the Three Beat Pas de Basque makes very little sense is in jig time. In this rhythm, the uneven length of the beats makes the union between music and dance look decidedly unstable. Modern Scottish jig time (6/8) is capable of a number of rhythmic interpretations but having three strong beats and one weak beat in a bar is not one of them. I know that some bandleaders “spice up” the rhythm by giving the impression that there are four even beats in a bar of jig time but in doing so they are really altering the time signature temporarily (to 2/4) for one or more bars.

In orthodox jig time, the second and fourth beats are only half the length of the first and third. Strictly speaking, there are only two beats in a bar of fast 6/8, a point that the bass lines of most of the old fiddle collections bear out. All that the extra beats in modern accompaniments do is serve to lighten up the bass line and give the music that special lift that somehow keeps us dancing well beyond our bedtimes. They are not functional beats in the dancing sense and should therefore be used with some caution against key movements in any step.

Part of the problem undoubtedly stems from a decision very early on in the revival of Scottish Country Dancing to treat the reel and the jig as one and the same thing. Such a decision undoubtedly made for easier teaching – standardisation always does, but the artistic price of such pragmatism was very high. The traditional Scots jig, which old collections show to be quite distinct from the reel, lost its independent identity as a dance form and was saddled with at least one ill-fitting step that has made it akin to the Ugly Duckling of the Scottish dance world.

The three beat Pas de Basque in jig time is a bit of an unhappy hybrid

and probably needs rethinking. Even those charged with teaching this wondrous Hermaphrodite struggle to perform it away from the classroom floor, especially when the band has the bit between its corporate teeth and is nudging the tempo up to the Sage of Auchtermuchty’s range. (Yes - Oh holders of the wonderful certificate. A cheil has been amang ye takin notes!).

So what we have is a step that fits reel time after a fashion and has been squeezed into jig time with a degree of finesse that makes Procrustes look like a dangerous intellectual. Has the time come for it to go? In practical terms, the answer is probably that it has already gone, therefore the question is irrelevant. Very few dancers actually use it at all on the dance floor. Even fewer use it late in the evening when the flesh is starting to take it out on the spirit for the spirit’s over enthusiastic response to the musical charms Scotia’s melting airs. In making this observation, I am not suggesting that the footwork and techniques of Scottish Country Dancing should be modified to suit the advancing ages and declining physical capabilities of the bulk of its participants even if current practice shows clearly that this has happened already. (The reduced knee movement in the current collection of Strathspey steps bears witness to a fair degree of subjugating artistic purity to the limitations of ageing ligaments.) What I am suggesting is that music and dance are no longer as synchronised as they were in the dancing mad days when thousands flocked to any venue where a certain Mr Shand happened to be performing. Now would be a very good time to have a serious rethink about the links between the two.



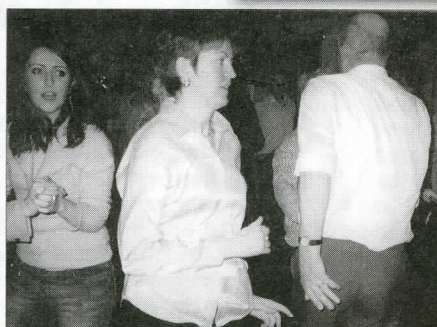
Straight after crossing The Minch, The Iain Cathcart SDB get ready to make music.



Alex Morrison addresses The Harry Cameron Memorial trophy. Until his untimely death in 1996, Harry was a musical pal of Alex's. His colleagues at Stornoway Fire Station presented the trophy to the Lewis & Harris



Janette & Donnie MacIver



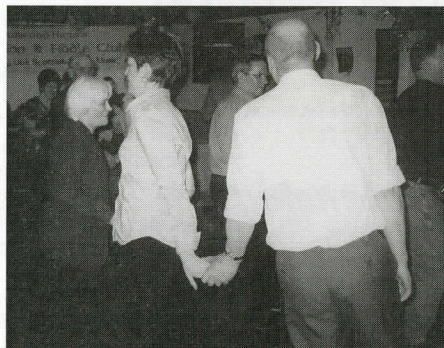
The Dannsa Rathaid as an alternative to The Highland Schottische



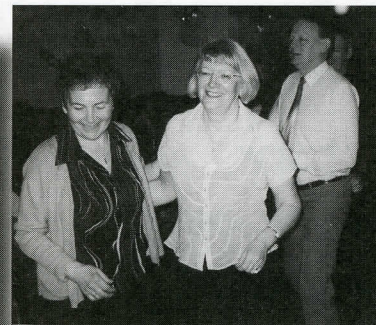
First Prize in the raffle



No problems dancing The Canadian Barn Dance



Nice to see The Circassian Circle danced in the Western Isles



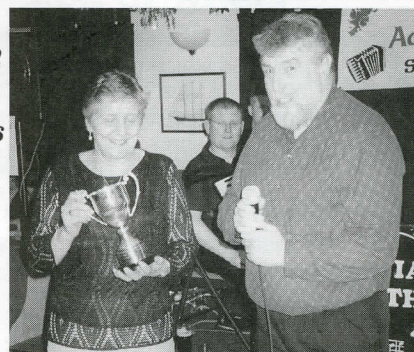
Time for a smile as The Canadian Barn Dance continues



Peggy & Neil MacNeil

The Military Two-Step

Ishbel Crichton (most improved player) receives The Harry Cameron Memorial Trophy



Auld Lang Syne

Web Dancer

By Sue Petyt

This column will appear each month and I will review Websites associated with dancing. Due to publishing deadlines, I write this review about 5 weeks before the magazine is published so please be aware that Websites can change between my review and the publication of the magazine. These observations are based on my professional opinion and personal preferences, please e-mail your views to me or write to the letters page.

If you would like your site reviewed please e-mail the link to me at sue@suepetyt.me.uk



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The Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing – reviewed 30th January 2005

I knew as soon as I looked at the home page that this was an old site and probably no longer used because the first thing that caught my eye was a banner saying "New – Calendar for 2002 – events and organisers". Sure enough when I opened the link, the events of 2002 were listed. There were only two pages on the site, the other contained information about the organisation and a list of the office bearers as at the AGM in 2001.

If the site is no longer to be maintained it would be preferable to remove it completely, it is littering the Internet, and if I had been looking for an organisation to join, I would have assumed it was no longer in existence.

www.sohda.org.uk

Scottish Official Highland Dance Association – reviewed 30th January 2005

This website had 29/12/2004 as the last date it was updated which meant that I had confidence that it was an active site. It is a good idea to use a last updated date to give people confidence, but it should only be used on pages that need to be updated regularly, like events listings. Not all pages need to be changed frequently and it makes the site look old if the update date is a long time ago.

There was the opportunity to join a mailing list to be kept up to date with news of events, and there were pictures and contact details for most of the Executive Committee.

The Diary and News page was unusual in that the first event on the list was not the next event – it was the one furthest into the future, and as you scrolled down the list you eventually got to the next event (a sort of upside down list). The disappointing thing was that events were still on back to 2002 and while it may be useful to keep an archive, I think it should be labelled as such and not incorporated into the diary. This would allow the events list to be displayed in a more conventional way with the next event at the top.

The Articles page was definitely out of date, the newest article being from November 2003, and the Article of the month being from May 2002. I began to wonder if different pages were being maintained by different people, and some were more active than others.

The resources page was a bit of a muddle, rather like an untidy drawer, you knew things were in there but they were impossible

to find! There were lists of past competition winners, books and leaflet lists, price lists and organisational policy statements and no doubt other documents I didn't find. It would give a much friendlier feel if the lists were categorised to make it easier for visitors to find things – they would be more likely to come back. One very good idea is the discussion forum. This seemed to be reasonably active and is a wonderful way to find out what the visitors are looking for. The only thing then is that you should try and act on their suggestions. There was one comment about needing to keep the Web up-to-date and another requesting lists of dance schools and teachers, very reasonable requests which it should not be too difficult to fulfil.

I noticed that on the Home page it said that all entry forms were available on the Website, I did try to find them but I did not succeed. For something as important as that it would be worth putting a direct (click here) link from the Home page to the entry forms to make sure that people can find them easily otherwise they may give up and not come back, maybe they were in that drawer...

The website had a lot of interesting information about Highland Dancing, and if I had been looking for an organisation to join it would have appealed to me, however parts of it could do to be organised better and also kept more up to date.

As the first site I reviewed was such a disappointing website and resulted in a short review I thought I would put in a third site this month.

Editor's note: I logged on to this site to copy the logo, only to find that the site was "temporarily unavailable" and asking the owner/administrator to get in touch. Please could someone from the SOHDA also contact us and advise us if you have a new address.

www.minicrib.care4free.net

Any Scottish Country Dancer who has not discovered this Website just does not know what they are missing!! The database, which you can download to your PC, contains the cribs for over 2000 dances – and they are completely free and regularly updated!

Charles Upton from the Deeside Caledonian Society, who created and maintains the database and website, deserves a medal, and if he would be prepared to accept it, a Scroll of Honour from the RSCDS (any branches out there prepared to propose him?).

The Website is straightforward and simple to understand, there is a page to tell you what it is all about, some frequently asked questions (FAQs) to assist with any download problems, and an example of what one of the crib sheets look like when created. Nothing else is needed – everything that a Scottish Country Dancer could want is there...

There are many people (myself included) who have produced crib sheets over the years and have a database of a couple of hundred cribs, but it must have been a monumental task to produce a database on this scale and keep it up to date (book 44 is included) with the macros to produce a crib sheet without any effort at all. There is one question though which has crossed my mind a few times. What happens to Web sites like this (and there are others) when an individual, who has put such a huge effort into creating and maintaining them, no longer wishes – or is not able – to continue with them? Who will carry them on? Ideally it would be the role of the RSCDS, but somehow I have my doubts whether they would be willing or able. Any ideas out there?

The Irish Rover

8 x 32 Bar Reels

Longways Set of 4 Couples

Devised by James B. Cosh of Glenshee Scottish Country Dance Club, Giffnock, Glasgow and was published in "22 SCD and One Other"

1-4 Couple 1 lead down the middle and cast up round Couple 3 on their own sides into second place.

5-8 Lady 1 dances right hand star with Couple 2, while Man 1 dances right hand star with Couple 3. Couple 1 finish facing 1st corners.

9-12 Couple 1 dance ½ reels of four with 1st corners (so that 1st corners finish on wrong side).

13-16 Couple 1 dance ½ reels of four with 2nd corners (so that 2nd corners finish on wrong side).

17-24 Lady 1 dances reel of three across set with Couple 2, while Man 1 dances reel of three across set with Couple 3. Couple 1 finish in second place on own sides, Couple 3 finish in top place on wrong sides and Couple 2 are in third place on wrong sides.

25-32 Diagonal rights and lefts – Lady 1 crosses diagonally up to change with Lady 3 while Man 1 changes with Man 2; then Man 1 and Lady 3 change left hands on sides while Lady 1 and Man 2 do the same; Lady 1 crosses diagonally up to change with Man 3, while Man 1 changes with Lady 2; then Ladies 1 and 2 change places on sides giving left hands, while Men 1 and 3 do the same.

© Dance On! With thanks to Jessie Stuart & Catherine Elliott-Walker for clarification!

Joe MacDiarmid's Jig

4 x 32 Bar Jig

Longways Set of 4 couples

Devised by Joan Richards and published in Five Scottish Country Dances 1982

1-4 Holding hands on the side, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

5-8 All dancers turn partners with right hands.

9-12 Couple 1 join hands and face down set, while Couple 4 join hands and face up. Both couples advance for four and retire for four (up and down set).

13-16 With "free" arm (the one not holding partner's hand) Couples 1 and 4 turn the person next to them. (Lady 1 turns Lady 2 with left, Man 1 turns Man 2 with right, Lady 4 turns Lady 3 with right, and Man 4 turns Man 3 with left.)

17-18 Couple 1 dance down set, crossing over halfway down, to reach third place on wrong side. (They don't hold hands.)

19-20 Couple 1 cast down one place to the bottom of the set. (Lady 1 going behind Man 4, while Man 1 goes behind Lady 4.)

21-24 Couple 1 dance ½ reel of three round Couple 4 to finish in fourth place on own side.

25-32 All dancers join hands and circle left for eight and back for eight.

Dance begins again with new leading couple.

© Dance On!

Bridge of Athlone

5 x 48 Bar Reels

Longways Set of 5 Couples

Anglicised version of old Irish dance.

1-4 With nearer hands joined, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

5-8 All advance again, men make arches and ladies pass underneath them. All have now changed places with their partners.

9-12 With nearer hands joined, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

13-16 All advance again, men make arches and ladies pass underneath them. All are now back in original places.

17-24 Couple 1 join both hands and gallop to the bottom of the set for eight slipsteps, and back for eight.

25-28 Couple 1 cast off. (Couple separate and dance down the set behind their own line, men follow Man 1, ladies follow Lady 1.) When Couple 1 reach the bottom they join both hands to make an arch.

29-32 Other dancers meet their partners, go underneath the arch and reform the set with Couple 2 now at the top. Couples 2, 3 and 4 now make arches.

33-36 Lady 1 dances underneath the arches up to the top of the set while Man 1 dances behind the men up to the top.

37-40 Man 1 dances underneath the arches down to the bottom of the set, while Lady 1 dances behind the ladies down to the bottom. Couple 1 remain at the bottom.

41-48 All dancers swing their partners for a count of sixteen.

Dance is repeated from new positions for the duration of the music.

© Dance On!

Seige of Ennis

32 Bar Jigs or Reels

Double Sicilian Circle

(2 couples facing 2 couples)

Anglified version of old Irish dance.

1-4 With nearer hands joined, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

5-8 **Bars 1-4** are repeated. Dancers retain hold on partner's hand, but break with "partner couple".

9-10 Couples dance four slip-steps to the side to change places with "partner couple". (Those going to the right go behind the other couple.)

11-12 All set (one pas de basque step).

13-14 Couples dance four slip-steps to the side to change places with "partner couple". (Those going to the right go behind the other couple.)

15-16 All set.

17-24 All swing opposites for count of sixteen. (Sometimes centre four dancers do right and left-hand stars.)

25-28 With nearer hands joined, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

29-32 All dancers advance for four and pass on, (one four holding arms up to make arches).

© Dance On!

The Geese in the Bog

8x32 bar Jig

Dance for 3 couples in a 4 couple longwise set

This dance and "The Mill of Towie" came out of the concept of the alternating wheels, with 1st couple throwing the others into a muddle in the middle and drifting safely round the outside before taking pity and bringing them back out to place. They were my first Sunday-morning dances. Bars 17-24 benefit greatly from crisp, accurate phrasing. I heard the tune on a Boys of the Lough recording, and it seemed to fit the dance, conjuring up images of strings of geese meandering aimlessly yet purposefully, all the time lost. Of course, it helps that it's a good tune. This dance was published in Dunedin Dances 4.

Tune: The Geese in the Bog (Traditional)

Bars

1-4 1st couple and 2nd couple dance rights and lefts half way.

5-8 2nd and 1st couples set, 2nd couple cross over giving left hand **while** 1st couple turn by the left hand to face their 1st corners.

9-16 1st couple dance half a diagonal reel of four with their 1st corners, followed by half a diagonal reel of four with their 2nd corners.

17-18 1st man with 3rd couple (at the top) and 1st lady with 2nd couple dance right hands across in a wheel half way round.

19-22 3rd and 2nd couples dance left hands across in a wheel once round, **while** 1st couple chase half way clockwise round the set.

23-24 1st lady with 3rd couple and 1st man with 2nd couple dance right hands across in a wheel half way round.

25-28 3rd man and 2nd lady lead a curving chase as in the dance "Snake Pass": 3rd man followed by 3rd and 1st ladies dances down to 2nd lady's place, across to 2nd man's place, down to 3rd man's place and across to 3rd lady's place **while** 2nd lady followed by 2nd and 1st men dances up to 2nd man's place, across to 2nd lady's place, up to 1st lady's place and across to 1st man's place. The "snakes" pass by the left shoulder. Effectively what happens is that the wheels unwind, with 1st couple tagging on at the ends of the respective wheels. Finish in the order 2,1,3, all on the opposite side of the dance.

29-32 All set and cross over giving right hands.

Repeat, having passed a couple.

© Iain Brockbank

Waves of Tory

48 Bar Jigs

Longways Set of five couples

Anglicised version of old Irish dance.

1-4 With nearer hands joined, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

5-8 Couples 1 and 2 dance right-hand star, as do Couples 4 and 5, while Couple 3 turns with the right arm.

9-12 With nearer hands joined, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

13-16 Couples 1 and 2 dance left-hand star, as do Couples 4 and 5, while Couple 3 turns with the left arm.

17-24 Couple 1 join both hands and gallop to the bottom of the set for eight slipsteps, and back for eight.

25-28 Couple 1 cast off. (Couple separate and dance down the set behind their own line, men follow Man 1, ladies follow Lady 1.) When Couple 1 reach the bottom they join both hands to make an arch.

29-32 Other dancers meet their partners, go underneath the arch and reform the set with Couple 2 now at the top. Couples 2, 3, 4 and 5 join nearer hands with partners and face down the set, while Couple 1 join nearer hands and face up.

33-48 Couple 1 begins the "dip and dive" figure by going under the arch made by Couple 5. They then arch over Couple 4 while Couple 5 turn to face up the set. Couple 1 go under Couple 3's arch while Couple 5 go under the arch made by Couple 4. Couple 4 turn to face up the set while Couple 1 arch over Couple 2 and Couple 5 arch over Couple 3. This "wave" motion continues until all dancers are back in the position in which they started this figure (Couple 1 at bottom, Couple 2 at top). Whenever a couple turns at the end of the set (top or bottom) they must go under the arch made by the couple coming towards them.

Dance is repeated from new positions for the duration of the music.

© Dance On!

Walls of Limerick

32 Bar Reels

Sicilian Circle

Anglicised version of old Irish dance.

1-4 With nearer hands joined, all dancers advance for four and retire for four.

5-8 Bars 1-4 are repeated.

9-10 Ladies change places with four sidesteps to the left.

11-12 Ladies set (one pas de basque step).

13-14 Men change places with four sidesteps to the right.

15-16 Men set. Couples are now facing the opposite direction to the one in which they started.

(In Ireland Bars 9-16 would be 7s & 3s)

17-18 All dancers take the right hand of their "opposite" and move to the side away from their partners for four steps.

19-20 All dancers set.

21-22 All dancers "come home" with their opposites for four steps

23-24 All dancers set

(Again, Bars 17-24 would be 7s & 3s in Ireland)

25-32 All dancers swing their partners for a count of sixteen, and finish facing the direction in which they started ready to begin again with a new couple facing them.

The dance continues for the duration of the music.

© Dance On!

The Redheugh Library Jig

Robin Dunn

Musical notation for The Redheugh Library Jig, featuring six staves of music in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes. Chord progressions are indicated below the staff lines: G, C, G, D, D7, G, C, D7, G, D, G, C, G, D, D, G, C, G, D7, G, D, A, A7, D, A, A7, D, (E7).

The Tuesday Night Jig

Robin Dunn

Musical notation for The Tuesday Night Jig, featuring six staves of music in 6/8 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and some triplet markings. Chord progressions are indicated below the staff lines: A, Bm, A, Bm, A, E, E7, A, Bm, A, Bm, E, A, Bm, E7, A, Bm, E7, A, Bm, E, A, A, D, A, E7, E7, A, Bm, C dim, A/C#, A, E7, A, (E7).

Some Dances Popular in Northumberland

Notated by Robin Dunn

Barley Bree

**32 Bar Jigs or Reels or
Irish Polkas
Longways 4 Couple Sets**

- A1** Lines go forward to meet (four steps) and back. Repeat. (8 bars)
A2 & B1 Top couple strip the willow down set. (16 bars)
B2 Top couple make arch, second couple cast, all through arch. If time, swing partners. (8 bars)

© Robin Dunn

Cumberland Square Eight

**64 Bar Jigs or Reels or
Irish Polkas
Square Set**

***Not to be confused with The Cumberland Reel,
which is a different dance entirely.***

- A1** Head couples gallop for eight across the set and back. (Gents pass back to back.) (8 bars)
A2 Sides repeat. (8 bars)
B1 Head couples right and left hand stars. (8 bars)
B2 Sides repeat. (8 bars)
A3 Head couples basket. (8 bars)
A4 Sides repeat. (8 bars)
B3 All circle left for sixteen. (8 bars)
B4 All promenade home anti-clockwise. (8 bars)

© Robin Dunn

Holmfirth Square

**40 Bar Jigs or Reels
Square Sets. (Numbered Couples)**

- A1** Holding hands in circle, four steps into middle and out again. Repeat. (8 bars)
A2 Number one couple raise partner's hand to make an arch, walk round set taking the arch over couples 2, 3 and 4. (8 bars)
B1 Grand Chain to place (passing partner halfway). (16 bars)
B2 Set twice to partner and swing (8 bars)

© Robin Dunn

The Nottingham Swing

Hornpipes

**Longways for as many as will.
Couples are numbered ones and twos
– ones being nearest the band.**

- A1** First corners (No. 1 man and No. 2 lady) right arm turn for eight step hops. Second corners do likewise. (No. 2 man, No. 1 lady)
A2 Ones give two hands and do two sideways steps down the set and back, then cast round twos – who move into ones' vacated places. All swing. (Couples have now changed places.)

In this form of dance the couples are progressing towards one end or the other of the set. When they arrive there they need to miss one turn of the dance and then resume dancing in the opposite direction, and with the opposite number to that with which they started.

***This particular dance is fairly easy and is
therefore very useful for introducing this kind
of set formation and also for introducing step-
hop dancing generally.***

© Robin Dunn

The Rose Tree

**32 Bar Reels
Longways set for any number of
couples numbered ones and twos.**

- A1** 1st man and 2nd girl (1st corners) right-hand turn and left-hand turn. (8 bars)
A2 Repeat with 2nd man and 1st woman. (2nd corners) (8 bars)
B1 Ones lead down set, turn and change hands, skip back and cast one place, while twos move up one place. (8 bars)
B2 Set twice to partner and swing. (8 bars)

After once through the dance the end couples miss a turn and come back in as opposite numbers. Since there are couples standing out on every even number of tunes through the dance, the band should play an odd number of 32-bar tunes. (I would suggest five or seven times through.)

© Robin Dunn

Northumbrian Dance

By Robin Dunn

Every now and again over the last twenty years or so, I have been asked to do workshops on the traditional music and dance of Northumberland. Sometimes the people doing the asking have had a good idea of what they were about and sometimes not. It seems to be often imagined, in the south of England at least, as well as with some of my Scottish friends, that Northumberland is a hotbed of traditional dance and music with everyone doing the rant-step all over the place, and that every house has a fiddle in it, and that we all go around endlessly singing "The Blaydon Races" and "Keep Your Feet Still Geordie Hinny". In reality what we have now is only a remnant, the traditions

are still there but you have to look harder to find them. Until fairly recently there was an old man in the Wooler area still putting the rant step into any dance in 4/4 time – even the Gay Gordons. Sadly he is gone now, along with a kind of a golden age of country dancing in these parts. There is a dearth of young people coming into the dancing and the number of dances being held has dwindled. As a bandleader and caller I can see this simply by looking at my diary. Also, if we have no booking for the band, or possibly a cancellation, I have increasing difficulty in finding somewhere to go and dance myself. It strikes me that there will not be a real resurgence in country dancing until it is done regularly in a majority of our schools.

If this all sounds a bit depressing, I can tell you that you can still find The Morpeth Rant, The Drops of Brandy (done to hornpipes), and the strange and wonderful Northumbrian version of The Eightsome Reel being done, only not as often, and with the numbers doing them greatly reduced.

On the music front there is a slightly different picture. There are scores of young players now, all over the county, and some especially good ones in the Newcastle area since the inception of the new folk music degree course at the University. Not many of them however, seem to have much of an interest in the dance band tradition or the local festivals; they are much more into forming concert bands and incline more towards a loosely Irish based style with a bit of added syncopation. So on the one hand, I feel quite lucky in having so many of them available when I need a good player for the band, but on the other hand, I am still waiting to hear them play a two-step or a 4/4 march in an informal session at the pub.

With the more general festival audiences around the British Isles however, interest in Northumbrian music has grown over the past twenty years or so. For a while our main export was Alistair Anderson and his amazing virtuoso concertina playing, then interest increased even more with the introduction to the rest of the world of our most recent elder statesmen, Joe Hutton (Northumbrian pipes), Willie Taylor (fiddle), and



Sue Morgan & Robin Dunn

Will Atkinson (mouth organ). Sadly they are no longer with us but interest in their music is still strong. Whilst none of them played in dance bands in the latter part of their lives, the music that they played was most certainly *dance* music. They exemplified the great crossover and rich mixture of the music of the Borders along with the likes of Tom Hughes and Bob Hobkirk and so many more long gone. These players from the Scottish side were also very much players of *dance* tunes rather than concert pieces. The great difference of course is that the older players learned their music at dances; they had the chance to simply absorb the style and *feel* of dance music just by being around in an age when more dances were being held.

There are of course people nowadays who are making great efforts to get youngsters dancing again, but they are rather unevenly spread around. I go into schools for instance, where there is not one teacher with any experience at all of any kind of dance other than disco; then others where there is one keen teacher but with no support from the Head. Then thankfully there are the better kinds of situations, where it is the Head Teacher that is keen and who ensures that time, space, and money are found – and the dancing prospers accordingly.

Every year I teach at a week long "Schools Folk Festival" in North Yorkshire, which is heavily based on dance. The high schools provide the musicians and the middle schools provide the dancers, and at the end of the week they have two big ceilidhs with about two hundred children at each one. The children also learn some of their local songs

during the week and some of these are sung between dances. Also, one or two of the schools who do country dancing regularly can usually provide an exhibition set to entertain us with their own special dance.

This festival was started when two musically inclined headmasters, at schools only a few miles apart, got together and swapped ideas and then used their combined, and considerable, enthusiasm and dynamism to make it happen. Neither of these heads is still at their respective schools but enough people seem to be willing to give time and effort to keep it going. It is the single most encouraging and uplifting week in my calendar and buoys me up for the rest of the year. It is the sort of event that, if it were more widespread, would go a long way towards ensuring a healthy future for country dancing.

At the other end of the scale, but equally rewarding, I recently did a night for a dance class run by Jock Thomson and his sister Nancy in Robertson near Hawick. They have an hour with the youngsters at the start, and then the adults

take over after that. They are very lucky to have the excellent Stuart Anderson leading a four or five piece band and setting just the right tempo for all the dances. The kids seemed to enjoy it as much as the adults, and hopefully, it is the kind of experience which will keep them coming back for more in the future.

Geographically, one of these beacons of hope is to the south of Northumberland whilst the other is to the north; I would love to see a bit more of it going on in between.

However we are still soldiering on, and if anyone is interested in trying the Morpeth Rant or the Northumbrian Eightsome, the best opportunity is probably to come to the Northumbrian Gathering at Alnwick on the 13th and 14th of November. This year the Friday night band will be Fiddler's Elbow with me at the helm, and for the Saturday night we have The Lomond Ceilidh Band. Also, I have dances at Morpeth, if anyone is travelling this way, on 1st April, 10th June, 5th August, 14th October, and 9th December. Do come and have a dance if you're passing, we'd love to see you.



Sue Morgan & Robin Dunn

Your Letters

Dear Editor,

The last few issues have carried some provocative articles and letters on the spirit and etiquette of Scottish Dance, sparked off by Mike Scott's articles on the spirit of Ceilidh Dance and other topics. Interesting alternative perspectives have been contributed by George Hobson, Rob Sargent, and Norah Dunn, whose reminder of Miss Milligan's phrase "controlled abandon" was timely. And the contribution from Mr (or Ms) Withheld may ruffle a few feathers.

Perhaps I could add my tuppence-worth.

I first took up dancing back in the nineties (that's the 1990s, in case you were wondering). Initially, my experience was of Scottish Contry Dancing. I attended RSCDS classes and started going to dances and balls on a regular basis. At the outset, I occasionally encountered a rigid or prescriptive attitude. For example, on one occasion where I was nervously perusing the Green Book between dances, I was accosted by an imperious gentleman who said, politely but firmly, "Next time do your homework beforehand". However, I believe these attitudes have become much rarer over the last decade or so, at least in the areas where I dance. RSCDS events have become more accessible to newcomers; for example, most clubs have now introduced recapping.

After a number of years, I was dragged along to a Ceilidh Dance by a Spanish friend who abandoned me for other partners when she found out I had no idea how to Spin. Fortunately, other partners were more patient, and before long I caught the bug. There were three things that particularly drew me to Ceilidh dancing. Firstly it was less mentally demanding and more physically demanding than Scottish Country. This provided a much needed contrast to my desk-bound day job. Secondly, although the repertoire of dances was more limited, there was a greater variety of dance forms, reflecting the fact that Ceilidh is a hybrid, drawing from a number of traditions. Finally the atmosphere was completely egalitarian: you were accepted irrespective of your background, age, nationality and so forth, as long as you entered into the spirit of things and were prepared to learn.

Here I do take issue with Mike Scott about his focus on individuality as the spirit of Ceilidh Dance. There's almost no solo dancing in Ceilidh. We dance with a partner, sometimes in sets of several couples. It is revealing that Mike makes no mention of a partner in his original article. Maybe our partner does not want to spin as fast as we do or be wrung out like a face-cloth in Set and Turn. More broadly, we dance in different venues, with a variety of bands and callers, perhaps in different geographical areas. All of these have their own distinctive flavour, their own styles and preferences. If we are insensitive to this rich variety, we are not only in danger of being discourteous, but we miss out on an important part of the enjoyment of Ceilidh dancing.

Hamish Dewar, Edinburgh



More etiquette?

Having read the letter from a dance band leader in last month's *Dance On!* I would like to say I agree completely with his comments regarding dancers' attitudes to dance bands. Just to add fuel to the fire I thought I would comment further on this issue. I have been a dance band leader for the last twenty-one years (a mere beginner!) and have enjoyed playing at dances all over the country and doing a few broadcasts etc.

Why is it that when a dance is announced (couple dance) the band starts to play and you could be half way through the first half before anyone gets on the floor? This is when the problems start; the dancers are not in sequence with the

music and are all at sixes and sevens unless you are lucky enough to have a couple who know where the dance is in relation to the music. Most of the time we manage to adjust the music so at least the dance ends where it should. Would it not be better if, when a dance is announced, the band start only when all the dancers who wish to participate are on the floor and so all starting at the same time? If a band can sit on stage and play the music at the correct tempo with tunes to suit it would be nice if the dancers could dance in the correct sequence. Woe betide the band that plays the wrong tunes at the wrong tempo for the dances – you would soon be told, but it works both ways. It seems no matter what happens it is always the band's fault! It is not the first time I have completely stopped in mid tune and restarted the dance because we can see it is just an irretrievable mess. Admittedly this doesn't happen too often but it does happen. At this point I would like to add that I in no way consider myself an adept dancer but experience over the years and help from some dancers has taught me to know where the dancers are at any given time.

My other small gripe is that we have often played at dances where there is a mixed audience of experienced Old Time dancers and usually younger non-experienced dancers. Why is it when you try to encourage these less experienced dancers on to the floor with the more easy dances like Dashing White Sergeant or Military Two-step hardly any experienced dancers get on the floor and help things along? They all know how to do these dances and there are only two or three throughout the evening. These people have paid just the same money to get in and have had to sit watching for most of the night – is this a case of dancers' snobbery? I commend dance classes and indeed play for them and think they are absolutely great both for the musicians and the dancers as we all learn at the same time. But it is not everyone who has the time or inclination to go to classes every week. Most people know the easy dances, we can play the easy dances so why can we not just do them and keep everyone happy? This is after all what dances are all about – enjoyment.

I hope to continue playing at and enjoying dances for many years to come and hope my comments have not offended anyone.

David Scott (Glenelvan SDB), Peebles



Dear *Dance On!*,

A magazine such as *Dance On!* will be a great benefit to the many dancers around the country, who may be needing a voice to keep Scottish Old Time dancing alive. I believe that many will particularly appreciate the dance instructions and I would recommend that you try to include instructions for more couple dances rather than set dances, as the couple dances often seem to be the poor relations in books of dance instructions.

As members of a small, but well-formed dance group/class in this area, I have undertaken to compile a small booklet for friends, of all of the dances that we have learned over the years, and it helps as a memory jogger for those who are still learning, and who need an occasional prompt on some of the couple dances and set dances.

I look forward to the future issues and Good Luck with your enterprise.

Keep up the good work!

Bob Sutherland, Monifieth

Editor's note: We will be delighted to include couples dances in our centre pages, whether they are recently devised or ones that are coming back into fashion. Please send or e-mail them to the usual address.

Alasdair's Dance Diary March

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances							
Mar-05							
Every Saturday	Fife	Largo Ward Village Hall	t.b.c.	8.30-11.30 No Bar	£3 (tea)	Door	Different bands each week.
Every Sunday	Fife St Andrews	Scout Hall, East Scores	Live Music	2pm-5pm	£3 (tea)	Door or tel 01334 472 375	MC/Caller Charlie Todd
Every Tuesday	Glasgow University	Student Union, University Ave.		7.30-10pm Bar	£4	0141 334 9869 07050 222 173	Dance Club
Every Wednesday	Newtongrange	Morris Club	Live Music	7.30-10pm	£3/£1.50	Door (Karin Ingram)	Ceilidh & Old Time Dance Club
	Glasgow	St Andrews in the Square	Live Music	7.30-9.30pm Bar	£4	Door (Tricia Matthews)	Ceilidh & Old Time Dance Class
4 th	Dumfries	Locharbriggs Comm. Centre	Ian Hutson	8pm-12mn	£5 Bar Lt. Supper	Tickets required 01387 710 975	Multiple Sclerosis, Dumfries.
5 th	Auchendinny, Midlothian	Glencorse Comm Centre	Willie Simpson	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 Sausage Roll supper	Door or 01721 723 468	(near Penicuik)
	Ayrshire	Sorn Village Hall	Lyne Vallay	7.30-11.30 B.Y.O.B.	£4.50 (Inc. Supper)	01292 220 344 01560 700 219	Tickets required
	Penicuik	Town Hall	Lomond Ceilidh	7.30-11.30	£5/£2.50	01968 672 631	No Bar (B.Y.O.B.)
	Meikleour	Village Hall	Alan Doig	8pm-11.30	£3.50 Bar	Door	
	Midlem (Borders)	Village Hall	David Scott & Glenelvan	7.30-12mn	£5 Bring own supper	Tickets from 01835 870 244	Charity Dance
6 th	Angus	Tealing	Ken Stewart	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
11 th	Midlothian	Bilston Miners Club	Eric Goodfellow	7.30-11.30 Bar	£4.50 (incl. Supper)	0131 660 1276 0131 663 6221	Wednesday Dance Club
	Carlisle	District Hall	t.b.a.	7.30-12.30 Bar	£7 (supper) Ticket requ.	01555 773 327	Highlanders
12 th	Dunbar	Dunbar Castle	George King	8pm-11.30	£2 [Bar]	Door	Social Club
	Dumfries	Academy Hall	Glencraig	7.30pm - ?	£5	01387 720 009 / 255 919 / 256 479	Music Festival Dance
	Gencarse, Perthshire	Village Hall	Andy McGrath	8pm-11.30 No Bar	£3.50	Door	Soft drinks available
	Stirling	Albert Halls	Black Rose	8pm-12mn	£8/£5	01786 849 247	S.T.D.T. Event
	Strathaven, Lanarkshire	Ballgreen Hall	Ian Cruickshanks	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£6 (incl. supper)	01357 520 900 (Date change)	Avondale Ceilidh Society
13 th	Beaulay	Phipps Hall	Bill Black	7.30-11.30	£5 (supper)	Door	Charity
18 th	Glasgow	St Andrews in Square	James Coutts	8pm-12mn	£6	Door	
19 th	Renfrew	Masonic Hall	Ross MacPherson	7.30-11.30	£5	0141 889 4711	Renfrew A & F Club
	Cockburnspath, Nr. Dunbar	Village Hall	Neil Hardie	8pm-12mn B.Y.O.B.	£5 (incl. Lt. Supper)	01368 830 391 01289 386 400	St Columba's Hospice
	Banff	Bowling Club	Ian Cruickshanks	7.30pm	£5 (tea)	Door	Fordyce Old Time Club
25 th	East Kilbride	Calderwood Hall	Bon Accord	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 B.Y.O.B.	01294 212 267	Highlanders
	Glasgow	Partick Burgh Halls	Fraser McGlynn	8pm-11.30 Bar	£5 membership	0141 339 9679	Highlanders
	Keith	Royal British Legion	Graeme Mitchell	7.30pm	£4.50 (tea)	Door	North East A. & F. Club
	Helensburgh (Highlanders)	Commodore Hotel	Lomond Ceilidh	8pm-1am Bar	£5.50	01436 672 927 01389 841 208	Dance
26 th	Perthshire	Bridge of Earn Hall	Simon Howie	8pm-11.30	£7 B.Y.O.B.	Door	
30 th	Troon	Concert Hall	Charlie Kirkpatrick	Ticket only	£18 (incl. Meal)	01292 289 234 01292 264 895	Ayrshire Ceilidh Club Tartan Ball
31 st	Dunbar	Dunbar Castle	t.b.a.	8pm-11.30	£2 [Bar]	Door	Social Club
	Dufftown	Memorial Hall		7.30-10.30		Door	Monthly Social
	Fife	Windygates Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-11pm No Bar	£3 (supper)	Door	

Scottish Country Dancing							
Mar-05							
Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
4 th	Troon	Concert Hall	David Ross	7.30pm		01292 315 558	Ayr Branch Dance
	Glasgow	Carmichael Hall	Kenny Thomson	7.30pm	£5	0141 956 2134	Glasgow Branch Dance
	Blairstown	Town Hall	Maple Leaf	7.30pm		01250 873 341	S.C.D. Club
	Cove	Burgh Hall	CD's	7.45pm	£4	Door (Club Dance)	Cove by Helensburgh
5 th	Edinburgh	Cluny Centre	Ian Muir			0131 337 4482	Beginners Dance
	Longtown	Comm. Centre	Ian Cruickshanks	7.30pm		01228 674 689	Longtown Group
	Buckie	Fisherman's Hall	David Cunningham	7.30pm		01261 812 941	
	Whittington		Andrew Lyon			015242 41986	North West Craven RSCDS
11 th	Oban	Corran Halls	Ian Thomson	8pm	£9	01631 563 103	Lorn RSCDS Supper Dance
	Aberdeen	McRobert Hall	Marian Anderson	8pm		01224 314 508	
12 th	Oban	Corran Halls	(Anita MacKenzie)	9.30am - 12.50pm		01631 563 103	Day School
	Oban	Corran Halls	Marian Anderson	6.30pm	£17	01631 563 103	Lorn RSCDS Buffet Dance [Bar]
	Dumfries	Academy Hall	Glencraig			01387 256 479	Music Festival Dance
18 th	Annan	Victoria Halls	J. Douglas			01461 500 250	Dance
	Dumfries	Marchmount High	(SCD Festival)			01387 256 479	Dumfries Music Festival
	Dunblane	Victoria Hall	Alan Ross	7.30pm			Stirling RSCDS Dance
	Greenock	Town Hall	Ian Muir Sound	7pm	£15	01475 633 096	Annual Ball
	Peterhead	Palace Hotel	t.b.a.	8pm		01779 478 422	
19 th	Dumfries	Marchmount High	(SCD Festival)			01387 256 479	Dumfries Music Festival
	Helensburgh	J.L. Baird School	Alan Ross			01436 673 521	Junior Dance
23 rd	Gartmore	Village Hall	David Anderson	7.30pm	£4	01877 376 314	Aberfoyle SCD Club.[supper]
25 th	Torphins	Learney Hall	Marian Anderson	8pm		01224 644 030	

Alasdair's Dance Diary April

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances

Apr-05

Every Saturday	Fife	Largo Ward Village Hall	t.b.c.	8.30-11.30 No Bar	£3 (tea)	Door	Different bands each week.
Every Sunday	Fife St Andrews	Scout Hall, East Scores	Live Music	2pm-5pm	£3 (tea)	Door or tel 01334 472 375	MC/Caller Charlie Todd
Every Tuesday	Glasgow University	Student Union, University Ave.		7.30-10pm Bar	£4	0141 334 9869 07050 222 173	Dance Club
Every Wednesday	Newtongrange	Morris Club	Live Music	7.30-10pm	£3/£1.50	Door (Karin Ingram)	Ceilidh & Old Time Dance Club
	Glasgow	St Andrews in the Square	Live Music	7.30-9.30pm Bar	£4	Door (Tricia Matthews)	Ceilidh & Old Time Dance Class
2 nd	Newtongrange	Dean Tavern	Webster Craig	7.30-11.30 Bar	£5	0131 663 6022 to reserve table	Acc. & Fiddle Club Dance
	Auchendinny, Midlothian	Glencorse Comm Centre	Jimmy Anderson	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 Sausage Roll supper	Door or 01721 723 468	(near Penicuik)
	Edinburgh, Nicholson St.	South Side Comm. Centre	Bill Richardson	8pm-12mn	£7/£5 Caller	0131 228 1155	S.T.D.T. Event
	Ayrshire	Sorn Village Hall	Jean McConnachie	7.30-11.30 B.Y.O.B.	£4.50 (Inc. Supper)	01292 220 344 01560 700 219	Tickets required
	Meikleour	Village Hall	James Coutts	8pm-11.30	£3.50 Bar	Door	
	Midlem, Borders	Village Hall	Ian Cruickshanks	7.30pm-12 Bar + tea	£5 bring own supper	01835 870 244	Proceeds to Charity
3 rd	Angus	Tealing	Johnny Duncan	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
8 th	Midlothian	Bilston Miners Club	James Coutts	7.30-11.30 Bar	£4.50 (incl. Supper)	0131 660 1276 0131 663 6221	Wednesday Dance Club
	Carlisle	District Hall	Willie McFarlane	7.30-12.30 Bar	£2 (supper) Ticket requ.	01555 773 327	Highlanders
9 th	Lanarkshire	Strathaven, Ballgreen Hall	Bruce Lindsay	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£6 (incl. lt. supper)	01357 520 900	Avondale Ceilidh Society
	Dunbar	Dunbar Castle	Jimmy Wilson	8pm-11.30	£2 [Bar]	Door	Social Club
	Gencarse, Perthshire	Village Hall	James Coutts	8pm-11.30 No Bar	£3.50	Door	Soft drinks available
15 th	Ayrshire	Hansel Village	Marian Anderson	7.30-12mn Bar & Raffle	£5.50 Snack	Door or 01292 289 234	Charity
16 th	Glasgow	Partick Burgh Halls	Ian Muir	8pm-11.30 Bar	£5 membership	0141 339 9679	Highlanders Club
23 rd	East Kilbride	Calderwood Hall	Johnny Duncan	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 B.Y.O.B.	01294 212 267	Highlanders
	Dunbar	Dunbar Castle	Dod Hutchison	8pm-11.30	£2 [Bar]	Door	Social Club
27 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall		7.30-10.30		Door	Monthly Social
28 th	Fife	Windyates Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-11pm No Bar	£3 (supper)	Door	
29 th	Helensburgh (Highlanders)	Commodore Hotel	Stuart McKeown	8pm-1am Bar	£5.50	01436 672 927 01389 841 208	Ceilidh & Dance
30 th	Perthshire	Blackford, Village Hall	Alan Ross	8pm-11.30 No Bar	£4 (tea & biscuit)	Door	Soft drinks available

Scottish Country Dancing

Apr-05

Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
1 st	Helensburgh	Hermitage Academy	Sandy Nixon	8pm	£	01436 675 922	Weekend Ball (Ticket Required)
	Forres	Town Hall	Drummond Cook	8pm		01224 644 030	
	Kirkton of Durris	Hall	Frank Thomson	8pm		01224 644 030	
2 nd	Helensburgh	Hermitage Academy	(Day School)	9.30am to	12.3	01436 675 922	Teacher:- Anne Smyth
	Helensburgh	Hermitage Academy	David Anderson	8pm	£	01436 675 922	Weekend Dance (Ticket Required)
	Whittington		John Stuart			015242 41986	North West Craven RSCDS
8 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	Ian Muir	8pm	£?	01542 887 616	Pay at Door
	Irvine	Volunteer Rooms	Nicol McLaren			01505 682 187 01294 823 865	North Ayrshire RSCDS
9 th	Dundee	Fairmuir Church Hall	Maple Leaf	7.30pm	£3.50	Door	Charity Dance
15 th	Bridge of Weir	Cargill Hall	Kenny Thomson	7.30pm	£6	0141 621 4104	Save the Children Charity
	Stirling	Albert Halls	Gordon Shand	7.30pm		Door	Stirling RSCDS Dance
	Aboyne	Victory Hall	Rob McCombie	8pm		01224 644 030	
	Huntly	Stewart's Hall	Frank Thomson Duo	8pm		01224 644 030	
16 th	Edinburgh	Cluny Centre	Iain MacPhail	Day	School	0131 337 4482	Edinburgh Branch RSCDS
	Penrith	Ullswater College	Jean McConnachie	£9/£10	Supper		Penrith SCD Club
	Ingleton		Ian Slater	Day School + dance		015242 41986	North West Craven RSCDS
20 th	Montrose	Town Hall	Maple Leaf	7.30pm			
22 nd	Kilmarnock	Grand Hall	Fleming Sound	7.30pm	£6	01563 523 669	Dance
	Hamilton	Eddlewood Hall	Gordon Shand	7.30pm	£6	01357 521 953	Hamilton & Clydesdale Branch
	Old Rayne	Village Hall	Lothian Band	8pm		01464 851 291	
23 rd	Castle Douglas	High School	(Day School)	1.30pm		Teachers:-	Linda Gaul & Wm. Williamson
	Castle Douglas	High School	Kenny Thomson	7pm		01556 620 658	Castle Douglas RSCDS
29 th	Cullen	Town Hall	David Anderson	8pm		01224 644 030	
	Ingleton	Comm. Centre	t.b.a.			015242 41986	North West Craven RSCDS

New Kilpatrick Country Dance Club

*Charity Dance
28th January 2005
Bearsden Burgh Hall*

Scottish Country Dancers from many parts of the Strathclyde Region gathered on Friday 28th January at Bearsden Burgh Hall for a Dance in aid of The Scottish Motor Neurone Disease Association. The Dance was organised by New Kilpatrick Country Dance Club, and the 160 dancers jigged, strathspeyed, and reeled their way through a simmering programme of dances, enflamed by the music of John Renton and his band. Club Secretary Margaret Sanders was pleased to announce that a sum in excess of £650 had been raised for the charity, resulting from ticket sales and a raffle of prizes donated by well-wishers. "It's always very satisfying," said Margaret, "that so many people having such a great time can enhance that enjoyment by benefiting such a worthy initiative." The Motor Neurone Disease Association provides specialist care and information, and funds research to improve the quality of life of people affected by MND. Marketing Manager Bryan Carroll said, "We are the only charity exclusively providing support for people affected by MND in Scotland, and are particularly pleased that so many people had such a good time 'Scottish Country Dancing' in support of our cause."

Postscript.

The New Kilpatrick Country Dance Club is associated with New Kilpatrick Parish Church, has around 100 members, and as well as participating in Scottish Country Dancing, extends its operations by giving demonstrations to various clubs and social groups within the region.

Club Secretary: Margaret Sanders – 0141-942 7519.
Scottish Motor Neurone Disease Association: Bryan Carroll – 0141-945 1077.

Article submitted by Patrick Murray

Darlington Appreciation Day

On 27 November 2004, over 100 dancers met in 13 teams at Longfield School, Darlington for the 33rd Appreciation Day of Scottish Country Dancers. Children from as young as 5 up to the age of 20 (yeah, ok technically the likes of me at the age of 20 aren't children, but needs must, so my participation was necessary) from Gateshead, Darlington and Leeds took part in this annual event of both social and adjudicated dancing.

This year's adjudicator was Helen Russell from Hull, East Yorkshire, who gave all the teams some great tips to help everyone to improve, by watching everyone dance a set dance for their particular category – Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced. Each team demonstrated a dance of their own choice as well. Great fun was had by all dancing to Neil Copland and his Scottish Country Dance Band, from Perth, who played excellently, including giving us very apt tunes to dance the old favourite "Christmas Tree" to. I would like to thank, on behalf of all the dancers, Terry Chaters for organising this event, and all his helpers, particularly his wife Betty, and also a big thank-you to all the teachers for preparing their teams for the day – it was definitely another Appreciation Day to remember.

Dora Connolly (dancing for Leeds RSCDS children's team)



Committee – (Left to right) Joan Young, Margaret Sanders, Pam Douglas, Janet Stewart, David Mudge, John Young, Peter Knapman.



At the Dance

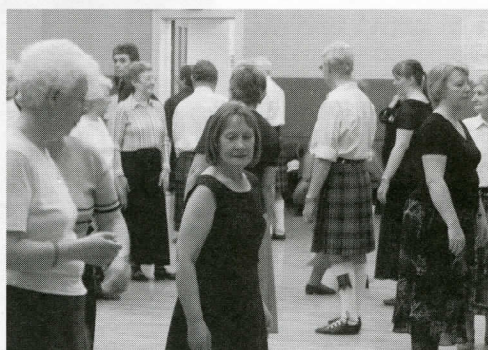




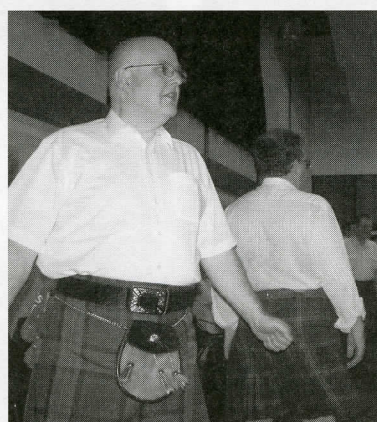
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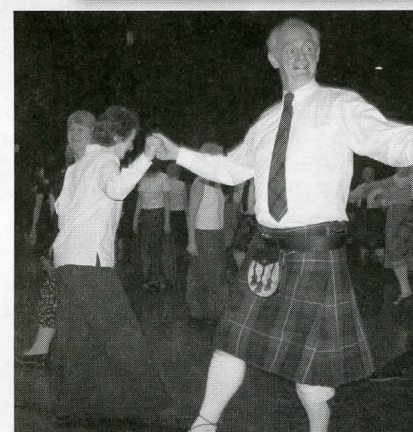
Marian Anderson SDB



Kipp ford Dancers at Dalbeattie



Iain Hale



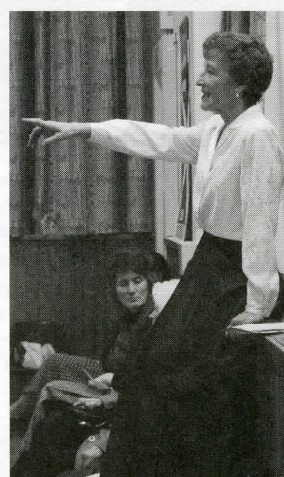
Wavell Tyroll



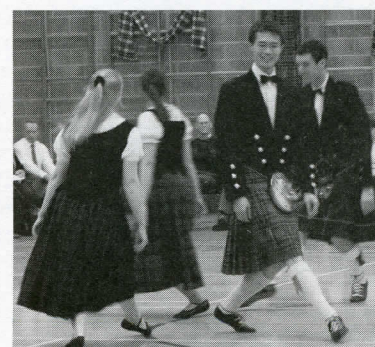
Colin Dewar SDB at Hightae Lockerbie Dance



Kirkcudbright



Newcastle Festival



RSCDS Spring Fling

Edinburgh Spring Fling

**Scottish Dance Weekend 1st – 3rd April 2005
for everyone age 16 – 35**

The first weekend in April will see young dancers "Frae A' The Airts" gathering in Edinburgh for a weekend of Scottish Dancing. All the events will be held in James Gillespie's School with the nearby Youth Hostel providing accommodation, if required, for the many visiting dancers to the city.

The weekend will open with a Ceilidh Dance on Friday night followed by classes on Saturday morning and afternoon, with a Scottish Country Dance on Saturday night. The weekend's feast of dancing will conclude with classes on Sunday morning followed by reflections and farewells over lunch.

This is the third Youth Easter School known as "Spring Fling" organised for young dancers by young dancers from the RSCDS, who invite young teachers and musicians to be on the weekend staff. While this event is held under the auspices of the RSCDS, all young dancers will be most welcome regardless of their previous dance experience or non-membership of the RSCDS. The first Spring Fling was held in Stirling in 2002 with Cambridge hosting it last year. Each young committee, while working within a basic structure, puts its own stamp on the event. This year will be a first for Choreography and Quadrille classes. The appeal of Scottish country dancing worldwide was evident last year in the participation of dancers from Germany, Australia and USA as well as the UK.



Can I come?

If you have never tried Scottish Country Dancing then come along to the beginners' classes. However if you are already a Scottish Country Dancer, you might like to master the Highland steps you have seen others doing in an Eightsome or Foursome Reel. Classes will be offered in Scottish Country Dancing at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels; Highland steps for using in Scottish Country Dances as well as an advanced Highland class; Quadrilles and Choreography.

The weekend package costs £30 for non-residents with residents' cost being £55 (shared accommodation in the Youth Hostel including dinner, bed and breakfast). A discount



is available to RSCDS members. The weekend package includes Friday and Saturday dances, classes on Saturday and Sunday finishing with Sunday lunch for all dancers. Tickets can be purchased for the individual events. Details of prices and application forms can be obtained from RSCDS Headquarters.

Calling all local dancers

The Spring Fling Committee would like to extend a warm welcome to all local dancers regardless of age, to come and join them at Saturday's dance on 2nd April at 7.30pm. Tickets priced £6 are available from RSCDS Headquarters.

The Committee and I look forward to welcoming the young dancers to Edinburgh Spring Fling.

Sue Porter (Youth Director RSCDS)

Enquires and application forms from

The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society,

12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7AF

Tel. 0131-225 3854

Fax: 0131-225 7783

www.rscds.org/youth

email: suzanne.durrand@rscds.org

Put on your dancing shoes. It's not too late to apply.



Last Year at Spring Fling in Cambridge

I had come to Scottish Country Dancing relatively late in my life, and then through non-RSCDS groups. I had no idea what a "school" would be like, and had trusted heavily to the recommendations of friends who had been to the Stirling Easter School in 2002, and had spoken highly of it. My trust in those recommendations turned out to be vindicated. Cambridge Easter School (or "Spring Fling") turned out to be a very pleasant weekend break in the middle of a busy work schedule.

Things started as soon as I reached Cambridge. After checking in, I was given a lift straight to the welcoming dance, where I caught up with one or two acquaintances. One dance, followed by a short spell of socialising with those friends – and others – and a night's rest later, the Saturday classes began. The excellent teaching of Deb Lees and Duncan Brown focused, in the advanced classes, on different aspects of technique. As someone, who does demonstrations and displays, which sometimes involve rapid changes of direction and orientation, I found Deb's hints and tips on changing feet very useful.

After this, back to the hostel for a quick brush up, and out again for the Saturday dance. Again a nice programme and, with everybody friendly, I was rarely sitting out.

On to Sunday and more classes. We learned more new dances, and in the final class put some of these dances together in a medley.

The school closed with "thank yous" to all the teachers and musicians followed by a lovely lunch.

Unfortunately, due to my train, I was not able to stay for the Highland class in the afternoon.

Overall, I had a great time at the Cambridge Easter School: the classes were good; the evening dances fun; I met a lot of new people; and the Cambridge scenery was beautiful. The whole package added up to a very pleasant "spring fling". Now I'm looking forward to and helping organise Edinburgh Spring Fling 2005.

Heather Carmichael, Edinburgh



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Dancing in The Borders in the 1800s

7/1/1859

New Year Tradesman's Ball The ball this year was held on Friday evening in Messrs Yellowlee's ball-room, which was tastefully decorated with evergreens for the occasion. Dancing began at 8 o'clock and was carried on with much spirit to 6 in the morning by five and twenty couples of "braw lads & lasses". Several beautiful songs were sung at intervals....and Mr George Edmund danced a hornpipe with much neatness and agility, showing that he was not unacquainted with the Terpsichorean art.

Forest Mill Ball The annual ball given by the firm of Messrs Roberts was this year held in the County Hotel, Selkirk. Messrs Kennedy talented violinists of Galashiels were engaged for the occasion. The floor being taken at 5 O'clock, the soul inspiring strains of the violins soon put life and mettle into the limbs and heels of all who tried their skill in the mazes of the dance. Old and young alike joined in the pleasant, manly exercises of the evening and soon made the room resound with rapturous joy and mirth. After their appetites had become keen by much dancing the company were served with excellent pies..... and made them renew the night's delightful exercises with all their vigour and animation.

21/1/1859

Advertisement Dancing - Mr Littlejohn from Balmoral will open a class for dancing in the Salmon Inn Ballroom of Friday 21st January at half past seven.

11/3/1859

Kelso Mr Dixon's Ball on the conclusion of his dancing classes took place on Friday night.....in Queen's Hall Assembly Room....attended by a goodly number of youths of both sexes just in the budding time of life.....The appearance of the gay company testified in an unmistakable manner to the efficiency of Mr Dixon's mode of tuition and the tact and skill displayed by that gentleman during the evening could not fail to strike those who were present....while the order and regularity observed in the various dances that were executed, showed the care and attention which Mr Dixon had bestowed upon each and the gratifying success that had attended his efforts.

6/5/1859

Dancing Assembly, Galashiels The pupils under Mr Dixon brought the season to a close on Friday night by a grand display.....The dances which were gone through with precision and grace, gave evidence of a most careful system of training, and evidently embraced all the latest changes. Such were the Polka in a style new to our eyes: The Reel of Tulloch in a complicated and pleasing variety of figures and Quadrilles

with novel and graceful changes. In Waltzing, for teaching which Mr Dixon has long been renowned, the pupils evinced remarkable dexterity and swiftness of evolution.

17/6/1859

Advertisement Dancing - Mr McGlashan begs to announce that he will open a class in the Salmon Inn, Galashiels on Monday 27th June at quarter past six. Mr. McGlashan will also at the same time open classes in the County Hotel, Selkirk, Rose Bank, Melrose and Nest Academy, Jedburgh.

24/6/1859

Stow Dancing etc. We observe the Mr Milne from Edinburgh has again visited our village and taken up classes in the Town Hall.....his merits as a teacher are well known....He is an accomplished vocalist and musician and performs upon the violin, concertina and guitar with masterly skill.

29/7/1859

Dancing Assembly Mr McGlashan's dancing class finished on Saturday with usual demonstration. The new dance the "New Lancers" which was so much admired last year was performed to perfection.....and the Scotch Reel Quadrille which we understand is the joint invention of the accomplished Mons. Veughs and Mr McGlashan was greatly admired and is sure to take its place as a favourite in our festive assemblies....combining as it does so much of our traditional dance with only a little of what is foreign.

7/10/1859

Yair Harvest Home A real harvest home, worthy of the old baronial style when all the vassals are assembled under their chief.....the tables were literally groaning beneath the substantial of life.....large granary had been cleared and seated for the dancing room. Mr Pringle who was accompanied by a number of his friends, honoured the party with his presence both at supper and the ball. The health of all present was proposed by A Pringle, Esq.

14/10/1859

Michaelmas Ball came off in the Black Bull ballroom specially granted for the occasion.....Between forty and fifty couples assembled and moved briskly about in the "Mazy dance", to the strains....extracted from the excellent Quadrille Band of Messrs Cunningham and Marshall, consisting of piccolo, trombone, fiddle and corneopane.

6/1/1860

Messrs Brown's Ball The Messrs Brown gave their usual treat to their employees in the County Hotel, Selkirk. Owing to the numbers employed it was necessary to take them in relays. The more juvenile and families at three....after being treated with pies and a dance were dismissed. The

Extracts from The Border Telegraph

adults assembled at five....The business of the evening was speedily entered into as there was little time to spare....the dance succeeded till 11 o'clock

7/12/1860

Mr Milne's concert and ball Mr Milne introduced a boy of eleven who had been a pupil of his for two sessions to dance the Highland Fling.

4/1/1861

Yair supper and ball Through the liberality of Mr Pringle an excellent supper and tea was provided for the labourers, their wives and the youngsters on the estate....to the enlivening strains of music, commenced merry dance.....under the bow-hand of Mr J McLaren and the playing of Mr Laidlaw who:

"Screwed his pipes and gar'd them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl,"
Dancing was kept up with great zest till an advanced hour in the morning.

4/1/1861

Grand Volunteer Ball, Hawick This ball under the patronage of the Upper Teviotdale Rifle Corps officers was held in the Tower Hotel Assembly Hall. The ball was opened by Captain Chisholm and Mrs Thomson, and then the assembled throng presented one of the grandest festive spectacles ever witnessed in our "Gude auld toon".

22/2/1861

Dancing and Deportment In the New Corn Exchange.....we have to notice the formation of a select association for the practice of dancing and deportment amongst the better class male and female operatives....a number of the most respectable of our working men and women have formed themselves into a society for improving themselves in the ceremonies and evolutions of the ballroom....in favour of more order, better dancing, and more politeness and suavity of demeanour.

3/5/1861

Veteran Mr Dixon Dancing Assembly.

28/6/1861

Peebles Mr McGlashan's annual exhibition.....the ball was graced by a select assemblage of the fashionables of Peebles and vicinity. The dancing of the pupils was marked by the ease and good taste which Mr McGlashan is so successful in imparting.

18/10/1861

Manufacturers' Dinner and Ball Held in large new Public Halland led off as usual with a Quadrille.

24/5/1871

Gordon Farewell Supper and Ball – The servants on the farm of Byrewells, along with a number of their neighbouring friends were entertained to supper by Richard S Frier on the occasion of him leaving the district.....Dancing was kept up with great spirit until an early hour.

13/9/1872

Borders Rifle Association Ball at Corn Exchange, Melrose.....dancing kept up with great spirit till early hour in morning.

1/11/1872

Harvest Home at Torwoodleeworkers on Ferniehurst and Torwoodlee farms had a social meeting to celebrate the finishing of the harvest.....Large barn cleared for occasion.....Proceedings were begun with tea.....dancing was commenced and did not cease until far into the morning. During the night pies, fruit and all kinds of suitable refreshment were supplied without stint.....toast to Mr and Mrs Gibson and family

27/12/1872

Bowden – Concert and Ball A concert of vocal and instrumental music was given in the Parish Schoolroom....in addition to musical performances the Highland Fling was danced by a prize dancer belonging to the district. After the concert a ball took place, at which a good number of the lovers of the dancing art were present. Music by Mr Tait, Ancrum.

4/1/1882

Earlston New Year ushered in quietly. Annual Dance in Corn Exchange Hall which was tastefully decorated and attendance was large. Dancing commenced at 9 o'clock and kept up with great spirit till early hour. Music of high order supplied by Good Templar Band.

4/1/1882

Stow On Friday night ball held under auspices of the dancing club in Old Parish School Room. Music by Mr Inglis, Galashiels.

22/3/1882

Lauder Youthful but vigorous football club held assembly on Friday. Concert thoroughly succeeded in pleasing and the dancing was largely attended and kept up with much spirit till about 3 o'clock

24/1/1883

Newtown Annual Ball on Friday night attendance low due to weather but very enjoyable evening, several songs and music by Messrs Bird, Melrose.

21/3/1883

Galashiels Dancing Assembly in aid of funds for Galashiels Brass Band held in Volunteer Hall on Saturday, hall could scarcely accommodate all the dancers who tripped light fantastic toe for two hours.

17/10/1883

Manufacturers' Dinner and Ball. The Ball opened at 9 o'clock and was a

brilliant gathering though not so largely attended as last year. Messrs Adams band supplied the music.

9/1/1884

Congress of Educational Institute of Scotland – Conversazione and Ball. The visit of the Institute was finished by a conversazione and ball in the Drill Hall on Friday night. The room had been finely decorated by Mr Goodsir. The platform was effectively decked with old historical banners and weapons and plants and covered with crimson carpeting. The windows were draped with lace, surmounted with artistic valances. The walls were decorated with paintings and old documents as well as a set of autographs including Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens. The company consisted of manufacturers and all other classes of the community and was thus at once a brilliant, representative, extremely sociable and successful gathering.

12/2/1884

Selkirk Volunteer Ball. Annual ball of Selkirk Reserve Volunteer Corps came off in the Volunteer Hall on Friday. About 80 couples present. Dancing carried on till advanced hour next morning. The decorations on this occasion, as arranged by Pipe Major Lamont and Sergeant Instructor Thomson were on a far more extensive scale than those of previous years.

27/2/1884

St Andrews Boat Club Ball in Edinburgh. Those from the Borders included Miss R Lang, Miss Scott Plummer, Mr James Curle jnr., Mr J Curle, Mr J T S Elliot, Mr A W Scott Plummer.

14/5/1884

Innerleithen On Wednesday a dance in connection with the class which has been held here lately took place in the Volunteer Hall. About 20 couples took part in the Grand March and thereafter a long programme of dances was gone

through. The proceedings were carried on well into the morning, and was of a most enjoyable and orderly nature.

4/6/1884

Lauder Dancing classes – on Friday evening last Mr Sutherland, teacher of dancing, deportment etc. brought to a close a course of lessons he has lately been giving here by holding an Assembly in the Volunteer Hall. There were about 40 pupils present and a number of parents and friends. After the Grand March the following dances which had been taught at the classes were gone through almost without mistake:- La Tempête, Reel, Lancers, Highland Schottische, Circassian Circle, Polka, Patronella, Quadrilles, Dutch Polka, Duchess of Gordon's Fancy, Rory O'More, Plain Schottische and Haymakers. Six young ladies danced the Sword Dance. Another young pupil took the difficult solo dance, Chillie Callum.

22/10/1884

Earlston Concert and Dancing. According to advertisement a musical party from Galashiels was to give a grand promenade concert and dancing in Corn Exchange Hall on Saturday evening. The concert was a total failure, as no one appeared, and a very few couples availed themselves of the dancing. The music was very good.

29/10/1884

Earlston Concert and ball to raise money for new street lighting.

11/6/1899

Stow Dancing classes, Mr Sutherland, Edinburgh brought the session to an end with Assembly in Town Hall....Dancing commenced with a Grand March and La Tempete followed by a set of Quadrilles. The Lancers, Schottisches, Polkas and Country dances followed. The Falkland Beauty was performed up to the mark it being a very intricate dance. The Highland Laddie, a lady's solo dance, was done by four of his young lady pupils.



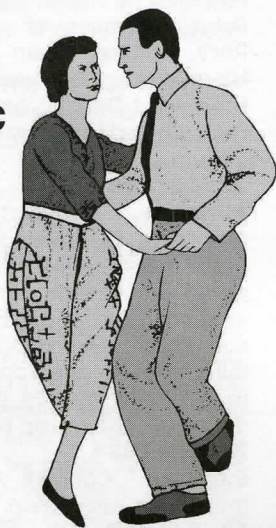
A much later date, but interesting none the less. The Davidsons' Band at Kirkhope Kirm, Kirkhope Granary, Christmas 1949. Photograph is courtesy of Jock Davidson, Selkirk

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Calling All Dance Groups

Dance On! is compiling a list of Dance Clubs and Classes for eventual inclusion on our Website. We already receive many enquiries, and we feel that such a list would be extremely helpful. Please let us have details of where, when and how often your group meets, what style of dance you do, level of experience required, whether it is live music etc and we shall include your details on our data base entirely free of charge.

RSCDS

Dear Karin,

Your anonymous band leader describes dancers who ignore the called dance and dance something else instead. Having seen the effect this can have on the inexperienced dancers who are trying to copy "the expert set at the top", I agree this is inconsiderate, to say the least. However, there is a solution. Those dancers who find the standard ceilidh fare too boring and want some variety should look up their local Scottish Country Dance group. With many more standard movements, and well over 12000 dances to choose from (according to the databases compiled by Alan Paterson - online at <http://www.strathspey.de/dd/> - and George Meikle), there should be plenty of variety to keep their interest. In the Central Belt we are fortunate in having a wide range of SCD groups, with different priorities and approaches, so these dancers should be able to find a local group to welcome them.

Cheers,

Ian Brockbank Edinburgh

ian@scottishdance.net

<http://www.scottishdance.net/>

Editor's note: We have had several enquiries from readers about RSCDS groups locally. Easiest way to find out where your nearest group is is to contact RSCDS Headquarters at 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh 0131-225 3854. There are groups to suit all ages and levels of experience and you will be made most welcome.

Appalachian Dance Classes

Appalachian Clog dancing is a form of American Folk dancing that originated in the Appalachian Mountains when the Scottish, English and Irish settlers combined their own dance steps with the rhythms of the African slaves, and the expressive body movements of the Native American Indians. Performed individually or as a group, the dancers act as the percussive accompaniment to lively music usually played by fiddle and banjo.

Appalachian clog dancing is energetic and rhythmic and can be enjoyed by newcomers to dance or the more accomplished wishing to learn something new.

At these classes you will learn the basic traditional steps starting from shuffles, taps and scuffs and progress to more advanced steps in choreographed routines and solo improvisation.

Classes will be held by Melody on Thursday evenings at The Eastgate Theatre and Arts Centre, Peebles.

Commencing Thursday 3rd March 2005 7.30 - 8.30pm £4.00 Please wear hard-soled shoes. For further details please contact Melody on 07753-214 513

Newtongrange Dance 11 February 2005



Jim & Cath Haldane dancing Jim's favourite – Postie's Jig



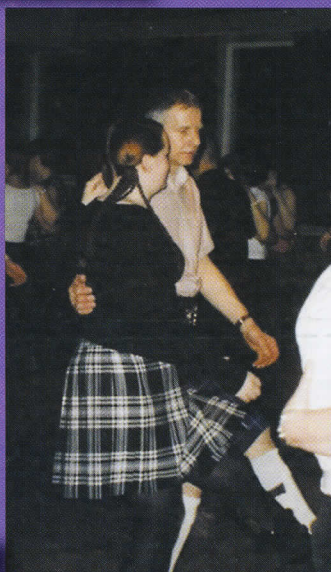
Charlie Todd



An All Star Band play for the dance



Stuart Anderson & Judith Linton



Jennifer Cowie & Ian Newton dance The Mississippi Dip



Andrew Knight



Stuart Anderson



David Scott & Jock Thomson



Nicol McLaren thinks that Tom Riddell's up to something!



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The John Carmichael Scottish Dance Band



Doug Maskew dons the kilt!



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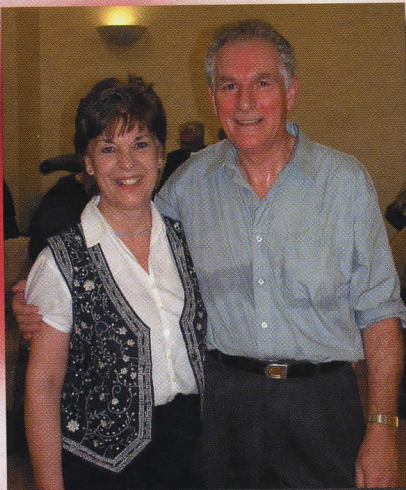
Williamwood Pipe Band drum corps



Williamwood Pipe Band



The Virginia Reel



Jamie & Jack Pressley from North Carolina



Andrew, Jim & Charlie Smith



St Bernard's Waltz



Rosemary Love, Robbie Shepherd & Tricia Wilson



May & Jim Holmes



John Carmichael

(All photographs © Dance On! or BBC Radio Scotland)