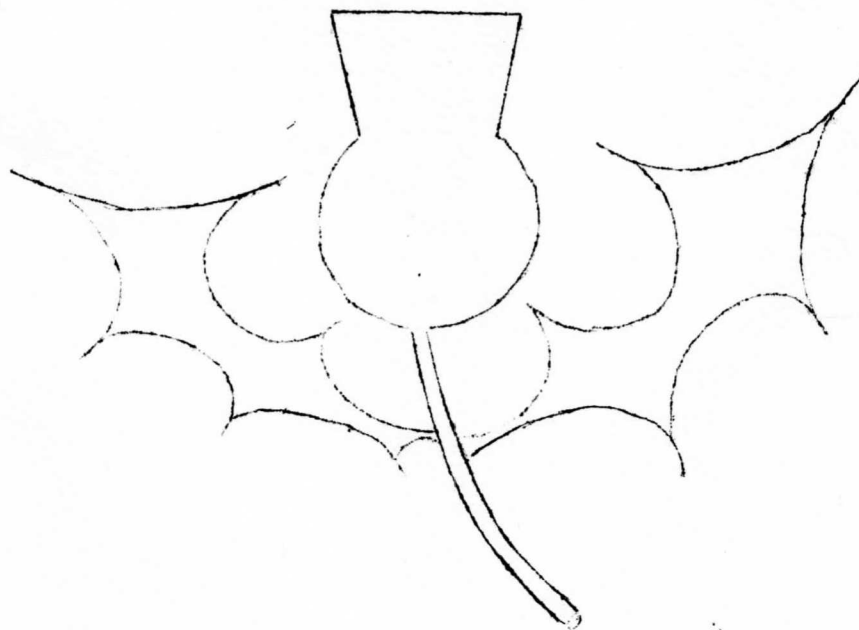


# THE THISTLE



Issued by the West Point Grey Scottish Country Dance Club of B.C.  
President : Dr. Norman MacKenzie, C.M.G., M.M. & Bar, Q.C., LL.D.  
Editorial address : 3515 Fraser, Vancouver 10, B.C. Canada.

## EDITORIAL.

Time passes, and the next issue will be our sixth and last for this year. We shall follow our usual practice of printing a report from each club that cares to send us one, and the "dead-line" will be March 30th. We shall probably remind secretaries of the various clubs with which we have most contact, but we here issue an open invitation to all. It is interesting to see what other people are doing, and it is gratifying to have one's own doings in print for other people to see.

## OUR DANCES, No. 23: Triumph.

Triumph is not danced as much now as it was twenty or thirty years ago. In fact, it was the second dance to be published by the Scottish Country Dance Society and was traditional through most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Scotland only two versions seem to have been common (more about this later), though more versions were known in England, where it appeared earlier (and died out earlier, but not too soon to be collected by Cecil Sharp and published in *The Country Dance Book* in 1909). It was also fairly well known in New England in the nineteenth century, to judge by the number of times it occurs in dance-books; (usually under the name "Lady's triumph", sometimes as "Katy's rambles"); but it is not among those dances which remain popular today.

The English version collected by Cecil Sharp is more symmetrical than ours. It starts with the Triumph figure (with the slight difference that the first man dances down the outside instead of following the others down the middle) but then, as if to make things fair, follows up with a second Triumph figure, this time with the second woman instead of the first. The dance ends in standard fashion with a down-the-middle-and-up and poussette. Earlier versions also had this symmetrical form, but were often longer; quite often they opened with a figure like hands-across before the Triumph.

The New England version given by Rickey Holden in *The Contra Dance Book* can be regarded as the same as Cecil Sharp's, for it starts in the same way, and differs only in having the standard New England ending of down-the-middle-and-up-and-cast-off and right-and-left. However, the American style seems to have been very different to judge by the following explanation. "Lady 1 join hands with gent 2 and they start down the centre. As soon as gent 1 wakes up to this horrible theft of his property, he rushes over to catch up with the fleeing pair... It is suggested that the arch behind the lady be over her head or at least about her shoulders, instead of aiding her at seat level". Another New England version (in Washburn's *Ballroom Manual*, published in Maine in 1862) was in one minor detail like the Scottish: the odd man out followed the other two down the middle, not down the outside.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the Scottish version and the others is in the final figure - poussette to the bottom. (This is an uncommon but by no means unknown arrangement; the best known dance of this kind is Strip the willow). It seems to have been a rare version - not only do all the nineteenth century Scottish dance-manuals give the version with the ordinary poussette but the S.C.D.S. themselves originally published that

version. The story goes that an old highland teacher of dancing, hearing of the version with the ordinary poussette (and therefore with the first couple repeating the dance several times before getting to the bottom) exclaimed "Na, na, that's no correct. Ye just do it once. Ye canna go on being triumphant". The logic of this was so obvious that this version was adopted in later editions of book 1.

A similar dance, in which the woman is fetched to the top by two men but without the triumphal arch is known in both England and New England as "Step and fetch her," and in Schleswig-Holstein as "Dreigespann". The "Dreigespann", rather interestingly, is like the Scottish in structure: it has only one triumph figure, and is of "First couple finish at the bottom" type.

#### LOCAL NEWS AND COMING EVENTS.

The University followed their excellent custom of celebrating Burns' night on the 25th itself, and of following the dinner and speeches by dancing until midnight. Halfway through the evening a team from our group danced "Rob Roy" (one of Hugh Foss's) as an exhibition and - in spite of suggesting that the others would surely rather dance themselves than see the team dance again - Schiehallion. During the general dancing, some of the team found themselves in The dashing white sergeant, Strip the willow, the Highland Schottische or the Gay Gordons for the first time for years - one tends to get so erudite in pure S.C.D. circles.

The Branch had a successful dance recently, and we hear that their demonstration team has started work. Numerous children's classes have started, some of which are going very well indeed.

A most enjoyable workshop for dancers from Kelowna, Armstrong, and Kamloops was organized in Kamloops by Alfred Orr, with Hugh and Nina Thurston teaching (there were enough this year to split into two classes).

We are looking forward to Mrs. Bingham's end-of-season dance on March 24 (details from her - MU4-4900) and to the Gleneagles ball, with the Teuchters, on March 6th.

#### EXTRACTS FROM LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS TO HIS SON.

19 xi 1745

Now that the Christmas breaking-up draws near, I have ordered Mr. Desnoyers to go to you, during that time, to teach you to dance. I desire you will particularly attend to the graceful motion of your arms; which, with the manner of putting on your hat, and giving your hand, is all that a gentleman need attend to. Dancing is in itself a very trifling, silly thing; but is one of those established follies to which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform; and then they should be able to do it well. And, though I would not have you a dancer, yet, when you do dance, I would have you dance well, as I would have you do everything you do, well.

It seems ridiculous to tell you, but it is most certainly true, that your dancing-master is at this time the man in all Europe of the greatest importance to you. You must dance well, in order to sit, stand, and walk well; and you must do all these well, in order to please.

18 iii 1751

The motion of the arms is the most material part of a man's air, especially in dancing; the feet are not near so material. If a man dances well from the waist upwards, wears his hat well, and moves his head properly, he dances well.

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It is interesting to compare these extracts with the following comment, made over 200 years later, (made, in fact, by Miss Milligan in a speech at St. Andrews recently).

"....And, remember, the one thing I will not have omitted - it doesn't matter who is in the class - I must have the social graces. I don't care about feet. Sorry - I don't worship feet. I could slay those people who say to me 'Miss Milligan, I don't like girls in long dresses: we can't see their feet'. You shouldn't be looking at their feet. You should be looking at what their feet made all this [indicating torso and head] do. This worship of feet worries me dreadfully".

#### HINTS ON BETTER DANCING.

This month's hint is for teachers. It is rather a trick and, like most tricks, should not be overdone. But if used with judgment and discretion, it can be a novel, stimulating, and effective device. It is this - perform the dance like a dotted line - dance the first two bars, rest two, dance the next two, rest two, and so on. (Thus it will take 64 bars of music to complete a 32-bar dance).

The situation in which this device is most effective is in a mixed group, with too many experienced dancers for one to feel justified in turning it into an elementary class, but too many beginners for the dancing to be successful if one doesn't; or when a demonstration team, having performed before an audience, is trying to tempt them to join in Scottish Reform or Waltz country dance, or some equally simple dance.

You can probably see the advantages for yourself. Imagine yourself teaching Petronella - you now have three times as long to help the unfortunate who has got lost in the diamond (the two bars rest after the turning, the two bars setting, and the two bars rest afterwards - a total of 6 bars). In fact, during the two-bar rests the D.Ps. will usually see for themselves where they should be. They can also see the shape of the pousette very clearly while they are stopped after each "move and turn". And think of the Glasgow Highlanders - or bars 31-32 there are always two couples in mutually distant parts of the room who get lost coming out of the reel - the rests give the teacher time to help both. And all this is achieved without the soul-destroying necessity of continually stopping and starting the music.

It will be found that, once a roomful of people have mastered a dance in "dotted line" style, they will have no trouble in eliminating the rests and straightway performing the dance as it should normally be done.

Some dances (Speed the plough is one) are more effectively taught as dance four bars, rest four, dance four, rest four and so on.

#### 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.

#### NEWS FROM SCOTLAND.

At the Royal Caledonian Ball last year well over two hundred officers danced in the set reels, the largest number yet. Every Scottish regiment except the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (who are in Malaysia) took part. Ten of the sets were sixteensomes (the rest, of course, being eightsomes) and the dancers were led onto the floor by the Duke of Atholl at the head of the Atholl Highlanders' sixteensome.

In the course of the ball, children from the Royal Caledonian Schools (for whose benefit the Ball, which first took place in 1849, is held) danced the Highland Fling, "The Shepherd's Crook", and "Flora Macdonald's Fancy".

#### LADY SUSAN. (Rondel)

When dancing Lady Susan Stewart's Reel  
I hear the sound of wind among the trees.  
Jack nods. I slip away when no-one sees  
And meet him where the shifting boughs reveal  
Pale gnomes and fairy folk, who with a peal  
Of knavish laughter vanish down the breeze.

When dancing Lady Susan Stewart's Reel  
I hear the sound of wind among the trees.

We frolic with the elves and then we steal  
Back home by different ways. Now, when we seize  
A chance to touch, Jack give my hand a squeeze -  
I wonder what the other people feel  
When dancing Lady Susan Stewart's Reel.

Hugh R. Foss.