

Mr and Mrs Jack Akrigg, Hobson's Farm, Dentdale, ages 76 and 71 respectively.

Mr Akrigg was born at Ribble Head, and at the age of 14 went to the Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale, as a servant. He was extremely keen on dancing in his younger days, and travelled long distances by bicycle to attend dances. He was also sometimes employed by young people from Chapel-le-Dale as a pony-and-trap driver, to take them to dances, and then he naturally attended the dances himself. He told me that he has danced in Sedbergh, Dent, Ingleton, Clapham, Bentham (4m. W of Clapham), Selside, and Horton-in-Ribblesdale. However, he has never danced in Wharfedale, Wensleydale, or Swaledale.

Mrs Akrigg was born and brought up in Dentdale, midway between Dent and Cowgill. Though as keen on dancing as her husband, she didn't have the transport facilities to take her far from home, and she danced only in Dent village and in the schoolroom at Cowgill.

At all the dances which Mr and Mrs Akrigg attended, the repertoire consisted of

Quadrilles	Lancers	Square - 8
Swing - 6	Turn - off	Cottagers
Circassian ☺ *	3 - Reel	Highland Fling
Waltz	Polka	Vassourana *
Polka Mayowka *	Heel & Toe Polka	Ban Dance
Schottische	Ideal Schottische *	

Mr Akrigg has heard of Kendall Ghyll, though never done it. Neither of them had heard of Brass Nuts, Holly Berry, or Buttered Peas.

Mr Akrigg attended dancing classes at Bleamoor, Ribble Head, when he was aged about 10-12 (thus ca 1895). These classes were held by a Scotman of the name of Urquhart, who was a mason's labourer working on the Ribble Head viaduct at the

time. Urquart, who was then a man of 40 or over, lived at Selsdon, and went back home each week-end. While working on the Ribble Head viaduct, he lodged with Mr Aknig's parents. He brought his food for the week in a box, which he tied to a stick and slung over his shoulder. He made up his own midday meal, but the people with whom he lodged made his evening meal for him from the food which he provided. The charge was 2/6 a week for the bed.

Urquart held these classes at Bleamoor as a form of relaxation, and made no charge for his services. The classes were held in a house, two or three nights a week, from October until the end of March, and were run for 3 or 4 years while Urquart was working on the viaduct.

The dances which Mr Urquart taught were those which are not stamped on the list above. He included the 3-Reel, and taught steps for this, "but the 3-Reel was a dance you could pick up yourself best". He also taught the boys how to ask the girls to dance with them; they had to ask her formally "Would you mind having this dance with me, please"; but there was no instruction that they should bow to her. Urquart had about a dozen pupils at a time, and their ages ranged from about 9 to 20. Urquart played the fiddle for his classes, and occasionally gave them a tune on his pipes.

Urquart was the only teacher known to Mr Aknig in this district.

Mr Aknig thinks that there were once dancing classes in Dentdale, but she herself has never been to classes.

By travelling about, Mr Aknig managed to attend about one dance a week throughout the winter. He, however, was by no means typical in his respect. His wife, who danced only about once a month, was much nearer the norm. In most places

the dances were held in the schoolrooms. Sometimes also they were held in the public houses. For instance, when Mr Alking was at the Hill Inn, they had dances in the big room there, for which they had an extension of their licence until 2 am. In their young days it cost only 6d for a dance. The fiddlers got 5/- for the night.

One of the big dances in Dentdale between The two Wars was the Beaters' Ball. Lady Henry Bentinck had Deeside House (now the Y.H.) as a shooting lodges and during the shooting season had a "Beaters' Ball" for all her estate folk.

I noted one casual remark of Mr Alking's "Dance!", he said, "I've taken my jacket off to dance many times". It was apparently not all that usual to do so.

3-Reel. This dance was done regularly in their young days, but was almost entirely a men's dance. They can only recollect 2 women who ever took part in it. One was a Miss Sunter of Dentdale (now incapacitated) and a Miss Parrington from Kendal (now aged ca 60). Miss Parrington came over from Kendal to give an exhibition of step-dancing - she brought her clogs with her.

(1) (2) (3)

To perform the 3-Reel, (1) and (2) face each other and "step-dance", both performing the same step. Then (2) turns about and faces (3), and these two now perform the same step once again. They then dance a reel of three (which Mr and Mrs Alking called a "chain"). I'm not quite certain how this reel was performed. It started with one pair giving right shoulders to each other, and then was an extra half-loop on it which interchanged the positions of (1) and (2). The whole sequence was then repeated with (1) in the middle, and this time (1) and (3) interchanged to bring (3) into the middle. Then the whole sequence was repeated once again. I'm not sure whether there were further repetitions.

The tune was a single or double jig, probably the latter.

There was only one step used for setting*, and this was repeated throughout the dance. I asked Mr Akingg to demonstrate this step, but he is rather crippled by arthritis, and he couldn't manage a clear demonstration. However, by dint of demonstrations on my part and his, I gathered that the step was a simple flatter, done with a tremendous amount of energy, i.e.

1 1 - Hop on LF and raise RF well off ground by bending R knee



and a Double beat with RF in semi 4th position.

2 and a ~ all.

My first demonstration was of a flatter done low down, and Mr Akingg commented that there was one man who danced it exactly like that. So some variation was permissible, but the normal style was the vigorous one.

In the reel of three ("chain") some walked, some danced. It depended how much beer they had had. They did not give hands to each other in this reel. In the stepping, the arms swing by the sides, swinging from the elbow, the R arm coming up as the dancer lands on the LF, and vice-versa.

This step for setting had no particular name.

Square-8. They last saw this done about 50 years ago. 4 couples stand in the usual square formation.

"High and low couples" meet up, cross hands, and go round and back [i.e. they dance a RH and LH star, using walking step].

Side couples do the same.

* This information later turned out to be false, as I expected.

"High and low" couples "waltz round in the middle", i.e. they take ballroom hold and waltz counter-clockwise round each other in the middle of the set
Side couples repeat.

All 8 form a ring by putting arms round the waist of adjacent people, and they all go round to the left with the pivot step [this is a "baby basket" for 8]

The above instructions were given by Mrs Akengg, and confirmed by Mr Akengg. She said it was "a very simple thing". He said it was similar to the first (?) figure of Quadrilles. I queried whether it contained a ladies' chain or a baby-basket for 4, but they were quite adamant that it didn't. They were also quite certain that it did not contain a figure in which the top couple danced with one side couple while the bottom couple danced with the other.

There was no step-dancing in this, but occasionally people stamped a sort of introduction before beginning, similar to the Cumberland "if you're an angel, etc."

Cottagers. Couple meets couple round the room.

Quadrille R + L with opposite couple (start off together, partners keep side by side)

Then take ballroom hold with partner and "spin-up", using pivot step, passing the opposite couple by the right and moving on to the next couple.

Turn off. Longways set right down the hall, sometimes as many as 16 couples in it.

All cast off, following 1st man and 1st woman, going right up to the top of the set before turning down, and going right down to the bottom of the hall.

All meet partners at the bottom, join crossed hands, and galop up to places.

Top couple, with crossed hands joined, galop to the bottom of the set and back to place.

Top couple, with ballroom hold, polka to the bottom of the set.

Repeat with second couple in top place, etc.

Swing-6. Non-progressive; man and two ladies facing another man and two ladies.

"Meet up and back, meet up again and twist the ladies over"

Do the same back again

"Spin-up" with the RH lady, "spin-up" with the LH lady

"Chain of 3".

"That's a warm up".

Mr and Mrs Atkinson simply recited off the above instructions as soon as I asked them about the figures of this dance. Further elucidation provided the following details:



The trios face, each man taking his two partners by their outer hands (Diag 1). They advance 4 steps, retire 4

steps, then advance again, and the men twist their

partners over to the opposite man. To perform this twist, each man swings his hands down and backwards, drawing his partner towards him, then swings his hands rightwards and up over the ladies' heads as they complete their turn (Diag 2).



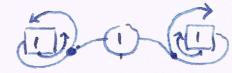
Diag 1

The ladies end with the opposite man, the RH lady of

each pair passing between the two opposite ladies, the

LH lady passing them by the ^{right} left. Men now fall back

to places, the ladies still facing in their original direction (Diag 3), with nearer hands joined.



Diag 2.

The trios now repeat the advance and retire (ladies actually

go backwards towards the opposite trio), then advance, and

again the men twist the ladies over to the opposite side,

and all fall back.



Diag.3

Each man now swings his RH partner with ballroom hold and pivot step.

Then he repeats this with his LH partner.

Then the trios dance a reel of 3, each man giving R shoulder to his RH partner to begin. Repeat ad lib.

There used to be competitions for the best set of dancers in the Swinging-6 "up and down the country". This was Mr Akniggs own phrase, but when I pressed him on this point, he would only give Morecambe as the only specific place where these competitions took place.

Highland Fling. Done to the Keel Row. Couple dance. Start with man facing partner, about 3' apart. Each dances the following steps.

1.1 Hop on LF, place RF in 2nd position

2 " " in front leg position

3,4 Repeat counts 1,2.

2.1-4 Turn (once round) to the right with 3 steps on RF, LF, RF, finishing with a hop on RF [? Possibly 4 steps RF, LF, RF, LF. If there was a hop, the position of the LF on the hop was vague]

3,4 Perform bars 1, 2 clockwise

5,6 Turn partner with R arm linked, using a step-hop.

7,8 Turn partner with L arm linked, using a step-hop.

I'm not sure whether this was progressive or not.

Ideal Schottische

Waltz 4 steps, turning ↘ (i.e. 123, 223, 323, 423)

Partners take mine hands, and bring their mine hand forward, turning back to back, and at the same time join outer hands to the rear. In this position they glissade 2 steps forward, man with RF leading, lady with LF leading (i.e. step, close, step, close). The forward hands are raised, the rearward hands lowered.

Partners glissade 2 steps backward, still back to back.

Then repeat the whole ad lib.