

NEIL MACNEILL, 128 CRAIGSTON, ISLE OF BARRA.

(Aged 89).

Mr MacNeill knew several of the dances on our list of "lost and forgotten" dances. He is a piper, and used to play for them.

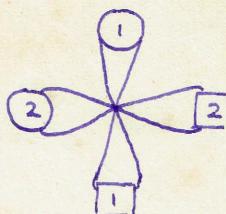
Ruidhleach nan coileach dubha. This is a reel for two couples which is danced to the well known tune of this name. To begin the dance the two couples face each other, the men on the left of their partners. The man and the lady of one couple both go down on one knee while the other couple set to them with "any reel steps" for 8 bars. Then the second couple kneel while the first couple rise to their feet and set for 8 bars. The second couple then rise and all four join hands in a ring and dance round to the left for 8 bars. This was repeated as often as the dancers pleased. [The two couples are, of course, respectively the "tinnraig" and the "coileach dubha" of the part-a-bent.]

The information about the dance was quite precise, but since Mr MacNeill could not dance the steps now, I could only show him various steps and ask him which were most like those used originally. There were no special steps for this dance, and as stated above, "any reel steps" could be used. I showed him 'P. de B', 'P. de. B. and balance', and 'kick out and to the side', and he said that all those were used. But he had never seen 'highcutting' used. The men used hand movements - opposite hand to foot - and the ladies had arms akimbo. All danced fairly gently, and there was no difference between the men's steps and the ladies' steps. When dancing round in a ring, they used something like step-change-of-step [definitely not the slip-step].

This dance was taught at a dancing-school held in Castlebay by an old man called "Ronald the Dancing-master". It was, however, danced at gatherings in houses all over the island. It has not been danced for about 60 years.

Cath nan coileach. This is a reel for two couples, danced to the tune of the same name. It is intended to represent the bickering of the cocks, and the way in which they circle round each other. To begin the dance, partners stand diagonally opposite each other, with crossed hands joined (see fig.). They remain in this formation for the whole of the dance.

The dance consists of two parts, the first played at very slightly less than



normal reel time, the second much faster.

First part: The four dancers dance round in a circle to the left, using a step something like skip-change-of-step, while the first part of the tune is played through twice. They then set on the spot (with hands still joined), using "any reel steps" for the same length of time.

Second part: The tune now quickens. The dancers dance round in a circle to the left, but using the pivot step, for the same length of music as before, and then set on the spot, using the 'backstep with a hop', again for the same length of music.

The whole dance can be repeated as often as desired. See the note above for further information about the steps.

This dance also was taught by "Ronald the Dancing-master", and has not been danced for about 60 years.

Coille Bharrach [The Barra Wood] A variant of the foursome reel for as many as will. Any number of dancers take hands and dance round in a ring, leaving one man in the centre. He chooses a lady from the ring, who goes into the centre with him and links her left arm in his right arm. He then chooses another lady, who links up on his left arm, and then another man, who links up with the two ladies. The centre four now release arms and dance a foursome reel while the ring dances round them. At the end of the reel, the four take their places in the ring, and another man jumps into the centre to repeat the dance.

White Cockade. This is danced by two couples, who join hands and dance round in a circle. The music starts slowly, and quickens until it is in normal reel time. The two couples then stop and set to the other couple on the spot. Then repeat as often as desired. The only feature in common with the usual version is that partners began by kissing.

Ruidhleach nam Banntraicheadh [The Widower's Dance] This is a version of the Pin Reel. Three men and two ladies take part. They join hands in a circle and dance round to the left. The pipes stops suddenly, when the men try to catch a partner. The odd man out is the "widower". The music then starts again, when all five dance round in a circle, and repeat the process. When — a man has been "widower" three times, he sits down and another man takes his place. Can also be done by any odd number of dancers.

Mr MacNeill knew no other dance on our list. He had never heard of the Hebridean dances before their reappearance ca 1920. He did not know a Gaelic name for the Scotch Reel.

I showed him also the "sosome" step to see if he had ever seen it. He told me that he had seen it performed using open intermediate instead of 2nd.

10. 4. 53

JOHN MACLEAN, THE GLEN, CASTLEBAY, ISLE OF BARRA

(Aged 89)

He had no knowledge of old dances. But in spite of having no English; he called the Foursome the "Scotch Reel".

NEIL MACDONALD, CASTLEBAY SCHOOL, ISLE OF BARRA.

10. 4. 53

His mother told him of the teacher in S. Uist who taught the "Hebridean" dances.

He knew the tune "Aberdonian Lassies" before Farquhar MacNeill's dance appeared. He had been told by an Aberdonian living in Inverness (a Mr Ellis) that "Aberdonian Lassies" was an East Coast dance. Note that the Barra men would often be in the East coast harbors on their fishing exhibition.

7. 4. 53

BARMAN, SCARINISH HOTEL, ISLE OF TIREE.

(Aged c30)

He had seen Damsadh na Tunnaig as a children's game in Harris. The children just got down on their hunkers with their hands clasped beneath their thighs, and just danced about like that.

RACHEL MACLEOD. TIGHNAMARA, CASTLEBAY, ISLE OF BARRA.

(Aged ca 70).

Miss MacLeod is a retired schoolteacher. She has very little recollections of dances herself, but her mother & grandmother told her of them.

Cailleach an Durdain. All she knew was that "the Cailleach fell dead", and this information she got from her grandmother.

Long Bharrach. She had heard of this, danced by some Barra fishermen at a N. Uist wedding 90 years ago. Probably only the men danced it, in their stockings. The daughter of one of the men, Annie Campbell, is still alive and lives in Vatersay.

Ruidheach nan coilleach dubha. She danced this as a childrens' game in her youth. Two boys and two girls took part, the boys playing the part of the cocks, and the girls that of the ducks. To begin the dance the couples stand facing each other. They then danced a continuous reel of four until they are exhausted. There was no setting. The boys danced with a normal travelling step, but the girls crouched on their hunkers, with hands held, palms together, to form the duck's beak, just in front of their mouths. They waddled & hopped around, the "beaks" wagging from side to side (see below).

Spairdeareachd Bharrach. Miss MacLeod learnt this from her mother, who last saw it "performed" about 1865 by an old piper, Donald MacKinnon. See letter on next page for further information.
The instructions are:

Sail an dara coise

Ann an bacan na coise eile.

[the heel of one foot in the instep of the other]. The actual walk is a marked swagger. Starting as shown in Fig. 2. below, bring the left foot to 3rd pos' as shown in Fig. 3. As you do so, bend the right knee and kick the



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.

left foot out to an open intermediate (low aerial) position, with full extension of the leg; and at the same time bring the right shoulder well forward.

Miss MacLeod also told us of a lady's dance which she saw danced by a little girl of 12, grand-daughter of an old piper, to a song beginning

Co ghoid an t-inneadh a Fiuray
Co chir no chard no shniamh e

[Who stole the wool from Fiuray, who teased or carded or spun it?] It was danced to a fiddle or part-a-bowl.

The dance was essentially a ladies' Scotch Reel, in which they dance a continuous reel, using a peculiar step. Miss MacLeod demonstrated this, and it appeared to be roughly as follows.

- Beat 1. With weight on L, put R in 1st pos"
2. With weight on L, put R in 5th pos", heel to L toe; and transfer weight to R
- 3,4 ~ of 1,2.
- 5 Step to 2nd pos" on R.
- 6 Close L to R in 1st pos"
- 7,8 Repeat 5,6.

[Could this be Fidh na gun?]

Miss MacLeod told us that in her youth people danced gracefully. There was no violent dancing, and no hooching or screeching.

She had never heard of the Hebridean Weaving Hilt, nor heard the tune, but had learnt the Swedish dance at training college 50 years ago! She had never heard of the "Hebridean" dances until their reappearance ca 1920.

With reference to the Weaving Hilt, she said that ca 1780 a Swedish ship was wrecked on N. Uist. The carpenter married a local girl and stayed on the island, while all the rest of the crew went back home. The carpenter's name was Salmine or Salmein.

She suggested also that we try Johnny Cameron [2nd last house to the point, but bedridden. Aged 77], and John MacNeil, [Flowan Cottage].

ANGUS JOHN MACLELLAN, HACKLETT, ISLE OF BENBECULA.

(Aged c.70)

Cailleach an Durdain. Mr MacLellan had seen this performed in his own home and elsewhere in Benbecula about 55 years ago, his own father often being one of the dancers. "It isn't a dance really, it is more a sort of a play". Two men take part, one being dressed as a cailleach, with a shawl round her head, and wearing a coat and skirt. The other man is supposed to be the cailleach's husband [not necessarily supposed to be old].

The cailleach is extremely fond of drink, and her husband often comes home from work and finds her missing - out in some bar, no doubt. The dance portrays such an occasion.

It opens with the husband standing waiting for his wife in his kitchen, with a stick in his hand. He dances three or four times round the room, looking under the chairs and table, and peering closely at the people in the room, to make sure that she isn't there.[†] The cailleach now enters, leaning on a stick, and "shaking all over with fear and the effects of drink." She ~~shuffles~~[#] into the centre of the room, and her enraged husband dances round her, belabouring her with his stick. She makes no attempt to defend herself, but just stands, trembling. He then kicks her on the bottom, and she falls down on the floor. She is now a piteous sight, lying on the floor, with her head slightly raised, with her knees drawn up, gripping her stick in both hands[#], moaning, and quivering all over. As she is lying there, her husband dances round her, kicking her occasionally, and brandishing his stick at her.[#] Finally, she staggers to her feet, and the dance concludes with the husband kicking her from the room..

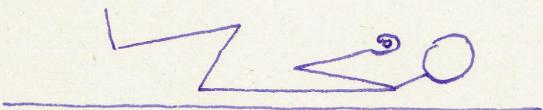


Fig. 1.

It was danced at any time when friends were gathered together, either in the kitchens of the houses, or at dances in the schoolhouse. It was always danced

[†] As he goes round the room here, he leans well forward so that he can see under the chairs, etc. The stick is just held normally in his hand. There is no particular direction of circling, either here or elsewhere in the dance.

[#] The cailleach has no "steps".

[#] She grips her stick with palms upward.

[#] He does not hit her with the stick while she is lying on the floor. His other arm hangs freely.

to the pipes, the tune being that noted by Alexander Carmichael for the Gestos Collection. Mr MacLellan had never heard a song of this name.

There were no elaborate steps. "It was not a step dance". The step used by the husband while dancing round the cailleach is as follows.

Bar 1. Count "and ONE" Full step forward on R
"and" Small step of about 3" forward on L
"TWO." A similar step forward on R.

Bar 2 Repeat the "and Two" of Bar 1 twice.

Bars 3,4. or of Bars 1,2.

Note that the R foot stays in front of the L foot during the whole of the first two bars, then the L foot stays in front of the R foot during the next two bars, and so on. The dancer leans slightly forward, and the knees are slightly bent.

Time: 60 bars per minute.

The whole performance lasted 15-20 minutes.

Dannsadh na Tunnaig. The dancers danced round in a circle, on their hunchers, with hands clasped under their thighs.

Tri Croidhan Caorach (Three Sheep's Trotters). This "dance" is for men only. It was performed at dances and parties, to the music of the pipes, the last occasion on which Mr MacLellan saw it done being about 55 years ago. It is danced by three men in a line. The two outer men stand still, facing inwards, each holding his right elbow with his left hand, and holding his right hand against his left cheek, palm outwards. The centre man faces one of the outer men, and dances about in front of him, keeping time to the music, but not necessarily using proper steps. While dancing about, he smacks⁺ this outer man's right hand, while the outer man tries to catch the centre man's hand as he does so. The outer man is only allowed to clutch at the centre man's hand just as his own hand is being smacked - he must not remove the back of his hand from his cheek, nor use his left hand - so that the centre man has a very good chance of getting away uncaught. If he succeeds in smacking this outer man, he turns to the other and tries him. If he is caught, he exchanges places with that outer man, who now dances in the centre.

The dance usually lasted about 10 minutes.

⁺ lightly! It does not pay to hit hard; You might not always be in the centre.

White Cockade [The following description was actually noted from Mrs (Penny) MacLellan.]

This was usually the last dance of the evening, and was always danced to the pipes. A young man, usually the M.C., takes his handkerchief in his hand, and walks clockwise round the room to the tune "The White Cockade". He throws the handkerchief to the girl he selects, who joins him on the floor. As she does so, the piper breaks off the tune, and plays the phrase "pòg an toiseach" [kiss first] several times. At this the young man puts his arm round his partner and

pòg an toiseach

daaa da da dee

C B C low A.

kisses her. The piper then resumes "The White Cockade", when the couple link arms and walk on round the room. The girl then throws the handkerchief to another man, who falls in behind the first couple, and all three walk on round the floor. This second man throws the handkerchief to another girl, who joins him, is kissed to the accompaniment "pòg an toiseach", and the new couple then fall in behind the first couple. This is repeated until all the couples are on the floor, or ^{until} the supply of men or girls runs out. The piper then changes to a reel, when the dancers split up into fours and dance a Foursome Reel. [There was no particular tune played for this reel.]

Often the girls were shy, and when the handkerchief was thrown at one, she would quickly pass it on to a neighbour.

Mr MacLellan had seen the first man twist the handkerchief into a rope, lay it on the floor and dance a few steps round it before walking round with it. We asked him if the steps were like those of Gillie Callum, and he said they were, "the very same". But this was about 55 years ago⁺

Scotch Reel. The men's steps were not the same as the ladies. The men used hand movements, but the ladies didn't. The men (only) hooched.

Reel steps in use were (i) Pas de Basque

(ii) Pas de Basque and backstep with a hop.

(iii) Plain balance.

(iv) An "open" step as follows.

Bar 1. Count "one". Spring, landing on both feet, with R well across in front of L [see Fig 2]

⁺ Mrs MacLellan was younger than her husband.

Count "two". ~ of "one".
 Bar 2. Count "one" As "one" of bar 1.
 "and"
 "two" Spring, to land on both feet, with feet apart (Fig. 3).
 As "one" of bar 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.

Mr MacLellan had never seen 'high-cutting' or 'Pas de Basque and Balance' in his young days.

Neither he nor his wife had heard the tune "The Thistle of August", nor had they heard of the Weaving hilt, nor heard the tune. They knew no others on our list of tunes.

Mr MacLellan's father had been taught by Ewen MacEachlan of Eochair, and danced Highland Laddie "just like John MacLeod does at present."

17

Gregory
Barberula
10th Aug. 1953.

Dear Tom,

Just a few lines
to let you know how
sorry I am for not writing
sooner, but anyway I know
you will be satisfied
with "Canticles on Dorian"
and this is the exact
version which Angus John
played for me recently.
Will Tom anything else
you want? Please in the
line of "Hildegard Music".

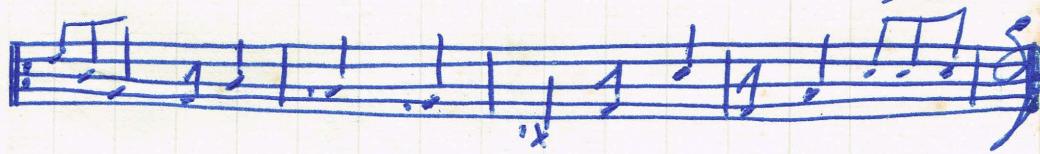
as I should say, I wish they
to be - of the best
help I can. Now Tom, there
is one thing I would very
much like to have, if
you could give me and
send me an "Old Fiddler's
Music Book" containing mostly
such - as Hornpipes, Reels,
Schottisches, Polkas, Waltzes and
Figs. I cannot, however, get this
book myself but seeing
you did send me an
the last book I would
like you very much to
send me an old
"Fiddler's Music Book" Enclosed
will be and appreciate for same.

Please let me know also
if you think that
this is the exact version
of Angus John's. It may
be less than you see.

Yours sincerely
J. B. MacCullum.



R.F.O.



SCALAR 11.) - 3. SHARPS (E.C.F)

E Play with G NATURAL instead
of G#.

MRS MONK, ½ EDWARDS, NO 2, CREAGOURRY, BENBECULA

(Aged 70)

Cailleach an Durdan. Mrs Monk saw this when she was about twelve. It was danced by a man and a woman. Both had sticks, and they beat each other. But everything else was vague. She did know the first verse of the song sent to us by Angus Matheson [p. 46].

She was not able to dance, but showed us a step by moving her feet while sitting down, which she thought was that used in this dance.

- Beat 1. Weight on L foot, put R toe down beside L heel.
- 2. Weight on L foot, put R toe down beside L toe
- 3 Step to 2nd pos" on R.
and Close L to R, feet side by side
- 4 Beat with L in this pos".
- 5-8 \approx of '1, 2, 3, and'. No beat.

Ruidhleach na Corleach Dubha. Mrs Monk knew the Part-a-bowl. The tune was that sent to us by Miss Bassin [p. 59 156-7], and the words were the same save that the 3rd and 4th lines of Miss Bassin's Miss began

"Air a' Bruth-aich Againn Thinn"

instead of

"Air a Bruthaich Air a Bruthaich."

Scotch Reel. She told us that in the old days the Scotch Reel had no figure eight, and the dancers merely danced round in a circle. More precisely, the dancers began as shown below, and then followed each other round in a circle,

(1) - [2]

[1] - (2)

[hands not joined] in a clockwise direction until they regained their places.

Mrs Monk knew several tunes which could be those on our list, and these we noted with the aid of Ian MacLachlan of Creagorry. Mrs Monk learned all her songs from her grandmother, who used to sing them while sitting spinning.

She told us that the following was a dance tune. She thought it was a solo dance, "but Angus John Macellar would know it."

TRI CRIODHAN CAORACH.

The musical score consists of eight staves of music. The lyrics are written below each staff. The lyrics are:

- Tri criodhan da criodhan Tri criodhan caorach
- Tri criodhan da criodhan Tri criodhan caorach
- Tri criodhan da criodhan Tri criodhan caorach
- Tri criodhan da criodhan Criodhan caomachadh maoiladh
- Co theid a chuidheach team Co theid a dhannsadh
- Co theid a chuidheach team Co theid a dhannsadh
- Co theid a chuidheach team Co theid a dhannsadh
- Co theid a chuidheach team Ach criodhan is carr cam ann [#]

T This pair of notes might have been in each case.

The timing of the last 2 bars was a little uncertain.

Mrs. Monk thought that the following was "Cath nan Coileach". But the occurrence of the name MacAulay has a Benbecula flavour, not a Barra one.

CATH NAN COILEACH.

Ruidhleadh mo choileach air lär Ri coileach Mhae - Amhlaidh ⁺

Goirmeadh mo choileach air spar Grad bheirinn an ceann as

Sud a coileach a bha sporsal Leis a chota Thrangach

Sheatadh [#] a rith coileach eile Ann an seilear Mhae - Amhlaidh

The next song might be "Bualadh mi" etc., though the tune is different

A chaorainn a chaorainn Bualadh mi sa chlaigann thu

A chaorainn a chaorainn Cragadh mi sa cheann thu

Bheir mi faram or a cheann Mar a dian thu solas dhomh

Bheir mi faram or a cheann Mar a las thu lamha dhomh

⁺ MacAulay

[#] Stepping.

The following was sung while dandling the cat on its hind legs. Could it be Dannsa bhriogais?

Handwritten musical notation for a traditional Scottish song. The music is written in three staves of common time (indicated by a 'C') with a treble clef. The lyrics are in Goidelic (Irish-Gaelic) and are written below each staff. The first two staves share a common ending bracket. The third staff ends with a repeat sign and the instruction 'D.C.'.

Dannsadh bhriogainn { a' chait a' chait }
and ui-ge so Dannsadh bhriogain a' chait bhair

Dannsadh bhriogainn { a' chait a' chait }
and ui-ge so Bha thu roair an tigh a bhail.

Ha buill a' chait a' chait Ha buill a' chait bhair

Ha buill a' chait a' chait Dhith thu an radan air a spar

The last is a song about a ship called An dubh Ghleannach (The Black Glen)

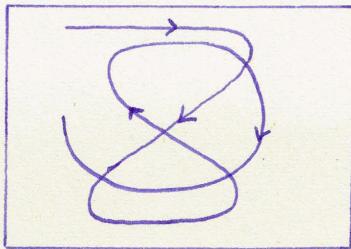
Handwritten musical notation for 'An dubh Ghleannach'. The music is written in three staves of common time (indicated by a 'C') with a treble clef. The lyrics are in Goidelic (Irish-Gaelic) and are written below each staff.

ANGUS MACMILLAN, GRIMINISH, ISLE OF BENBECULA

(Aged 79)

Cailleach an Durdair. Mr MacMillan had seen the dance but remembers nothing of it, except that it was danced to the pipes. He knew also a song, but has forgotten the words and can remember only the tune. This is the one noted by Alexander Carmichael.

Danssa na Tunnaig. He had seen this danced by adults, at a ball, to the pipes. As many as will danced it, down on their hunkers, and with their hands clasped beneath their thighs. It was a follow-my-leader dance, and the pattern followed was as shown below. He had never seen the kiloby step used.



White Cockade. He described the dance exactly as did Mrs Macmillan. We asked him if he had seen the M.C. put the handkerchief on the floor and dance round it. He said he had, when he was about 10 or 12. Only one handkerchief was put on the floor. We asked him what the steps were like, and in what direction the man danced round the handkerchief. He said "Just like Dansadh Claidheamh", and "Clockwise". He was "sure" on this last point.

Scotch Reel. When he was young, the men and the ladies used the same steps. The men (only) used their hands and the men hunched. He never saw the figure eight replaced by a circle.

He remembers a "Dansadh Chait", which consisted of "dandling the cat".

Died 17 May 1954

THE DEATH of Angus MacMillan, of Griminish, Benbecula, the most noted of our Gaelic story-tellers, marks the end of a tradition that lived on for centuries. He was about the last of a type that has gone from our midst, a type that is now quite irreplacable.

Modern education and ideas had little or no influence upon him. He lived to see the atomic age, but his world was peopled with heroes, giants, fairy princesses, and the sons of the Kings of Lochlann, the Land of Light and the Green Isle at the World's End.

He was the perfect example of the untaught and unlettered but highly cultured and refined mind. The heroes and heroines of his stories had set for him a fixed standard of conduct, and he really did live up to that high standard. There was nothing petty, nothing mean, nothing ignoble in him. He knew that the son of the King of Greece acted in such a manner in a certain situation, and in a similar situation Angus himself would do only what befitted a king's son.

The Open Door

All that was added to the virtues and grace that his Catholic faith had imparted to him. To his neighbours he was always the true and warm-hearted friend, ever ready to lend a helping hand in time of need or trouble. His door was always open, alike to friend or complete stranger. Nationality, creed, social status made no difference to him.

Eminent scholars in several European countries to-day are proud to have numbered Angus MacMillan among their friends. To folklorists, Angus was something more than a mere source of information; he was a phenomenon.

Undoubtedly, he was one of the most remarkable story-tellers in Western Europe and his feats of story-telling are unequalled in the history of folklore recording. His tales took not hours, but sometimes several nights, to narrate.

10,000 Pages

In the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission in Dublin, there are close on 10,000 ms. pages of tales recorded from the dictation of Angus MacMillan. The Irish Commission have presented a microfilm copy of the entire collection to the University of Edinburgh.

Professor Dag Strömbäck, Director of the Dialect and Folklore Archive at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, has said of him: "I have never in my life heard a story-teller like Angus MacMillan."

Slán agus beannachd leibh,
Aonghuis. Cha bhi bhur leithid
ann a ris. Requiescat in Pace.

C. M.

ARCHIE MACDOUGALL, LINCLETT, ISLE OF BENBECULA.

(Aged 85)

Cailleach an Durdain. He had seen this, but could not remember it.

Dannsa na Tunnaig. This was a follow-my-leader dance. A file of dancers, all down on their hunkers, with their hands clasped beneath their thighs, followed each other wherever the leader cared to lead. The dance was a test of endurance, and sometimes lasted half an hour. Old people as well as young danced it. They pushed each other to make them fall over, but if a dancer did fall over, they just rose and continued dancing; the only method of elimination was by lack of endurance.

It was danced at dances everywhere on the island to a special, fast tune (in reel time) played on the pipes.

Scotch Reel. The men and ladies used the same steps. Only the men used hand-movements, hunched, and knocked their fingers. He had never seen the figure eight replaced by a circle.

He had no knowledge of any of the other dances on our list.

12. 4. 53

CALLUM MACCORMACK, NUNTON, ISLE OF BENBECULA

(Aged 83)

Dannsa na Tunnaig. He had seen this danced by adults when he was 12 or 13, to the music of the pipes. He described it as a normal Scotch Reel, begun in the side-by-side position, save that the setting step consisted of dancing on the hunkers, all four of them, and shooting out a leg to the side.

We questioned whether he was sure of this, since he admitted that he wasn't very keen on dancing, but he said that he was quite sure.

He had no knowledge of any of the other dances on our list.

Cailleach an Durdain. She saw a dance called Cailleach an Durdain, and danced to the correct tune, played on the pipes [by Angus John MacLellan's brother], at a ceilidh in Oban ca 24 years ago. It was danced by an oldish man named Higgins.

He started at the top of the hall, and danced right down the hall. He held a stick in both hands across in front of him, and jumped over it, and brought it back over his head. She thought he held it occasionally at head level, and brandished it. The steps were 'tap' in style.

DONALD MACFACHEN, AIRDVEG, ISLE OF BENBECULA.

13. 4. 53.

Danasa bho balla ghu bhalla (Dance from wall to wall). This was a solo dance which he had heard of. It was danced in Benbecula about 60 years ago. The dancer danced in his stockings feet, and always wore stockings with white feet to them.

Danasa cota ruadh. (Dance of the red skirt). He saw this danced[†] by Angus MacKinnon (Danny), Rubain, Eriskay, now aged about 56. The dancer was brought up in Barra, and was said to have seen it there. The dancer wore an ankle-length skirt, pulled in tightly at the waist. It was a step dance, not "tap", the first step being rather like Shean triubhas. Mr MacEachen thought it contained the "Over the Water" step followed by a walking step. There was a special tune and part-a-beat for it.

[†] About 10 years ago.

JOHN MACLEOD, late of EOCHAR, ISLE OF S. UIST

(Aged 46)

At present Mr MacLeod is Assistant Manager of the Great Eastern Hotel, Duke St., Glasgow. (Tel. No. Bell 1904).

The Hebridean Dances. Mr MacLeod knows five of these dances, namely Tullochgorm, Highland Laddie, Over the Water to Charlie, The First of August, and Blue Bonnets. He was taught them by the late Archie MacPherson, also of Eochar. The latter learnt them from Ewen MacLachlan - known as Ewen-of-the-short-arms on account of having deformed arms.

This Ewen MacLachlan was sent by his parents to study for the priesthood at the Scots College at Douai in France. Owing to his short arms, however, he was unable to carry out certain of the duties in taking Mass, and so was not ordained. He returned to Scotland, and after some time on the mainland, he eventually settled at Eochar in S. Uist, where he earned a living by assisting the priest and teaching dancing.

Archie Macpherson was not actually a pupil of Ewen MacLachlan's, for he was only 11 years old when Ewen MacLachlan held his last classes, and so was too young to be a member of the class.[†] He did, however, ~~and~~ watched the older pupils practising their steps, and then went away and practised them. When the end of the session came, Ewen MacLachlan gave a "dancing-master's ball", where the best pupils showed off their paces, and, having guessed what the youngster was doing, insisted on Archie Macpherson performing one or two of the dances.

The dances were revived about 1925, and a special competition was arranged in S. Uist for teachers capable of performing these dances. There were two competitors, Archie Macpherson, and a Donald MacDonald, the former being adjudged the winner.[#] Mr MacLeod said that this MacDonald was a "comedian" who had concocted these dances from fragments.[†]

These dances were noted by D. G. MacLennan from Archie MacPherson, but Mr

[†] Mrs Buchanan, aged about 80, of Liniclett, Benbecula, told us that young men ~~and~~ women attended Ewen MacLachlan's classes. Her father and mother were in service in the priest's house in Eochar at that time, and both attended the classes.

[#] D. G. MacLennan was one of the judges. In the course of a telephone conversation, he told us that Donald MacDonald admitted to him that his versions were not authentic.

^{††} Miss Cissie MacDonald, of Arisaig, formerly a well known Highland dancer, was taught some of these dances by Donald MacDonald. She told us they were very different from those danced by John MacLeod in some of them, the dances danced successive halves of each step facing in opposite directions. A.19

Macleod says that the dances described in D.G. MacLennan's book are quite different from those he was taught by Archie MacPherson.

At the request of the priest in Barra, John Macleod taught these dances to some girls in Barra. He claims that Farquhar MacNeill, who demonstrated these dances at the E.T.D.S.S. Festival at the Albert Hall in 1935, learnt them from his pupils. Farquhar MacNeill himself claims to have learnt them from his grandfather.[†]

The five dances known to John Macleod were usually danced to the pipes, though occasionally to the fiddle or accordion. He had never heard them given Gaelic names, nor was punt-a-ben ever sung to them so far as he knew. All but the "First of August" were danced to the tune having the same name as the dance, and the First of August was danced to "The White Cockade". He had never heard the tune "The Glorious First of August" before, nor did he know which "First of August" was referred to in the title of the dance.

Archie MacPherson also knew "The Flaneers of Edinburgh", and would have taught him this, but John Macleod was not keen on learning it as he found it too difficult. It contained a double treble, done simultaneously with both feet, and a step in which the dancer drops on one knee. But this is all he knows of it. He said that D.G. MacLennan should have it. Also Gilleann ar eilidh, the lads wi' the kilt.

He had never heard of "Over the Hills and Far Away", nor "Jacky Tar", had been MacDonald's "concoction" Misi Forbes, and heard of Farquhar MacNeill dancing Aberdonian Lasses, but didn't know where it came from.

Apart from the obvious reels, John Macleod knew nothing of any "set" dances in the Isles. He had never heard of the Hebridean Wedding Lilt till he saw it danced recently by the R.S.C.D.S. Nor had he heard the tune before.

He had danced Danssa na Tunnaig. It is a children's dance, often a solo done at home, in which the child gets down on its hunkers, with its hands clasped under its thighs, and dances round in a circle.

[†] In support of John Macleod, it should be mentioned that Farquhar MacNeill knows only the same five steps of Over the Water as does John Macleod. Yet Archie MacPherson told John Macleod that the dance had ten steps originally, but that he could only remember these five. Further, Mrs Mackinnon, Dunard Hotel, Castlebay, told us that her daughter, who was John Macleod's star pupil, used to practice with Farquhar MacNeill in her kitchen — before the latter went to London.

The White Cockade. This was the last dance⁺ of the evening - usually about 3% in the morning. One man went behind the door and put his back to it. Then another man, "somebody prominent, often the M.C. [some-one with a bit of brass, a devil-may-care]", took his handkerchief, and walked down the hall, and gave it to a girl. She rose, linked arms with him, and they walked together round the hall. Then she gave the handkerchief to another man, who came and linked arms with them, and so on, until all were on the floor. The girls were often shy and tried to avoid the handkerchief or "to pass it on to their neighbours. Some had it thrown to them. Old men would often give it to a small girl. When all were on the floor, they divided as in a Grand March, and danced a Strathspey and Reel of Tulloch. While they were setting themselves into focus, the piper would play the phrase "pog-an-toiseach" several times. The bolder spirits then kissed their partners, and all began the reel.

He said that this is still done, mainly to find out who are going ~~home~~ together, because in the Isles people are very "close" about that sort of thing - much more so than in the towns on the mainland.

PETER MACKAY, KILAULAY, ISLE OF S. UIST.

(Aged 80)

Mr Mackay knew two of Ewen MacEachlan's pupils, namely Archie MacPherson and John MacMillan, both of whom taught dancing in Easdale. He himself was a pupil of John MacMillan. He had seen them both dance the Hebridean dances, namely Over the Water to Charie, Tullochgorum, Highland Laddie, The Frist of August, Blue Bonnets, Oree the Hills and Far Away, Miss Forbes, Jacky Tar, and Bonnie Anne. He thought the last was "a country dance." He had never seen "set dances".

He remembers some of the "Highland Fling" steps taught by John MacMillan, which he learnt about 1890.

- (1) First step of the Fling, normal style, with full extension to side.
- (2) Beats 1. Hop on L, place R heel down in intermediate position though with leg not fully extended
 - 2. Hop on L, and place R toe down in the same place.
 - 3. As 1.
 - 4. Hop on L, and place R in 5th normal aerial (front).
 - 5-8. \sim of 1-4
 - 9-12. As 1-4.
 - 13-16. Double shuffles.
 - 17-32. \sim of 1-16.
- (3) Beats 1-4. As in first step of the Fling.
 - 5-8. As 1-4 of (2)
 - 9-32. \sim , repeat, and \sim of 1-8.
- (4) Beats 1. Spring to land with feet apart, weight equally on both feet.
 - 2. Spring to land with R in 5th (front).
 - 3. As 1.
 - 4. \sim of 2.
 - 5-8 As 1-4 of (2).
 - 9-32 \sim , repeat, and \sim of 1-8.

When he was young, the young girls danced the same steps as the men in the Scotch Reels, but John MacMillan also taught some quieter steps for the older women. He demonstrated these, whistling "Green grows the rashes o'." They were as follows.

- (1) Beat 1. Place R in 5th rear pos"
 2 Small step to 2nd pos" on L
 3 Close R to 5th rear pos"
 4 Hop on R. No particular pos" for left.

This is, of course, the "Single Cenn-coisiche" of Peacock.

- (2) Beat 1. Step forward on R
 2. Hop on R and bring L to 5th rear normal aerial
 3. Step back on L.
 4. Close R to L in 1st
- (3) Beat 1. Step forward on R
 2. Hop on R and bring L to 5th rear normal aerial
 3. Step back on L
 4. Hop on L and bring R to 5th (front) normal aerial
 5. Step on R to left, crossing R leg over L leg.
 6. Step on L to 2nd pos"
 7. Close R to 5th front pos"
 8. As 2.
- (4) Beat 1. Place R in 5th front pos"
 2 Step on L to 2nd
 3 As 1.
 4 Hop on R and bring L to low 3rd front aerial.

Mr Mackay was sent a copy of Anderson's book about the year 1900 by a friend working in Cupar; and taught some of the dances from it to the islanders. In particular, "Patticat or Barn Dance" (?), and "The Royal Visit". He remembered this latter quite clearly, and gave us the figures without hesitation.

The Royal Visit. Longways country dance formation. Tune: Bonnie Dundee.

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Top couple set | 4 bars |
| Turn partner | 4 bars |
| Set with opposite partner (M ₁ with L ₂ , M ₂ with L ₁) | 4 bars |
| Half ladies chain | 4 bars |
| Turn partner. | 4 bars |
| Top couple down centre | 4 bars |
| Top couple pousette | 4 bars (8 bars?) |

The dancing couple walked down the centre. For the pousette they used waltz hold, the step being a 'chassé' with a hop up in front.

His setting step - in Strathspey time - was as follows.

- Beat 1. Step to 2nd on L
- 2. Close R to L
- 3 As 1.
- 4 Kick R across L to 2nd.

They also danced Glasgow Highlanders - probably also taken from Anderson's book.

RONALD MACDONALD, ARDNAMONIE, ISLE OF S. UIST.

13. 4. 53

(Aged c.70)

He was another pupil of Archie MacPherson's. He cannot remember any of the dances now, but knew their names; at least, he knew the five still known by John MacLeod, and also knew Miss Forbes, Jacky Tar, and Gillean ar eilidh.

He thought Ewen MacLachlan came from Greenock.

DONALD MACPHEE, NUNTON FARM, ISLE OF BENBECULA.

13. 4. 53.

(Aged c.70)

An expert Highland dancer in his youth, but knows nothing else. His father was a pupil of Ewen MacLachlan's. He said that his father told him that the Hebridean dances were French, and that his father got this from Ewen MacLachlan himself. But D.G. MacLennan's theory of their French origin is now so well known in the island that I hesitate to accept this information.

RODERICK MACPHERSON, LINICLETT, ISLE OF BENBECULA.

(Aged 73).

Mr MacPherson's father was taught dancing by John MacMillan, and was able to dance a number of the Hebridean dances, namely *Over the Water*, *The First of August*, *Highland Laddie*, *Tacky Tar*, *Moss Tarnes*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Gillean ar eilidh*, but not *Tullochgoon*, *Blue Bonnets*, & *Over the Hills*. Mr MacPherson had, however, heard of these last three. He had never heard of *Bonnie Anne* nor *Aberdonian Lassies*. The dances were always done to the pipes.

He was himself able to dance *Highland Laddie*, but could not do it now. He showed me Jack McConachie's 7th step exactly as recorded by Jack, saying that it was sometimes used as a reel setting step. He also confirmed that the *Over the Water* step was as done by John Macleod (brush, tap, etc) & not as done by Farquhar MacNeill (point, tap, etc).

He remembered the first step of *Gillean ar eilidh*: [It had 8 or 10 steps].

- Beat 1. Hop on L and shake R out twice in 4th aerial pos"
2. \sim of 1.
 3. As 1.
 4. Spring, landing on both feet with L leg across in front of R legs and then \sim .
- 5-8 Repeat 1-4.

This was danced clockwise round in a circle.

Scotch Reel. The men used Highland Fling steps, and the ladies danced quietly. The men used their hands, & the ladies had their arms akimbo. Only the men hunched. He had never seen the figure 8 replaced by a circle. In his youth, suitable reel steps were P.d.B P.d.B + balance, P.d.B + backstep with a hop, and Plain balance. He had seen his father do Angus John MacLellan's "open step", but said that it was a step from *Tacky Tar*. Some of the steps from *Highland Laddie* could also be used, in particular, the one which he demonstrated.

(d. twisted)
Had also seen Swords over Thimbles.

CALLUM MACPHERSON, & MRS SMITH, EOCHAR, ISLE OF S. UIST.

(Aged c 65-70)

Both are children of Archie MacPherson, but both had been away from home for most of their lives.

They had both heard of The First of August, O'er the Water, Highland Laddie, Blue Bonnets, Tullochgorum, Tacky Tar, & Gillean ar eilidh. Callum MacPherson used to dance this last one himself. He thought he had heard of Bonnie Anne, danced at the Uist and Barra Association in Glasgow about 20 years ago. It was danced by 4 people, and they turned each other round. Mrs Smith had heard of Miss Forbes and O'er the Hills. Neither had heard of Flowers of Edinburgh, or Aberdonian Lassies.

Callum MacPherson said that his father used to dance round the room with a "lugh (knee) step", something like "chassé and spring down on one knee".

White Cockade. Callum MacPherson described exactly the same version as did Mrs MacLellan [p.8], without swords, of course, but in couples, and with pàgan-toisead after each lady came on the floor.

HUGH MACKINNON, CLIADALE, ISLE OF EIGG.

(Aged 59.)

An Dannsa Mòr: This dance originally belonged to Skye, and came to Eigg via the neighbouring island of Rhum. Some Eigg men who were working in Rhum learnt the dance there from some men from the Strathaird district of Skye, and brought it back with them when they returned to Eigg. A son^t of one of these men, and the nephew[#] of another are still living, both aged about 80, so we may say that the dance reached Eigg about 80-100 years ago. It is still performed at concerts on the island, the two principal parts being taken by Hugh Mackinnon and Donald Archie MacLeod, the gamekeeper.

The dance as now performed was described to us by Hugh Mackinnon as follows. It is danced by men only, as many as please taking part, to verses sung by two of the men, with a chorus at the end of each verse sung by all of the dancers.

The dancers join hands to form a ring, all facing inwards, the hands being held just below shoulder height, with arms straight^{††}. The two men who sing the verses, whom we shall call X and Y, start in diametrically opposite places in the ring. The first man, X, sings the first line of the verse, and, as he does so, both he and Y come inside the ring. The second man, Y, immediately follows with the second line of the verse, then X sings the third line, and so on. As they sing, X and Y walk about inside the ring, looking at each other the whole time. While X and Y are singing the verse, the other men continue to stand in the ring with hands joined, but leaving gaps for the two men X and Y. On the first line of the chorus, which is sung by all of the dancers, X and Y fall quickly into their places in the ring, joining hands as at the start, and the whole ring dances round to the left, moving slowly for the first half of the chorus, and then quickly until the chorus is finished. The two men, X and Y, then come into the centre and sing the next verse, and so on. During the chorus, the dancers hop round on the left foot, keeping their right legs extended towards the centre of the ring, with legs straight, & the feet about 18" from the floor. They make 4 hops to a line of the chorus.

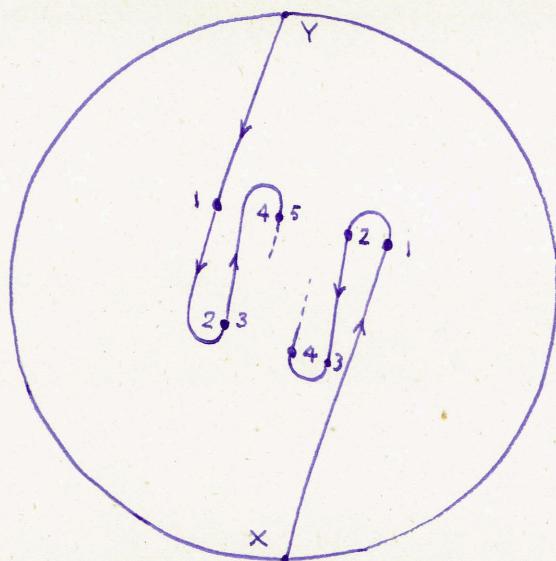
We were told by Hugh Mackinnon that no definite movements are prescribed for the dancers X and Y while they are singing the verses, and each dancer gives

^t Neil MacDonald, son of Angus MacDonald.

[#] Lachlan Campbell, nephew of Duncan Campbell. Hugh Mackinnon remembers Duncan Campbell, who was old when he was a boy.

^{††} Hugh Mackinnon himself joined hands by hooking his fingers in those of his neighbours, but this probably varies from dancer to dancer.

his own interpretation of the part; but the movements should not be rough or abrupt. He and his wife demonstrated the movements, as done at present, and the following description applies only to this; there have been wide variations from this in the past.



The positions of X and Y at the ends of successive lines of the verse are shown in the figure above. During the first line (sung by X), X and Y come inside the ring, moving obliquely to the right. X comes at least half way across the ring, and Y not so far. As Y sings the second line, he walks past X, and both turn counter-clockwise to keep more or less facing each other. As X sings the third line, he walks past Y, who remains stationary, watching X. X looks over his shoulder at Y as he passes him. As Y sings the fourth line; he walks away from X, and both turn clockwise to face each other; and so on. As X sings a line, he walks without turning, and Y remains more or less stationary, watching X, who looks over his shoulder at Y as he passes him. As Y sings a line, he walks away from X, and both turn to face each other.

The "walk" here is a light jaunty walk on the ball of the foot, arms swinging & elbows well bent, with a half flitting, half arrogant inclination of the head as they watch each other.

At the beginning of the chorus, the two men make a very quick whole turn to their right and spring into their positions in the ring, landing on the left foot and raising the right leg, ready to hop round as already described. Hugh Mackinnon himself used a very rough Pas de Basque (begun with the right foot) for this whole turn.

The only variation from this occurs in the verse beginning "Uhh ni uhh ni uhh". Here X portrays the Miller's daughter, and comes into the ring with hands covering

his eyes, and body bowed down, as if sobbing^t. He sings his first four lines in this way, but on this fifth (i.e. the ninth line of the verse), he springs defiantly erect, swinging his right arm up as if warding off the other man with his forearm. During the whole of this verse, Y walks about quietly, with no swagger, singing his own lines, & watching X. The track of the two dancers is much as before.

There is one other slight gesture which Hugh MacKinnon made quite unconsciously. On the line "Le sadach na muile" of the last ~~the~~ verse, he made a gesture as if he was throwing up two handfuls of dust to cover himself: "I can even dance covered with the dust of the mill."

Hugh MacKinnon also told us that two dancers whom he had seen take the principal parts used to make the dance much more like a war dance. They breezed across the circle, and almost shouted the words at each other. He was quite sure that this was not the correct way. It was probably a performance of this type which gave the dance the name of the "Eigg War Dance".

The verses which follow are partly from a Ms. version taken down from Duncan MacLellan, of Clàdale, ca 1932, by the late Donald Mackay, and partly from the traditional version sung by Hugh MacKinnon and his wife. We are indebted to Miss K. Mackay, sister of Donald Mackay, for permission to use this MSS.

^t He also shakes his head from side to side while "sobbing"

An Dannsa Mór

Fonn

Si übh uidil uidil uidil
 Hal-dar-al uidil-an
 Si übh uidil uidil uidil
 Hal-dar-uidil übh-an.
 Si übh uidil uidil uidil
 Hal-dar-al uidil-an
 Si übh uidil uidil uidil
 Hal-dar-^{al}-uidil übh-an. +

Rann

Übh uidil à thurabha
 Übh à uidil-an
 Übh uidil à thurabha
 Hal-dar-^{al}-uidil übh-an

Tha òr aig Coinneach a' Rudha,
 'S gun òr aig a h-uile fear;
 Tha òr aig Coinneach a' Rudha,
 'S aig fear Rudha 'n Dùnain.
 Übh uidil à thurabha
 Übh à uidil-an
 Übh uidil à thurabha
 Hal-dar-^{al}-uidil übh-an.

Pòg do nighean a' Ghobha
 'S gun phòg dha'n a h-uile té,
 Pòg do nighean a' Ghobha
 'S do ogha Mhic Lùcais
 Übh uidil à thurabha
 Übh à uidil-an
 Übh uidil à thurabha
 Hal-dar-^{al}-uidil übh-an.

+ These lines were not in D.M's MSS. They were noted from Mrs Hugh Mackinnon. D.M marked the next 4 lines as the chorus, and his verses consisted of the first four lines of each of the verses above. I have rearranged these to make the description simpler. Hugh Mackinnon referred to lines 9-12 above as the "chorus"

Bidh poll air osan nan toll,
'S tric air feadh nan nighean e;
Bidh poll air osan nan toll,
'S bidh e feadh na dùthecha.
Ùbh uidil à thurabò à
Ùbh à uidil-an,
Ùbh uidil à thurabò à
Hal-dar-^{al}~~uidil~~ ùbh-an.

Ciamar a ruitheas mi'n nighean,
'S dòthis a's a' rathad orm?
Ciamar a ruitheas mi'n nighean,
'S ceannadh^t air an urlar?
Ùbh uidil à thurabò à
Ùbh à uidil-an,
Ùbh uidil à thurabò à
Hal-dar-^{#al}~~uidil~~ ùbh-an.

^t D.M. had "ceathrar" here. Hugh Mackinnon said it should be "ceannadh": a crowd of big fellows. [Angus Matheson says ceathrar is correct]

[#] D.M. had "Tal" here & elsewhere instead of Hal.

Fonn

Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir Òig
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir Òig
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir Òig
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir Òig
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir

Rann

Ubh is ubh is ubh,⁺
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Ubh is ubh is ubh,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Gu dé lochda rinn mi?
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir,
Gru'n d'laigh mi le saighdear,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Nach iomadh té rinn e?
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir.

Mo ghaol a' Ministeir Buidhe,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Mo ghaol a' Ministeir Buidhe,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Cuide riut a dheanainn suidhe,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Anns a' ghàmadh 'm brodh na luibhean,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir.

Cha téid mise chun a' stòil,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Cha téid mise chun a' stòil,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Gus am faigh mi gùn an t-sròf,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Aparan buidhe gu bòsd,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir

T From here onwards, D. Mackay had omitted all repeated couplets.

Dhannsainn le trombaid,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Dhannsainn gun trombaid idir,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Dhannsainn le fidhleir,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
Dhannsainn gun fhidhleir idir,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir;
le sadach na muilte,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuilleir.[†]

[†] Donald Mackay left out the second couplet, & repeated the last.

Marbhadh na Béiste Duibhe: This was brought from Rhum at the same time as Danna Már. It is not really a dance, for it is not performed to music. We could find no-one on Eigg who remembers either a song or a tune of this name. It is still acted occasionally at gatherings on the island.

It is performed by two men and a cushion. The otter is represented by the cushion, for which one of the men provides the animation. The other man is the hunter, and is armed with a stick or cudgel. The first man takes the cushion, and, kneeling down behind the table (or other suitable piece of furniture), makes the otter poke its head (a corner of the cushion) out beyond the table leg, the head moving from side to side as the otter looks around for signs of danger. The hunter now stalks the otter, creeping along on all fours until he is within striking distance of it. He tries to hit it with the cudgel, but the otter draws back its head just in time. The otter now reappears, poking its head out from behind another piece of furniture - a chair or dresser - and again the hunter stalks it and tries to kill it with his cudgel. But again the otter withdraws its head just in time. This goes on for some time, but eventually the hunter finally succeeds in "killing" the otter. At this stage, the first man retires, and the hunter is left alone with the "dead" otter! In great glee he examines the carcase, and then, picking it up by the tail (the opposite corner of the cushion), he swings it over his right shoulder, and walks off with it. He doesn't get very far, however, before the otter comes alive again, and "bites" him on the buttock. The hunter lets go of the otter, clutches at the painful portion of his anatomy, and falls backward - on the otter - screaming. He rises; and, taking hold of his cudgel, gives the otter several heavy blows, and nearly kills it this time. Then he picks it up by the tail, swings it over his shoulder, and walks off with it.

The Kissing Reel: Hugh MacKinnon gave us a description of this exactly like that of Mrs MacLellan (p. 8). He said that it was last danced on Eigg about 7 years ago, a very little for 40 years before that.

The Scotch Reel, etc: He had never seen a "circle" figure. In his young days, the ladies & the men had different steps. The men used their arms, knocked their fingers, and hooched; while the ladies had their arms akimbo. He had seen high-cutting, done by oldish men, 40 or 50 years ago.

Hebridean Weaving Lilt: He had never heard of the dance, nor heard the tune.

[†] Which is, however, supposed to be merely stunned.

11, Stourcliffe Road,

Wallasey,

Cheshire.

15th June.

Dear Mr Mackinnon,

I have recently been writing up my notes on Danna Mòr, and I find there is still a small doubt in my mind as to whether I have it noted correctly. My doubt concerns the words of the chorus, and I wondered if you would be so kind as to confirm that the following is correct.

1) The first time that the two men go into the ring, they sing

"Ubh uidil à thurabò à

Ubh à uidil-an

Ubh uidil à thurabò à

Hal-dar-uidil ubh-an"

— 2 —

They then jump back into the ring.

and all dance round singing the chorus

They then come back into the ring and

sing

" Tha or aig Coinneach a' Rudha,

's gun or aig a h-uile fear;

Tha or aig Coinneach a' Rudha

's aig fear Rudha 'n Dunain.

Uhh uidil à thurabhl à

Uhh à uidil-an

Uhh uidil à thurabhl à

Hal-dar-^{ah}-uidil inbh-an."

Then jump into the ring & all dance
round and sing the chorus again.

Is this correct? Yes.

2) And is the chorus

" Si übh uidil uidil uidil

Hal - dar - al uidil an

Si übh uidil uidil uidil

Hal - dar - uidil übh - an

Si übh uidil uidil uidil

Hal - dar - al uidil an

Si übh uidil uidil uidil

Hal - dar - uidil übh - an ,³³

the dancers dancing more quickly round
in the last four lines than in the
first ?

Or is it

" Übh uidil à thurah à

Übh à uidil - an

Übh uidil à thurah à

Hal - dar - ~~uidil~~^{al} übh - an

Si übh uidil uidil uidil

Hal - dar - al - uidil an

Si übh uidil uidil uidil

Hal - dar - ~~uidil~~^{al} übh an , "

This is the correct version

You will note that in the 4th & 8th
lines it is : Hal - dar - al übh an .
Dancing more quickly round in the
last few lines

—4—

the dances dancing round more quickly
during the last few hours than in the
first four?

I'm sorry to bother you again over
this, but I would like to make sure that
it is correct. If ~~you~~ No. 1 is correct,
perhaps you would just like to put a
tick in the margin, & do the same
with whichever of the two charuses is the
correct one [I think ~~that~~ the first is
correct, but I may be wrong], and
return this letter - it would save you
some trouble. If both charuses are
wrong, or if No. 1 is wrong, ~~just~~ I
should be very grateful if you would
correct it for me.

Oleadale,
Isle of Skye,
Inverness-shire
Scotland.
22nd June 1953.

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Flett,

I was very pleased to get your letter and particularly for one reason. Shortly after your visit to Skye you very kindly sent us a gift parcel and a note with your address. This note got lost or mislaid somehow and we could not write back to thank you. This I do now in all sincerity.

I see you are still working with the "Danse Macabre". I have made the necessary corrections and am

returning your own letter so that
you can see my remarks.

I shall be pleased to have a
copy of your article when it is
written and better still I hope
to see you both in Bigg in the
not too distant future.

Thanking you again for
your kindness.

Yours,

Yours sincerely
Hugh MacKinnon.



FLORA MACLELLAN, CLIADALE, ISLE OF EIGG.

(Aged 82)

Mrs MacLellan is the widow of Duncan MacLellan, from whom Donald Mackay noted the words of *Dannsa Mór*.

Dannsa Mór: She told us that in her young days, the dance differed from the version described by Hugh MacKinnon (p. 5) only in that during the singing of the verses by X and Y, all the men released hands, and X and Y went back into diametrically opposite places anywhere in the ring. It was danced by as many as pleased.

White Cockade: Mrs MacLellan gave us a description of this dance exactly like that of Mrs MacLellan of Benbecula (p. 8). We asked her if she remembered the earlier version in which the first man twisted his hankie into a rope, laid it on the floor, and danced round it. She said she did, and (without prompting on our part), said that he danced steps like those of the Sword Dance, and danced clockwise. She was quite certain on this point.

The Scotch Reel, etc: She told us that on Eigg, about 60 years ago, they did not do the "figure 8" in the Scotch Reel, but used a circle-figure instead. To begin the dance, the two couples faced each other (Fig. 1), the lady standing on her partner's right. The lady passed across in front of her partner, who stood still until she had passed him, and then fell in behind her. The ladies dance round in a circle and return to their original places. The two men follow their partners round, but end back to back in the centre facing their own partners (Figs 2, 3).

①

-②

①

-②

Fig. 1.

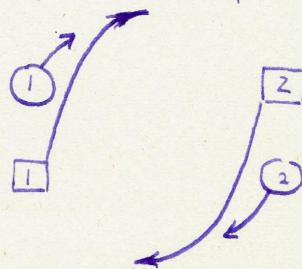


Fig. 2.

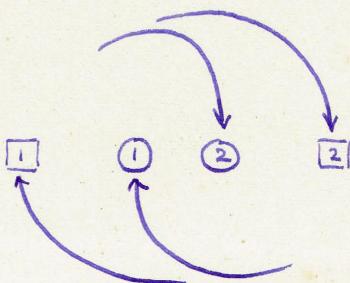


Fig. 3.

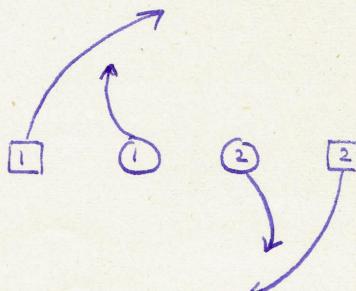


Fig. 4.

They then set, facing their partners, & then danced round in a circle again. This time they all began simultaneously, & the men simply fell into place behind their partners.

The ladies could do the same steps as the men if they pleased, but they usually did "sidesteps" — low down. Both men and girls hooched and snapped their fingers.

NEIL MACDONALD, CHIADALE, ISLE OF EIGER.

(Aged 80)

Mr MacDonald is the son of one of the men who brought Dannsa Mór and Marbhadh na Beiste Duibhe to Eigg.

Dannsa Mór: Mr MacDonald told us that Dannsa Mór should be danced by 12 men only. In his youth, during the singing of the verse, all the men released hands, and X and Y went back into diametrically opposite places anywhere in the ring. While they were singing the verse, X and Y sometimes used to go outside the ring. He thought that Y stood still while X sang the first line of the verse, and only moved while singing the second line. The "grief" in the first verse about the Miller's daughter was very overdone, the "sobbing" man almost touching the floor with his forehead.

He and his wife were quite certain that the dance started with the verse beginning "Tha òr aig Coinneach a' Rudha".

He said also that in this first part of the dance there is a verse missing. It was about a fishing boat & a net used with it, & some objects which were in the boat.

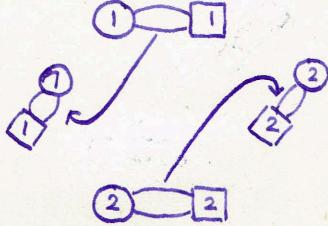
To begin the chorus, the men just walked into their places - there was no "whole turn & spring". During the chorus, the dancers hopped round, hopping as high as they could, with the right leg held out horizontally. They used normal grasp. Otherwise the dance was as described by Hugh Mackinnon (p.).

Marbhadh na Beiste Duibhe: In the old days, Mr MacDonald told us, the dancers would fashion an otter out of an old sack stuffed with straw, and fix a tail to it. The "dance" was exactly as described to us by Mr Mackinnon, except that to really kill the otter, the hunter gripped it behind the ears & banged its nose against the ground. The otter would often hide beneath the ladies (long) skirts. The whole performance lasted about half an hour.

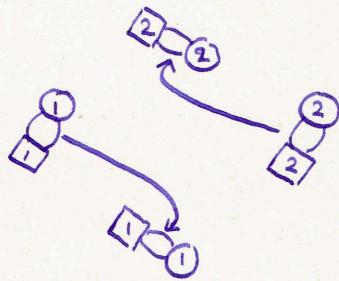
Dannsa na tunnaig. He saw this done as a solo by an adult about 70 years ago. The dancer danced round the room on his hunkers, & used the kibby step.

The Scotch Reel, etc: He remembered the "Old Style", as he termed it, described by Mrs MacLellan. He said that the ladies had different steps from the men. The men, and also "feery girls" hopped & snapped their fingers.

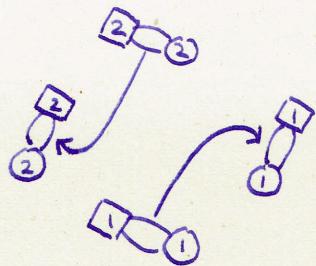
He also told us that they danced the usual Country Dances on the island - Petronella, Rory O'More, Flowers of Edinburgh, etc., but there were no strathspeys. He remarked that the possette used for Petronella was performed in diamond formation, using waltz hold & something like skip-change-of-step.



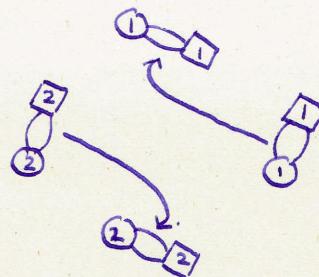
Bar. 1.



Bar. 2.



Bar 3.



Bar 4.

of probably
prompted here.
Now doubtful
of this.

Bars 5 and 6 as bars 1 and 2 respectively. On Bar 7 half turn, and drop back to own sides on bar 8, having moved up or down one place.

For the reel portion of the Scotch Reel, they used 'skip-change-of-step', but for the Strathspey portion, they used a step consisting of

1. Step forward on R foot
2. Close L behind R.
3. Repeat 1.
4. Hop on R & bring L to 3rd normal aerial pos".

Aunts. Dick Daniel, Lochaber.

LACHLAN CAMPBELL, CLIADALE, ISLE OF EIGG

(Aged ca 80)

Lachlan Campbell is the nephew of one of the men who brought Dannsa Mór to Eigg. The following information, though interesting, is not trustworthy, for I am afraid that he was piqued because we did not go to him first.

Dannsa Mór. He said that in his youth this was done by 7 or 8 men. The two men who sang the verses walked about outside the ring, & went back into their original places in the ring. The remaining men kept their hands joined, while this was going on, & stood with their right leg crossed over their left. While hopping round in the chorus, their raised feet were about 18" off the ground. Only the two men sing the chorus while they are dancing round. They used normal grasp.

The chorus was

Ush nidle nidle a
 Hal-dar-al nidle an
 Ush nidle nidle a
 Hal-dar-aldil ush-an
 Ush nidle à thurabha
 Ush à nidle-an
 Ush nidle à thurabha
 Hal-dar-nidle ush-an.

MR & MRS DONALD MACKAY, CUAGACH, ISLE OF EIGG.

Mr Mackay came from Stoneybridge on S. Uist, and his wife from Lochmaddy on N. Uist. He was about 70, and she was somewhat younger.

The Pin Reel: Mr Mackay remembered this danced about 55 years ago on S. Uist, where it was known either as the "Pin Reel" in English, or in Gaelic, Ruidhleadh.

Mrs Mackay remembered the same dance on N. Uist, danced about 50 years ago, where it was called Ruidhleadh na.

The dance was performed by any number of couples, who joined hands and danced round in a ring, with one odd lady, the "pin" in the centre. The music stopped, & the ladies stepped in front of their partners, joined hands in a ring, and, the music restarting, they danced round the "pin". When the music stopped for a second time, the ladies wished for a partner, the odd one out becoming the new pin. This was repeated once or more times. The lady left without a partner on the last occasion then sat down, & a man took her place as "pin". The dance was then repeated as before, save that the men now form the inner ring round the pin. While the men were dancing round, "some of the girls would go away & hide, & then there would be several pins."

Mrs Mackay said that she used the chassé step (no hop), but that the skip-change-of-step was also used - it was up to each dancer to suit himself or herself.

Morag bheag nighean Muradh an thoir
 S' meather a glane é, S' meather a glane é
 Morag bheag nighean Muradh an thoir
 S' meather a glane é a posadh.

Wee Morag, Murdoch the joiner's daughter
 light she would go, light she would go,

light she would go to her wedding.

SANDANORE,
ISLE OF EIGE,
SCOTLAND.
TELEPHONE Eigg 71.

2nd October, 1953,

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Flett,

I am sending to you now the music of the Dannsa Mor, with my apologies for having taken so long to do so. This has been on my conscience for a long time but during this summer I have found it impossible to do all the things which were waiting to be done, and I am only now beginning to find time to tackle the arrears. I have not yet obtained the music of the Pin Reel from Mrs. Donald MacIsaac but hope to do so as soon as they are clear of the harvest. Thank you for the copy of the words of the Dannsa Mor - I enclose a rough typed copy of the full lay-out.

The music of the Dannsa appears to be in the Key of D, in Common Time. In the first part, the music consists of three groups of four bars each, these groups being linked by the last bar of each group being identical throughout. I have tried to give an accurate indication of the speed; but although I have marked the chorus as "slightly faster" it is possible that it should be at the same speed as the first verse, the change of rhythm being responsible for the impression of increased speed. However, I think it is sung a little faster. With regard to the rhythm, in the music of the first verse in the first part of the Dannsa the first and third beats in each bar are strongly accented. In the chorus the accent is the same on each beat, giving it an even rapid running effect throughout. In the verses after the first, the bars are sung alternately by two men inside the circle of dancers; the first man sings bars one and three fairly slowly, but the other bars are sung in the same speed as the first verse, into which they lead.

In the entire second part of the Dannsa there are only two bars of music which are repeated over and over throughout verses and chorus with a steady, monotonous rhythm (perhaps suggested by the mill-wheel) at the same speed as Part One.

Although D. G. MacLennan in his book gives the impression that a girl takes part in the Dannsa, and the words imply it, the old people here are definite in stating that they have never known a girl take part in the Dannsa.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Hector J. A. MacLean

AN DANNSA MOR.

Rann: Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Verse. Ubh a uidil-an,
Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Hal-da-uidil ubh-an.

Fonn: D D D B A A A,
dir. F F E D D,
D D D B A A A,
B A A B D D.

Seisd: Si ubh uidil uidil uidil,
shores. Hal-dar-al uidil an,
Si ubh uidil uidil uidil,
Hal-day-uidil ubh-an;
Si ubh uidil uidil uidil,
Hal-dar-al uidil an,
Si ubh uidil uidil uidil,
Hal-day-uidil ubh-an.

Fonn: D D F E E D D D,
dir. B B B B A A,
D D F E E D D D,
B A A B D D;
D D F E E D D D,
B B B B A A,
D D F E E D D D,
B A A B D D.

Rann: Tha or aig Coinneach a Rudha,
'S gun or aig a h-uile fear;
Tha or aig Coinneach a Rudha,
'S aig fear Rudha 'n Dunain.
Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Ubh a uidil-an,
Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Hal-da-uidil ubh-an.

Fonn: A D D E E E F,
dir. B B B B B A A,
A D D E E E F,
B A A B D D,
D D D B A A A,
F F E D D,
D D D B A A A,
B A A B D D.

Seisd:

Rann: Pog do nighean a' Ghobha,
'S gun phog dha'n a h-uile te;
Pog do nighean a' Ghobha,
'S do ogha Mhic Luais.
Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Ubh a uidil-an,
Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Hal-da-uidil ubh-an.

Seisd:

Rann: Bidh poll air osan nan toll,
'S tric air feadh nan nighean e;
Bidh poll air osan nan toll,
'S bidh e feadh na dutchha.
Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Ubn a uidil-an,
Ubh uidil a thurabh a,
Hal-da-uidil ubh-an.

Seisd:

Rann: Ciamar a ruitheas mi'n nighean?
'Sdithis a's a' rathad orm;
Ciamar a ruitheas mi'n nighean?
' S cearnadh air an urlar.

Seisd: Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir Oig,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir Oig,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir Oig,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir Oig,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir.

Fonn: D D D D D E,
 F D D D D A,
 D D D D D E,
 F D D D D A,

Rann: Ubh is ubh is ubh,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Ubh is ubh is ubh,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Gu de loc a rinn mi?
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Gu'n d'laigh mi le saighdear,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Nach iomadh te rinn e?
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir.

Seisd:

Rann: Mo ghaol a' Ministeir Buidhe,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Mo ghaol a' Ministeir Buidhe,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Cuide riut a dheanainn suidhe,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
 Anns a gharadh 'm bicdh na liubhean,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir

Seisd:

Rann: Cha teid mise chun a' stoil,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Cha teid mise chun a stoil,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Gus am faigh mi gun an t-sroil,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir;
 Aparan buidhe gu bord,
 Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir.

Seisd:

music of the Danza etc.

List Vane and

Mr mi - die

mutable as well as modifiable - any



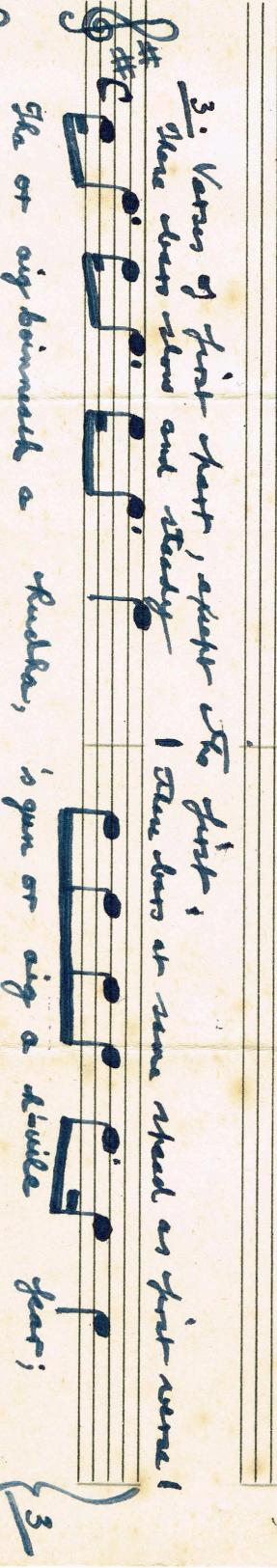
Wetwi - did a Thrush on other
Spad: The above four days occupy seven records

2. Below after each verse of the first sheet



~~Spent: slightly shorter - up sounds to three four bars~~

Ans: display faster - six sounds to three four bars



3. Waves of first start, except the first,
More slow slow and steady | Then goes it same speed as first were |

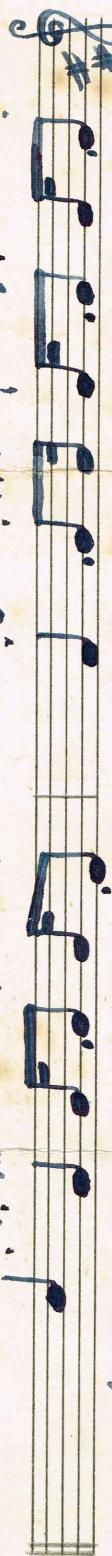
She or sig beinmark a Rucka, 'pon or sig a little year;



The other day I made a speech at a meeting in Tsinan.

Part 2 of the Danube chor.

These two bars are repeated over and over for all voices and choirs of instruments.



At night a million City stars night a million
Speed: same as first verse of Part 1.

+.

AN DANNSA MOR.

3.

Rann:

Dhannsainn le trombaid,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
~~Dhannsainn le trompaid,~~
~~Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,~~

Rann:

Dhannsainn le trompaid,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
Dhannsainn gun trompaid idir,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
Dhannsainn le fidhleir,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
Dhannsainn gun fidhleir idir,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir,
Le sadach na muile,
Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir.

Seisid:

UNIVERSITY AVENUE,
GLASGOW, G.2.

19th March 1953

Dear Mrs. Flett,

Your letter to Oliver & Boyd has been forwarded to me by Mr Hugh Watson, brother of the late Professor J. Carmichael Watson. He thought I would be able to deal with it as I am editing Volumes v and vi of *Carmina Gadelica*. I have not been through all the Carmichael papers, as the portions I had to deal with had been set apart by J. Carmichael Watson. In the portions I have dealt with I have only come across two things bearing on your query. One is a song concerned with the dance *Cailleach an Dùdain* (Vol. i, 206), which is as follows:

Chailleach an dùdain, It may be as well
to Chailleach an dùdain,mission or the
Li Chailleach an dùdain, University. I would
appr Cum do dheireadh rium! send me an
offprint of your article in the Journal
of Chailleach an dùdain, and Song Society.
I Chailleach an dùdain, ing the words of the
da Cum do chùl rium, of words in Vol. VI
of Cum do cheathramh rium! your article had
appeared by then I could refer to it for
Chailleach an dùdain,
Chailleach an dùdain,
Null e! nall e!
Cum do cheathramh rium!

Chailleach an dùdain,
Chailleach an dùdain,
Sios e! suas e!
Nuas na beirearan!
Cum do chùl rium!
Cum do cheathramh rium!

i.e. Carlin of the mill-dust, (thrice), keep thy rear to me!
Carlin of the mill-dust (thrice), ~~keep thy back to me~~,
~~keep thy quarter to me!~~
Carlin of the mill-dust (twice), keep thy back to me,
keep thy quarter to me!
Carlin of the mill-dust (twice), over with it! back with it! Keep
thy quarter to me!
Carlin of the mill-dust (twice), ~~up with it~~ down with it! up with
it! let it not be brought down (?)! Keep thy back to me! Keep thy
quarter to me!

The other is a small note: 'Marbhadh na Béiste Duibhe', the killing of the ~~black~~ black beast (otter), or 'Togradh an Dobhrain Duinn', the desire of the brown water-dog (otter), was the name of a dance containing much action.

These two items, to the best of my recollection, are the only ones of this nature I have come across. The remainder of the Carmichael papers are now deposited in the Library of Edinburgh University and it would be

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an arduous task to search through them in their present state.

I am, Yours sincerely,

Angus Matheson

Lecturer in Celtic, University of Glasgow

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A&E. 17.S.53.

Hughes J. D. M. H. S. C.
Yours sincerely,

further information.
I appreciate it if you would send me an
application for Edinburgh University
to have the formal permission of the
Dudatin in your article. It may be as well
your using the words of Galileach an
Librarian of Edinburgh University. I would
appreciate it if you would refer to it for
I myself may be including the words in Vol. VI
dance in a collection of words in Vol. VI
of Carmina Gallica and if your article had
appeared by then I could refer to it for
further information.

Dear Mrs. Hlett,
114 University Avenue,
Glasgow. W.2.
11th May 1953.



Tel. KELVIN 2231.

THE UNIVERSITY,
GLASGOW, W.2.

Heir present state.

114
115

104, UNIVERSITY AVENUE,
GLASGOW, M. 2.

18th July 1953.

Dear Mrs. Flett,

I return the songs
with some rough translations and
some corrections. I do not know the
terms for Pin Reel or Bachelors'
Reel. So I prefer not to venture a
guess. If you gave me a rough idea
of the words I might make them
out.

I was interested in the Trig War Dance.
Had heard of it but had not come
across it. I believe Tom Horne
Campbell of Canna recorded it.
The best known Rudha an Dùinidh
is in Shye, of which a family of
MacAshills were tacksmen, and
the name Kenneth occurred
among them.

I should be glad to have an
offprint of your articles as I

6
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would like to have a copy of
the Trig War Dance.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely
Angus MacLennan

(b) Three hooves, two hooves, three
sheep's hooves,
3 hooves, 2 hooves, a hornless sheep's hoof,
who will keep me company (?), ~~the~~ (or
perhaps it should be chuideachadh, who will
assist me?), who will dance (with me),
who will keep me company (?), but a hoof
with a twist in it?

(c) My cock would dance (lit. reel') ~~on~~ on
the floor
With MacAulay's cock,
My cock would crow on the roost
Though I should decapitate it (lit.
take the head out of it).
That is the cock which was foppish
With the French coat,
He would set to another cock
In MacAulay's cellar
(+ i.e. a Turkey cock?)



An Daonna Ólár

- v. 1. Kenneth of the Rudha (headland) has gold,
and not every man has gold;
Kenneth of the Rudha has gold
And so has the Goodman of Rudha an Dúinín.
2. A kiss for the Smith's daughter,
without a kiss for every girl,
A kiss for the Smith's daughter
and for MacLucas' granddaughter.
3. There will be mud on the tattered hose (can also = leg of trousers),
Oft is he (or perhaps 'it') among the girls;
There will be mud on the tattered hose,
And he will be ranging the country
(or it might mean; the news will spread through the country side)

4. How shall I chase the girl
When there are two in my way?
How shall I chase the girl
When there are four on the floor?
('four', reading ceathair. If ceannadh is
correct, I am not sure of its meaning here. Cearn
can mean 'corner, angle')

Part. II Chorus. Said the daughter of the young Diller,
Said the daughter of the Diller,

Verse 1. Ibh and ibh and ibh (^{ibh = something}
_{like alas, woe})
What harm have I done?
I lay with a soldier,
Has not many a girl done it?

2. My love is the yellow-haired Minister
With thee I would sit
In the garden of herbs.

3. I shall not go to the stool, (of repentance)?
Till I get a satin gown,
And a yellow apron for show.

4. I would dance with (=to?) a trumpet,
I would dance without a trumpet at all,
I would dance with (=to?) a fiddler,
I would dance without a fiddler at all,
With the mill-duet.

An Dannsa Mór

Part I. Chorus.

Übh uidil à thurabh à

Übh à uidil-an

Übh uidil à thurabh à

As long as

Hal-dar-uidil übh-an.

Si übh uidil uidil uidil

Hal-dar-uidil ~~übh~~ uidil an

Si übh uidil uidil uidil

As long as

Hal-dar-uidil übh-an.

As long as

Verses. 1.

Tha òr aig Coinneach a' Rudha,

's gun òr aig a h-uile fear;

Tha òr aig Coinneach a' Rudha,

's aig fear Rudha 'n Dùnain.

2.

Pòg do nighean a' Ghobha

's gun phòg dha'n a h-uile té,

Pòg do nighean a' Ghobha

's do ogha Mhic Luais.

3. Bidh poll air osan nan toll,

's tric air feadh nan nighean e;

Bidh poll air osan nan toll,

's bidh e feadh na dùthcha.

4

Ciamar a ^{ruitheas} mi'n nighean,

's dithia a's a' rathad orm?

Ciamar a ruitheas mi'n nighean,

's ceannadh ⁺ air an urlar?

Part II.

Chorus

Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir ^f Óig
Arsa nighean a' Mhuileir ^f

Verses. 1.

Ubh is ubh is ubh

Cu dé lochd a rinn mi?

Cu'n d'laigh mi le saighdear,

Nach ionadh té rinn e?

2.

Mo ghaol a' Ministeir Buidhe,

Mo ghaol a' Ministeir Buidhe,

[†] Possibly 'ceathrar.' ✓?

Cuide ~~an~~^{runt} a dheanainn suidhe

Anns a' ghàradh 'm biadh na luibhean

3. Cha téid mise chun a' stòil

Cha téid mise chun a' stòil,

Cous am faigh mi gùn an ~~t-sròit~~^{t-sròl},

Aparan buidhe gu bòsd.

4. Dhannsainn le trombaid,

Dhannsainn gun trombaid idir,

Dhannsainn le fidhleir,

Dhannsainn gun ~~fìor~~ fhidhleir idir.

le sadach na muilne.

(a)

Mórag bheag nighean Muradh an t-saoir

Mhurchaidh an t-saoir

's aistrum a dh'fhalbhadh i, 's aistrum a dh'fhalbhadh i,
meather a glane é, s' meather a glane é

Morag bheag nighean Muradh an t-saoir

's aistrum a dh'fhalbhadh i a phòsadh.
meather a glane é a posadh.

[Transl' of above (?)

Wee Morag, Murdoch the joiner's daughter,

Light she would go, light she would go,

Wee Morag, Murdoch the joiner's daughter,

Light she would go to her wedding.]

(b)

Trí criodhan, dà h-criodhan, trí criodhan caorach.

Trí criodhan, dà h-criodhan, criodhan caomachadh maoladh.

Caoracha?

chuideachd

Có théid a chuideach team, có théid a dannsadh,Có théid a chuideach team, ach eriodhan is carf cam ann?

(c)

Ruidheadh mo choileach air làr

Ri coileach Mhac-Amhlaidh,

Ghairmeadh

Gairmeadh mo choileach air spàrn

Gàd bheirinn an ceann as.

Sud an coileach a bha spòrsal

Leis a' chòta thrangach,

Sheatadh e' rith coileach eile

Ann an seilean Mhac-Amhlaidh.

Also the following phrases or names.

(a) Sail ~~an~~ ^{na} dara coise

Ann am bacan na coise eile

[Transl' of above (?). 'the heel of one foot in the mstep of the other'.]

(b) Cé ghoid an t-inneadh a Tiuray

Co chuir no chard no shniamh e?

[Transl' of above (?)] 'who stole the wool from Tiuray,
Who teased or carded or spun it'

(c) Coille Bharrach

??
[Barra Wood]

= Birch wood?

(d) Long Bharrach

[Barra Ship.]

(e) Pog an toiseach

[Kiss first.]

(f) Dannsa bho balla ~~go~~ ^{ge} balla [Dance from wall to wall]

(g) Gillean ~~an~~ ^{air} Eilidh

[Hads with the hill]

Ruidhle na fionn?

(h) Ruidhleadh na?

[Pin Reel]

Ruidhle nam fleasach?

(i)

Ruidhleadh na

[Batchelor's Reel]

??

(j)

Ruidhleadh nam Ban

[Widow's Reel]

Widows?

(primarily means 'widow'
but sometimes used
for 'widower')

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

A Slight Sketch of a Journey made
Through parts of the Highlands and
Hebrides undertaken to collect material
for Albyn's Anthology by the Editor
in Autumn, 1815. MSS. Edinburgh
University library.

p. 18. "While here [Loch maddie], I witnessed for the
first time, persons singing at the same time they dance:
and this is called dancing to port-na-beul, being a
succedaneous conterwance to supply the want of a
musical instrument. ... the mode in which these merry
Islanders perform the double exercise of singing and dancing:
— thus — the men and women sing a bar of the tune
alternately; by which they preserve the respiration free;
and at the same time observe the accent and rhythm
quite accurately — the effect is animating: ..."

FATHER ALLAN MACDONALD. MSS. now in the possession of Bishop Grant,
The Cathedral, Oban.

"Strange Things. No 86. There is a dance called "Cailleach an durdain" - "The Carlin of the dust". It is a Punch and Judy dance and has a special pipe tune for itself called "Cailleach an Durdain". Two take part in the dance - an old man and an old trembling shivering hag (a man dressed in punch attire does her part). The old hag comes in trembling and quivering with a stick in her hand and her husband similarly armed. They fight with the sticks - dancing all the time. Finally the old man thrusts his stick into her body and she falls down dead. The old man beats his hands and howls most atrociously as it occurs to him that he has murdered the old woman. The sudden change from anger and animosity to broken-heartedness for the loss of his partner in life is ridiculous. He bends down over her only to find out more surely that she is dead. The lamentation is heart-rending. Again and again he bends over her and again his sorrow is only intensified. He bends down and touches her foot and the foot rises a little and quivers away most singularly. The old man regains a little confidence. He bends down again and touches the other foot, and it too begins to shake incessantly. At these signs of returning life he bursts out into hysterical laughter. He touches the hands one by one. They too begin to quiver. The old carlin stretched out on the floor with her two feet and two hands quivering looks ridiculous to a degree and the spectators nearly drown the piper with their uproar. The old man then bends down and touches her hair and up she springs with renewed life and they both rush into each other's arms most gaily."

Strange Things. No 87. "Danns an Amadair" - "The fools' dance" is as follows. There are reels on the floor and everything going at the merriest, when there springs in from some hidden place a being whose appearance is diabolical. He appears to be headless and has four legs and four arms, whichever you may choose to imagine them. He skips about frantically and the fair sex scream in terror and leave the floor at the first glimpse of him. Their more valorous partners hurry to their seats after them. The disguise is made by fastening a jacket not over the shoulders but under with the under part of the jacket fastened about the chest, the arms stiffed with straw dangling from the hips and looking very like a pair of supplementary legs. The head is covered with a dark sack, the two arms stretched up and outwards on each side of the head and giving a peculiar shape to the headpiece of the monster.

Of course this dance is done only rarely. The charm would be worked off by repetition.

221

Isle of Canna,
Scotland.

5th May 1953.

Dear Mr. Flett,

I was very interested to get your letter.
Fr. Allan's original manuscript belongs to Bishop
Grant, the Cathedral, Oban, so his consent will be
necessary : I am agreeable, on condition that Fr.
Allan is credited.

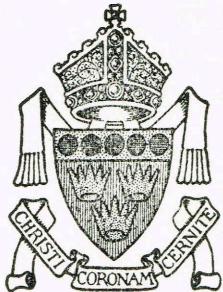
Yours faithfully,

J. L. Campbell

T. M. Flett, Esq.,
Department of Pure Mathematics,
University, Liverpool.

Acknowledged. 12/5/53.

DIOCESE OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES



BISHOP'S HOUSE,
ESPLANADE,
OBAN, ARGYLL,
TELEPHONE: OBAN 2123

4th. June, 1953.

Dear Mr. Flett,

Your letter of the 12th. May has had to remain unanswered until now, because I left home for Nova Scotia on the 13th. May.

By a starnge coincidence one of the things I made up my mind to do this Winter was to look for some work on Scottish Dancing. We saw so much of it throughout Cape Breton Island among the old descendants of people from our Highlands, and heard many views on the subject.

I have pleasure in consenting to your use of the material from Fr. Allan's MSS. put at your disposal by Fr. MacCormick and agreed to by Mr Campbell. You may publish any of that material as you wish, making appropriate acknowledgement.

Yours sincerely,

+ Kenneth Grant.

T.M. Flett, Esq.
Department of Pure Mathematics,
University, Liverpool.



21st May, 1953.

Mrs. J. F. Flett,
11 Stourcliffe Road,
Wallasey,
Cheshire.

Dear Madam,

I have your letter of 17th May, 1953.

I shall be willing for you to use the song[†]
and the reference in the manuscript^{*} provided, of
course, that you make the usual acknowledgements.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that appears to read "L. W. Sharp".

L. W. Sharp
Librarian.

[†] Cailleach an Dùdain.

^{*} Alexander Campbell. See p.

A certain dance in my form, say by Scotch children at parties in Manchester, in the 1870's.

Looey

or

Looom

Loo.

Left hand

Right foot

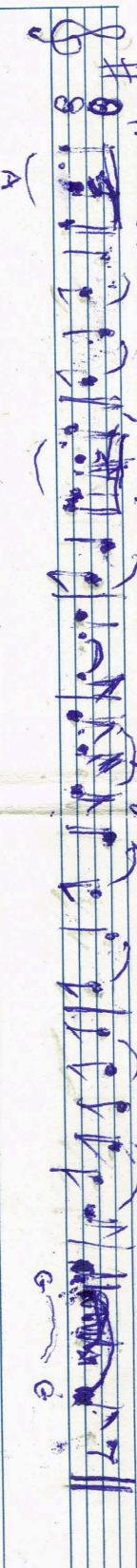
Left foot,

backwards

notes/lets

in from

& thumbpit.



A



Put your right hand in; pull your right hand out; shake it a little, and then turn round about! [In this strain, rattle shake here!]

D.C.

I have not seen this in many forms for
It is a form of Hinkum body, but more

Hinkum body, but more

legende

ANNIE G. GILCHRIST. In Vol. 7 of the Folk-Song Journal, Miss Gilchrist referred to "hinkum booby, a Scottish dance of uncouth movements". In reply to our enquiry, she wrote:

January 9 19
53

WALNUT BANK,
LANCASTER.

Dear Mr Flett,

At the age of 89, my sight is very far gone and I write wi' difficulty (as the Scot is said to joke). But I can tell you that "Hinkumbooby" is a degraded version of "Here we dance Lubin, Lubin", see we dance Lubin light; Here we dance Lubin, Lubin, every Saturday night." in a Lubin was a Scottish action-dance, clasping hands in a ring, but separating to perform the various actions, song to the tune, e.g. "Put your right hand in;

Put your right hand out,
Shake it a little and shake it a little,
And then turn round about,"

D.C. Here we dance Lubin, Lubin, etc.

The ring dances Lubin between each successive action (which may continue ~~sister~~ at the initiative fancy of the leader) - "left ^{hand, right foot} foot - etc - noses in, and noses out, shake it a little" etc. "Looby loo" is a variant of the name - and shake it a little, and then turn round about!

Chambers, in his Popular Rhymes of Scotland, p. 137, describes a less graceful form under the name Hinkum Booby, which was sung to the tune of "Little barley". I do not remember ever seeing the tune here given in any collection. It is rhythmic. A.G. Gilchrist. The rhythm here is distinctive.

ANNIE G. GILCHRIST. In Vol. 7 of the Folk-Song Journal, Miss Gilchrist referred to "hinkum booby, a Scottish dance of uncouth movements". In reply to our enquiry, she wrote:

2. In regard to the tunes you enclose, I think you would do well to send them to my friend Miss Ethel Bassin, whose Edinburgh address, when at home, is 66, Falcon Avenue, Edinburgh, 10, from which this letter and enclosure would be forwarded, as I have, for the moment, forgotten her sphere of labour further north (in the Highlands?). She knows the Gaelic & can speak and teach it.

In Miss Frances Tolmie's collection (^{collection / texts & music}) edited by the E.T.D.S. Society, there are evidences of a gapped scale, with modes partially filled at a later period. In this collection there are songs of labour such as accompany the regular ~~beats~~ forward & back-ward movement ^{of} across a web of cloth ^{across} on a table or board in the process of thickening (fulling) the cloth. I cannot write more, but if you would care to enclose this letter with your own in response to Miss Bassin's, together with the tunes, I am very willing. I am wonder-struck at the beauty of your music script! It is hard to believe it is 'manuscript'!

Lastly, Miss Bassin's address is, when at home, 66 Falcon Avenue, Edinburgh, 10., but her sphere of teaching and research is further north, and I have at present forgotten it. But a letter would no doubt be forwarded. My sight fails almost daily, and I can write by faith, rather than sight. Did I give you the reference in Chambers "Popular Rhymes of Scotland", p. 137, to "Hinkum Booty"? I suspect that Chambers didn't know a note of music!

P.S. Please excuse delay in reply. I need
good daylight - which has been in short sup-
ply since you wrote to me.

Please excuse the sloppy script. I live
alone but for ^{two} maids - neither being a 'scholar'; and alpend upon
my nephew Philip Geddes' visits (happily he lives near me)
for help and information and communication with out
world.

A.B. (O.B.E., F.S.A., if you care to know)

I enclose your letter in case it may be useful to you?

Action dance in shiny form, say by Scottish children at parties in Manchester in the 1870's.

Booby
Hence dance booby, booby, Here we dance booby, booby, Every Saturday night! elegant!



G C

A

Left hand
Right foot
Left foot,
back, back,
now shake
when you
right hand in;

D.C.
Put your right hand out; shake it a little, and shake it a little, and then turn round about!
Rhythm rather sicky here!

We wrote to Miss Bassin, enclosing the list of old Gaelic dances which we had encountered in books, and also the tune for the H.W.L., & the Highland Dance from Momus turn'd Fabulist. She replied as follows.

Permanent address:-
66 Falcon Avenue,
Edinburgh, 10

Address until Easter:-

Ben Wyvis Hotel,
Strathpeffer, Ross-shire

6 February 1953.

Dear Mr. Flett,

Thank you for your most interesting letter. I do not know that I can help you very much, but perhaps I can suggest one or two people who know more about Highland dancing than I do.

You probably are in touch with Miss Jean Milligan of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, though I take it that the dances you are interested in are display rather than social dances. A South Uist man - from Iochdar (English spelling Eochar) in that island is now in Glasgow and is rather knowledgeable about old Hebridean dances. I do not know his address but you might address your letter:-

Mr. John MacLeod (of Iochdar, South Uist)
c/o The Uist and Barra Association,
The Highlanders' Institute,
Elmbank Street, GLASGOW, C.3

Did you let Miss Gilchrist see Mrs. MacNab's tune? I feel doubtful about the Scottishness of the first part. With that melodic minor 4th bar it cannot be very old. John MacLeod might know something about it. If you like to write direct to Mrs. MacNab her address is:-

2195 Pender Street East,
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

You might also try Mr. D. G. MacLennan,
3 Jeffrey Road,

Blackhall, Edinburgh, 4.

You probably know of him - a retired dancing master, well-known - and the author of a book on Highland dancing.

The second tune I am sorry I do not know. About the song titles - several of which are names of animals - the only one I am sure of is Damsadh na Tunnaig, "The Duck Dance". The children's nursery song, "I saw a ship a-sailing" often has the sub-title, "The Duck Dance." You will find something about such dances in a little book in solfa called "Puirrt-a-beul" ("Mouth Music") by K. N. MacDonald, published by Alex. MacLaren, ~~MR~~ Gaelic Bookseller, 268 Argyle Street, Glasgow, originally published in 1900, reprinted in 1940. (I think my dates are right, but I have not a copy here.)

Miss Annie Johnston, The Glen, Castlebay, Isle of Barra, might be able to help you if you sent her the list of titles. Many years ago I noted from her the Damsadh na Tunnaig, of which I enclose a copy.

Referring to your second tune, I might say that a number of Gaelic Puirrt-a-Beul consist of nonsensical words fitted to well-known Lowland tunes. I have, for instance, Gaelic words for "Over the Hills and Far Away" which was demonstrated to me ^{as} a dance by an old lady of 85 in

the Isle of Skye (but she hailed from Harris) in

the year 1925. (If only I had had the gumption to write down particulars of the steps as well as the words!)

I am sorry that I personally cannot help you further but I hope that you and Mrs. Flett may get more satisfaction from some of those I have named. You may mention me in writing them.

I am interested to know that Miss Gilchrist has been able to write you for she is pretty frail nowadays and her sight is very poor.

With best wishes to you and your wife in your researches, and do ask me anything else that you think I might know!

Yours sincerely,

Elinor Weston

T. M. Flett, Esq., School No. 10, Stourcliffe Road,
WALLASEY, Cheshire.

P.S. I wonder if Mrs. MacNab's time has been transcribed as heard.

I return you times along with a phonetic transcript and translation of the "bush dance".

Transl

We wrote to Miss Bassin, enclosing the list of old Gaelic dances which we had encountered in books, and also the tune for the H.W.L., & the Highland Dance from Momus turn'd

RUIDHLEADH NA COILICH DAUBH/A

RUIDH-LEAPDH NA COIL-ICHT DHUBH-A, 'S DHAMN-BAIDH NA TUNN-AG-AN,

RUIDH-LEAPDH NA COIL-ICHT DHUBH-A, AIR A' BHUTH-AICH SHUAS UD.

AIR A' BHUTH-AICH, AIR A' BHRUITH-AICH, AIR A' BHRUITH-AIC URR-AD

AIR A' BHRUITH-AICH, AIR A' BHRUITH-AICH, AIR A' BHRUITH-AIC SHUAS UD

Again think

Translation

"Reeled" The black cocks
And damed the ducks,
Reeled the black cocks,
On the bank up there!

On the bank, re. above there
" " " " up there.

MRS WOOD, CLEKIMINN, near JEDBURGH.

(Aged ca 65).

The following information refers to the neighbourhood of Jedburgh ca 50 years ago (1903)

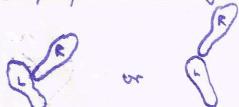
Scotch Reel. Start side by side with partner, but at the beginning the men move in to the centre to face partners. All set with Highland Schottische step for 8 bars. Then reel of four. Repeat this several times (always with the Highland Schottische step), concluding by setting.

Music then changes to reel tempo. Reel of four. Then swing partners for 8 bars, then reel of four again, & conclude by swinging for 8 bars.

The details are as follows.

Highland Schottische step. (1) Hop on L, R in 2nd; (2) Hop on L, R in 5th rear aerial; (3) As (1); (4) Hop on L, R in 5th front aerial; (5) Step on R in 2nd; (6) Close L to R; (7) As (5); (8) Hop on R.

Strathspey travelling step. (1) Step forward on R; (2) Close L behind R in position as shown, using either 3rd or 5th position, and with the feet not necessarily perpendicular to each other; (3) Step forward on R; (4) Hop on R & swing L foot through, not too violently & no glide or pull through as R.S.C.D.S. step.



Reel travelling step. R-S-C-D-S. step-change of step (hop 123), but closing as in the step above.

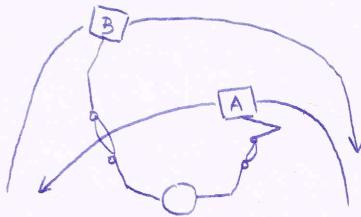
Swing partners. Take ballroom hold, save that man's left hand, which is holding the lady's right hand, is lying on his (left) shoulder. Ordinary pivot step, and no change of direction.

N.B. Some preferred to begin with a reel of four, but most did it as above.

Threesome Reel. Danced by a man & two ladies, all facing the same way & joined by hands.



Bars 1-8. All set with Highland Schottische step (as above).



Bars 9-10. Ladies A & B exchange places. Lady A dancing under the arch formed by man & lady B. As they do so, the man turns under his own left arm, and all end facing in the opposite direction to that in which they began. Same travelling step as in Scotch Reel.



Bars 11-16 Repeat this 3 times, returning to original places.

Then repeat from beginning. Strathspey time only, no reel part.

Hullachan. Start in line, men in centre facing partners. Set to partners with 8 pas



de Basque, then swing for 8 bars as in Scotch Reel, with no change of direction halfway through the swing. Usual progression for Hullachan.

Round about Hullachan. One ring, each facing partner & with back to the next person. Set for 8 bars with pas de Basque, then swing for 8 bars as in Scotch



Reel (not changing direction halfway), & pass on to the next person.

Country Dances. Had done Petronella, Roxburgh Castle, Flowers of Edinburgh, Haymakers, Triumph, Drops of Brandy, Corn Rigs, American Dwarf, Bottom of the Punchbowl. Asked about the two last. Rather vague, but thought they were as follows:

Bottom of the Punchbowl. 4 couples in a set. 1st couple faces down, 2nd up, & both join nearer hands with partner. First couple dance under 2nd's arch (who dance up), & then dance backwards over 2nd couple, who dance backwards down, so that all regain places. Repeat this (?). Then down middle & back, and "polka'd off".

American Dwarf: Advance & retire & cross over. Repeat back to places. Down middle & back, & polka'd off.

They used to skip (not skip-change of step) down the middle. Her pas de Basque was exactly the same as the R.S.C.D.S. version. Knew no Country Dances in Strathspey tempo. Poussette was done with ordinary ballroom hold & "polka" step; no definite pattern.

MRS NICHOLL, CANONGATE, JEDBURGH.

(aged ca 70)

Confirmed the Strathspey travelling step as above. Otherwise nothing of interest.

ANDREW CAIRNCROSS, BONEGATE COTTAGE, JEDBURGH

(aged ca 80).

Uncle of Mrs Wood, and used to play the cornet in a dance band in and around Jedburgh. Memory very hazy, but gave us the ball programmes on the following page. This was for a ball ca 1910.

MRS NORMAN, LANTON, nr JEDBURGH

(aged ca 65).

Nothing of interest save that she did the poussette with ordinary ballroom hold & the waltz step. There was no definite pattern. Also had seen "Bob at the Bowster" at a time a long time ago but could remember nothing about it.

87th - Brown Peacock of Adour

0
0

24. Walts and Gallop. (Banks of Loch Lomond and John Peel. in G.)
23. Haymakers. (Pop goes the Weasel in G.)
22. Barn Dance. (Road to the Isles. in D.)
21. Tangers. (Fiddle your own fiddle in D, My love is like a red red rose in D, Bonnie Dundee in A, Annie Laurie in D. Brown Cow etc in D.)
20. Travasovienne (La Vie in)
19. Petronella. (Highland Laddie in D.)
18. Common Schottische. (Selected in D)
17. Triumph. (Triumph in A.)
- EXTRAS.
16. Walz. (A Hundred Pipers and Comin' thro' the Fey. in G.)
15. Quedilles. (This is no my ain lassie in D. The Boatie Rows in D and Dundee in A, Johnnie Cope in D, my love she's but a lassie yet Donald Dunn in A, Johnnie Cope in D, and Glensca Lassies in D.)
14. Polka. (Sunbeam Polka.) in and Trio in
13. Reel. (Orange and Blue in D.)
12. Nine Pins. (Nine Pins)
11. Dutch Polka. (Dutch Polka in D.)
10. Flowers of Edinburgh. (Flowers of Edinburgh in G.)
9. Hullaghen. (Cock o' the North in A.)

EXTRAS.

8. Highland Schottische. (Stumble in A.)
7. Spanish Walz. (Spanish Walz in D.)
6. Dracs o' Brandy. (Yankee Doodle in D.)
5. Bear Dance. (The Road to the Isles in D.)
4. Tangers. (Lover's Scouts) (Blue Bonnets, (Up in the Morning) (Glenaruel Highlanders in A Barron Rocks of Aden in D))
3. Walz. (The Wells o' Werry in G)
2. Polka. (Scenes of life, Polka) in G, Trio in C.
1. Grand March & Circassian Circle. (Scotland for Ever, Huns' Convention in D.)

LIZZIE NORMAN, LANTON, nr TEDBURGH

(aged ca 35-40)

Mrs Norman knew a "besom dance", which she learnt from James Ingles of Deanfoot Farm, Denholm. The "besom" is here actually a brush. Instructions as follows:

Start with end of handle in L hand, the head lying on the floor in front of you with the bristles upwards.

Bar 1. Count 1 Hopping once on L foot, swing R leg forward and up, and —
 Count 2 Bring it over the besom, changing the besom over to R hand under R leg. Drop on R foot, lifting L foot just off floor as you do so.

Bar 2. ~ of bar 1.

Bars 3-8. Repeat bars 1 and 2 three times.

This leaves besom in L hand. This part took 7 seconds, and the music now quickens for the second part.

Bar 9. Count 1. Hopping once on L foot, swing R leg forward and up, and —
 Count 2. Hopping again on L foot, bring R leg over the besom, changing besom over to R hand under R leg. R leg returns to position as shown, R foot just off the floor, and with R knee slightly bent



Bar 10. Count 3. Hopping again on L foot, & swinging R leg forward & back a little as you do so, change the besom from R hand to left hand [not under leg].

Count 4 Repeat Count 1. of bar 9

Bar 11 Count 5 Repeat Count 2. of bar 9

Count 6 Repeat Count 3 of bar 10

Bar 12 Count 7 Repeat Count 1 of bar 1

Count 8 Repeat Count 2 of bar 1.

Bars 13-16. ~ of bars 9-12.

This part takes 5 secs. Then repeat from beginning.

Tune: Keel Row.

Mrs Norman also learnt The Cobbler's Dance from Mr Ingles. It was done on the hunkers, with arms folded, using the kibby step, the foot being shot out sideways & brought back in from the front.



MR YOUNG (George R.), 3 Old Bridge End, Jedburgh, Roxburghshire.

(aged ca 55).

Mrs & Mrs Young were keen dancers in their younger days, and went to dances in the country villages round Jedburgh.

Scotch Reel. Begun in line as shown, ladies facing each other in centre [Query Did man place his hands on his partner's waist?] First part in strathspey tempo, alternately reel of four, then set for 8 bars. Second part in reel tempo alternately reel of four, then swing for 8 bars.

For setting in strathspey tempo, they used Highland Schottische step as described by Mrs Wood [B.1], but close in 3rd position on count (6). The strathspey travelling step was also as described by Mrs Wood [B.1] save that the close on count (2) was in 5th position. For the reel of four in reel tempo, both Mrs & Mrs Young used the chassé, closing in 5th position, but they said that the "hop 123" (closing in 5th position) was also used. When swinging in the reel part, they took ordinary ballroom hold & used the ordinary pivot step. The Glasgow Highlanders step was also used as an alternative setting step in the first part.

O □ □ O.

Hullachan. Begun as Scotch Reel above. The ladies set and swing first. Otherwise as described by Mrs Wood [B.2]. For the pas de Basque they used 5th position, with no jeté at all. Round-about Hullachan as described by Mrs Wood.

Country Dances. They danced (and still knew) Queen Victoria, Triumph, American Dwarf [same as Rony O'More], Roxburgh Castle, Rifleman, Comings. They knew both the R.S.C.D.S. Comings & also the English version [Flowers of Edinburgh]. Apparently there was always disagreement as to how it should be done. They knew no Country Dances in Strathspey tempo. In Triumph, 1st couple went to 2nd place, then 3rd & 4th as with the usual progression.

Roxburgh Castle. The top few people follow each other to left with the chassé step. Then they do a R.H. & L.H. star. Finish by going down the centre & back, & poussette.

Rifleman. Top couple cross over and cast down behind opposite side. Cast back

up to top and stay on opposite side. First four people down the centre arm in arm

② X ④ X ① X ③

as shown, turn & come back, & conclude this part with top couple facing down on contrary sides, second couple facing up.

Then do Cucasian circle:- Ladies cross, men cross, & repeat this to places. Turn your opposite partner. Then chain: man takes partner's R hand, turns her under his own arm, & puts arm round back to begin moving over. Return & swing own partner.

When going down the centre in Country Dances they either used skip step or just skipped. They did not use skip-change-of-step. In reply to the question "how did you change places with the next couple?", Mr Young told me that "Oos joost bur'l". The hands were held naturally in Country Dances, whereas they were on the hips or up in the Reels. They all hooched in Country Dances or Reels.

1954 JFF? Writing
Appeal in 1953
Notes

Mrs I. C. B. JAMIESON, BLAKEHOPE, CLOVENFORDS.

Not much knowledge of her husband's work, but certain things quite clear.

- 1) At variance with Miss Milligan on Technique & outlook. He wanted more enjoyment, less emphasis on technique. Miss Milligan would squash him with "But my mother didn't dance like that" - to which he would reply that her mother danced in polite ballrooms. These dances were performed at fairs by the farm labourers.
- 2) Technique. He himself danced as did the people from whom he collected the dances. He wore ordinary shoes - they often wore boots. His strathspey travelling step was the natural one - swing through to 4th position with no pull or glide. Close anyhow. His skip-change-of-step was the same. His pas de Basque again the natural lazy one.
- 3) He was against "dancing in squares" [This refers to pousette?]. He himself used the waltz pousette.
- 4) He collected the Duxton Reel. Many of his dances were made polite. Miss Milligan's reaction to one: "How vulgar". Thought it was Duxton Reel & man putting hands on lady's waist in front of him.
- 5) Showed me the bonnage's costume for Roxburghshire. The team which he took to the 1935 Albert Hall Festival wore this. One traditional dance & one the son of a traditional dancer. All now scattered.
- 6) Hooched, but kept hands down in County Dances.

MRS PEGGY NICHOLSON, TONGLAND CHICKEN FARM, BURNSIDE, KIRKCUDBRIGHT (aged ca70)

Mrs Nicholson learnt to dance at a polite dancing school, but had been to various kums. The kum was usually begun with a big meal. The dancing would start about 7%, to the music of a fiddler, usually only one. Kums would only be held at big farms with enough workers to make the right atmosphere. The workers on smaller farms, however, often helped on the harvest on neighbouring bigger farms, & they would then be invited to the latter's kum.

Scotch Reel & Tulloch. Danced as one dance, begun in line of four, as usual. At kums, on the last beat of the strathspey travelling step the foot was just swung through into 4th position without any pull or glide, but at dancing school she learnt to bring the foot up the front of the leg. The close was also in 3rd position in the dancing-school version. Ladies danced slightly lower than the men. Hands were held on the hips or in the air for Reels, & the men clapped hands while the ladies danced.[†]

Country Dances, etc. Mrs Nicholson also remembered having done Triumph, Petronella, Waltz Country Dance, Haymakers, Sir Roger de Coverley, Dashing White Sergeant, Flower of Edinburgh, Rory O'More, Eightone, Circassian O, Highland Schottische, Strip the Willow, Drops of Brandy, Pease Stree (?), Cumberland Reel. She had heard (only) of Bab-at-the-Bowster.

In Petronella they used slip-step when going down the middle.* Had never seen R.S.C.D.S. pousette, only that with waltz hold & waltz steps. Fifth position used in pas de Basque. They hands hung by the sides in Country Dances even at kums, but there they did hooch in Country Dances.[†]

MR GEORGE NICHOLSON [husband of above; now dead].

(aged 84).

Went to dancing-school in Kirkcudbright taught by a German lady, "Madam F". Learnt Swords. Thought that he began in quadrant with heel on right & danced clockwise. Learnt also Fling & Sailor Hornpipe. Did the step  + 2 crosses* of 1st August - said it was Sailor Hornpipe step. Thought that the R.S.C.D.S. glide had been taught by Madam F. [But what in?] All highly unreliable.

* Confined by Mr Nicholson.

* Mrs Nicholson thought that they walked in one or two. 68

MR JOSEPH FINNEY, (LATE^T) GOVERNOR, THE WORKHOUSE, KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

(Aged 62)

Mr Finney was born & lived until 9 years ago (1944) in Drumnadrochit, Glen Urquhart. Prior to 1923, he claimed that his repertoire was Petronella, Triumph, Caucasian Circle, The Nut, Strip the Willow, Pease Stael, Roy O' More, Cumberland Reel, The Bumplin, Glasgow Highlanders, Speed the Plough (also, though less often, known as Inverness Country Dance), Soldier's Joy (not very popular), Greig's Pipes, Haymakers, Dashing White Sergeant, Blue Bonnets, The Eight Men of Moidart, Kenmuir's on & awa', Highland Laddie [in Perthshire], Haughs o' Cromdale [not much], Corn rigs. But possible confusion with what he has done later, for he has done a good deal of country dancing.

Apparently learnt ca 1914 from an old teacher who would then have been ca 70. This old teacher taught The Bumplin, similar certainly to original, but Mr Finney could not say if it was the same. He also taught high-cutting. He also performed a solo dance in reel tempo called "Dougal Cratur"*. All that Mr Finney could remember of it was that the Irish rocking step was used in it. Hands were mostly on the hip. More footwork, in tap style, & less knee bending. Possibly only seen twice, in Glen Urquhart.

Glasgow Highlander was the only Country Dance in strathspey tempo. Here the travelling step was: (1) Step; (2) close in 3rd or 5th; (3) step; (4) Hop, & bring other foot to 3rd low aerial, with the ball of that foot resting against the instep. In the pas de Basque, either 3rd or 5th position was used. A skipping step was used for going down the middle, & the passeste was performed with waltz hold & waltz step.

In the Scotch Reel the strathspey travelling step was similar to that above save for count (4) which was Hop & bring the other foot to 5th near aerial. He had also seen 5th front aerial. Men held their hands up, ladies on their hips, & both hunched.

He thought he had seen a dance called Rounten Glen at a dance-hall in Glasgow run by a man called McCracken, ca 1925.

* Workhouse now out of use.

[#] Character in Rob Roy.

MISS MARGARET PATERSON, Ivy COTTAGE, AUCHENCAIRN.

76
(Aged ~~ca~~ 75)

(Died 1959)

Miss Paterson started to teach dancing round about 1920 [on the death of her mother], but far a good many years prior to that had been pianist in a Dalbeattie dance band, & played in many of the villages around. She was an early contributor to the R.S.C.D.S. albums. When she started teaching, she kept careful notebooks of all the dances which she knew. She learnt Highland dancing from Mr Riley's father [see B.15⁽⁷⁴⁾], but also learnt "Scottish Waltz" from a pupil of D.G. MacLennan's in London. Of most interest when talking about country dancing in the district.

The dances which were once done at Auchencairn[†] were as follows: Paddy O'Rafferty Pease Strae [she gave these dances to the R.S.C.D.S. The latter was learnt from two old people who came to Auchencairn from elsewhere], Triumph [with normal progression & not as in R.S.C.D.S. album], Petronella, The Nut, Drops of Brandy [to "Pop Goes the Weasel"], Flowers of Edinburgh, Circassian Circle [ladies cross, then the men cross, then repeat back to places, followed by rest as R.S.C.D.S.], Cumberland Reel [not very often], Haymakers. In addition, Jessie's Hornpipe & Haughs o' Cromdale were done in Dalbeattie. Scotch Reel, Tullock & 8-some were also done.

Miss Paterson could not remember the figures of either Jessie's Hornpipe or the Haughs o' Cromdale, but the latter was in one of her notebooks [see following page]. Some of these dances were taught by a Mr Buck, an old dancing master.[#]

In County Dances & Reels, the Reel tempo travelling step was either chârîé or hop 123. The pas de Basque was a 3 beat step, & was probably in 5th position [rather than 3rd], but that was all. The travelling step in the Strathspey part of the Reel was the natural step-i.e. swinging the foot through to 4th position on the hop. She had never seen the R.S.C.D.S. version, even in classes. For the pousette, ballroom hold was used, & waltz steps. She had never seen the square pousette.

The Scotch Reel was begun in line and was the classical version. ladies & men hooked in Reels, & the men raised their hands, but in County dances, there was no hooking (by either sex) or raising of hands.

Miss Paterson also showed us three Strathspey steps for the Scotch reel. These were as follows:—

[†] i.e. prior to 1923. Miss Paterson was exceptionally clear on what was pre-R.S.C.D.S.

[#] A teacher of this name was also known in Jedburgh, but we can't remember who mentioned him.

Step 1. ✓

- (1) Hop on L, point R in 5th.
- (2) Hop on L, point R in open int.
- (3) Hop on L, point R in 5th rear.
- (4) Hop on L, point R in 2nd.
- (5) As (1)
- (6) As (2)
- (7) Spring on to R, L in 5th rear ~~low~~ aerial position
- (8) Hop on R, point L in open int.

Step 2. ↗

- (1) Hop on L, R in 5th
- (2) Hop on L, shake R out (to side?)
- (3) Step on R in 2nd.
- (4) Close L behind R.
- (5) As (1)
- (6) As (2)
- (7) Spring on to both feet, landing with L in 5th front
- (8) Hop on R (with L shaken out to side?)

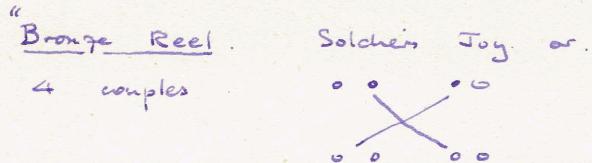
Step 3. ✓

- (1)-(4) As step 1.
- (5)-(8) Walk 3 steps + hop on R (bringing L up in front), making one whole turn to right.

+ R.L.R.

71
B.12.

The following descriptions were noted by Miss Paterson ca 1921 [definitely before the R.S.C.D.S. era.]



all galop round to places. top right hand couple and bottom left hand couple galop over to each others places. other two couples do same. first two couples galop back, then other two couples galop back. then first figure of Quadsilles down the sides. after ladies chain all galop round to places and repeat galloping across then Quadsilles with the two top couples and the two bottom couples." [See letter on following page]

"Haughs o' Cromdale C.D. H. schottische time

First gent take right hand of second lady and hop round 1:... 2:... first lady and 2nd gent give right hand across & hop round also 3-4 change to left hands & hop in opposite direction. Then "Highland Schottische with own partner & on to next couple down the row.

"Duke of Perth or Pease Stroe

1st gentleman & partner take right arm & hop round twice. then gent round behind second lady and partner round behind second gentleman, then meet, take left arm & hop round once. then gent & second lady take right arm & hop round once, while at the same time partner & third gent. take right arm & hop round once. 1st lady & gent again meet & take the left arm hopping round once then gent & third lady take right arm & hop round once, while partner & 2nd gent take right arm & hop round once. 1st lady & gent meet again, take left arm & hop round twice. then gent sets to 2nd lady (123 hop) & runs round her sets to third lady & runs round her, then the three of them finishing up with reel of three (figure of ∞) while partner sets first to third gent & runs round then to second gent & runs round then reel of three with them. then both cross over back to own places & begin with next couple.

Liz Cottage
Auchencairn
By Castle Douglas
Nov 6th 1953

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Flett.

I was so pleased to hear from you and to know that my little books had been of some use. and to know that you are trying out the more natural and easygoing style of Country dancing among the members of your Scottish Dance Society.

I shall be interested to hear sometime if they enjoy it more than the very careful and precise way it is taught now.

Well, about the C. D. "The Lee Reel" my mind is a complete blank. I cannot remember ever dancing it nor can I recollect teaching it. But I must have done either when I added - "and turn" to allow for the music, - two bars for set and two for turn, - for a good many years before I started teaching dancing. I was pianist in a Dalbeattie dance band and saw much dancing in the small towns and villages where we played but did little dancing myself. and it was in Dalbeattie that I first saw "Haughs of Cromdale" and the Bronze Reel. I have not yet managed to get to Dalbeattie with enough time to find if there are any left who used to go to these dances but I hope to go soon.

Above the Haugh of Cromdale" the Scotchmen have won
 Fast and Jolly, not like the C. D. Shakspeare line, and the
 dancers did not take the Highland Schottisch step across the
 dance as described in Book 4, Bars 9-10. But the two couples
 (main arm on partners waist) danced a Highland Schottisch
 and with the eight steps around arrived at the next couple
 down. The tune would be Kafiroogulum. Orange & Blue
 "What a Hausten Kummer" on other H. S. time.
 I am studying the note in my old book, of the Bronze Reel
 and think I can make them a little more clear. I
 wish I had the Re. So many of these dances fade from
 my memory. My classes came to an abrupt stop,
 I am sad to say, at the beginning of the last war when
 all the Halls were commandeered for Soldiers and
 when the war was over I fell I was too old to begin
 again although I got many requests begging me
 to do so. Well that is not helping you
 any so I shall now write the note to
 the Bronze Reel. With my sister's and my
 very kindest regards to you and your Flott
 and hoping you will write again if you think
 I might be of use

I am sincerely
 Margaret Patterson

Eighttime Reel time

Top
 Middle
 Bottom
 Left
 Right
 Inside
 Outside
 Main arm on partner's waist

4. Couple. Standing 2 couples of
 bottom of sets facing 2 couples sit left
 Bottom

- Fig 1. All 4 couples gallop (ship ship) (means arm on partner's waist)
 round in circle to places.
2. Top right hand couple and bottom left couple
 (that is left hand taken from top)
 gallop or ship ship across diagonally to each other places
 Then the other two come couple as the same
3. First two couples gallop back to place
 2nd two couples
4. Now first figure of Quadrilles as far as ladies
 chain is danced with each two couples
 down their side of self (cross over ^{themselves} side, ladies chain)
 (They did not do right + left in crossing over but
 simply walked across the ladies preceding the men by
 a step and into their right places)
 now begin again as Figure 1. 2. and 3 but
 this time (sister)
 City the two top couples + the two bottom couples
 One gallop round on bridge to finish and then complete the
 dance can be danced in again if wished

JOHN RILEY, 33 HIGH ST., DALBEATTIE.

(aged 67)

Quite the nastiest little man we have ever met. Wits even nastier. A dancing teacher, expert tap & clog dancer, & was also a professional Highland dancer. Learnt his dancing from his father.

Knows Liverpool & Lancashire clog hompipes. Has other steps composed by himself. At one time, ca 30 years ago, all the young men of the district competed amongst themselves as to who could compose the best step. Clogs were once common in Dalbeattie. He himself has competed in S. Wales & Lancashire. Steps very close & feet almost straight. Not like Scottish trebling.

I showed him Anderson's double treble, & he confirmed that it was so called. The double treble à la Mrs Cramb was not known to him as a named step, & he had names for most of them.

His Highland dancing was of no interest - modern sort of stuff.

MRS MUNDELL, PAINTERS, HIGH ST., DALBEATTIE.

(aged ca 55)

When she came ca 50 years ago from London, everyone wore clogs. Keen dancer ca 1920, but cannot remember dances now. Remembered doing Jessie Hompipe & knew that it wasn't The R.S.C.D.S. dance of that name, but nothing more.

MR GEORGE KIRK, PORT ST., DALBEATTIE

(aged 81).

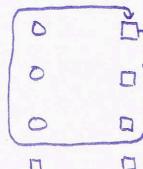
learnt his dancing when he was 17 or 18. He could do the Liverpool & Lancashire clog hompipes, which he learnt from a Glasgow man. He remembered learning "Haugh o' Cramdale" from a man called Carter in Dumfries, but thought it was: Top man turn 1st lady, down centre & back, Tap man turn 2nd lady, down centre & back, pousette.

Jessie Hompipe as follows lady cast round 2nd & 3rd ladies & top 3 men to place. Man does the same. Down middle & back, Pousette.

The pousette was done with waltz hold & waltz step. Had never seen R.S.C.D.S. glide.

He held classes & dances in the Town Hall at one time.

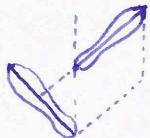
[†] Certainly not "H of C". But what was it?



MISS E. B. MCNICOLL, LINTHAUGH, 13 PRESTWICH AVENUE, CULCHETH, Nr WARRINGTON.

Mrs McNicoll learnt her dancing from her father, now dead. He was born ca 1864, learnt his dancing in Arbroath, & later taught in Part Glasgow. He was well-known as a professional Highland dancer. He knew the Highland Fling, Sword-dance, Shean-Tribhans, Sailor Hornpipe, Irish Washerwoman, Irish hornpipe (properly), Clog dance (?), and a "trotting dance" called "The Blue-bells of Scotland" performed to the tune of that name (Oh where, tell me where, does my Highland laddie dwell) followed by Annie Lunn.

Mrs McNicoll has been very well taught, & uses the five positions in her dancing, making note-taking easy. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th are as usual, but her 4th position, which is not, explains a number of discrepancies here between various writers. In her 4th position, the foot is at the same time in front of 1st posn & diagonally forward from 3rd position. The knee is then bent, the calf vertical, and the heel well forward. In these notes, "4th" will refer to this position.



Highland Fling.

1st Step. As usual, but with hand up for turn. When the foot is up in front of the leg, it is in 5th aerial.

2nd Step:-

- Bar 1. Count 1. Hop on L + point R in 2nd.
 Count 2 Hop on L + bring R to 5th near aerial
 Count 3 Hop on L + point R in 4th
 Count 4 Hop on L + beat R in 5th front aerial twice.

Bar 2 Four backsteps as usual, finishing with R in 5th front aerial.

Repeat in usual manner.

3rd Step:-

- Bar 1. Count 1. Hop on L + point R in 4th
 Count 2 Hop on L + beat R twice in 5th front aerial
 Count 3 Spring on to R, crossed about 6" over L, + bring L to 5th near aerial.
 Count 4 Spring on to both feet with L in 5th front position.

Bars 2 and 3, ~ and repeat of bar 1.

Bar 4 Turn as in first step.

Repeat with opposite feet.

4th Step:-

Bar 1. As in 2nd step.

Bar 2. Count 1. Cross R leg over in front of L leg, * put R toe down beside and to the left of L toe, toes touching, and rock over to the left so that the R heel nearly (but not quite) touches the ground. The two Toes must not leave the ground here.

Count 2 Rock back so that the L heel nearly touches the ground.

Counts 3 + 4, ~ and repeat of Count 2. Repeat as usual.

5th Step :-

Bar 1. Count 1 Hop on L + point R in 2nd.

Count 2 Hop on L + bring R to 5th rear aerial

Count 3 Hop on L + point R toe in 4th

Count 4. Hop on L + point R heel in 4th.

Bars 2 and 3 ~ and repeat of bar 1.

Bar 4 Turn as in first step.

Repeat with opposite feet.

6th Step:-

Bar 1. As 1st step.

Bar 2. As bar 1 of 2nd step.

Bar 3 Repeat bar 1.

Bar 4 Turn as in first step.

Repeat with opposite feet.

7th Step.

Bar 1 Count 1. Hop on L + point R in 2nd.

Count 2. Hop on L + bring R to 5th rear aerial } Making $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to L on these two beats.

Counts 3 + 4. Repeat 1 & 2.

Bar 2. Repeat bar 1. [Making one whole turn on the two bars.]

Bar 3. Counts 1 & 2. ~ of bar 1, but with no turn

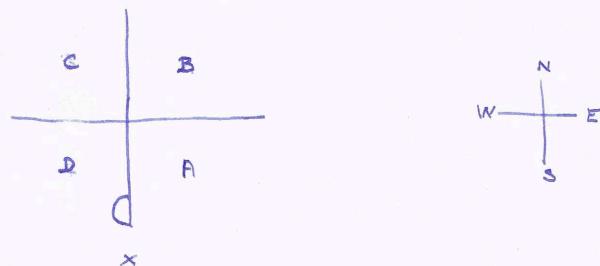
Counts 3 & 4 As 1 and 2 of bar 1, but with no turn.

Bar 4. Four backsteps. Then repeat with opposite feet.

8th Step :- This is the standard one.

Sword Dance.

The step here is a three beat pas de Basque, using 5th position on the 2nd beat, & with no excessive noise on the 3rd beat.



1st Step:-

Bar 1. Pas de Basque in A, facing N.

Bar 2. Pas de Basque in A, facing E

Bar 3. Pas de Basque in A, facing S

Bar 4. Pas de Basque in A, facing W

Bar 5. Pas de Basque in B, facing W

Bar 6. Pas de Basque in A, facing W

Bar 7, 8. Few high cuts in A & B facing W [done over scabbard, not out at point]

Repeat as usual.

2nd Step:- Standard one of no interest.

3rd Step :-

Bar 1. Count 1 Hop on L in D + point R toe in A, facing E

Count 2 Hop on L in D + point R heel in A, facing E

Bar 2 Count 3 Hop on L in D + point R toe in A with toe turned markedly inwards, facing E.

Count 4 Repeat Count 2 [with toe turned out], facing E.

Bars 3 + 4. ~ of bars 1 + 2, still dancing in A + D + facing E.

Bar 5 Count 1 Hop on L in D + point R toe in A, facing N.

Count 2 Hop on L in D + point R heel in A, facing N

Bar 6 Count 1 Hop on R in A = point L toe in 5th (in A), facing N

Count 2 Hop on R in A = point L heel in 5th (in A), facing N.

Bars 7-8. Few jumps across scabbard in A & B, facing N.

Repeat as usual.

4th Step :-

- Bars 1-6 As ours, beginning with two pas de Basque in A & D, facing N.
- Bar 7. Count 1. Hop on R in A & point L in 2nd in D (facing N).
- Count 2. Hop on R in A & point L in B, still facing N.
- Bar 8 Count 3. Spring on to L in A, turning round by right ($\frac{3}{4}$ turn) to face W, bringing R to 5th aerial front.
- Count 4 Spring on to both feet with R in 5th front.

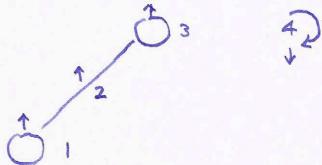
Repeat as usual.

Shean-Tribhais.

Much of this was standard, and I did not note it. The only steps of interest were as follows:-

3rd Step:-

- Bar 1. "1234", hopping on L and ending with R close to L in 5th low aerial.
- Bar 2. Count "and". Pause in that position.
Count "one, two, three" Run forward three steps on toes, R, L, R, diagonally forward to R.
- Bar 3. N of bar 1, finishing with L in 2nd intermediate aerial.
- Bar 4. Count "and one" Hop on R & shake L in 2nd aerial, turning to R.
Count "two" Complete the turn by repeating the last movement
Count "three" Spring into 5th position, L in front.



On bar 1, L arm is up, head looking down, body slightly hunched forward. On bar 2 the head is thrown back as you run & the arms are changed. On bar 3, the R arm is up & head normal. On bar 4, change to both arms up.

Another step is as follows.

- Bar 1. Count 1. Hop on L & point R in 2nd.
Count 2. Hop on L & bring R to 5th rear aerial
Count 3 Hop on L & bring R to 5th front aerial
Count 4 Hop on L & shake R twice in open int.
- Bar 2 Count 5-8 Back & forwards, as in "balance & back"

MRS MILNE (née AMY FLETCHER), 124 MORLEY RD., LONDON, E.10.

Learned Highland dancing between the ages of 6 + 14 (1917-1925) from Madam A. Watson, King St., Aberdeen. [mother of Bobbie Watson]. Very vague about most things, but remembered Shean-Truibhas only as a dance for four people. Had no recollections of it as a solo [but had never been to a Highland Games]. Quite certain about this. Had danced with 2 boys + another girl + had always been on the end, so presumably began like



1. Reel of four, giving right shoulders to begin. Probably end people returned to places + centre pair exchanged places, but of this she wasn't sure. The step used was the usual Shean-T screeching step, twice R. foot, twice L. foot, twice R. foot, and so on back to places, finishing with two springs. Both hands were up for the screeching steps, and down on the hips - fishwife fashion - for the two springs. When the R foot was being used, the R shoulder + arm were forward + vice-versa.

2. Six' pas de Basque + four high-cuts. Cuts well out to side on p.d.B. Hands down for them, + up for high-cuts

3. As. 1.

4. Onwards. Here Mrs Milne was very vague + I had to prompt. The dance was alternately Reel, set, Reel, set, ... with few setting steps. The first was the six p.d.B + high-cuts. The others were something like

- Our 2nd step (kick out + to the side), with hand-movements as in our step, but finishing with high-cuts
 1234. in front, behind, 1234 + back-shake.
 - Idop, heel, toe, heel, + shuffle (twice), then repeat with 1234 + pivot.
- But not certain of details.

There was no quick-time. The tune was "Whistle o'er the lave o't", + they danced to fiddle, pipes, or piano.

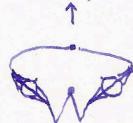
* Also 'Schliffing step'. Skimming - to move lightly and smoothly along the ground, to move as scarcely touching the ground. J. Jamieson, Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language, Edinburgh 1808

Also modern golf term SCHAFF to strike w/ta gla
surface-imitative -Scottish

Had two teachers, (A) Mrs Barnett and her daughter in Lancashire, ca 1905, and (B) McEwen in Glasgow ca 1909. From both he learnt Lancashire, Quadrilles, Cuckooian (C), Haymakers, Flowers of Edinburgh, Dashing White Sergeant, Reel of Tullock, Eightsome. (A) taught other country dances, but these he could not remember.

Cuckooian (C). First part:— ladies exchange places, then men do the same, then all repeat back to places. This was done with a walking step. Then set and turn partners, followed by ladies chain. Here the men (at least) used "hop 123" and gave one hand only to the ladies — there was no attempt to put the other hand round behind the lady to help her round.

Country Dances. (a) When going down centre (e.g. Petronella), the couple faced half-front, + joined inner and outer hands. (A) taught the "skip-step" here, while (B) taught the "hop 123".



(b) Pousette. This was done with a diamond pattern, performing one and a half diamonds in six steps + using the last two to return to places. (B) at least taught polka (i.e. 'hop 123') step here. He couldn't remember what (A) taught, with one step to each side of the diamond. If the dancers couldn't polka, they waltzed.

The Reel of Tullock had no Strathspey portion. The swings were one-arm, with the other hand held in the air — by both men + ladies. Men (only) hooked in the Reels. + neither men nor women hooked in the Country Dances. In the latter, both men + women had hands down.

"Hop 123" was used for the "circle-8" in the Eightsome.

At dances, men wore light patent leather shoes, either laced or with the big silver buckle. With the kilt, the latter only were worn. The light Highland dancing pumps were worn only by professionals. The ladies wore patent shoes, with heels of about $3\frac{1}{4}$ ", fastened either with a narrow strap + button or with the large buckle as for the men.⁺

⁺ Mrs Flett used this.

⁺ Mr Flett confirmed this.

The following notes, except where indicated, are based on conversations with Mrs MacNab during her visit here, Aug 19-21, 1954.

1897-1966 aged 57

Probably aged 55-60. Has son aged 18, & our impression was that she was 9 or 10 when she went to Canada, this being in 1907. Now crippled with rheumatism.

Before she went to Canada, she learnt Highland dancing of the standard type from E. E. Henderson of Govan. She also mentioned an "old Mr Sutherland" who taught her dancing, & both of us got the impression that this was in Scotland. He taught the Strathspey steps, & sometimes called them ladies steps.

Soon after she went to Canada, & for some while afterwards, she & her sister took lessons from an old dancing teacher & piper, Mr D. C. Mathers. He had come from Loch Carron, Ross-shire, where he had been piper to some lady. A scandal in which she was concerned had forced him to come to Canada. At the time he was teaching them, he was becoming very religious & would sometimes give them tracts during his lessons. He did not teach professionally in the usual sense, only my. & her sister being his only pupils. Later he went to the States, & there recovered from his religious phase. He must have taught them between 1907 & 1914. Neither Mrs my. nor her sister liked the non-standard dances which he taught them, for the dances were of a very vigorous character, but her mother[†] made her write the dances down in a notebook.

During the 1914-18 war, Mrs my. learnt some other non-standard dances from a Mrs Fassiefern Bain who taught languages in the High School in Vancouver.[#] Mrs Bain was the daughter of the Rev. Alexander Stewart, "Nether Lochaber", and had come to Vancouver ca 1913 [though Mrs my. did not know whether she then came directly from Scotland]. Mrs Bain suggested to her that she learn some dances other than the standard ones, & taught Mrs my. a fair number of dances which she had learnt in Scotland. Here again Mrs my. was the only pupil, & Mrs Bain described the figure & showed her the steps. At that time Mrs my. was more interested in boys & jazz, but her mother made her put the dances down in her notebook.[#] Mrs my. did not learn all the dances which Mrs Bain knew.

^T In letter A she says Mr Mathers made her put the dances down

[#] These from letter A.

[†] Was Mrs my. still at school, or was she training as a teacher of dancing? Or did her mother have this career in mind for her?

In 1935 Mrs M. came to St. Andrews & took her Teaching Certificate, this being her first contact with Miss Milligan. In 1948 she returned to St. Andrews & here taught the four dances which were published that year, returned again in 1952 and taught four more dances, and again in 1954, when she taught a further three. In addition, she has taught dances to several private teachers.

She has at present a school of about 100 pupils. She teaches national dancing, Polish, Puebla Indian, Indian, Mexican, English, Welsh, & has "collected" dances from various national groups in Vancouver & elsewhere. She adjudicates at Festivals of National Dancing, & judges Highland dancing.

She has at least two teams who take part in exhibitions, her "ladies" [The Caledonian ladies?] who wear white frocks & Tartan sashes, and her Teen-agers who do the exhibition dances [her ladies only do country-dances]. The girls in this later Team wear full dress - montrose jacket with white belt (sic!), & blackcock feathers in their Balmorals.

The information above is quite clear and precise. The remaining information is not nearly so precise, but it does combine to give a fairly clear picture of her work in collecting dances. We couldn't press our questions here too far, for they would have made her very suspicious of our motives in asking them.

Apparently she has never "collected" dances in the usual technical sense, i.e. she does not seem ever to have gone to complete strangers asking if they knew of old dances. Whenever teachers from other districts came to Vancouver, she would take lessons from them. Similarly, if she met teachers from other districts at Dancing Teachers Conventions, she would learn what they had to offer. As for collecting in the technical sense, the nearest she has ever got to it is asking questions of any old people who come into the Scottish circle in Vancouver. But she said that she "couldn't just go round asking people in general - they would think you were queer." Her brother, however, seems to have done so - on her behalf.

There did not seem to be any real sense of collecting for historical or scientific reasons. The earliest items, of course, were simply learnt while she was learning to dance. The later items would seem to have been acquired more with the idea of increasing her stock-in-trade as a dancing teacher rather than with the idea of preserving the dances.

I don't think she has ever inquired too closely into the history of the dances she has "collected". She has been keen to find any legend or tradition connected

with them, but I don't think she has ever asked where her informants obtained the dances, how long it is since they left Scotland, & so on. Nor does she know on what sort of occasions these dances were performed - I don't think she has ever inquired. Nor has she ever asked about shoes, dress, etc.

She doesn't seem to have found the sort of dance one would expect. Most of her collection consists of solos & set dances. She has very few country dances, had never met "Cath nan coileach", "Ruidheadh nan coileach dubha", or "Cailleach an Dudain"[†] [never even heard of this], had never heard of the "Shetland Reel", and had never come across "Beistle's March" [or "the Earl of Errol"], "King of Sweden"[‡] [as such] or "Jack on the Green". She has never been to Nova Scotia, though several of her informants came from there.

Most of her informants were old, Leif Hansen [see later] being an exception. She acquired most of her dances prior to 1930, one found in 1936 [[§] forget which] being described as a "recent" addition.

Mrs M has it fixed in her mind that every dance should represent its title in some way. I gathered from one remark that the audiences at her shows expect this. She twice showed evident puzzlement because the R.S.C.D.S. dances don't satisfy this criterion. First was when I mentioned "The Gentle Shepherd", which is in 6/8 time. She thought it ought to be gentle - in strathspey tempo. When I told her there was no relation between dance & tune she was quite perturbed, thought it very wrong. I found the same reaction when I mentioned "The Golden Pheasant". That represents China", she told me. "How can that be a Scottish dance?"

She has three Welsh dances in her collection, in one, "The Bells of Aberdovey" which is a set dance, the dancers wear bells on their fingers & at one stage stop & ring out the chimes of Aberdovey. Another, "Jenny Jones," performed to the "Ash Grove" is a solo.

Like Miss Molligan, she doesn't know what "traditional" really means. I spent the trip on the ferry over to Liverpool explaining the meaning of "traditional" & "folk".

[†] Yet Vancouver has a big ex-Hebridean population.

[‡] Except w/ Mrs Craib's booklet, of course.

To sum up, our conclusions were as follows:-

- (i) Mrs M. has rarely or never "collected" in the technical sense. Her dances were largely taught to her by various dancing teachers, either as a child or later. Only this can explain the absence of country dances and folk dances from her collection, and the money she has spent on her collection [see letter A].
- (ii) Her interest in the dances at the time she collected them would appear to be that of a dancing-teacher acquiring a stock-in-trade. It is possible that the historical emphasis only came later (possibly 1948, when she saw the interest her dances created at St. Andrews?) This would explain the lack of information about sources.
- (iii) So far as she is concerned, all her dances are "authentic", but the meaning which she attributes to this word is not clear. But a collection formed in the way this has been must contain a number of fakes - dances composed for little girls by dancing teachers in Canada [in the style of the "Butterfly Dance", the "Japanese Fan Dance" & so on]. The Welsh dance "The Bells of Aberdovey" is very obviously an example of this class.

It is probable that one could sort the genuinely Scottish dances from the fakes only by having the full collection laid before one together with all available information about sources. The problem is made more difficult by our lack of knowledge about traditional Scottish dancing, and by the element of mime which occurs in both genuine Scottish dances & "national" dances composed for little girls by dancing teachers.

On technique, Mrs MacNab commented as follows:-

- (i) She had never seen the R.S.C.D.S. strathspey travelling step prior to her visit to St. Andrews in 1948. In other words, she had never seen it in Canada, nor had she learnt it at St. Andrews in 1935.
- (ii) She thought, but could not be quite certain, that the ship-step was not used in hands-round prior to the R.S.C.D.S. era. It was certainly not used in the 8-songe.
- (iii) She had never seen the square pousette prior to its introduction by the R.S.C.D.S. The pousette she learned originally was the usual "take ballroom hold & waltz or polka round into the next place". There was no definite pattern.
- (iv) She had never heard the R.S.C.D.S. allemande or any similar figure called by that name prior to the R.S.C.D.S. era - it was always "promenade".