

Mr Peter Beresford, Oughtershaw, Langstrothdale, aged 73.

I made a call on Mr Beresford on the 4th, a rather hurried one, for I had to wait for him to come down off the hill. I arranged then to return the following morning, when I spent an hour and a half with him. On this second occasion, his son George was with us for most of the time.

Mr Beresford was born and brought up in Yockenthwaite in Langstrothdale. His father was a fiddler, and passed this art on to both Mr Beresford and Mr Beresford's brother Jack (who died only last week). I am not sure when Mr Beresford came to Oughtershaw, but it was probably at about the time he married, ca 50 years ago.

Mr Beresford and his brother played for most of the local dances in Langstrothdale as far down as Kettlewell, and in Littondale (as far down as Arncliffe?). Among the places he listed specifically were Oughtershaw, Yockenthwaite, Buckden, and Starbotton. Sometimes they were accompanied on the piano by George Turnbull, who formed a small dance band with them.

Mr Beresford's sons George and [redacted] are well known local players of the piano/accordion; they play regularly at dances in the neighbourhood, as far over as Dentdale.

Mr Beresford was himself a very keen dancer, and danced as much as his musical duties permitted. He has never been to dancing-classes, and picked up all his dancing from other dances. He and his wife, however, taught their children to dance in their own home. He has never heard of anyone in Wharfedale who taught dancing. Even his step-dancing (see later) "just come".

The dances which were done in his district in his young days were as follows:

Quadrilles	Lancers	Waltz Cotillion (up Littondale only)
Caledonian (a long while ago)	Circassian O	Buttered Peas
Kendal Ghyll	Swinging-6	Turn-off 6.
Huntington's Chorus	Square-8	Off she goes
Buy a broom	Highland Fling	3-Reel
4-Reel.	Waltz	Polka
Schottische	Ban Dance	Vasconina
Heel & Toe Polka		

[But not Cottagers, Holly Berry, or Brass Nuts]. In addition, the older generation had a dance called Steamboat and another called Irish Washerwoman, which he never did. There was also a solo brush dance and solo step-dancing.

In most cases Mr Beresford can remember, at least roughly, how these dances were performed. Some of these dances I noted quickly on my first visit; in such cases I note any discrepancies in his two descriptions.

Circassian Circle [noted only roughly on 2nd visit]. Couple meets couple round the room. "Meet up and cross over" (probably Quadrilles type R+L, both starting simultaneously), then ladies chain (almost certainly with the rough allemande), "spin round", and waltz on to the next couple.

(1) 

Buttered Peas In sets of 2 couples; (2) 

Few hands round and back ("galop round").

All four put R hands into middle with thumbs up, and go round as in a RM star, then put L hands into middle with thumbs up and go back.

Shake R hands with partners, clap 3 times, shake L hands, clap 3 times, then link R arms with partner and spin round.

There is no change either of place or the couple with whom you are dancing.

[This was noted only on my 2nd visit, and George Beresford helped here. There is a discrepancy from the printed description, in that there is no clapping + spin on the sides, but I did not raise this with Mr Beresford; had I done so, he might have remembered it. There is definitely no change of position, for I did raise this point with him.]

The dance is still done at dances in Oughtershaw.

Kendal Ghyll [Noted only on my 2nd visit] Longways set for 3 couples.

Circle 6 and back ("galop round", taking hands).

Arch figure with handkerchiefs (as in printed description; top couple goes over 2nd couple to begin). I'm not sure whether they repeat this arching figure.

The men "run a 3-reel" and the women "run a 3-reel", i.e. both two dance a reel of 3 on the sides, simultaneously. I'm not sure how they began this reel. Mr Beresford thought the middle man went out, but he wasn't quite sure.

I asked Mr Beresford whether he was certain of the orders; on this he was quite positive. I asked him also if there was a cast off, etc. as in the printed version, and he said definitely not.

This dance was before George Beresford's time (he is ca 45).

Turn-off-6. [Noted on both occasions; same description each time]. Mostly done in a longways set of 3 couples "but more can dance if need be". Best time for this is a long pipe. Men cast off to left, following 1st man, while ladies cast off to right following 1st

lady, meet at the bottom, and come back up the centre. Could step-dance in place if back too early.
 Men now cast up, following bottom man, while ladies cast up to left, following bottom lady. They all meet partners at the top, and go down the middle to places.

Top couple join crossed hands and galop down the middle and back

Top couple take ballroom hold and polka down to the bottom, turning clockwise as they do so.

For the cast down & cast up they use a definite polka step (i.e. hop 1-2 with a polka rhythm, and a close in ~~near~~ 3rd with feet parallel). On my first visit, Mr Beresford referred to this as "step-dancing", i.e. "they started off step-dancing, the men round to the left, the ladies to the right".

Mr Beresford says he has not seen the promenade figure in the printed version.

Swinging-6 [Noted only on my 2nd visit]. This was the usual name for the dance in Langstrothdale and Littondale, though it was sometimes called Meeting-6. Mr Beresford has also heard it called "Salf" or "Sylph". George Beresford has ~~heard~~ met it under the name of Sylph at Cononley (2 m. south of Skipton) and in Swaledale. It is still done in Oughtershaw.

1-8 The trios go forward (1-2) & back (1-2), then forward and the ladies cross by the right to the opposite man, and they all fall back to place. The men can spin the ladies under their arms if they wish - some do, some don't.

9-16 Repeat this back to places.

17-24 Men "spin-up" with R.H. partner (i.e. ballroom hold & pivot step)

25-32 Men "spin-up" with L.H. partner

33-40 The trios each dance reels of three.

Mr Beresford usually played Buffalo Girls for this, in the sequence AABBB. This had a local rhyme attached to it

My little donkey's lost his shoe
lost his shoe, lost his shoe
My little donkey's lost his shoe
And he's going for the cobbler in the morning.

which the dancers would sometimes sing. George Beresford often plays Nuts in May for bars 1-16, and a special 'spin-up' time 3 times for bars 17-40.

Square-8. [Discrepancies in the accounts given on 1st & 2nd visits, but relatively slight].
1st visit. Tune Buffalo Girls.

1-8 Top & bottom couples go forward (1) and back (2), then galop across to the opposite place (3, 4), then back the same way and spin round (5-8).

9-16 Side couples the same (9-16)

? Then take hands in a ring of 8 & "galop round".

2nd visit

1-8 Forward and back (1-4), then "goes through and swings round" [not clear whether these are the same or separate, i.e. whether they swing round as they are going through to opposite place, or whether they go to opposite place & then swing round].

9-16 Same back

17-24 Sides the same.

Circle-8 ("galop round").

There was no step-dancing in it, and no contact between top & bottom couples and side couples except in the circle-8.

Mr Beresford said that this was similar to the 2nd figure of the old-time dances.

Huntsman's Chorus [Noted only on my 2nd visit]. This is still done in Dugdalehow & Buckden, and is still very popular. "There is always a florin for it" (George Beresford). Longways sets, far as many as will.

All go forward & back, then cross over to opposite place.

All go forward & back again, and cross back to own places.

All join crossed hands with partners and promenade round to left, with a real polka step.

The 3 top couples polka right down the middle and back (ballroom hold?), turning clockwise as they do so.

The 3 top couples then polka right down to the bottom places.

Repeat ad lib.

Buy a broom. [Noted the same way on both occasions]. Stand opposite partner in a square set, as shown

(2)

(1) - (1)

(2)

First man and lady [go forward & back to each other?] and change places.

Second man and lady do the same.

They repeat this back to places.

First couple spin-up with partners

Second couple spin-up with partners.

The first part was danced to "Auf der lieben Augustus", slowly, with a beaten step RLR, LRL, RLR, etc. I am pretty certain that the step is the one I got from George Turnbull (see later). An alternative possibility in the first part is that they set on the spot before crossing over. The second part was danced to a quicker tune, in the usual way with ballroom hold & pivot step.

Grosh Washwoman. I got the name of this from Mr Turnbull later on the morning of my 2nd visit. I went back to Mr Beresford just for a minute; he said he had heard of it, but didn't know how it went. But Mrs Beresford said she had done it when she was a girl, probably at the Buck Inn in Buckden. Stand as far Buy a broom. First couple advance & retire & cross over, then 2nd couple the same, back in the same way, then "go round".

Off she goes. [Noted only on my first visit]. His first description of this was: "you spun the woman round one way, spun her the other, and then you galoped round". Later on, he amplified this as follows: longways set, men one side, ladies the other. Clap hands, collar a woman & spin her round, [then presumably the other way], galop round to the left [i.e. promenade], then galop back [i.e. up to the right] Top couple go down the middle and spin her round."



Top couple go down the middle and spin her round."

4-Reel. Bit vague about this. Stand



All cross over & back again)

and if back early, shuffled off. Then spinning with partner. This was on my 2nd visit. On my first visit he said there was step-dancing in it, with all sorts of steps. Humpye time. George Beresford added that he last saw it about 40 years ago in Buckden!

3-Reel. Very like Huntsman's chorus. Had a cast off in it. But done by 3 couples only, in a longways set. Thinks the 3 couples danced a reel of 3 on the sides. No step-dancing in it.

Mr Beresford was a very able step-dancer in his younger days - he just learnt it from other people. He has even won prizes for it in pubs. For instance, he was in a pub in Thorby in Wensleydale (near Aysgarth) one day, and someone was playing a honpipe on the piano - and playing it superbly. Someone shouted "Come on, give us a step", so he jumped out & danced a bit. After him, 3 or 4 others jumped out & danced a bit - and he found it was a competition, & he had won it.

Mr Beresford tried to show me the stepping. The sound it made was "diddleendum", done with rapid alternation of heel & toe. "diddleendum, diddeendum, diddeediddeendum" This was known as a double shuffle, and the same movement formed the "shuffle off" (& presumably was the same as the "double shuffle off" which he mentioned). I gather the style was rather like Bob Canna's Devonshire steps.

A typical tune was that now used for the Dorset 4-Hand Reel (tune in Community book) 8 bars in 10 secs. Soldier's Joy was another.

The only social dance in which this was used was the 4-Reel.

Some could do the double shuffle right out in front, "shaking right from the top of the leg", but he could only do it from the knee [it wasn't clear which was the desirable method].

It should be noted that clogs were worn up here in Langstrothdale - Mr Beresford wore them when younger, & so did all his sons. "Old Bick" (now dead) who was at the George Inn used to make his clogs fair rattle. "The step-dancing was better in clogs".

Round about Xmas-time, Mr Bereford and his friends used to go pace-eggin'.
9 or 10 young men went in a party round the various farms in Langstrothdale,
dressed in old clothes, often with false whiskers and false faces. At each farm they
entertained the household with their songs, entering in a certain order.

The first to go in were the "Jolly Boys":

We're two or three Jolly Boys, all of one mind
They've come to pace-eggin', for it's pace-eggin' time
If you will prove kind with eggs and strong beer
We'll come no more to see you until the next year.

Then enters "Jolly Jack Tar"

The next that comes in is Jolly Jack Tar
He's fought with Lord Nelson during last war
He's come right from the sea, old England to view
And he's come to pace-eggin' with us jolly crew.

Then enters a "Jolly Young Lad" with a verse which Mr Bereford has forgotten. Then
comes in is "Old Tuppot the miser"

Next that comes in is the old miser you'll see
She's a gallant old woman in every degree
She wears the old rags to save her monies (money)

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There is also a chimney with a pigtail and a liking for strong ale, and the
performance concludes with a plea

You'll pull out your purse and give us a trifle ...

At every home the pace-egggers were welcomed. In many places they stayed on for
an hour or two, and there was singing, and sometimes dancing in the kitchens. Although
there were relatively few homes in the valley, you might take a week going round

them in this manner. Often they collected as much as £7.

The money which they collected on their pace-eggin rounds provided a free supper and a ball for all those who had contributed. This ball, the "Beckermonds Ball", was a famous event in those parts; it was held in a "chamber" at Beckermonds which had once been an old schoolroom, and they danced from early evening until 7% the next morning. People who had not contributed to the pace-eggers — usually folk from outside the date — could attend the ball by paying a suitable fee.

This old "chamber" at Beckermonds was the local dancing-place in those days but there were only one or two dances there a year.

Another local dance of great importance was the "Drier's Ball" at Greatstones, a shooting lodge (and once a pub) at Ribble Head. Here, too, the dancing went on until 7% the next morning.