

August 1961.

Mrs S.E. Ridding, Vale View, High Newton (in Cartmel), N. Lancs, aged 81.

Mrs Airey gave me Mrs Riddings address, and I asked straight away about Greensleaves.

Here I give question and answer.

Have you heard of Greensleaves? "Oh yes, my brothers used to do that. There used to be three of them. They used to link arms and go round. There was a clap... then they hit each other. They used to clap each other on the back... The last figure they used to kick each other... It was an old one, Greensleaves. It was more for making a bit of fun at a dance; if there was any weddings, or 21st birthday parties, or any dances in the parish [hall]. It was just to make a bit of fun".

Was it ever done by more than one set of 3? "If there were more than three who knew it. But there was just a certain lot who knew it" [and apparently she only saw one set at a time].

Was the first figure one in which they linked arms and went round in a circle? "Yes".

Was there one where they linked arms back to back? "Oh, there was one like that"

Was there a figure with lifting legs over [here I demonstrated]? "Yes. I think there was something like this" [Here I had the impression that she was very doubtful. I think this remark of dubious value].

How old were you when it stopped being done? "It stopped when that certain lot that did it stopped dancing; I never saw the younger lot do it. My brothers did it - one would have been in his 50's now." It was done at Mrs Riddings sister's wedding, when Mrs Ridding was 17, and has not been done much since.

Mrs Ridding attended three sets of classes, the first from Old Toss Robinson, before she was 10, the second held by a Tommy Teesdale when she was about 10, and the third set held by Stanton Robinson, when she was about 12. She has no recollection

of hearing that the school ever stopped for the dancing-classes.

Tommy Teesdale was from Haworthgate and taught in the district in various places. At the time of her classes (c. 1850) he was a man of about 30, so was born c. 1820. So far as she can remember the classes were twice a week, probably for about a quarter, with a ball about February or Easter. The charge was about 10/- for one child, but it was cheaper if there were more than one from a family.

I do not think her memory of who taught what is reliable, so I merely give the list of dances which she has done, or seen done, in the district. The solo dances which she learnt at the classes were

Highland Fling

Nigger Dance

Irish Jig

Horse To Newmarket

Skipping-rope dance

Sailors Hornpipe

Tambourine dance

Hoop dance (done with a hoop)

(she has never seen a Sword-dance)

"Step-dancing" (i.e. the Lancashire stepping).

Two other dances from the classes were

Plaidie Dance ("all the girls had plaids, and all used to go up and do a step.

The King and Queen used to get in the middle and have a kiss. We somehow got round them, and we had a dance. Then the King and Queen used to go out and we followed them).

Garland Dance (used to finish with this. Girls only. They went round the room swinging garlands, and at the end they used to hook the garlands on to one of them - it might be the Queen).

The social dances in use (and probably taught by one of the three) were

Quadrilles

Lancers.

Circassian ♂

Cottagers

Waltz Cotillion

Spanish Dance

Square 8

Swinging Six

3-Reel (not very many did this, and there was only one set on the floor at a time.)

Usually at gatherings in High Newton it was done twice in the course of the evening, once by younger people, and then by older people. Sometimes it was done by 3 sets. They used to talk about "running the 3-reel". They "run it first", then the middle (boy) steps to the first girl, turns on the shuffle off to the second girl and steps to her, then all three shuffle off and they repeat the whole (all three dance all the shuffle-off). The travelling step was <sup>(probably)</sup> hop-123, and it was ~~not~~ danced to the White Cockade [She was absolutely certain of the repeated stepping by the middle person].

Highland Schottische

Polka

Waltz

Barn Dance

Polka Majorca

la Vassoriana

(not Ninepins)

Tommy Teesdale also had a skater dance which he did in skates (ice) on a big stone, with stepping in it.

At the balls, each child danced separately for the step-dancing (or if the class was very big, they might dance in twos or threes). The audience used to throw pennies and sixpences.

Mrs Riddings knew the treble shuffle (like Normans), double shuffle, and single shuffle (this being just half the double shuffle), Agnew crawl, rocking step. There was also a "half cut" which had a cabriole in it. There was only a little bit of "heel and toe" in it.

Apart from these dances, there was also the Cushion Dance. This was rather on a par with Greensleeves in that only the older people did it. One body used to go round with a cushion and put it in front of a girl, then knelt on it and she gave him a kiss, and so on, with alternately boy and girl taking the cushion round. Then finally they finished off with a longways Country Dance, probably Sir Roger.

Mrs Riddings had never heard of a broomstick dance, but had met the Frog Dance.

In her twenties, they had a social in the parish hall once a month, and there were also 3 balls during the winter. Her parents thought the social once a month was dreadful; that was much more than they had had.