

Country Balls & Village Halls

Here follows a selection of reports about balls and dances from the Border Advertiser.

- 7/1/1859 **New Year Tradesman's Ball** The ball this year was held on Friday evening in Messrs. Yellowlee's ballroom, 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.
- 7/1/1859 **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 making them renew the night's delightful exercises with all their vigour and animation.
- 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 and was 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.
- 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 cornopean.
- 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

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

- 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.
- 18/10/1861 **Manufacturers' Dinner and Ball** Held in large new Public Hall, and led off as usual with a Quadrille.
- 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.

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- 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.
- 15/10/1884 **Manufacturers Corporation Annual Dinner and Ball** The Ball was opened in the evening at 9 o'clock when Messrs. Adams supplied the music. The company numbered 98 ladies and 104 gentlemen, as against 93 ladies and 114 gentlemen last year.
- 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.
- 18/1/1910 **Melrose** Dance at Hydropathic - members of staff with friends had annual dance on Friday night when large company present. Dancing began at nine and was carried on with great spirit till early hours on Saturday morning. Supper in dining room at 11 o'clock.
- 18/1/1910 **St Boswells Dance** The annual assembly of coachmen, butlers, maids and others in the employment of the fox hunting aristocracy was held on Friday night in the Public Hall, when upwards of 60 gathered together for a few hours enjoyment. Up to date music of Mr Robert Brown and pianoforte partner gave to company great delight.
- 1/1910 **Selkirk** Dance on Friday night, the teachers of Selkirk held their annual dance in the Masonic Hall when there was a large attendance.
- 1/2/1910 **Selkirk** Alpine Club Social and Dance held in County Hotel ballroom on Friday night.
- 8/2/1910 **Bowland** Social and Dance, Bowland Recreation Club dance took place on Friday. Beautiful tea served in Club's new room. Music by Mr Torrie, Halkburn.

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- 15/2/1910 **Bowden** Successful Carpet Bowling Club dance. Music by Mr Robert Brown, Newtown.
- 22/2/1910 **Selkirk** Coachman's Ball in County Hotel on Friday.
- 22/11/1910 **Selkirk** Social and Dance. Employees of Scottish Wholesale Society Ltd., Etrick Mills held social and dance in Lesser Victoria Hall on Friday.
- 29/11/1910 **Melrose** Annual dance of Newstead villagers took place on Friday in Schoolroom, about 25 couples were present and MCs were Mr A Lindores and Mr Hills. Music by Mr Swinton, Eildon.
- 6/12/1910 **Bowden** Annual dance connected with Carpet Bowling Club held in Bowden Public Hall on Friday. 40 couples took part. Floormaster Mr Thomas Jamieson, musical entertainer Mr Robert Brown, Newtown. Some dancers contributed beautiful songs.
- 6/12/1910 Buccleuch Hunt Ball held in Corn Exchange, Kelso on Wednesday night. About 200 ladies and gentlemen attended. Herr Iff's from Glasgow supplied the music.
- 20/12/1910 **St Boswells** Number of young men made arrangements to have a dance which was duly held on Friday in Public Hall. Mr James Leiper acted as MC and excellent music provided by Mr Crossland's Quadrilles Band from Galashiels.
- 7/1/1913 **Philiphaugh** Supper and Ball at Philiphaugh House on Hogmanay. The working people and servants on Philiphaugh Estate with their wives were entertained by Mr & Mrs S Strang Steel. Splendid supper served and then dancing in music room.
- 7/1/1913 **Melrose** Asylum Staff Dance held in spacious ballroom. Over 100 couples attended. Mr Eddie was floor master. Band comprises Mr Hall (piano), Mr Campbell (violin), Mr Amos (cornet). There was supper at the interval and the dancing resumed till 2 o'clock in morning.
- 7/1/1913 **Melrose** Dance at Kaeside. New Year welcomed at Kaeside with dance kindly given by Mr & Mrs Muir. About 40 people from neighbourhood present. Dancing kept up merrily to music supplied by two violinists from Earlston. Mr James Flynn varied programme with several selections on his gramophone. After some speeches dancing resumed till early morning.
- 7/1/1913 **Fancy Dress Ball** at Hydropathic on New Year's eve. The Ballroom beautifully decorated and the event was successful in every respect; costumes, music and management.

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- 14/1/1913 **Bowden** Carpet Bowling club had very enjoyable dance in Public Hall. Messrs. Brown and Darling supplied music.
- 21/1/1913 **Selkirk** County Hotel staff dance. Staff of the hotel and their friends held a ball in the County Hotel which proved unqualified success. Music supplied by Mr G.R. Colledge on piano and Signor D'Agrosa on violin.
- 21/1/1913 **St Boswells** Local Choral Society had annual dance in Public Hall. The attendance was fairly satisfactory though a dozen or so more gentlemen would have been an advantage. Excellent music by Bird's Quadrille Band.
- 21/1/1913 **Maxton** Quoiting Club dance in Maxton Hall passed off satisfactorily.
- 21/1/1913 **Melrose** Up Kaeside way there has been quite a spate of festivities lately and on Friday night the third dance in little more than as many weeks took place. A numerous company all in fancy dress, assembled and till a late hour on Saturday morning Mr Henderson's barn was the scene of much mirth and enjoyment.
- 11/3/1913 **St Boswells** On Friday night in the Public Hall the members of Newtown and District Orchestral Society held their second annual dance. The membership is about 30 but with friends invited the company numbered nearly four times that and a particularly delightful programme they had. The floor masters were Messrs. Colwell, Park Swinton and Thomson. Music provided by Misses Rita Brown, Nellie Cochrane, Lily Laidlaw, Jessie Smith, Maggie Smith, Messrs. Colwell, Donaldson, Wilkie, Ferguson, Melrose, Morrison, Smith and Swinton. Auld Lang Syne at 3 am concluded a most successful dance.
- 18/3/1913 **Newtown** Social and dance in Public School. Pupils attending evening continuation classes and friends had very successful social and dance. Music by Mr Robert Brown (violin). Mr Darling (piano).
- 1/4/1913 **Melrose** Fancy Dress Ball at the Abbey School. Miss Wilson and the girls of the Abbey School held fancy dress entertainment.
- 1/4/1913 **Melrose** Fancy Dress Ball at St. Mary's. Pupils of St. Mary's and Abbey School entertained to fancy dress ball by Mr and Mrs Hamilton. With the many varied and picturesque costumes a pretty sight was witnessed and the children entered merrily into the scheme.
- 1/4/1913 **Selkirk** Amateur Orchestral Society dance in Masonic Hall. 25 couples attended. Messrs. B Weddell, R V Hardie and William Bryson were MC's.

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- 1/4/1913 **Selkirk** Lawson memorial Musical Association held dance in Lesser Victoria Hall. Music by Mr Tom Colledge and Signor D'Agrosa. Messrs. James Fenton and William Hope acted as MC's.
- 20/5/1913 **Melrose** Staff at asylum held quarterly dance when a pleasant evening was spent.
- 11/11/1913 **Kelso** Buccleuch Hunt Ball held in Corn Exchange and attended by over 200 ladies and gentlemen representing nearly all the county families in district. The Corn Exchange was transformed into baronial hall for the occasion, prevailing colours being green and gold. The Buccleuch crest and emblems of the chase occupied conspicuous positions. A special floor was laid for the occasion and music by Mr J Meredith Kay's band from Glasgow.
- 30/12/1913 **Newtown** Miss Dalrymple entertained employees of Elliston Estates and friends to annual supper and dance. Dancing for two hours then splendid supper after which dancing resumed. Miss Nettie Robeson danced three step dances in fine style. Music supplied by Mr Bird, Melrose.
- 30/12/1913 Staff and friends entertained at Eildon Hall to annual supper and dance. dancing main feature of evening. Music by Mr Robert Brown, Newtown.
- 30/12/1913 **Lauder** Most enjoyable dance took place in Volunteer Hall on Christmas Eve and was largely attended.
- 13/1/1914 **Melrose** Asylum dance. About 100 couples attended annual staff dance. Head attendant Eddie and Deputy Head Attendant Wishart officiated as floor masters. Supper was taken at the interval and dancing resumed till early next morning.
- 13/1/1914 **Clovenfords** Supper and Dance. Mr and Miss Oven entertained the household staff and estate employees and a few friends. Mr Oven and family joined in dancing. Sumptuous supper in excellent style after which dancing was resumed together with songs and recitations. Mr McDonald was MC and music supplied by Messrs. Mercer Brothers (Galashiels).
- 13/1/1914 **Caddonfoot** Supper and dance for house servants and estate employees at Fairnilee given by Mr & Mrs Roberts. Messrs. T Brown and William Anderson were MC's and music supplied by Tom Kennedy (Bowmont Forest).
- 20/1/1914 **Melrose** Abbey School supper and dance. Through the kindness of Miss Wilson the staff of Abbey School were entertained to supper and dance on Friday. Mr Ralph Davidson was MC. Songs by Messrs. Smith and Cuthbertson.

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- 27/1/1914 **Clovenfords** Annual concert and dance of Caddonfoot Rifle Club held in Rifle Hall. Messrs. T Hogg, T Stenhouse and A Redpath were MC's and music supplied by Messrs. Sanders and Scott, Galashiels.
- 3/2/1914 Parish Church Choir held social and dance about sixty members and friends attended. After a few dances tea was served. Songs by Miss M Blake and Mr E B Hutchison and mandolin selections were given by Mr McVeagh. Messrs. Beattie and Sutherland were MC's
- 24/2/1914 **Clovenfords** branch of Scottish Rural Workers' Friendly Society held dance in Rifle Club Hall.
- 3/3/1914 **Newtown** The railway employees held their annual dance in Public School. There was a large attendance. Music by Mr Robert Brown's band and dancing continued with much spirit till 4 am.
- 17/3/1914 **St. Boswells** Orchestral Dance, Newtown St. Boswells and District Orchestral Society held annual assembly in Public Hall. 40 to 50 couples were present. Music by Mr T L Blackwood, Kelso (violin) and Miss Simpson, Kelso (piano). MC's were Messrs. C Colwell and T Swinton.
- 31/3/1914 **Earlston** Ball – on Friday night a public ball was held in the Corn Exchange Hall as a sort of finish up to the ordinary Saturday night dances. Owing to the numerous attractions of late the dances were poorly attended. Hewitt's band was in attendance and supplied appropriate music.
- 19/5/1914 **Newtown** The Countess of Dalkeith gave a ball on Thursday at Montagu House, Whitehall for her daughter Lady Margaret Scott. The spacious mansion, which is the London resident of the Duke of Buccleuch was decorated entirely with crimson roses. The terrace overlooking the garden was covered in and lighted with fairy lamps. The long garden which runs down to the embankment was illuminated with countless little electric lamps. The Duke of Buccleuch was there for a short time.
- 13/1/1915 **Melrose** The first dance of the season in Melrose district was held at the Asylum. 80 staff and friends were present. Music by Messrs. A Campbell (violin), J Hall (piano) and A Amos (cornet) MC was Head Attendant Eddie.
- 17/2/1915 **Leaderfoot** On Friday night a dance the proceeds of which went to the fund for providing comforts for the wounded soldiers, was held in the granary at Leaderfoot. Nearly 50 couples were present. Music by Messrs. Wright, Park and Paterson and dancing kept up till 5 o'clock on Saturday morning. Tea and refreshments were purveyed at intervals and some of the company added to the pleasure of the evening by contributing songs.

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- 14/4/1915 **Selkirk** Social and Dance. There was held in St. John's Episcopal Church Hall a social and dance given by the Machine Gun Section of the Royal Scots in appreciation of the many acts of kindness accorded to the section by the ladies in the vicinity of the billet. Most enjoyable evening begun about 7.30 when 60 people sat down to tea. There was a pleasant programme of dances, songs and games. Mr Hartley officiated at the piano.
- 15/3/1916 **Bowland** Concert & Dance in aid of Soldiers' Comforts Fund held in Caitha School. The dance was well patronised, excellent music by Messrs. Mercer Bros. And Mr Campbell.
- 27/2/1918 **Bowden** Concert and Dance. Concert given in aid of Red Cross by artistes from Newtown and Innerleithen, a dance was held afterwards, both functions being well attended.
- 27/2/1918 **Earlston** A dance was organised by a company of local gentlemen. Held in Corn Exchange. Music by Mr and Miss Brown, St Boswells and Miss Wallace, Earlston. MC was Mr John Stafford. Surplus proceeds to local War Guild.
- 19/1/1921 **Galashiels** Volunteer Ball. This annual ball which used to be one of the events of the season, but which has not been held for a number of years was resuscitated in the Drill Hall Paton Street. A large company was present and the function proved a big success.
- 26/1/1921 **Galashiels** Whist Drive and Dance. Members of Galashiels, Selkirk and Melrose Licensed Trade Association held a whist drive and dance in Town Hall, the function proving most enjoyable. Dance attended by about 40 couples and evening was kept up till 2 am.
- 26/1/1921 **Earlston** Bachelors' Dance. On Friday evening the local bachelors held a most successful dance in Corn Exchange when there was a company of about 60 couples. The hall was very artistically decorated with evergreens, ribbons and Chinese lanterns, and the picture when the dancers were engaged was a gorgeous one. Messrs. R A Dodds, H Wallace, R Murdison and D W Donald were MC's. Music by members of Galashiels Town Band.
- 2/2/1921 **Selkirk** Rugby Club Whist Drive and Dance in Union Hall well patronised.
- 9/3/1921 **Melrose** Farmers' Dance. Lauderdale farmers held their annual dance in the George and Abbotsford Hotel. Over 40 couples present. Music by

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Messrs. Gilchrist's orchestra, Edinburgh. Messrs. Brown, Hogg and Gibb were MC's.

- 16/3/1921 **Melrose** Whist Drive and Dance. In connection with the close of the Continuation Classes which have been carried on all winter the pupils and friends held a whist drive and dance in the school. There was a large attendance.
- 16/3/1921 **Stow** Ex-Servicemen's Dance. A very successful and enjoyable dance – the first function of its kind held in connection with the Local Ex-Servicemen's Club – took place in the Town Hall. Between forty and fifty couples were present. Music by Messrs. Wilson and Miss Wilson, Borthwickhall. Messrs. A F Miller and W Mann were MC's.
- 6/4/1921 **Galashiels** Social and Dance in connection with Roxburgh Street School proved a great success. Mr T S Morris presided. Games were indulged in, and a splendid programme of songs, recitations and dancers was contributed to. 40 couples attended the dance following.
- 3/1928 Dance in aid of Aged and Infirm Ministers of Episcopal Church fund under patronage of Duchess of Buccleuch in Selkirk Hall (Victoria Hall?). The hall was beautifully decorated with flowers from Bowhill, Philipshaugh and Wellwood. 100 couples there. Paterson's 'A' band from Edinburgh played. The catering was done by the ladies and Mr Winton the hall-keeper organised the drinks.
- 12/1928 **Newstead.** 123rd anniversary of the "Village Ball". Annual village ball dates back to 1814. 30 couples present and danced to Paterson (Earlston) Band.
- 16/1/1940 **Dance notice** – 'Help the Finns', A Dance & Buffet, Dryburgh Abbey Hotel, St. Boswells. Wed 24th January. 1940. Money to **Finnish** Red Cross. Jack Proud's Band.
- 27/2/1940 **Report on Leap Year Dance** 5th Battalion HLI Warrant Officers and Sergeants' dance. **Jazz band** – it was agreed this band contributed greatly to success of evening.
- 19/3/1940 **Gattonside Dance.** Last weekly dance held on Tuesday, owing to small attendance music supplied by radiogram.
- 1/1/1946 **Dance notice** – In aid of Earlston British Legion, Grand Dance, Corn Exchange, Earlston, Saturday 5th Jan. 8pm PIN UP GIRL COMPETITION FOR '46. Melrosian Dance Band.
- 8/1/1946 **Dance notice** – Galashiels Liberal Association, Grand Dance, Volunteer

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Hall, 14th January, '46. **Old and new dances** Empire Palais Band

- 25/6/1946 **Melrose Festival Ball**, 100 couples including the Selkirk Standard Bearer, Braw Land & Braw Lass and five of their attendants attended annual ball in Dingleton Hospital ballroom. Opened with **Grand March led by 'Melrosian'**. Arcadians Band. MC's were J G Wilson and T G Graham.
- 31/12/1946 **Masked Ball** to be held on Wednesday, 8th January, '47 in aid of Selkirk High School Jubilee Fund in Victoria Hall. **Most ambitious function since pre-war days.** Organised by Mrs Hutchison of the Fleece Hotel.
- 4/7/1950 **Braw Lads' Gathering, Scott Park Gathering** Outstanding success with, at one time at least 1000 people, taking part in one of the dances. Estimated dancers and spectators totalled 3000. Music of Gala Town Band over loudspeakers. William Ranking, Dean of Guild acted as MC.