



**THE**

**THISTLE**

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OUR DANCES NO. 63: The haymakers

This dance is both old and widespread, being found under various names in England, Scotland, Ireland and America. "The haymakers" is the usual name in Scotland and Ireland; in England it is usually called "Sir Roger de Coverley", while in America its name is "The Virginia reel". In each of these countries it is to be found in various versions, all having a very strong family resemblance to one another.

In Scotland, beside being passed down by oral tradition, it is to be found in a number of nineteenth-century documents, including Lowe's, Allan's, Anderson's and Smythe's manuals and the Dundalk manuscript. Smythe describes it as an English dance, and Anderson calls it "The Haymakers or Sir Roger de Coverley".

The haymakers is danced with a plain walking or running step (except that some Irish dancing schools use the familiar Irish jig steps, which look rather out of place and are probably a modern innovation). It is one of the select band of dances in which the leading couple ends at the bottom of the set after each repetition, a band which includes also "Strip the willow", "Foula reel", and "Barley Bree". A number of versions of the Haymakers (though not the one most familiar to today's dancers, namely the one in S.C.D.B. 2) contain the well-known contra-rotating figure in which the first couple turn each other by the right arm, then the second couple by the left (the man turning with the woman and the woman with the man) then each other, then the third couple and so on. These two characteristics suggest that the dances we have mentioned are in fact fairly closely related; and are related to the northern European weaving-dances like Väva Vadmal.

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OUR DANCES NO. 64: The dashing white sergeant

No : not the familiar one (we dealt with that in The Thistle no. 3) but another dance of the same name. This one is an ordinary longwise country-dance, which seems to have been reasonably common in the nineteenth century, as it is found in both Allan's and Anderson's manuals. But its first appearance in print is not in Scotland, and in fact not in Great Britain at all, but in America : it appeared in Elias Howe's "American dancing-master and ball-room prompter" in 1862.

It goes as follows:-

- 1 - 8 The first couple cross over, cast off one, turn with right hands and give left hands to the second couple (presumably the man to the woman and the woman to the man, as in bar 3 of Scottish Reform).

- 9 - 16 Balance in line  
 17 - 24 The first couple down the middle and up.  
 25 - 32 Poussette.

[Note. The second figure is described as "forward and back". This usually means "advance and retire" but cannot do so here because the dancers face alternate ways. A "forward and back" balance was known in the nineteenth century (presumably very like the balance in MacLaine of Lochbuie) and this must be what is meant].

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--- THE BACKGROUND --- (concluded)

Let us stay with the interesting Mr. Thomas Wilson for a little longer. You will remember that he was the London dancing-master who in the early 19th century almost reduced country-dancing to a science. He wrote a text-book (The Analysis of Country Dancing; and a later version (1825), entitled The Complete System of English Country Dancing), which described all country-dance figures in vogue at that time (and a few more of his own) and he made a collection of dance-tunes (which he called A companion to the ballroom) to each of which he fitted three figure-sequences. Twenty-four of these (all to Scottish tunes -- Wilson chose his tunes from all over Britain as well as France, Germany and Italy) appear in our dance-books, and I listed them in the last issue.

What do they have in common? Yes, you're right : double triangles. Every one of our seven double triangle dances is in that list. Perhaps you can find only six : My mother's coming in; Lord Rosslyn's fancy; Fergus MacIvor (this is the correct spelling, by the way. MacIvor is a character in Scott's 'Waverley', and Wilson correctly reproduces Scott's spelling. I don't know why the SCD Books have it differently); Fidget; The Golden Pheasant; and Lady Baird's reel. The seventh -- and this you may not have expected -- is There's nae luck about the house; but if you look up the original description in The Companion you will find that bars 17-24 are, in fact, the double triangle although they have a different interpretation in our books. If you then want, as is natural to know which is correct, and look the double triangle up in the Complete System, you will be surprised. At any rate, I was. Neither interpretation bears much resemblance to Wilson's figure, which has the leading man dancing in a triangular track round the second and third women while his partner dances similarly round the second and third men.

If you investigate further, comparing the figures in Wilson's dances as they appear in our books with the original descriptions in Wilson's own books, you will find a number of other differences, though nothing quite as alarming as the double triangle. For example, Wilson has a figure called 'turn corners' -- it occurs in bars 33-40 of Lady Mary Douglas. This has been replaced

in the books by 'turn corners and partner', a well-know traditional Scottish figure, but one which is unfortunately not quite the same. Wilson's figure goes as follows:- turn first corners with both hands, dance round each other, turn second corners with both hands, dance back to place (travelling-step throughout). Incidentally, Wilson has a figure called 'swing corners' which does involve turning both corners and partner, and it is interesting to note that it is just like the American contra-dance figure 'turn contrary corners' -- i.e. right to your partner and left to corner, not the Scottish figure, which is right to corner and left to partner.

There is no point in going further into details about the differences in the figures which have come in. As I said, Wilson's book can be found over here, and anyone really interested can investigate for himself. But there is one interesting example where a dance itself seems to have gone astray. It is Dumbarton Drums. Wilson gave three possible dances to each tune. Usually it is the third (and most complex) which is served up to us. But for Dumbarton drums the dance in our books consists of the first dance plus half of the second.

There are also some differences in the music. The rhythm of Jenny's Bawbee as given by Wilson is not the heavily-dotted strathspey rhythm which we use. In fact, Wilson did not intend the dance to be a strathspey, for he marked it allegro, whereas he says in his introduction that strathspeys are andante. Woo'd and married and 'a' is a 9/8 tune -- as anyone familiar with the song, or with the tune as it appears in collections of Scottish music, will know. And Wilson so gives it. But in Book 16 it has been turned into 6/8 -- you may have noticed (and, if you knew the tune before, have been upset by) the long 5-beat notes in bars 2,4,6,8,10,12,14 and 16, where the tune seems to slow down to walking-pace. Try playing these as 2-beat notes -- you will get the original tune, and a far better rhythm. Unfortunately, though one couldn't do the dance in this rhythm using standard present-day Scottish country-dance technique. One would have to find out what steps went with 9/8 rhythm -- and Wilson didn't describe them in detail and they haven't survived.

I'll give you one guess : what tune did Wilson print for Ca' the ewes to the knowes? Yes, you're right, he printed Ca' the ewes to the knowes. And for Caledonian rant he printed Caledonian rant. I don't know why these were altered -- possibly to give us more strathspeys (Wilson doesn't include tunes in strathspey tempo in The Companion). But it all adds to the differences between what we do and the original versions.

Thus Mr. Thomas Wilson, London dancing-master, collector of dance-tunes, and deviser of dance-sequences to go with them (using traditional English figures and new figures of his own) would be surprised to see how completely his dances have faded away in England and how popular they are with Scots. And though he would be hard put to it to recognize some of his brain-children he would no doubt be more than pleased to see people enjoying them. As Ludwig Burkhardt once wrote to me about the American version of his Krüz König -- he was sorry it was not done correctly, but would very very much rather have it done incorrectly than not done at all.

\*\* SCOTTISH DANCE MUSIC \*\* [concluded]  
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Hornpipes

Let us clear one red-herring out of the way first : there is an old English tune called "hornpipe" in a slow and subtle triple rhythm : Handel and Purcell both wrote hornpipes; and there are several well-known 17th-century country dances to such tunes. "Hole in the wall" is one, and the hauntingly beautiful "Orleans baffled" is another. But they have nothing to do with the hornpipes we are talking about, which are in duple rhythm (very square-cut and unsubtle), are later in date, and are known all over the British Isles. We have already had a look at the final three crotchets when we were discussing reels. In fact, we might say that the hornpipe has a steady quaver rhythm and so goes at exactly half the speed of a reel. If we compare a hornpipe (e.g. East Neuk of Fife) with a reel (e.g. The mason's apron), we see that the crotchets in the hornpipe correspond to the quavers in the reel inasmuch as they carry the main rhythm. The quavers in the hornpipe and any semi-quavers in the reel are decorations. There are usually far more decorative quavers in a hornpipe than there are decorative semi-quavers in a reel and there is a good reason for this -- semi-quavers are none too easy to play at this speed. In fact, there are many reels with no semi-quavers, whereas all hornpipes have a fair number of quavers.

One effect of this is that reels and hornpipes tend to look alike on the printed page -- mostly quavers with a few crotchets. However, one can usually hear which notes are carrying the rhythm. And in any case the last bar will show the difference, as we explained under "reels".

A number of Scottish dance-tunes are called "Scotch measures" (or "Scots measures" or, nowadays, "Scottish measures") and these have exactly the same characteristics as hornpipes. In fact, "Scotch measure" seems to be simply another term for "hornpipe" in Scotland (it is not used in other parts of Britain).

Favourite hornpipes are:-

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The flowers of Edinburgh          | Soldiers joy                  |
| The East Neuk of Fife             | Princess Royal*               |
| Staten Island                     | The white cockade             |
| Circassian circle                 | Roxburgh Castle               |
| The bottom of the punch-bowl      | Jacky tar                     |
| The Durham ranger (Duran ranger)* | Lady Mary Hay's Scots measure |
| The Earl of Errol                 |                               |

Tunes starred are popular also in England and are probably of English origin. The Soldiers' joy is popular all over the place, even as far away as Sweden.

Clogs

Just as a reel can be played more slowly, so can a hornpipe. And a slow hornpipe, just like a strathspey reel, has plenty of dotted rhythm, though it does not have any "Scotch snap". In Scotland slow hornpipes were used mainly for clog dancing -- alas, almost died out now, though a generation ago it was very popular in the mining villages in Fife, and elsewhere.

These slow hornpipe tunes are known all over the British Isles, and are usually simply called hornpipes (only in Scotland and in New England are they called clogs) and indeed the most typical Irish hornpipes, like Londonderry hornpipe, Boys of Blue Hill etc., and the best-known English hornpipes like Liverpool hornpipe are of this type.

These hornpipes show some very definite melodic characteristics, besides the rhythmic ones we have been discussing. One which is as noticeable to the eye as to the ear is the tendency to weave patterns on one chord. For instance, in the second part of "The Colosseum" all eight notes in the first bar are on the tonic chord; in the next bar, all eight are on the supertonic (and form the same pattern, one note higher). Bars 3,5,6 and 8 are also each on one chord. When the notes of a chord are restricted in compass, the result is naturally very often a succession of thirds and fifths and this configuration is also fairly common in fast hornpipes and reels. But clogs sometimes go to the extreme; bar 1 of "The Liverpool hornpipe" contains two complete runs up a chord. This is extremely rare in reels, and might be regarded, in fact, as characteristic of the clog.

Another frequent figure is a run up successive notes of the scale, and even more frequent is a run down.

Because clog-dancing has died out in Scotland, there are no tunes that can be called favourite clogs, but all the ones we have mentioned, together with Harvest home and The Royal Belfast hornpipe are common in collections of Scottish dance-music of around 1900.

### Quicksteps

Quicksteps are not primarily dances; they are marches. But, as we remarked earlier, a march has all the underlying rhythm and structure of a dance-tune, and many quicksteps, played at dance-tempo, have become favourite dance-tunes. Quicksteps come in two rhythms -- the pure duple, usually written in 2/4 time (The barren rocks of Aden is one) and the triple/duple, usually written in 6/8 time. A good example of the second type of quickstep is "Dovecote Park".

Rhythmically the quickstep and the hornpipe are quite similar. Each is in a steady crotchet rhythm, with three crotchets on the tonic chord at the end of the tune. Quicksteps often have also three crotchets on the dominant chord at the end of the first strain (this is much rarer in hornpipes). If we regard the tonic crotchets as a period at the end of a sentence, then the dominant crotchets are a comma in the middle.

Melodically, quicksteps are very individual, and anyone who plays over the quicksteps listed below will soon find that he can recognise a quickstep when he hears one even if he cannot describe their characteristic individuality in words.

Favourite quicksteps are:-

Pure duple (2/4)

Barren rocks of Aden

Dornoch links

Killiecrankie

The 93rd's farewell to Gibraltar

The 74th highlanders' quickstep

Inverness gathering

Australian ladies

The Earl of Mansfield's march

The burning sands of Egypt

Scotland the brave

## Triple-duple (6/8)

Dovecote Park

Come under my plaidie

Atholl gathering (Athole high-landers)

The Glendaruel highlanders

The Cock of the north

Blue bonnets

Hot punch

Colonel Robertson

Farewell to the creeks

Piobaireachd of Donald Dhu

The lowlands lads think they  
are fineJigs

Jigs and reels have much in common : the same tempo, the same phrasing, the same fast even flow of notes of the same length. The difference is that jigs are not in pure duple rhythm but in triple/duple rhythm : their notes group in threes (or sixes) rather than in fours (or eights).

In Ireland, reels and jigs are equally common, and any large collection of Irish dance-tunes will contain scores of each (for example, the O'Neill collection contains 415 jigs and 380 reels). But Scottish jigs are much rarer. Big collections like Gow's, with several hundred reels, may contain only a dozen or so jigs, and one famous collection -- Surenne's -- has no jigs at all. Every piper knows dozens of reels; not every piper knows any jigs.

Because of the fast even flow, a jig, when written in 6/8, as it usually is, nearly always has six quavers in each measure. This singles it out from most triple/duple tunes (that is to say, most tunes written in 6/8 time) in which the underlying rhythm is crotchet/quaver/crotchet/quaver

To check this, look through almost any collection of music you like, from Mozart's sonatas to Greek folk-dances, and you'll see this rhythm.

In other words, this rhythm is a common, non-characteristic rhythm; the six-quaver rhythm is uncommon and is one of the characteristics of the jig. (It is also characteristic of the tarantella and of a certain type of Bulgarian tune.)

Well-known Scottish jigs include

Brae Riach

The shaggy grey buck

Cork Hill

Over the water

Jig of Slurs

Teviot brig

Kinloch of Kinloch

The Goby

The Goby is known equally well in Ireland, and may belong to either country. In addition, modern Scottish bands play -- and modern Scottish collections contain -- some Irish jigs.

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::: COMPARISON CORNER - SERBIA :::

So far in our comparison corners we have described styles of dance that have much in common with Scottish, and have dwelt on the interesting resemblances. This time, for a change, we turn to a type of dance that is in complete contrast. In case any reader is wondering "whatever happened to Serbia" let us start by explaining that it is nowadays part of Yugoslavia. It is, in fact, one of the six main political divisions which make up that nation (the other five being Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Montenegro and

Macedonia). The political boundaries of Serbia do not quite coincide with its cultural boundaries : "official" Serbia includes a piece north of Belgrade which was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire until the Great War ended, and where the music and dancing is quite different; and it also includes a piece in the south-west where the inhabitants are Albanian-speaking and, again the culture (including the music and dancing) is quite different, being in fact the same as in Albania itself. Having subtracted these two regions from "official Serbia" we should now add some regions to it. Serbian culture does not stop short at the western frontier but fades away gradually in the Bosnian highlands. On the south both dance and language gradually transform into Macedonian, and on the east there is a strip along the Bulgarian frontier where the dance shows a mixture of typically Serbian and typically Bulgarian characteristics. You can see already that a study of Serbian dancing has historical and geographical ramifications quite different from anything in Scotland. Another thing that greatly affects the study of the dancing is the lack of written records. In Scotland we can find dance-instructions over 250 years old. The first written description of Serbian dances was made in 1920, and this was made not in Serbia but in England from the dancing of refugees. Serious collecting and recording in Serbia itself did not start until the 1930's. All collecting has to be from living tradition : there is no question of reconstructing dances from old documents because there are no old documents.

Now what about the dances themselves? They are pure step-dances : no figures at all -- nothing like a hands-across or a right-and-left, let alone a reel of three. The dancers join hands to form a chain, which is usually in the form of a part of a circle, the dancers facing the centre, and dance the appropriate step : the step is the dance. It is a curious fact that in any one part of south-east Europe either all chain-dances go to the left or they all go to the right, and Serbia is one of the regions where they go to the right. (Or at least, start to the right, for many dances are symmetrical, and the second half is simply the first half with "right" and "left" interchanged). Sometimes a dance has several steps : the dancer on the right end of the chain is the leader and everyone changes when he changes; he changes when he likes.

The Serbian word for a chain dance of this type is "kolo", and there are a large number of different kolos -- Ersko kolo, Djachko kolo, Rumunjsko kolo and so forth. Not every kolo has the word "kolo" in the title, and very often the title is just a feminine adjective like "Sarajevka", "Vranjanka", or "Dorćolka"; or the first word or words of a song whose tune is used for the dance, like "Savila se bela loza vinovar". (The reason for the adjective being feminine is that the general word for dance -- igra -- is feminine. So beware of the writer of programme-notes who, using his dictionary and his grammar translates "Sarajevka" as "the woman from Sarajevo". It should be "The Sarajevo dance").

The commonest kolo in Serbia is one called U Sest. There are a very large number of tunes for it, and in rhythm and phrasing they are all uncannily like reel tunes : the same eight-bar



strains, the same fast even flow of notes. They are about the same speed, too, though dance-tempo in Serbia varies more widely than in Scotland, and a Serbian band will often gradually speed up the tempo towards the end or take gipsy-like liberties with the tempo in the middle, which is reasonable enough in view of the fact that many Serbian musicians are gipsies.

Here are three U Šest steps, not the commonest or most typical, but chosen because they should be danceable by Scottish dancers. (They can be danced to reel tunes -- the rhythms will be right, though the melodic flavour will be wrong). They are danced low on the balls of the feet, with an upright posture. We count two beats to the bar : thus each 16-beat step takes one 8-bar strain of music.

#### Step A

1 & 2 & Step a few inches to the right on the right foot, step on the left foot in front of the right, and repeat  
 3 4 & Bring the feet together and swivel the heels, right, left, right  
 5 6 & swivel them left, right left  
 7 8 & swivel them right. Then step a few inches to the left on the left foot, and step on the right foot in front of the left foot.  
 9...16 & Repeat to the left.

#### Step B

1 & 2 & As step A  
 3 & 4 & Step on the right foot just behind the left and lift (a lift is like a hop but the foot does not quite leave the ground), then step on the left behind the right and lift.  
 5 & 6 & As 3 & 4 &  
 7 8 & Step on the right foot just behind the left. Step a few inches to the left on the left foot and step on the right foot in front of it.  
 9...16 & Repeat to the left.

#### Step C

1 [ & 2 ] & Step a few inches to the right on the right foot. Stay poised there and then (on the "&" after "2") hop.  
 3 4 & Step on the left foot across in front of the right, step on the right a few inches to the right, step on the left a few inches to the left.  
 5 6 & As 3 4 & but on the other foot  
 7 8 As 3 4 (no &)  
 9...16 Repeat to the left.

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