

THE THISTLE

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EDITORIAL.

Hogmanay is just past and Burns' night is in the near future as we write (it will be past by the time you read this); with regular dances and classes starting up again after the Christmas recess, and spring just around the corner (not far south of here hyacinths are already out) we step bravely forward in 1966. May it be a happy and satisfying year for all our readers.

OUR DANCES, No. 29 : SPEED THE PLOUGH.

This is one of the traditional dances that survived until well into this century. It is described in Scottish Country Dance Book No. 2 as "collected in Inverness" and it has an alternative name "Inverness country dance." It was described in print in Joseph Lowes Selection of popular country dances, published in Edinburgh about the middle of the last century. The description there goes as follows

Speed the plough or any other reel

The first and second couples, giving right hands, chassie round	(4)
Back again giving left hands	(4)
The first couple down the middle and up again	(8)
Set and turn corners	(8)
Set to partners in middle and turn round	(8)

The "chassé" step in the first figure should cause no surprise, as this is the regular traditional travelling step over most of Scotland, including the Inverness region, for country dancing.

The tune, a very fine reel, is often played for the eightsome reel. There are other, less well-known country dances called "Speed the Plough" (that is to say, they go to this tune) including one collected in England about 1910 by Cecil Sharp, for which the tune is played much more slowly and with a distinct lilt.

When the Perth Medley was devised, the anonymous composer took "Speed the plough" with one modification for the first part of the medley, and devised strathspey figures to form the second part.

OUR DANCES, No. 30 : REST AND BE THANKFUL.

This dance was composed by Jack McConachie, and included in his "Grampian collection", published in 1963. It has been a favourite in almost every Scottish dance-group in the Vancouver region since Stewart Smith taught it at the 1965 May camp.

The recommended tunes are Miss MacPherson's Reel and Geordie MacLeish. These tunes can be found in "The Speyside collection of Scottish Country Dance Music". They have not been recorded, so those who dance to a gramophone will have to choose some other tunes of suitable length and tempo. Note : a record rubber-stamped "Rest and be thankful" is available in the U.S.A.; it does not consist of the original tune and is in fact a copy of Andrew Rankine's "North of the Grampians". It is at the correct tempo for "Rest and be thankful", and is long enough for the dance five times through.

The dance.

Crossing and casting.

- 1 - 2 The first couple cross over, giving right hands,
- 3 - 4 cast off one (the second couple moving up) and
- 5 - 6 cross over, giving left hands.
- 7 - 8 The first woman casts up one (round the second woman), crosses to finish beside her first corner and takes him in promenade position (i.e. hands crossed in front). She is on his left, and they are facing the way she was going. Meanwhile the first man casts off one and picks up his first corner in promenade position similarly.

First promenade.

- 9 - 12 The second corners advance (towards each other) and retire while the first man leads his first corner (round behind his second corner) to the opposite corner of the set, and the first woman does the same.
- 13 - 16 The first couple turn each other with left hands one-and-three-quarter times round, and take their second corner in promenade position.

Second promenade.

- 17 - 20 The first corners advance and retire, while the first man leads his second corner (round behind his first corner) to the opposite corner of the set, and the first woman does the same.
- 21 - 24 The first couple turn each other one-and-a-quarter times round and finish facing their first corner positions. (The first woman will find herself facing the third woman; the first man, the second man).

Half reels.

- 25 - 28 The first couple and their first corners dance half a reel of four, but at the end the first couple pass each other by right shoulders and curve towards their second corner positions.
- 29 - 32 The first couple and their second corners dance half a reel of four; but at the end the first couple pass each other by right shoulders to finish on their own sides in second place.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ : ANSWERS.

1. (i) Waverley, (ii) Prince of Orange, (iii) Golden Pheasant, (iv) Duran ranger (properly ; Durham ranger), (v) Lamb skinnet, (vi) Dashing white sergeant (see Thistle number 3), (vii) Lady Mary Douglas (see Thistle number 10), (viii) Moudiewort, (ix) St. Patrick's day, (x) La Tempête, (xi) Drambuie.
2. The Jimp waist.
3. "hop-one-two-three" in the southwest (Ayrshire, Dumfrieshire, Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire); no hop elsewhere.
4. (a) All contain a hands-across except Duke of Perth.
(b) All have left-shoulder reels except Montgomeries' rant.
(c) All to reel tunes except Flowers of Edinburgh (a hornpipe or Scots measure).
(d) All titles misleading except Struan Robertson's reel (see last month's verse).

BOOK REVIEW : DANCING IN THE INNS OF COURT, by James P. Cunningham.

The Inns of Court would not, at first sight, seem likely places in which to find historical details about social dancing, but Mr. Cunningham was led there by his researches on the origins of country dancing. As a member of the Middle Temple he was in a favourable position to trace the relevant documents.

The custom of dancing in the Inns was established as early as the 15th century. The dancing started with the Solemn Revells, consisting of Measures (replaced in the 18th century by minuets) followed by less solemn dances, the Post Revells, consisting of galliards, corantos, branles, and country-dances.

Mr. Cunningham has traced, and has reproduced in his book, six manuscripts containing descriptions of Measures, and one, written in 1648, containing descriptions of four country-dances. These are the earliest directions for country-dances known to us. The manuscript does not name the dances, but three can be identified as Hunsdon House, Spring Gardens and Lulle me beyond thee. All are for four couples : two in square formation and two longwise, in one of which the first two men are on one side, the other two on the other.

Playford's "The English dancing-master", 1651 is, of course, well-known to all historians of the dance as the first printed source of country-dances, but Playford did not say where he obtained his dances. Mr. Cunningham's scholarly monograph reveals one of Playford's sources, and sheds welcome light on a dark corner of the history of the dance.

COMING EVENTS.

The Victoria Scottish Country Dance Society is holding its annual dance Saturday, February 5, 1966, at the Auditorium Hall, St. George's Church, Maynard St., Cadboro Bay, from 8 p.m. till midnight. Further particulars from Miss Joyce Fairbairn, 15-2150 Haultain St., Victoria, or Mrs. Husband, 1720 Garnet Street, Victoria. Hospitality is extended to any dancers who need accommodation.

LOCAL AND PERSONAL NEWS.

The most important piece of news this month is undoubtedly the engagement of Murray Shoolbraid and Miss Kirsty Kincaid. Murray has been on the Editorial staff of The Thistle since it started, has been a member of the Teuchters dance-band from the beginning and has played a major part in singing parties of all types; Kirsty has been here less than a year, but has already endeared herself to everybody. We wish them a long, happy and harmonious life together.

Mrs. Bingham's "Betwixt and Between" party, postponed because of the snow, was a greater success than ever. At times the hall seemed to be bursting at the seams. "Rest and be thankful" earned two encores.

Our President, Dr. MacKenzie, was recently guest speaker at a St. Andrew's day celebration in Amherst, Nova Scotia, and reports that for him the highlight of the evening was a performance of Scottish country dancing by young couples, mostly doctors and their wives.

One of our Editors - Nina Thurston - has been appointed Editor of the Bulletin of NFDI (Northwest Folkdancers Incorporated). This is the organization which coordinates folk-dancing of all nations in the northwest region (Alaska, B.C., Washington, Oregon).

John and Jessie Hicks have been appointed Editors of the news-sheet put out by the Vancouver branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

A TARTAN IS REGISTERED.

Occasionally we are asked exactly what entitles anyone to wear a tartan. The interested reader may be able to deduce something from the following facts about the Maitland tartan.

In 1953 the Hon. Patrick Maitland had to deputise for his brother, the Earl of Lauderdale, as Hereditary Bearer for the Sovereign of the national flag of Scotland. It was argued that he should wear the tartan: the question was - what tartan? Lord Lyon King of Arms looked into the question and decided that, although the Maitlands are Lowlanders and would not normally wear the kilt, they could wear tartan scarves, trews, etc. He proposed that they should wear a modification of the Lauder tartan (thin blue and yellow lines being added), and this design has been "ordained" by the Earl of Maitland and recorded by the Lord Lyon in a warrant "defining the proper tartan of the Clan Maitland". The family, according to the Oban Times, "are naturally eager to protect its use" and have arranged for it to be sold only to those who register their claim with the Hon. Patrick Maitland. Lord Lyon suggested that wearers should be those of Maitland surname but Maitland proposes to allow claims based on "blood descent, alliance or servitude". Those who register must forswear their claim to any other clan tartan.

A NOTATION FOR COUNTRY-DANCES.

We often want to write down instructions for country-dances, sometimes in a hurry. Here is a very quick and compact method for this. There is no need to learn it all at once : you can start by learning some of the abbreviations and mixing them in with ordinary words. The more you learn, the more you will be able to condense your instructions.

We start with a list of abbreviations for common words and phrases.

A	Allemande	a	arch
B	<u>B</u> ack to back	b	<u>b</u> oth
C	Ladies <u>c</u> hain	c	<u>c</u> ouple(s)
D	<u>D</u> own the middle and up	d	<u>d</u> lead <u>d</u> own
L	rights and <u>L</u> efts	e	<u>e</u> lead up
M	pro <u>M</u> enade	f	<u>f</u> ollows (or following etc.)
N	advan <u>N</u> ce and retire	k	<u>k</u> corner(s)
P	Poussette	λ	<u>λ</u> left [the stroke is to distinguish λ from figure l in typing. In hand-writing it is not needed].
S	<u>S</u> et to and turn corners (as in Duke of Perth 17-24)	m	<u>m</u> an (or <u>m</u> en)
T	<u>T</u> urn corners and partner (as in Duke of Perth, 9-16)	n	<u>n</u> ear (or <u>n</u> earer, or with <u>n</u> earer hands joined)
U	hands ro <u>U</u> nd and back	o	cast <u>o</u> ff
X	hands <u>a</u> cross and back	p	<u>p</u> opposite
3	reel of <u>three</u>	q	<u>q</u> clap
4	reel of <u>four</u>	r	<u>r</u> ight
8	figure of <u>eight</u>	s	<u>s</u> et
		t	<u>t</u> urn
		u	cast <u>u</u> p
		w	<u>w</u> oman (or <u>w</u> omen)
		x	<u>x</u> cross (or crosses, crossing, crossed)

Suffixes to capital letters show which couples take part : thus L_{13} means first and third couples dance rights-and-lefts. o_1 means cast off one place; o_2 means cast off two; similarly for u, d, and e. c_1 means first couple, etc.; similarly for m, w and k. Except where otherwise stated it is partners that are set to or turned.

Letters may also be used as suffixes. t_r , t_λ , t_b , t_x mean turn with right, left, both or crossed hands respectively. x_r means cross over giving right hands. X_r means right-hands-across, i.e. the first, or clockwise, half of X; U_r means the first, or clockwise, half of U; X_λ and U_λ denote the second, or anti-clockwise halves.

$\frac{1}{2}t$ means a half-turn (i.e. 180° , or a turn into each others' places); $\frac{1}{2}X_r$ means right-hands-across half-way round, and $\frac{1}{2}X_\lambda$, $\frac{1}{2}U_r$, $\frac{1}{2}U_\lambda$ are also half-way round. $\frac{1}{2}L$ and $\frac{1}{2}C$ are obvious.

In a reel of three we need to know who dances with whom and which way they go. "The first man reels with the third woman and third man, passing the third woman by the left shoulder to begin" becomes $m_1 \text{ } \nearrow \text{ } w_3 \text{ } m_3$. Similarly for 8 in dances like Jessie's hornpipe. The 8 in Corn riggs is $c_1 \text{ } 8c_2$. For a reel of four, dancers are bracketed to show who passes whom first, e.g. $4(w_1 \text{ } m_1)(m_2 \text{ } w_2)$ in the Glasgow Highlanders.

Certain common pairs of reels are denoted by R. Reels with corners, passing first corners first (as in the Duke of Perth) are R_1 ; these are, of course, always left-shoulder reels. Reels with corners passing second corners first (as in General Stuart's reel) are R_2 . R_w means reel on your own sides, e.g. The new-rigged ship 9-16 (H.B. w in this instance does not refer to women). R_p means reels on opposite sides : Maxwell's rant starts $R_p \text{ } R_w$. R_r and R_l are reels across the dance as in "Fight about the fire-side" and "Kiss quick" respectively.

Now let us explain some less common figures. H stands for "hands joined in line" : H_x , H_p and H_w occur in Hamilton House at bars 9, 17 and 25 respectively.

$(-y)$ means "into y's place", or "finish in y's place". Thus $c_2(-c_1)$ means "second couple move up to top place".

Z is "hullo and goodbye" as in General Stuart's reel.

K is "set to corners" as in The new-rigged ship, 37-40.

V_1 is cross over and cast off one [called "cross over one couple" in old books]

V_2 is V_1 , cross back, and cast off one more [called "cross over two couples" in old books]

V_u is bars 1-8 of The Montgomeries' rant.

Unless otherwise stated, the first couple do d, e, o, u, D, V_1 , V_2 , V_u ; the first two couples do A, C, L or P; all dancing couples do s, t, B, M, N, U, X.

The sign = means "repeat". The sign \leftarrow means "counter-repeat", i.e. repeat interchanging either m and w, or r and \nearrow , or 1 and 2. If the context does not make it clear which is meant, the fuller versions $m \leftarrow w$ etc. are used. Unless otherwise stated, it is the immediately preceding phrase that is repeated or counter-repeated.

We fit the figures to the music by placing a full-stop after every eight-bar phrase. The phrase may be divided by a colon into two four-bar halves, each of which may again be divided into two-bar halves by a semi-colon. Commas are used only for punctuation.

We indicate a two-couple dance by a figure 2 after the title, a strathspey by an S, a dance in Circassian circle formation by a C, a dance in écossoise formation (in which the first man and woman start on each other's sides) by an E.

Finally, here are some examples.

Torryburn lasses, 2.

$c_1 n s w_2 : U_r.$

$m \leftarrow w.$

D.

P.

Jenny's bawbee, 2S.

$s; \frac{1}{2}L : =$

D.

A.

The Gates of Edinburgh.

$R_p.$

$R_w.$

$H_x s : m_{23} w_{23} t_b, c_1 l \frac{1}{2} t_b.$

$H_w s : t_r.$

The Duke of Perth.

$c_1 t_r ; o_1 : t_\gamma.$

T.

S.

R.

The Glasgow highlanders, 2S.

$(m_2 -w_2 -w_1 -m_2)$

L.

$w_1 m_2 w_2 n d, m_1 f : w_1 m_1 w_2 n e, m_2 f.$

s.

$4(w_1 m_1)(m_2 w_2).$

Paddy O'Rafferty, 2.

$N : \frac{1}{2}L.$

=.

D.

P.

Dundee Royal arch, E.

$m_1 w_2 s t_b : w.$

C.

$w_2 m_1 w_1 m_2 n D. (c_2 -c_1)$

$c_1 s : t_b.$

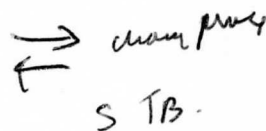
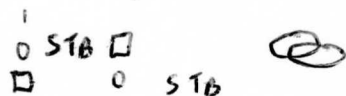
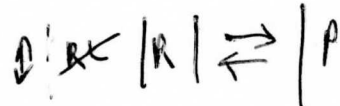
Rest and be thankful.

$V_u.$

$w_1 m_2 m_1 w_3 M(-p), k_2 N : c_1 l \frac{1}{2} t_\gamma.$

$w_1 m_3 m_1 w_2 M(-p), k_1 N : c_1 l \frac{1}{2} t_\gamma.$

$\frac{1}{2}4(w_3 w_1)(m_1 m_2) : \frac{1}{2}4(w_2 w_1)(m_1 m_3). (c_1 - c_2).$



[Occasionally a few words may have to be used for unusual figures. If new figures, like Hugh Foss's double figure of eight, become common, it may be worth while inventing new abbreviations].

NORTHERN JUNKET.

The square-dance magazine that is different. \$2.50 for 12 issues, from Ralph Page, 117 Washington St., Keene, N.H., U.S.A.

Each issue brings you interesting articles on all phases of dancing : squares, contras, folk-dance, folk-song, folk-lore. Traditional recipes, too for hungry dancers.

BROUN'S FOR AYE AND BROUN'S FOR ME.

B.D. Fraser (reprinted by permission
of The Crier).
(Last stanza slightly altered).

While everyone prances
Through erudite dances
With curious jigglely tunes,
I sit on a chair
In the depths of despair
And I murmur "Thank goodness for BROUN'S!"

Even Rory O'more
I consider a bore,
And The Nut puts me right in my shell.
For the Foursome, I find,
I've the wrong sort of mind
And for Dashing White Sergeant as well.

The Newly Rigged Ship -
Well, it gives me the pip,
And I give it a very wide berth.
I dance a Strathspey
Like a hippo at play
And an Eightsome like nothing on earth.

When La Tempête appears
I dissolve into tears
And I seek any port in the storm.
When they do River Cree
They can do without me,
And the same goes for Scottish Reform.

Though Dumbarton may Drum
I don't care - I won't come,
and I daren't visit Hamilton Hoose.
At the Haughs O' Cromdale
I turn ever so pale,
And I simply can't stomach La Russe.

When I tried The Long Chase
I fell flat on my face.
Speed the plough very quickly ploughed me.
Being no sort of fairy,
I scorn Light and Airy,
And Jonny can keep her Bawbee.

I simply can't do
That absurd Lady Sue
With its troublesome "set and turn right".
When Montgomerie rants
I get ants in my pants,
And Broun's is my only delight.

So my joy is complete
As I spring to my feet
When the band plays that gayest of tunes,
And at last the glad call
Echoes right round the hall,
"Will you please take your partners for Broun's".