

RACHEL MACLEOD. TIGHNAMARA, CASTLESAY, ISLE OF BARRA.

Aged ca 70

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

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

song Snarrach. 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.

Raidheach nan coiseach duona. 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 ducks' beak just in front of their mouths. They waddled & hopped around, the "beaks" wagging from side to side (see below).

Spaidsearachd Bnarrach. Miss Macleod learnt this from her mother who last saw it "performed" about 1865, by an old piper Donald Macinnion.

See later on next page for further information.

The instructions are:

Sàil an dara coise

Ann an bacan na coise eile.



Fig. 1.

[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. 2.



Fig. 3.

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

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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 Fuiray

Co chur no chard no shniamh e

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

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

[Could this be Fith'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 kilts, nor heard the tune but had learnt the Swedish dance at training college 50 years ago! She has never heard of the "Hebridean" dances until their reappearance ca 1920.

With reference to the Weaving kilts 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 seddiden. Aged 77] and John MacNeil [Flower Cottage].