

Mrs Linkster danced the lancers, quadrilles, eightsome, Scotch reel, Boston 2-step and Highland Schottische regularly (once a fortnight) in Hamnavoe about 1920. The Shetland reel was then, and is now, still done at weddings; but only when specially requested by older people. It is a dance for 3 couples who stand alternately man and woman in two lines to start. She has not heard of a dance for three people or of the muckle reel. She has seen solo dancing - and the steps are not those of the Shetland reel.

At weddings the dancing starts with a march (if the reception is held in a hall so that there is room enough) which is headed by the bride and groom followed by the bridesmaid and bestman, then the married couple and close relations. As many as possible join in the march, and in the dance which follows - usually the lancers. In the old days when the company walked to church and back the order on the way there was bride + bestman, bridesmaid + bridegroom, married couple etc. On the way back the bride and bridegroom headed the walk.

Burra Isle is now gripped with Baptist and Fundamentalist fervour and I have arrived in the middle of a mission which is conducted over powerful loudspeakers attached to the roof of house opposite Mrs Linkster's. We were treated to hot gospel from 7 pm to almost 8 pm this evening. The community is badly riven, but those who have seen the light have a strangle hold on the social life of the district. No dances have been held here - except very occasional small affairs - for many years. Whenever there is a dance, however, lancers, quadrilles and the eightsome reel predominate.

Mrs Elizabeth Pottinger (née Fullerton) 72
Branchiclate, Hamnoe, Burra.

16.9.59

1. Mrs Pottinger was born in Oxna but came to live in Hamnoe at the age of 18. She did not dance in Oxna but came to Hamnoe to the dances there.

2. The dances generally done in her young days were Highland Scattish, Scotch reel (for 4 people) and Shetland reel (for 6 or 8 people). The Shetland reel always started men on one side and ladies on the other. 'You chamber up with the music and then go round the reel'. She did the steps for me.

1. 1 Step on RF & Hop on RF with L knee up in front and lower leg hanging.
2 Drop on to LF & Hop on LF etc.

2. 1 & 2 Beat R L R with other foot lifting a bit in front.
The step looks very much like a morris step.

The step for the reel was a step-hop - 'You chamber round the reel'.

3. The Highland Fling was a dance for 4 rather like the Scotch reel. She would not commit herself to the tempo of these, but said that the Shetland reel was the fastest of them all.

4. The She Brides reel was simply the first dance of the evening - usually a Shetland reel. It was usually done with 3 couples. Only occasionally did she see the Shetland reel done with 4 couples.

5. She remembers the Quadrilles (not the lancers) being brought in when she was about 23, i.e. ca 1910.

6. She worked on the tenings in Penwick and saw the Shaaels o Fanta danced there by girls from Walls. They had other dances not known in Hamnoe, including Haymakers. But she had never heard of the muckle reel.

7. She had not heard of the Flugga.

8. She had seen step dances done by men.

Mrs Mary Smith Duke St, Hammaroe, Burra. ca 80.

16.9.59

Born and brought up here.

1. Mrs Smith reluctantly gave me the following information on dancing and followed it up with a sermon.
2. The Shetland reel was done by either 3 or 4 couples. It was the most frequent dance done, the only others which she could remember being the Highland Scottish and the Scotch reel.
3. The Sheabs o' Foula was just a tune for the Shetland reel.
4. She saw men doing step dancing.
5. There were no special dances at weddings.
6. The quadrilles were brought in about 1904-6.

James Finkster

Glen, Mannaroe, Bura.

82

16.9.59

1. The Shetland reel was for 4 couples.
2. There was no special Brides reel.

1. Raffie danced a step dance and a clog dance.

The step dance was for soft shoes and the clog for the old open clogs. He picked up the step dance from two brothers, John William Pottinger who died about 1941 aged about 80 and his brother Pete, Raffie could not say from whence he picked up the clog dance - it seemed to be done quite generally by his acquaintances.

2. The step dance was done by the two Pottingers to the time Reel of the 51st division (8 bars in 10 seconds), but Raffie did it to the Marchioness of Tullymot (8 bars in 8 seconds).

The step was 1. 1 Hop LF & 2 Beat RF twice. $\frac{1}{2} \text{ 3d4 } \frac{1}{2}$, the beats being done in 1st, 3rd, 5th, crossed 5th, near 5th according to inclination. There is plenty of ~~more local movement~~ Raffie turned from side to side and moved about a bit according to the position of the beats.

The end of a phrase is marked with three stamps.

Pete Pottinger marked the end of some phrases by dropping onto the L knee with the R foot out forward (heel on the ground). He would quickly spring up and continue dancing.
The hands are kept on the hips.

3. The clog dance is free beating keeping time to the music, any tempo (8 bars in 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ secs). He included

- (a) Jump with feet in time 2nd second, then click heels together in mid air.
- (b) Alternate Stamps with alternate feet as 1, 2, 3.
- (c) Beats with toe and heel in a very flat foot position 1, 2.

(d) The rock as done by Billy Gurn, Devon.

$\frac{1}{2} \cdot 1$	Beat LF	3	Drops on to RF
$\frac{2}{2}$	Beat R toe	4	/
$\frac{3}{2}$	Beat R heel	5	/
$\frac{4}{2}$	Beat R toe	6	/

He did this both as given and also in the timing 1 & 2, 3 & 4.

The clog dance also was done with hands on hips.

George Peterson Duke St. Hannover, Bursa.

? 25.

16.9.59

Also Bragaster, Papa Stew.

1. George is from Papa Stew. He left to go to school in Berwick when he was 12 but his mother still lives there and he has continued to spend his holidays there. He is now teaching at Hannover.
2. The Shetland Reel as danced in Papa Stew is for 3 or 4 couples with men on one side and women on the other. They take R hands with ~~for~~ partners and all dance back step with hop, ending a phrase of music with 3 stamps. Then they reel in the usual men-follow-women style using a step-hop.
3. His mother is 58 and can remember doing the Muckle reel of Papa Stew. Alec Johnson the shopkeeper and Lawrence Fraser the fiddler could also describe the dance (though Fraser can not play the tune). There are on Papa Stew now 6 people over 70 and 12 between 60 and 70. The only thing which George knows about the dance is that at one point the men dance back step with hop on the spot while the women dance a shuffle in a semi circle in front of their partners. An old fiddler would go from a Shetland reel straight into the muckle reel which was much more energetic - so energetic that people stopped doing it. Usually 6, but sometimes 8 people took part in it.
4. George learnt the violin from John Fraser in Berwick. He is still alive - a tall old man with a white beard. He is from Papa Stew and is a 1st cousin of George's mother. George plays with the violin under his coat lapel and holds the bow some distance from the end. George played me the two tunes for the Muckle reel of Papa Stew. They are both quite regular being built on 1 or 2 bar phrases each repeated four times - though with slides to move from one phrase to another. The two tunes are as follows.

John Umphray's time : 2×4 $\overset{*}{1 \times 4}$ $\overset{=}{1 \times 4}$ $\overset{*}{1 \times 4}$ 2×4
 2×4 $\overset{*}{1 \times 4}$ 1×4 $\overset{*}{1 \times 4}$ 2×4

There seems to me to be 3/2 bars at the points starred.

Tom Fraser Jamieson's time 2×4 1×4 2×4 .

William Hughson in Weisdale from Papa ^{Stornoway} is the oldest man with the tunes for the Muckle Reel. He is over 80. His two brothers ~~The three brothers~~ Thomson Hughson, Weisdale, and Fraser Hughson, Aith, are also fiddlers and know the tunes.

5. He played me the tune of the Papa ^{Stornoway} Sward Dance. He says that it differs from the version normally played on the mainland.

There is apparently some dispute about the ('trip') used by the men when dancing solo. Each man apparently has his own. He dances in the Sward Dance himself - his own trip was a non-committal hopping and pointing in 4th before 5th position. He has never seen the step shown to us by Johnson (like a forward foot's jig).

1. Mrs Pottinger came from Yell to Hamnavoe about 1900
2. The Quadrilles were not introduced into Hamnavoe until the hall was built in 1906 or 1907. The Lancers came sometime later. The other dances being done in those days were Scottish, Polka, Scotch Reel, Reel of Tullock.
3. She remembers ~~old men~~ the John & Peter Pottingers doing the step dances. They both lived in the south of the island. She does not remember any clog dancing. Apparently the two old men both went away sailing. Raffie Gunning was present and he said that the clog dance was a late craze among men of his own age.
4. Mrs Pottinger says that the Highland girls who came to the fishing in Hamnavoe at the turn of the century taught some people, including Raffie's father, the sword dance.
5. While ^{she was} at night school in Yell (at the age of 17 or 18) the schoolmaster, Mr Watson, taught Lancers, Quadrilles, Polka, Scottish. She saw him dance the Sailor's Hornpipe at a concert.
6. In Yell the Shetland reel was for 3 couples standing alternate. There were a great variety of steps - though all were just keeping time with the music.
7. In Hamnavoe at ~~dances~~ weddings there was the Brides march followed by some favourite dance after the meal.

1. Mrs Williamson started dancing about 1930. The dances done then, and still done now, were lancers, quadrilles, Highland Schottische, Scotch reel, Reel o' Tullock, eightane reel and Haymakers - and other couple dances. The polka, however, had gone out by 1930.

She mentioned Boston 2-step, military 2-step, Gay Gordons, Hesitation waltz, St Bernards Waltz, and also Dashing White Sergeant and G�arison circle, as others preserved from 1930 until now.

2. The Shetland reel is still done when called for at weddings. It is a dance for 3 couples standing alternately men + women. The step which she showed me was as follows.

1	Point R heel in 2nd position	There is no hop on LF, but
3	R toe in 4th position	a tilt using L knee.
2	Step on to RF in semi 2nd	
1	Step onto L in flat 3rd	
3	Step on to RF in place.	

Perform continuous.

The couples took ^{hold with} both hands just above waist level and shunted the arms back and forth, particularly if both were doing back-step. Alternatively, the men might put up their hands alternately.

3. The Brides reel is a grand march followed by a six quadrilles.

4. She had seen step dancing and had picked it up from Rafie Gunning. She dances for me the simple flatte step as used by him.

Mrs Barbara Hunter

Homeleigh, Bideford, Devon, 72

Devon

17.9.59

1. The dances done by Mrs Hunter in her young days were the Shetland reel, Scotch reel, reel o' Tullock, Lightsome reel, Polka, waltz, schottisch and quadrilles. Very few knew the dances and it was not often done.
2. The Shetland reel was danced by 3 couples standing men and women alternately.
3. The Fandango reel was not done in Bideford in her young days but she has seen it performed more recently.
4. The Brides reel used to be an ordinary Shetland reel, but now it is a grand march followed by the Quadrilles.
5. She has seen men do the Sword Dance (Gibbie Ceilidh) and step dancing.

1. The Shetland reel was for 3 couples standing men on one side and women on the other.
2. The Brides reel was just a Shetland reel.
3. There was always a gunnu at a wedding, but no fool.
4. The step dance was brought in by John William Pottinger and all the younger men picked it up from him.

His mother, Mrs Agnes Johnston (ca 85) was present for part of the interview, but her memory had gone.

1. There has been no hall at on Papa Stour. Dances were held in crofts and barns, sometimes in empty crofts and occasionally in the old fish sheds. After the new schoolteacher, Mr Drummond, came from the Borders in 1912 - more especially after he returned from the '14-'18 war - the school was used for dances and concerts. He taught dances including Quadrilles, dances, Boston 2-step, Schottische.

Before them the dances were the Shetland reel and the Muckle (or old) reel - together with Polka, Scotch reel and reel & Tullock which were introduced about the turn of the century.

2. In 1901 there were over 250 on the island. There were many fiddlers - including the three Hughson brothers mentioned by George Peterson who came from Hanover, Papa Stour, and John Humphrey of Biggin. There was dancing at his house very often, and it was there that the Papa Stour sword dance was revived about 1890. John Humphrey had died before Alex had started dancing. Only the walls of the croft now remain.

3. In the Shetland reel three couples started with all men on one side. In the old days when the women had long skirts, they moved gracefully in an ellipse - but you couldn't see that their feet were moving. The men just swung their legs about. Only late did people take more interest in their steps and do backstep (with hop) or 'a sort of Pole B' (here he showed a plain beaten Pole B, feet side by side, moving a little from side to side). The step for the reel was a step hop. In his dancing days couples took hands for the setting.

4. The Muckle reel ~~was also~~ followed a Shetland reel and was the faster of the two. The special step at the beginning which he showed was - hold partner with hands on upper arms; drop onto LF and ~~soon~~ man swings RF back, hop on LF + man swings RF forward, drop on to RF and swing LF back, hop on RF + swing RF forward (woman centre to fit in); pairs rotate in a semi circle back & forth,

Mrs Mary Ann Robertson Biggins, Papa Stew, ca 80 19.9.59

1. She had danced both the Shetland Reel and the Muckle Reel.
The later followed a Shetland reel - it was faster but very similar.
You just hold ~~the~~^{your} partner with your hands on his upper arm and
dance round, then do the figure eight.
2. She had not seen a Bride's reel.

Mrs Mary Jamieson Biggins, Papa Stew. ca 75 19.9.59

1. The dances done in her young days were the Shetland Reel,
Muckle reel and Polka. The reels were for Scamper starting with
the men on one side and the women on the other.
2. She had heard of the Bride's Reel, but knew nothing about it.

Lawrence Frazer ca 50 Upper Biggins, Papa Stour
Fiddler.

19.9.59.

1. The Shetland reel and Old reel (i.e. muscle reel) were done regularly up to 1930 and continued in general but less frequent use until 1939. Both were for 3 couples, men on one side, women on the other. Both were phrased regularly, with dancing opposite partners alternating with figure eight. The difference between the two was only in that Old reel was faster and noisier, and of course that it went to its own tune. In the Old reel partners held each other with hands on the partners upper arms instead of holding hands. The Old reel was always preceded by an ordinary Shetland reel.
2. He had heard the name Brides reel but knew nothing about it.
3. In the days of John Murphy of Biggin there was dancing every night in the croft here with different groups of young people going in to get the old man to play for them. It was then all Shetland reels.
4. Other dances - Lancers, Quadrilles, Haymakers, Flowers of Edinburgh (C.D.), Dashing White Sergeant, and circle dances - were taught by Mr Drummond the schoolmaster after the '14-'18 war. The Scotch reel, Reel o' Tullock and Polka were done before then, but he could not tell with their date of introduction.

Jimmy & Lizzie Isobister The Manse, Pepe Storn c. 55 20.9.59

Both from Foula where they spent most of over 50 years.

1. In their youth they danced Shetland reel, Shaa's o' Foula (same as Foula Reel), Scotch reel, reel o' Tulloch, eight-step reel, Quadrilles, Lancers, Polka and other circle dances.
2. They have seen schoolchildren dance Shaa Foula reel recently and it is the dance which they did on Foula in their youth (so far as they can remember).
3. Mr Isobister was one of the four fiddlers who played the Foula reel for the film 'Edge of the World'.
4. They can not imagine why people had to be brought in from the mainland to do the dance for there were plenty of people on the island who could do it. They did not see that part of the film being made.
5. They could not remember a Brides reel being performed.

Mr Hughson and his two brothers lived at Hamnavoe, Papa Stour until 61 years ago. Tommy Andersen told us later that the family had only lived there for 10 years, having previously been in ?

1. He started by playing the tune for the Thuckle reel, a tune which he took by ear from John Humphrey.

Did you ever dance it yourself? Yes.

How did it differ from the Shetland reel? It was the same; but there was no step, you go round the figure eight all the time. In the Shetland reel they danced to certain parts of the tune.

In the Shetland reel, the men follow the women round the figure eight, is it the same in the Thuckle reel? Yes, the men follow behind; but in the Thuckle reel you do the figure eight all the time.

Have you ever seen a figure eight done with the couples inside by inside?

No: the men always followed.

How did you stand at the start? Three ladies in a row and three men on the other side.

Was that the same for the Shetland reel and the Thuckle reel? Yes, almost the same.

They had only these, but later they got the sword dance going and that was a change for a bit.

What was the step for the Thuckle reel? Something similar to the music, just go round to the music.

2. What steps were there for the Shetland reel? Was there the backstep? Yes.

Was there a shuffle? That was on Whalney.

Where did you see that? A Whalney man came and did it here (Aith).

What travelling step was used in the Shetland reel? [Tom showed walk, travelling pas de Basque and step-hop.] It was a walk.

Have you ever seen people ducking? [Tom showed the woman's courtesy which he was shown in Whalney.] The woman in the house replied that some people did it in Aith.

He played a reel for us - 16 bars in 19 seconds. [Gaber fee or

Was there a convention for placing the men and women up and down the harbour?] relative to the fiddler? No convention.

Did the middle woman have a special direction to start? She started going sunrise?

3. Did you ever play at a wedding? Yes.

On Papa Stour? A lot there too.

Q
□
□
□

Did you play for the Brides Reel? John Humphrey fiddled for that.

Was there a special dance on Papa Stour called the Brides Reel? Yes.

When was it done? It was the first to lead off on the floor.

Was it like the Shetland reel or Thuckle reel or different? It was like the Shetland reel. It was all the same as far as the dance was

concerned. I didn't see them. You couldn't hear the fiddle for the hurrying kicked up.

When you played the Huckle reel did you play that all the time or did you mix it up with other reels? It was a separate dance by itself. There was no right step keeping in them days. So long as you could hurry and roar you were all right.

Was there a special dance at the end of a wedding? No.

Did you ever see nine women dancing together? Yes, if they felt like it. Old Humphrey had a thing which he called 'Goodnight', which ended the dance.

At a wedding on Papa Stour, was a collection made for the fiddler? Yes.

When? About midnight - they went round with the fiddlers hat. In the middle of a dance? No.

It transpired that it was 33 years since he played at a wedding. The advent of guitar with fiddle, and then band made him withdraw.

Did you ever see sweeping at a wedding? No.

Have you heard of the fiddle and the fool? No

There were always some people not invited to the wedding and they came as guizers, disguised in straw. Six men of them (men) danced a Shetland reel to a special tune - The Guizer - which was struck up when they appeared, but you could not hear the music for the horifications and roar and clumps o' them dancing. Then they mixed up among the guests.

4. Did you have the Shaals o' Fouta in your young days? Yes.

Did you have the Fouta Reel? That was a different tune; I had the Shaals o' Fouta but not the Fouta Reel. He said that he had the impression that the Fouta Reel was a different thing altogether. Was it different just as a tune or as a dance as well? I can't say. I never heard the tune Fouta Reel.

The Shaals o' Fouta was alone on the mainland when he first came to Aith.

The woman with whom he lived said that the Shaals o' Fouta was alone in Aith when she first started dancing. Some called it the Shaals o' Fouta and some the Fouta reel. It was done with a whole line of men and a whole line of women.

The first couple went down and back, cast off and followed by all. Step on the spot. Then first couple gallope down and back. There was lots to it.

Where those shunting movements? Yes.

Is that right Mr Hugson? That's right.

Thomas Hughson Leapark, Weisdale 82.

22.9.59

Thomas played the fiddle and danced also.
He left Papa Stour when he was 19 and spent 40-50 years
in West Burraford before moving to Weisdale.

He said that he could remember very little about Papa Stour and
had never been to a dance there. However, he had heard of the
Brides Reel there. He had not heard of the Brides Reel in Burraford.

He said that the Muckle reel was a dance for 8, 4 couples,
while the Shetland reel was for 3 couples. The Muckle reel ~~was~~
included both the figure eight and dancing opposite partners.
In both the dances started with the men on one side and the
women in the other. The women led the reels in both dances.
In the Shetland reel partners held right hands while dancing
opposite each other, and in the Muckle reel 'something similar'.

He learnt the tune Sheals o Fonda in Papa Stour. He declared
it to be a tune, but not a dance, and said that it was just
the same as the Fonda reel.

Mrs Hugh Hughson 92 living with Thomas Hughson.
From Muckle Roe, S. Delting.

She had heard of the Flugge, but could give no information.
She had heard of Muckle reel and Brides reel, but again
could give no information.

William Hughson Weisdale 85

22.9.59

The Muckle reel was a slow old thing, done when the men
wanted a rest.

Did they dance opposite partners? Yes, but not much; more as if
they just flitted round [with a wave of his hand].
The men followed their partners round the reel.

Mr Hughson then spoke of the good fishing on the Shaaals just off Foula and said that he had heard that part of the shaaale represented pulling the cod in on a handline.

Did you hear that in Aith? Yes, they had only a bit of the Shaaals o Foula on Papa Stour.

Where did you hear that the Shaaals o Foula and the Foula reel are different, on Papa Stour or in Aith? Both - but I never heard the Foula reel.

He played the Shaaals o Foula for us, as a reel, at 16 bars in $2\frac{1}{2}$ reels.

5. I showed the Muckle reel arm hold and swinging step as given by Alec Johnston on Papa Stour but he had seen nothing like it. He had seen nothing like his own Muckle reel arm Aith or on the mainland of Shetland at all.

Have you seen the Shetland reel with 4 or 8 people?

No. They did the Scotch reel with 4.

Have you seen a reel in which you put your hands across?

[4 people giving Rhand star.] No.

Did you know the Maltman? No. Every place in Shetland has a different name for the same tune. #
He told us that of all the music on the wireless, that from Aith was the nearest to the old Shetland music.

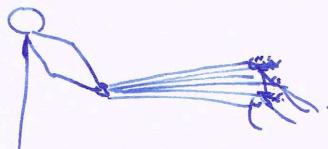
He had not heard of Guadie, Sittie Seabie dance, Fiddlin' the Hill, or the Drunken Skipper.

1) When she was 15 or 16, she attended a wedding at Brough on Whalsay - the reception was held in a dance there.

The Bride's Reel [or Bride's Reels?] was held towards the end of the evening, just before* the bride departed to her new husband's house. [Miss N. paused at the point marked *. I suspect that the bride was actually put to bed, but she didn't like to say so.]

The dance they performed was the Sixsome Reel; the dancers were the bride and groom, the best man and bridesmaid, and the married folk. Two other people stood on either side [side, not end] of the reel, armed with small bundles of corn, and while the dancers performed the figure 8, these two swept the bride [bride only?] with the ends of the corn whenever she came near them.

The corn was probably tied at the end at which it was held, and ribbons were tied among the corn heads - two or three ears tied together. It was held in both hands, and the sweeper swept in the plane of his body



and arms. He actually touched the bride's clothes with it.

She only saw this done once, because she was not normally allowed to stay up as late as this at a wedding.

2) Her mother could dance a Shetland Reel very well. In the figure 8, she "ducked" every so often - it was very graceful. The bride in the Bride Reel mentioned above - she also 'ducked'.

Mr John Irvine, Saltness, Whalsay, aged 76

Mr Irvine was born at Brough, Whalsay, and lived there until he was 9 years old. His family then moved to Marister, where he lived until he married; then he moved to Saltness.

He is a good dance fiddler. When he was young, he lived next door to a splendid fiddler, William Hutchison, and he learnt a good deal from this man. To a considerable extent, however, he is self-taught. His repertoire consists almost entirely of Shetland Reels; he will not (or cannot) play a hornpipe, a jig, or a march.

Mr Irvine actually danced himself, but I doubt if he could dance now - his legs are crippled by rheumatism.



I had a long conversation with Mr Irvine, and we tended to jump from one topic to another. The following notes are as far as possible a record of our conversation. Some topics are touched on several times - I got him to amplify one or two things later. There are also further notes taken during other visits.

When Mr Irvine started going to dances, most of the dances were Shetland Reels. The Polka, Schottische, etc., came in about 50 years ago, when he was married. These new dances didn't really come into vogue until the halls were built. Before that, they danced in the houses.

"The trouble is that in a hall you couldnae hear a fiddle."

The Shetland Reel was for 6 people, with alternate positions.

The Auld Reel "was one of the original times so far as he could gather from old folks". The dance itself "was a very simple affair. They just liltit roon" [with an up and down wave of the hand to illustrate the action]. It was always danced at a wedding. Sometimes 6 girls. Sometimes 6 men, "and a Drunken Stepper back along wi' it." But the Auld Reel has not been done now for 30 or 40 years. And as for the Drunken Stepper, "it is 30 years since I saw it done".

He has heard of an old dance called Cuddy, but that is all.

I asked him about solos. The only one he had ever seen was one done by an old lady on Whalsay - she held her skirts right out  & stepped from side to side. This was a long time ago. [It was probably a form of the Skirt Dance.]

The Bride's Reels at a wedding were done just before the supper. That was when the fiddler got paid. The first Reel consisted of six women, the bride, bridesmaid, and married woman, and three of the bride's best friends. Then another six women danced, and so on until all the women danced. The married woman collected a 6^d from each person, and everyone had to pay, even if they refused to dance. This money was collected before each Reel. Then the men

or perhaps turn a full circle. This is followed by a reel which goes on with no turnings or reversals - the again using step-hop but this time with more beating. The reels figure eight of both reels is done with men following women.

5. Heard of Bride's reel but never seen one.

(His mother could not remember having seen it either)

6. There were skiddlers at weddings (i.e. guijas) but no fool. They had no special dance.

7. Of the Sword Dance I only knew the 'trip'. There is no traditional step for this. Unfortunately, it was not possible to see the Sword Dance.

danced, the bridegroom, best man, and married man first, together with three of the bridegroom's friends, and then all the men following them. The married man collected a shilling from each of the men. This was the fiddler's pay.

For each of these Reels, there were ~~about~~ probably 3 or 4 different tunes, and one of them always had to be the Auld Reel. Sometimes the Drunken Skipper would be played when the men were dancing.

The Bride's Reels would have taken about 2 hours. They started about 11%, and went on until about 1%. Then supper, and then to bed. But all the young folk would gather and have a dance the next morning, and probably go home after dinner.

After the wedding supper, they put the newly-married couple to bed. All the women first put the bride to bed. The fiddler sat up in the corner and played a 'kin' o' a Pilt. All the women were dancing about and kicking up a caper. When the bride was safely in bed, she then handed out the bridescake to the women. Then the men brought in the bridegroom and put him to bed — and he gave all the men a dram, while the bride gave them their pieces of cake. And the fiddler had to play all the time this was going on.

Sometimes there would be nearly 200 people at a wedding. At the least, there would be about 100.

The Bride's Reels dropped out of use when the halls were built.

"Have you ever heard of the fiddler's bid?" This was before Mr Irvine's time, but he has heard older people speak of it. Suppose there was to be a wedding if the wedding was to be on a Thursday, then on the preceding Monday the bridegroom and best man, dressed in their best clothes, went right round

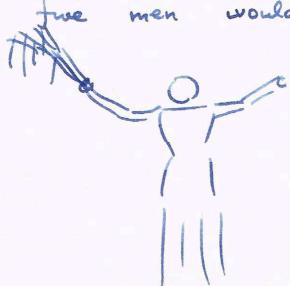
the island, and gave out the invitations for the wedding - all except for the fiddler. He didn't receive his invitation then, but on the Wednesday, when the bridegroom himself went to the fiddler to give him his invitation - the fiddler's bid. The bridegroom then brought the fiddler - complete with fiddle - back to his own house, and the fiddler stayed with the bridegroom for the night, playing for entertainment whenever he was required.

When the Auld Reel was played in a Shetland Reel, the dancers "just took hands, two and two together, and liltit through the reel". Each of the two people put their nearer arms round behind the other's waist. There was no "dancing" in the Auld Reel.

I asked Mr Irvine if the dancers ever put in extra turns? "Yes, yes, you would see them swinging round".

Mr Irvine didn't usually play the Auld Reel when a man was dancing with his wife. "It was usually just when two wimen or two men were dancing the gither".

I asked Mr Irvine about sweeping the bride. He said that "when they were dancing the Bride's Reels they would take some corn - all the wheat had been thrashed out o' it - for sweeping the bride. They would always have these specially made up bundles o' corn for sweeping the bride wi'." They all got the same, all the men and women in the Bride's Reels. Maybe four or five men would be standing round the dancing place, waving the corn over

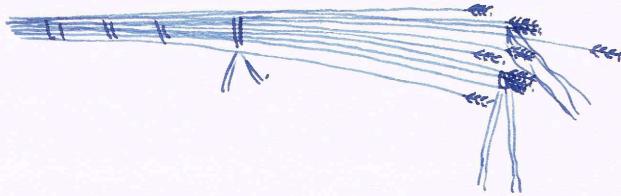


the dancers heads, and maybe poking it in the lassies faces.

"The funny bit o' it was that they didna' want to sweep the bride - they were supposed not to sweep the bride".

16.5.58/6

The straw brushes were made by taking a bundle of straw - 'gloy' it was called - and sweeping all the grain off it by running your hands along it. Then it was tied up in a bundle for about half its length, with the heads left free. Finally, ribbons would be tied to two or three heads at a time, leaving about a foot of ribbon dangling below.



"When the women danced the Shetland Reel, there wasn't much o' a step in it - it was main their body".

Mr Irvine had never heard of a fool at a wedding.

Mrs Mary Williamson, Whitefields, Whalsay, aged 93

Mrs Williamson belonged to a non-dancing family, and clearly disapproved of me. But she gave - albeit reluctantly - two pieces of information.

- (i) She had heard of "sweeping the bride", even in her youngest days.
- (ii) "Shaalds o' Foula" was a dance, even in her youngest days.

Mrs Anderson, and Miss Anderson, Whitefields, Whalsay, aged ca 65

In the house with Mrs Williamson. They hadn't much knowledge of dancing, but they helped very considerably by giving me a list of the older people on the island.

Only two items of information

- (i) Miss Anderson has seen the ceremony of "sweeping the bride".
- (ii) They have heard that the verse

Too can I leave fader and middar,
 And too can I leave sister and brudder,
 And too can I leave kith and kin
 And follow the steps o' a framdman's sin

was associated with the march from the bride's house to the actual ceremony.

Mrs George Polson, Marister, aged 74.

Also Mr Irvine. Mrs Polson and Mr Irvine are the sister and brother of Mr John Irvine of Saltness.

Some general conversation first. Then I asked Mrs Polson the following questions.

Question: Can you tell me about The Bride's Reels?

Answer: "The Bride's Reels were usually done just before supper. Supper would be about 12%. The Bride's Reels were all women. The bride was first, and the bride's nearest friends. The nearest friends were in the first Reel. Every Reel they danced, they paid. That was what paid the fiddler".

Question: Who were the actual people in the first Reel?

Answer: "The bride, best maid, the married woman. Then the close friends, bridegroom's sister, etc."

Question: Who collected the money?

Answer: "The married woman collected after the women danced". She actually collected after each Reel from the six who had danced in that Reel. "The bride and the first Reel might have given 1/- . The second Reel might have given 6d. The cheapest was 3d."

Question: Did every woman dance?

Answer: They're nearly all danced. And those that didn't dance, they gave the money. There were a few that didn't dance, but very few."

Then the men danced, and the married man collected the money. "That money was given to the fiddler".

The dance here was just the Shetland Reel for six people.

The full set of Bride's Reels were danced up to about 40 years ago.

I then asked about The Auld Reel. Mrs Polson had to think about this one, and Mr Irvine intervened for the first time.

Mr Irvine: "When the Auld Reel was played, they just took hands in pairs. They just reeled all the time that [tune] was on".

Mrs Polson then took up the story: "We keepit time to the music. I think we just tooket each other round the waist and we reeled. When he finished playing it, we had to get into our places again" [i.e. for an ordinary Shetland Reel].

Question: "Did the fiddler play the Auld Reel just as one of several tunes for a Shetland Reel."

Mrs Polson: "Yes".

Question: What was the Drunken Skippie?

Answer: "They would just take gin another roon' the neck and a' fa' down. Then he would start to play something different and they were getting up and starting to dance again."

I then asked about steps for the Shetland Reel. The main' one for the men was the Whalsay shuffle, danced on the spot. The ladies also shuffled, but did it in an arc of a circle centred on their partner, moving from side to side
i.e. 



I then asked about sweeping the bride. Mrs Polson remembered the bunches of corn, and said: "They ca'd it sweepin' the bride, but they keepit clear o'

the bride. They weren't supposed to touch the bride".

Question: Who did the sweeping?

Mrs Polson: "The men did it till the women, the women did it till the men".

Question: Did they touch the bridegroom when they were sweeping?

Mrs Polson: They couldn't touch the bride nor the bridegroom; they got off".

But apparently all the other dancers were tickled and hammed by the sweepers; the com ruffled their hair and brushed across their faces, and poked in their eyes.

I asked next about laissez your partners; they had no recollection of this.

Then I asked Mrs Polson what dances were in use when she started dancing. "They were beginning to dance Waltzes, Scotch Reels, and Haymakers." And "The Shaaids o' Foula was never here".

I then returned to the Auld Reel, and asked if they introduced extra spins in the figure 8. Mrs Polson misunderstood my question, and replied: "Let me see. There was one or two spins. There was one or two that you had to dance double. I can't mind."

Mr Irvine: "The Soldier's Joy was one".

Mrs Polson: "For those tunes you had to dance twice as long." Apparently the "dancing time" was then twice as long as the "reeling time".

Question: So in effect people knew the tunes and danced accordingly?

With this, they both agreed.

The first hall in Whalsay was the Mission Hall at Saltness, and was built ca 1907. The minister at that time allowed dancing in the new hall. The minister who followed him, however, did not allow this.

Captain Robert Simpson, Symbister, Whalsay, aged 93

Captain Simpson was born at Isbister in Whalsay. He was 2 years at the fishing before he was 21, and left the island to go to sea when he was 21, in 1887.

I asked him what dances were done when he was young.

Answer: "There were 3 women and 3 men. That was the old Shetland Reel."

Question: What else?

Answer: "There was a Reel called the Drunken Skipper. That was a funny Reel that."

Question: Anything else?

Answer: "No. Those are the two oldest". Afterwards, it was waltzing and Scotch Reels".

Question: The waltz and the Scotch Reel came in after you started dancing?

Answer: "Yes".

Question: Can you tell me about the Bride's Reel?

Answer: "That's generally the first Reel after they are married. Generally the bride and bridegroom, best maid and best man, and the married couple, too".

Question: I have heard of the Bride's Reels, when first six ladies danced together, and then six men danced together. Was that done in your youngest days?

Answer: "No, I don't think so".

Question: Have you ever seen 6 ladies dancing together at a wedding?

Answer: "No, I can't remember it".

In view of these ~~question~~ answers to my questions, I started investigating how many weddings he had attended before he left the island (he came back to live here permanently in 1919). In his young days, weddings sometimes lasted

for 3 days, but he stayed only for the first day, and he did in fact only attend 3 or 4 altogether before he went to sea. He was not a great dancer, for he was so much at sea.

He had one or two recollections of weddings that are worth noting: "The first wedding I was at was at his brother's. There were two weddings at Brough [at about the same time] and I can remember going down to the Kirk at Brough. I was about 10 or 12, then, not more. I can remember the people marching to the Kirk - the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. All the lasses dressed in white, young men and young women". The groom was with the best women, and the bride with the best man*. And on the way home, naturally, the bride walked with the groom. Old people as well? "No, it was generally only the younger people. All the older people were making ready for the festivities after the wedding."

When did the Bride's Reel take place? "Oh that was generally at night, 6% or 7%. They generally had dinner, then tea, and then started dancing. They started with ordinary dances, but the Bride's Reel was always later at night" [this is in contradiction to his earlier statement that it was the ~~first~~ dance].

Captain Simpson ~~that~~ wasn't allowed to stay up to the end of his brother's wedding, but he saw the Bride's Reel; it consisted of the usual 3 couples.

I asked if they had 'sweeping the bride' at his brother's wedding. "Yes, I believe that they did - in the Bride's Reel" [The last addition really indicates that he remembers it, for I didn't mention the Bride's Reel in my question].

I asked about the Auld Reel, but he has no memory of it - not even when I described it.

The Drunken Skipper. "They generally fell down on the floor when they were drunk". Was it done in his youngest days? "Yes". Was it done by men and women? "No, all men". And how many? "Six".

"The fiddle had a reel, the Drunken Skipper". Did they dance as in a Reel? "Yes, they had to dance". And then they fell down. But they had to know by the fiddler when to fall down". Apparently they just fell down where they were standing. Then they sprang up, "by the music", and started dancing again.

The dance was generally done at an ordinary dance. How often in the evening? "Just once. It was generally one of the last two dances".

The dance was performed in his very youngest days. Captain Simpson has no recollection of a story, or of words to the tune.

The Shetland Reel. Even in his youngest days, the Shetland Reel was danced in alternate positions. He has heard of "duckin" in the Reel - this would have been in his young days - but has not seen it, to his recollection.

He has no recollection of a shuffling step in his youth.

8

Kiss your partner. I asked him about this - I give question and answer.

Question: Did you ever kiss your partner at the end of a Reel?

Answer: "Yes, I have seen that. I believe that used to be."

Question: Was there any special signal by the fiddler?

Answer: "No".

Question: But how did you know when to do it?

Answer : "Just when the Reel stopped".

Question : But did you kiss your partner at the end of every Reel.

Answer : "No, maybe just once or twice" [in the evening].

I could get no further information on this.

Some further odd notes

- (1) There has been no dancing-masters on Whalsay, to his recollection.
- (2) He has never seen any solo dances on Whalsay.
- (3) He has never heard of 'cuddy'.
- (4) He has never heard of the fiddler's bid.
- (5) He has no clear memory about the Shaaids o' Foula - in either direction.
- (6) He has heard of a "Jig". This was a definite dance, not just a type of tune.

17. 5. 65

Mr and Mrs Thomas Kay }
Mrs Ursilla Kay } Chaltister, Whalsay.

Mr Kay is aged 78, his wife 77, and Mrs Kay 76. None of them were keen dancers in their young days.

When they began dancing, most of the dances performed in an evening were Shetland Reels, though the Polka and Schottische were danced occasionally.

The Drunken Skippies? "They would dance a while and then fa' down as if they were drunk".

What was the dance they would dance a while? "Just a Shetland Reel".

Apparently, someone would call for the Drunken Skippies, and then the men only would perform this. It was done at ordinary dances, but only once in the evening.

The Bride's Reel was the first dance at a wedding. It was danced by the bride and groom, the best folk, and ~~many~~ the married folk, together with as many others as the floor could hold. They have no recollection of any other type of Bride's Reel. Nevertheless, they talked throughout about the Bride's Reels, although to them there is only one Bride's Reel.

They had heard of the Auld Reel, but didn't know what it was; they had never danced it.

They did remember sweeping the bride.

Did they kiss their partner at the end of a Reel? "Yes, the men called kiss the lasses". Some of the girls ran for it.

They knew nothing of a Whalsay shuffle, or of 'duckin' in a Reel.

They had never heard of Shands o' Foula.

A lot of the young ones used to gather at William Hutchison's house in the evenings, and danced, "and ga'ed him a little for playing".

Mr and Mrs Andrew Moar, East Burns, Whalsay, ages 73 and 75.

Both Mr and Mrs Moar were keen dancers in their youth, and Mr Moar also played the melodeon. Our conversation lasted a long time, and we touched on many topics. I will try to preserve the original order.

I first asked about the Bride's Reel. They immediately replied that this was the first dance at the wedding, and was performed by the usual 3 couples. It was just an ordinary Shetland Reel.

In their young days, most of the dances performed in an evening's dancing would be Shetland Reels. The 1st couple were the couple nearest the fiddler, and they and the second couple changed places with each reel. The third couple returned to their own places each time. There was a standard terminology here - the top couple were called the fore-oars, and the 3rd couple were said to be "in the hole". These names may have been connected with the Shetland 6-oared boats, the sixearn.[†]

I then came back to the Bride's Reel, and again asked them what this was. Without any further prompting from me, Mr Moar said "the Bride's Reels were 6 women dancing together". He then realized what he had said, and recollection came flooding back:

"They were danced later in the evening"

Question: Was there only one?

Answer: No - as long as there were women. I imagine there would be three Bride's Reels. The first Reel would be the bride, the best maid, the married woman, the bride's sisters, and her nearest relations.

[†] See Capt A. Halerow, The Sail Fishermen of Shetland, Lerwick, 1950.

17. 3. 59/1

Question : Would all the women in the company take part?

Answer : "No, there would be too many". Then there were the Bridegroom's Reels. There would [also] be a very rough reel; they would play the Drunken Skipper, and at a certain turning of the spring all the men went down on the floor".

Question : How long is it since the Bride's Reels were done in this way?

Answer : "I've not seen it done since 1914".

In the Bride's Reels and the Bridegroom's Reels someone went round with a cap and collected the "fiddler's money". In latter days the bridegroom paid the fiddler himself [and then presumably the custom died].

They "swept the bride". But "they couldna touch the bride nor the bridegroom". The men swept in the Bride's Reels, and the women in the Bridegroom's Reels.

They both remembered their parents talking of the Bride & Bridegroom's Reels.

I then returned to the Shetland Reel. Mr and Mrs Kay had told me that Mr Moar's father had been a very fine dancer. I asked Mr Moar how many different setting steps his father had had: The answer was "Just two, the shuffle and the backstep". I asked if they had heard of 'duckin'. They said not, but Mr Moar remembers hearing his mother saying that the older women in her time "lunkit", that is to say they danced first with the body tilted to one side and then to the other, i.e.

Mr and Mrs Moar have themselves seen one old lady do this - Margaret Hutchinson of Scar. She would have

been nearly 80 at the time, and this would be over 50 years ago. She went right over to one side and danced a few steps, then right over to the other and danced a few steps. She kept her body in the same vertical



plane throughout - she did not twist her body to bring one shoulder in front of the other.

[When Mr and Mrs Moar were describing this to me, I noted that they both used the word 'duckin' in their description - quite unconsciously - so I think they must have heard the word in connection with this movement at some time or other.]

I tried to get them to tell me the travelling step for the figure 8 in the Shetland Reel. I demonstrated the chassé, the hop 182, and the travelling pas de Basque, and they thought they had seen all three.

I went on to ask about the Auld Reel. "They always played that when they were dancing the Brides Reels. In a Shetland Reel they dance separately, but in the Auld Reel they took hold of each other and they danced together... The Brides Reels were'n'a danced right without they danced the Auld Reel."

I went on to ask about the hold. They demonstrated - arms round each others waists, more distant hands clasped.



And for the figure:- "When you were dancing the Auld Reel, you still made the figure 8.

You reeled all the time that they were playing the tune".

I pressed them to show me the step for the Auld Reel, but they wouldn't do so. I demonstrated the Cunningham step with a pronounced lilt, and they rejected it. I did a walking step with a pronounced lilt, and they rejected it also. I then tried the chassé without lilt, but with a pronounced drop on count '2', and they thought that was correct. But I wasn't at all certain that they weren't merely picking this one to please me!

The Auld Reel could also be used in the course of an ordinary evening's dancing, but never by itself - always as one of the tunes in an otherwise normal

Shetland Reel.

The Drunken Shappei was also not restricted to the Bridegroom's Reels, but could also be done at ordinary dances.

Other dances which were done in their young days were the Scotch Reel, the Schottische, the Polka, and the Waltz. Mr Moar's sister, who was 10 years older than him, could do these in his young days, even though he himself did not know them. She had learnt them from the Scotch girls at the gutting.

Mr Moar herself worked at the gutting in Whalsay, and she can remember the local girls picking up the new dances from the Scotch girls who were working there.

They had heard the name Cuddy, but knew nothing about it.

A Shetland Reel is done in Whalsay with the reel first. So to end the Auld Reel, the dancers had to break from their partners, get into their proper places, and then start to reel, one behind the other. The Auld Reel was not terminated with the three stamps, though these were used frequently in a normal Shetland Reel.

With some tunes here, e.g. The East Neuk of Fife, you "danced" for double the length of time that you needed - known as "double dancing tunes". There were no special steps for these tunes, however.

They did the Fouka Reel in their young days.

Ca 1912, Mr Moar saw a reel repeated - or double reel - in a Shetland Reel, at Sandwick on the mainland.

I asked finally if the first dance at a wedding was performed by the usual 3 couples. This was so, even when the Bride's & Bridegroom's Reels were performed later on, but in this case the first dance had no especial name.

Mr and Mrs Gilbert Arthur, Brough 7, Whalsay.

Mrs Arthur was born in 1892. She remembers the Brides & Bridegroom's Reels being done when she was about 10 — so about 1902. She has also a vague picture of the Auld Reel, but that is all.

Mr Arthur had danced the Drunken Skipper. They tumbled over each other as they fell down, and I gathered that they all tried to be the one on top.

They both knew the "fore-oars" and "hole" nomenclature, but had no idea where it came from. But Mr Arthur had seen the 6-oared boats, and remembered that they had no steersman — simply the 6 oarsmen.

Mr and Mrs John Hutchinson, Creades, Brough, aged 75 and 73.

Mostly Shetland Reels in their young days. The usual Sixsome, over the reel first, then dance. In the figure 8, the ladies usually held up their long skirts with one hand; the men had their hands down.

When "dancing" (i.e. setting) the ladies did not hold their skirts. I asked about 'duckin', and they said they had seen it. "They would have a kind o' a step that they kind o' went down". Did they go down with a tilt to one side, or did they keep their bodies straight? "Kind o' straight. But some wi' a tilt". The older women in their young days did it, but Mrs Hutchinson tried it herself.

Mrs Hutchinson (Mrs Katie Hutchinson), as she is known on the island, ~~had~~ tried to show me the shuffle step which the women did. As far as I could see it was.

Count 'and and a 1' Shuffle RF out, in, out, and in, and on the final 'in' step on to it

'and and a 2' Shuffle LF out, in, out, and in, and on the final 'in' step on to it.

Size.

On bars 1 and 2, they moved to the right, on bars 3-6 ~~to the left~~ back to their original place and out to the left, and on 7-8 back to place. They did this in an arc of a circle centred on their partner, who merely danced on the spot.

In the Auld Reel, they went in pairs and reeled continuously. It was one of several reel tunes which were played together for a single Reel. You just took arms round your partner's waist, and left the other hand free. When the next tune started, you just took the nearest places, and then began another.

17. 9. 59/11

ordinary reel, following your partner. I tried to get them to show me the step for the Auld Reel, but all I got was that you "keepit the notes o' the fiddle".

The Bride's Reel was 3 men, 3 women, usual constitution. They "swept the bride", though in fact the bride was not touched (the others suffered, however).

17.3.33/12

Mr and Mrs John Irvine and their son, Mr Magnus Irvine, Saltness,
together with Mr and Mrs William Williamson (the Postman) Marister,
Mr and Mrs Robert Williamson, 40 Gardentown, Symbister,
Mrs Harriet Sandison, 30 Gardentown, Symbister (Mr J. Irvine's daughter),
Mrs Jessamine Tetly, Hillhead, Symbister,
Mr William Irvine, 10 Gardentown, Symbister (Mr J. Irvine's son),
all at Saltness, where they had gathered for an evening to show me the Shetland
Reel as done in Whalsay. And a tremendous exhibition it was too. The
atmosphere was just right, and the men, in particular, gave a superlative show.

In Whalsay at present, the Shetland Reel can be started in either of the positions shown. It consists of alternate 'reeling' and 'dancing', and the first



measure of the tune is always used for reeling.

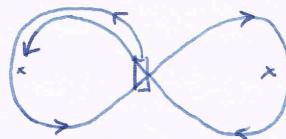
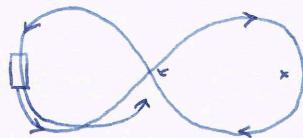
I noted the figure particularly for the second of these starting positions. In this case, the centre lady moved off in the direction shown below.



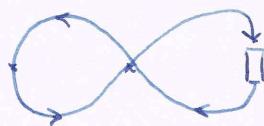
Two of the couples change places during this reel, and, as they actually performed it, the couple who returned each time to their own place could be at either the top or bottom. We gathered from Mr John Irvine, however, that this couple should properly be at the bottom of the room.

They actually performed a Reel several times during the evening, and in the one

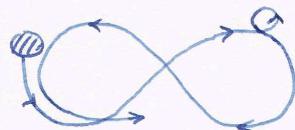
which I particularly noted, the tracks of the three couples were as follows:



Top.

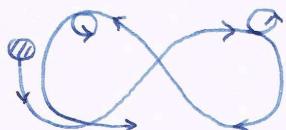


They all inserted extra turns into the reel whenever they pleased. Thus Robbie Williamson once did



Top.

and once did



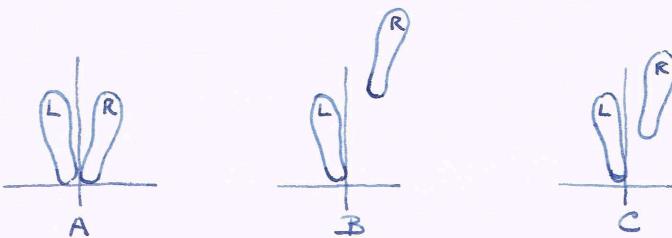
Top.

The travelling step in the reel was either a travelling pas de Basque or a lifting walk - indeed, the latter was almost a run, for they picked their feet up quite high. With either step, they swung their arms by their sides, elbows well bent. Each reel finished with the three stamps on the last bar.



The setting step used by the men was the "Whalsey shuffle" or "Whalsey scruff". Basically this was a double shuffle, but it was performed with the weight well behind the shuffling foot.

To describe the step, I need three new positions, and I illustrate the RF in these positions in the following diagrams



Start in position A shown, with the weight on the RF, and LF just off the ground. Throughout the step, the heels are only just off the ground.

1.1. Drop on the LF and at the same time push the RF, with the ball of the foot on the ground, out into position B.

and Without any pause in this position, brush the RF, with the ball of the foot still on the ground, back into position C.

and Without any pause in this position, push the RF back out to position B, the ball of the foot still being on the ground

a Begin to brush the RF (on the ball of the foot) in towards position A, so that it is approximately passing through position C on the count 'a'

2 Push the LF, with the ball of the foot on the ground, out into position B, and at the same time complete the movement of the RF along the ground into position A, transferring the weight to the RF as soon as it reaches position A. The LF reaches position B and the RF reaches

position A simultaneously, exactly on the count '2'. Just before the LF begins to move, there is a slight flexing of the LF; effectively there is a spring off the LF, except that the ball of the foot never leaves the floor.

The actions here on the counts 'and and a 2' are the typical movements, and I christen them 'double shuffle with RF'. The movements for the double shuffle with LF are simply those above contrairwise.[†] The remaining bars can now be filled in with the double shuffle with alternate feet; thus:

1.	and and a	}	Double
~	Double shuffle with LF		

2. 1

and and a 2. Double shuffle with RF

and and a	}	Double shuffle with LF , etc.
3. 1		

This was actually the step Mr Magnus Irvine used. The other three younger men varied this with a single shuffle; this was simply the movements described above for count '2'. More precisely, the movements on count '2' above constitute a 'single shuffle with the LF'.[†] Then a typical sequence as done by the other men would be

1. 1 As above

and and a 2 Double shuffle with RF

and and a	}	Double shuffle with LF
2. 1		

& Single shuffle with RF

2 Single shuffle with LF

[†] The terms double and single shuffle are mine.

2 and and a } Double shuffle with RF
 3 ~ 1

and and a 2 Double shuffle with hf , etc.

The rhythm of this variation is

täfätitty Täfätitty Taatataatäfätitty
1 2 1 8 2

I am indebted to Jeanette Williamson (Mrs Robloie) for this; it was a very great help in picking up the step.

Robbie Williamson had a method of getting into the shuffle which was most effective to watch. I actually noted this next day at his house, and I give it separately.

The ladies simply used a beaten pas de Basque, but Mrs Willie Williamson showed me the step used by ladies in the old days. This also I noted next day, and I give it separately.

(I was immensely impressed by the sense of music possessed by all the men present. I persuaded them all to demonstrate their shuffling steps to me; they would not "dance" to the "reeling turn" of the music. Mr Irvine had to play the 8 bars of the reeling turn through before they would start their shuffling.)

In the setting, the hand positions were completely arbitrary - up, on the hips - or down, or swinging by their sides as in the figure 8. And the bocaching bounced off the low ceiling and seemed to give them extra virgin.

Some comments here which I noted from the general conversation.

Mr John Irvine : The fiddler determined the direction of the reel. He was seated at the top of the room, on either side of the fireplace, and the top man had his back to the fiddler. The second lady led off the reel by coming up towards the fiddler. This was the way the older people insisted on dancing it.

Jeanette Williamson and others: When the ladies were coming to the end of the reel, they turned at the opposite place to their own, & fell back into line, facing their partners.

Robbie Williamson: All the old men did a half-turn at every corner.

Jeanette Williamson: I learnt it that way [in Beawick].

I queried Robbie about the "every". On reflection, he thought it was probably only on two corners.

Jeanette Williamson: The older men didn't follow directly behind their partners; they kept just half a step behind and to the side of them.

Mr John Irvine: The odd fiddlers wouldn't play if the dancers didn't keep in time.

Miss Elizabeth Nicolson (discussion cont'd).

(1) After some persuasion, Miss Nicolson showed me the setting step which she and her contemporaries used in the Shetland Reel. It was a sort of glide to the side and back, but done with a queer rhythm. It conformed with what I saw Mrs Willie Williamson do at Saltress on the 17th, subject to the infirmities of age on the part of Miss Nicolson, so I will leave the description here.

It was not entirely regular, i.e. one did not usually 'glide' to the right for 2 bars, then back to place and out to the left for the next 4 bars and then back to place on the last 2 bars - the changes of direction could be made at any time. Moreover, they 'ducked' at the ends of the glide - i.e. whenever they changed direction.

(2) Miss Nicolson confirmed that the older people used to insert extra turns at the corners in the figure 8. Further, the ladies definitely backed across the set when they ended the reel - they made the appropriate turn as they passed through their partner's place. In the reel, the ladies 'ducked' whenever they could, probably at the corners.

(3) When I described the Bride's & Bridegroom's Reels to her, she had some hazy recollection of this.

(4) ~~■~~ Miss Nicolson's father was the manager of the fishing station on Whalsay. When she and her sisters were young, they used to have fireside dances in their own home, and invite the family of "a gentleman farmer" who ran Symbister farm. They would also dance at the farmer's home in return. At these dances, one of the dances performed was the Tonla Reel.

(5) The 'but end' of a cot is the kitchen, the 'ben end' the bedroom end.

Mr John Irvine, Saltness (3rd visit).

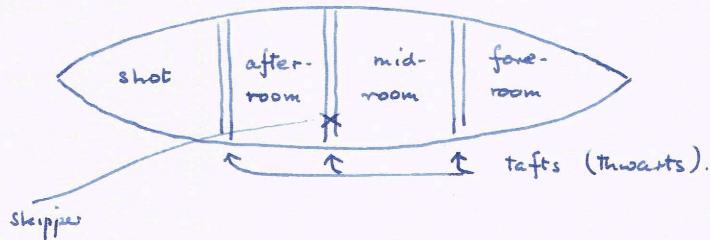
Tobacco
3X Boys

Some further notes on things arising from the evening before.

(1) The top two couples in a Shetland Reel were called the fore-oars, the third couple were "in the hole". The top couple were the couple nearest the fire. The fiddler sat on whichever side of the fire he pleased, and the top man had his back to the fiddler. The second lady always began the reel by going towards the top of the room.

"The two of them dancing in the hole had to wait a bit" [for the others to start off].

(2) I asked Mr Irvine about the old sixearns - he had actually sailed in one. The layout of the boats was as shown



The crew consisted of 4 men and 2 boys, the latter ~~were~~ usually called "feed boys". They were paid a fee for the summer's work, and in addition got the fish caught on one string of lines. The 4 men owned the boat between them, and they shared the proceeds from the other strings of lines - 32 in all (there were about 10 hooks in a string). Thus each boat had 33 strings, 8 for each of the men, and one for the two boys.

The 4 men always took the front oars - the fore-oars, - and the boys sat in the after-room. The skipper was usually in the place marked with a

cross. He was the steersman when the boat was under sail, and he then sat in the "horrocks". The fish were placed in the shot.

Presumably the terminology used in the Whalsay Shetland Reel arises from this. The two couples who interchange places should be the more able dancers — they put the worst dancers in the hole, where they weren't so much in view as the others — just as the six-oar crews put the beginners in the after-room.

- (3) In a Whalsay Shetland Reel, the first 'turning' is always the reel turning, the second is the dancing turning.

The tempo of Mr Irvine's Shetland Reels was $15\frac{1}{2}$ secs. for 16 bars.

- (4) When Mr Irvine was young, "all the old people knew the tunes — that was the way I learnt the tunes — from old people diddling".

"There were tunes which had double dancing time". How did they know them? "They all knew the tunes". Examples of such tunes were Soldier Joy and The Devil among the Tailors. "They were the tunes with 3 turnings in, which were used for double dancing".

■

- (5) Mr Irvine has seen everything double & double dancing and double reels, at some places on the West Side.

- (6) Mr Irvine has seen the shuffle only in Whalsay — although he has been at weddings & dances in almost every part of Shetland.

(7) If the dancers were slow in completing the figure 8 in a Shetland Reel, Mr Irvine would put an extra bar or two into the turnings. For instance, he would sometimes play the second half of a turning again at the end. Other fiddlers also did this, "but the old fiddler I was born next door to, he just knocked off playing, and asked "could you no reel a peerie grain faster". [This was William Hutchison at Creadie Knowe].

(8) In the Shetland Reel the ladies always turned the short way as they reached their partner's finishing place, and then backed into their own places across the set. It was impossible to tell whether they finished with the 3 stamps, because of their long frocks.

"The women were lifting on their heels, and it was the action o' the body which made the dance. You couldn't see their feet.

"Some of the old ladies that were able to dance sare bonny, they put an extra turn in' on the corner."



"They "duckit" when about half round, and when they backed into their places. They didna gae far doon at a'".

(9) I asked him to play the Auld Reel for me. I found I couldn't do a classé with a drop (see Mr & Mrs How) to his playing - nor did he think it the correct step. On the whole, he seemed to prefer a lifting walk.

(10) He played the Drunken Skippes for me exactly as it used to be played for dancing. The dancers - all men - started off as in an ordinary Shetland Reel, with 8 bars reeling. Then followed 6 bars of dancing time at ordinary speed, after which the music began to slow down. As soon as it slowed down, the men began to reel about [in the other sense], and then fell down. He then hit the strings two or three times with the bow as a signal for them to rise, and they started again with reeling time. Mr Irvine usually played the time twice over (i.e. they fell down twice) and then broke into an ordinary Shetland Reel.

He has never heard of words to The Drunken Skippes.

Miss Elizabeth Nicolson

Nothing to do with dancing. A Shetland Grace

Guid grant wis a blessing

Every day as weel as dis'in

[dis' in]

A lang airm in a fu' spuin

[in = and, spuin = spoon]

An plenty to ate when dis is duin

[duin = done].

This was quite common in her young days.

A Shetland toast. From her uncle at North Roe.

Heres guid luck to dee and dnie

No forgettin' me and mine

Whin me and mine come to see dee and dnie

I hope do'll be as kind to me and mine

Is I wis to dee and dnie

When dee and dnie cam to see me and mine.

Mrs Paton, Vatshoull, aged 89

- (1) Remembers the Drunken Skipper in her youngest days.
- (2) Thinks the Bride's Reel was the first dance at a wedding. Has no recollections of the Bride's Reels.

Mr and Mrs Andrew Moar, East Burns (2nd visit)

- (1) Mrs Moar remembers the ladies shuffling with the step described by Mrs John Hutchison (17.9.59).
- (2) I asked them again about the step for the Auld Reel. After some thought, and various demonstrations whilst Mr Moar doodled the tune, they decided that the step was probably a strongly tilting walking step.

Doodling the tune as

La-dadum dee dum da-da dum dee

La dadum dee dum da-da dum dee

Da dum-dee-a da dum-dee

Dadadum dadadum dadadum dee,

the timing was 4 steps for each line.

I asked also whether the couples ever put in an extra turn at the ends of the reel. Mr Moar was not sure of this, but Mrs Moar was positive that they did not do it.

The lady next door, a Mrs Irvine, aged 61, can just remember the Auld Reel; this gives an indication of when it fell out of use.

- (3) Mr Moar went to weddings with his father at least 67 years ago, & they had the full Bride's & Bridegroom's Reels then.

Mr Henry Anderson, Burns, Whalsay, aged 81.

Mr Anderson can remember that at the weddings six men danced when they paid the fiddler.

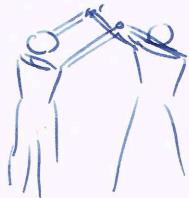
"It was then that they took up the fiddler's money. They took a shilling from every man. I think that was what they called the Bridegroom's Reels."

The six ladies also danced together. "I think the six women danced the Bride's Reels".

Miss Anderson, sister of above, aged 75.

Has been very keen on dancing in her young days.

About 60 years ago, she attended a wedding when a Yell lass married a Whalsay man. She remembers that when the Yell people were 'dancing' [setting] in a Shetland Reel, they held hands as shown below



Mr James Hutchinson, aged 81 }
 Mrs James Hutchinson, aged 72 }

New Town, Whalsay.

Mr Hutchinson remembered the Bride's Reels. Just before supper - the Bride's Reels were the bride's nearest relations - two or three of the Bride's Reels - all women. Then also the Bridegoom's Reels. They swept the bride with a sheaf of corn. Supper was then usually about 2%.

He saw this for the first time when he was just a schoolboy, aged 12 or 14. He was allowed to stay up as long as he liked, so saw the whole ceremony.

[Mrs Hutchinson was not so clear on this. She began to say that the Bride's Reel was the first dance, but Mr Hutchinson told her that was wrong, and went on to say what I have noted above. In the end, recollection came back to Mrs Hutchinson, and she agreed with her husband's account].

I asked about the Auld Reel. Mr Hutchinson said that "they just kept to the figure 8". He does not remember their joining arms.

Mr Hutchinson remembers the shuffling step in the Shetland Reel from his young days on Whalsay - and men who were old then could do it. Quite definitely, the top two couples changed places in their youngest days.

I asked about extra turns inserted in the Reel. Mrs Hutchinson said that when reeling, the women turned at the corners. Mr Hutchinson thought it was at the ends.

I asked also about 'duckin'. Mrs Hutchinson said that "they ducked when they were going to start the reel" [i.e. the figure 8]. I asked if they ducked when going round the figure 8, and to this both of them replied "no".

Mr Hutchinson remembers the Drunken Stepper from his youngest days.

Mrs William Williamson (Mrs Maggie Williamson), Mairist.

One of those who danced for me at John Irvine's house. I visited her separately in order to note the old women's setting step.

The rhythm is an odd one - I think the movements occur on the counts a1, a2, etc., where these are as follows



To begin the step, the feet are in position A, and they remain almost parallel throughout.

- Count 'a' Make a small hop on LF on the spot, and lift RF off the ground
- 1. 1. Make a small step -about 9"- to the right on RF
- a Spring off both feet, and land on the LF about 5" to the right of its previous position
- 2 Put the RF down about 5" to the ~~posi~~ right of its previous position.

Repeat the counts 'a2' as often as required. Then, with feet about 9" apart, spring off both feet ~~on count 'a'~~ and land, on a count 'a', on the RF, more or less on the spot. On the succeeding numbered count place ~~on~~ the LF down, about 9" from the RF. Then perform the counts 'a2' above contrariwise as often as required. Then repeat a similar sequence to the right again, and so on.

The changes in direction need not occur at any regular division of the 8 bars dancing turn.

The 'duckin'' was simply a bob at the changes of direction, achieved

by bending both knees on the last 'a2' of the sequence, i.e. if the sequence is to the right, then on the last 'a' the L knee begins to bend, and on the '2', the R knee bends. The R knee probably bends more than the L knee, and the RF ~~turn~~ may be placed slightly in front of the ~~turn~~ LF

[I had unexpected confirmation of the step described above - though not of the 'duckin' - from Josie Williamson, brother of Robbie Williamson. At a dance which I attended on my last night on Whalsay, they put on a Shetland Reel - especially for my benefit. Josie Williamson was one of the dancers, and while they ~~were~~ were waiting for the music to begin, he did the old ladies' step - precisely as I have noted it from Mrs Williamson.

The three men who danced in the Reel on this occasion were Josie and Robbie Williamson, and Magnus Irvine, the ladies Jeanette Robertson, Robbie's sister, and Mrs Tetley.]

Mr Robert Williamson, 40 Garden Town, Symbister.

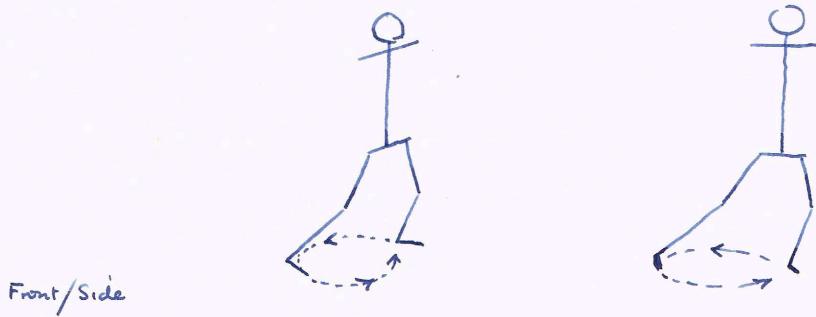
One of those who danced for me at John Irvine's house; I visited him separately in order to note his method of getting into the shuffle. For this, I give the counting from the beginning of the reel ing time.

1-7 Travelling pas de Basque, or a lifting walk.

8. 1 Stamp LF

8 Stamp RF

2& Stamp LF. Immediately after the stamp, which occurs exactly on the count '2', the RF begins to slide in a circular movement out towards near 4th int position, then round through 2nd position, and in to position A (see p. 14 of preceding day's notes), coming in from the direction of 4th int position. The L knee begins to bend as soon as the RF moves off, and there is also a slight bend of the R knee (see diagrams below).



• The RF approaches position A just before the first count '1' of the next bar, and as it does so, the L knee is straightened.

9. 1 Drop heavily on the RF in position A, and immediately take the LF just off the ground

9. 8 Beat lightly with the LF on the spot

2 & Beat lightly with the RF on the spot, and on the count '2', and immediately begin to slide the LF round in a similar circular movement to that made by the RF (with the same beats of the R knee).

10. 18 28 Perform bar $\frac{9}{8}$ contrarie.

11. 18 ~~Perform~~ counts '18' of bar $\frac{9}{8}$.

2 Beat lightly with the RF on the spot.

12. 1

and and a

2

and and a etc

Exactly as in the shuffle described previously. Drop on LF to begin.

Mrs Robert Williamson (Mrs Jeanette Williamson),

Born on the mainland of Scotland, of a Shetland mother & a Scottish father, she has spent a certain amount of time with relatives in Reawick. Her knowledge of Shetland Reels is derived from weddings in the Reawick district, and from her grandfather (whose memory is now not good). Her information relates to fairly recent dates, and may not be typical of what was done long ago.

- (1) She knew the old ladies' step, as described by Mrs Williamson.
- (2) Another step which she has seen is a beaten pas de Basque with a contrary type of swing :-
 - 1.1. Step forward on RF, and pivot to the left on that foot
 2. Continuing to pivot, place the LF behind the RF as shown (the dancer is now facing to the left)
 2. Beat with the RF on the spot.



- 2.1 Pivoting to the right on the RF, step on the LF in the position shown, and continue to pivot on the L toe.
2. Continuing to pivot, place the RF behind the LF as shown (now facing to the right)
2. Beat with LF on the spot.

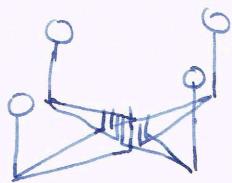
(3) She has been told that in Reawick and Sheld 'kiss the lasses' was always associated with 'double reels'. If the fiddler played a double reel at the end of a Shetland Reel - i.e. if he repeated the reeling turn - then the men had to kiss their partners. Some of the young men would bribe the fiddler to do this with a particular dance, and would then select some fancied girl as partner for this dance.

(4) She has seen a dance with kissing in it, with the use of a handkerchief, on Tettar, but her description did not correspond to the usual description of Bab at the Bowster. I didn't note it, because it is comparatively recent, and I would like to know more about it from Tettar itself.

(5) At a wedding in the sail-loft in Sheld about 20 years ago, she played a game called Biggin the Mill, which was done to music. First one couple sat down, facing each other, legs straight out, feet in contact. Then another couple



sat ~~and~~ at right angles to them, and put their feet over the first pair's ankles. Then



^{two} another couple came in in one of the gaps & put their feet together on top of the pile, and so on until they had as many people as could crowd in. The last people had their ~~feet~~ legs at a considerable angle to the floor. Then they put the lights out, and they had all to stand up!

Mrs Janet Bruce. Sandhank, Isbister, aged 89

A remarkable source. Her memory is brilliantly clear, and her answers came without hesitation. I have not the slightest doubt about their correctness.

Mrs Bruce was brought up in Treiwick, between Symbister and Isbister.

I asked her first what dances were done in her young days. The main dance was the Shetland Reel. They started in alternate places. The two couples nearest the fire were the "fore-oars," and the third couple was "in the hole". (She had no knowledge of the origin of these terms). The fore-oars changed places - i.e. the couples interchanged places.

Another dance done in her young days was the Auld Reel. They "grippit arms and keepit two and two thegither and danced the figure 8 just the same".

The only other dance in use when she began dancing was the Drunken Steppers.
"When we were young we gathered in a fiddler's house. The fiddler we had was William Hughson".

For the rest, I will give question & answer.

Question : Can you tell me about the Bride's Reels?

Answer : "The Bride's Reels were just the same as what we called the Auld Reel, but there were no men in it - all women, do ye see. And all men in the Bridegroom's Reels.

"In the Bride's Reel they had gloy made into things like brushes, and that was brushed down the women as they turned around. Only they had nae tae touch the bride.

"The women brushed the men in the Bridegroom's Reels. And then

they hurried for the bride."

Question : And did they collect the money?

Answer : "The married woman collected the money. The married women collected from the women, the married man collected from the men."

Question : Was the Bride's Reel like the Shetland Reel?

Answer : "It was like the Auld Reel, holding on to one another, only they formed the figure 8 just the same".

Question : Did they not 'dance' on the Bride's Reel?

Answer : "Na, they was just going around, keeping step with the fiddler".

Question : Did the men 'dance'?

Answer : "The men just danced the same way".

Question : How did they hold each other in the Auld Reel and the Bride's Reel?

Answer : "You had one hand round the other's waist." The other hand was clear. "Sometimes you had to keep awa' the straw brush".

Question : Was there any part of the Bride's Reel like the Shetland Reel?

Answer : "Na. They just keepit going on aroun'. Sometimes it was quite short, others it was a braw" [while?].

Some general conversation. Then I asked what the step was in the Auld Reel. I demonstrated some steps. The answer was that "when we reeled in the Auld Reel it was just a walking step".

Question : Did they do the Drunken Skipper in the Bridegroom's Reels?

Answer : "Na, Na. That was just when they were having ony night dance. They never danced it at a wedding".

Question : Would the Drunken Skipper not be done at a wedding at all?

Answer : "Na".

Some more general conversation, of which I give notes later. Then more on weddings.

Question : Who were in the first Reel at a wedding.

Answer : The usual 3 couples, i.e. bride and groom, best folk, married folk.

Question : Was that an ordinary Shetland Reel?

Answer : "Yes."

In the Bridegroom's Reels, the bridegroom was not touched by the brushes.

Question : When did the Bride's & Bridegroom's Reels come in the evening?

Answer : "It was late, when the wedding was coming to an end. Generally about 11 or 12%. Then supper, then go to bed. The wedding generally lasted two days - it started at 9% on the Thursday morning, ended at 9% on the Friday night."

Mrs Bruce saw the Bride's & Bridegroom's Reels for the first time when she was about 11 or 12.

Finally, some odds and ends.

- (1) There was no signal for "kiss the lasses". "Somebody simply said 'kiss the lasses'".
- (2) There were no extra turns in the figure 8 in the Auld Reel.
- (3) She had never heard of words for either the Auld Reel or the Drunken Skippie.
- (4) "The fiddler had a low stool on the nesting couch so that he was above the company".
- (5) She is not aware of the convention re starting positions in a Shetland Reel mentioned by John Irvine of Saltness.
- (6) Her husband, Robert Bruce, was a very fine dancer [this from Mrs Margaret Hutchison of Creadie Knowe].

Mrs Margaret Hutchison, Creadie Knowe, Whalsay, aged 75

Sister of Mr John Hutchison of Creads. Reputedly a fine dancer in her youth.

Mrs Hutchison remembers the Bride's Reels. They maybe had half a dozen of the Bride's Reels. Then they would have the Bridegroom's Reels, again maybe half a dozen. These Reels were later in the evening; they would have supper immediately they finished.

The Auld Reel occurred as one of the times in the Bride's Reel. When this tune was played, they "took hands and kept going". The step was a walking step, but liltit; she was quite certain of this. I showed her a chassé, but this was rejected. There were no extra turns in the Auld Reel.

In the Shetland Reel, the normal travelling step was a travelling pas de Basque. "The ladies took two or three steps & then dookit". I tried dropping on the final beat of 4 bars, & she thought this about right. It wasn't much more frequent than this. Bend the front knee for the 'dook'.

The ladies steps were the glide and the shuffle - I demonstrated these as I have learnt them from Mrs Katie Hutchison & Mr Willie Williamson, and Mrs Hutchison commended them - said they were correct. But she wouldn't get up to show me for herself - a great disappointment, for everyone had said she could.

Nothing to do with dancing: The bride's mother ~~broke~~ crumbled the bride's-scene (an oat-cake, with seeds and sugar in it) and threw ^(the pieces) over the bride when she entered the house on her return from the ceremony. All the young women scrambled for the pieces, and a lot of them put the pieces under their pillows.

(on Whalsay)

Went to a dance last night - following
 a concert which I stepped. The dance
 started at 11.30, & was still going strong
 at 3.45 when I left. Programme roughly

Lancers

St. Bernard Waltz

Highland Schottische

Quickstep

Quadrilles

Pride of Erin Waltz

Quickstep

Eightone Reel

Boston 2-Step

Shetland Reel

Waltz

Quadrilles etc!

Only snag was that I had to get up at
 7^½ for the boat. This morning.

Second cousin to Peter Fraser of Finnigarth, and grandfather of Jeanette Williamson on Whalsay. Born in Dale of Walls, left there at the age of 15, then lived in Burrastow, Walls, for 17 years. Moved to Reawick in 1905.

The dances done in his young days were nearly all Shetland Reels, but there were in addition the Muckle Reel of Finnigarth, The Shaalds o' Foula, and Haymakers.

The Muckle Reel of Finnigarth was done frequently in Dale of Walls and Burrastow, but not in Reawick. He had been told that there were 13 turnings in the tune (though he had never counted them). The Finnigarth family were the only ones who could play the tune properly.

He thought the Shaalds of Foula was done by 6 people.

The Polka and Waltz were introduced to Walls when he was about 21. He and other young people had seen them in the south.

At the end of a Shetland Reel "very generally" the young men kissed their partners.

The Bride's Reel at a wedding in his young days was a 3-couple Shetland Reel, with the usual 6 people, the 3 men on one side, the 3 ladies on the other. There might also be more people on the floor if space permitted. It was always the first dance. Mr Fraser has no recollection of 6 women dancing together at a wedding.

Mr Fraser has never heard of 8, 6, or 4-Man's Reels, or of double reeling or double dancing time, or of the game Biggin The Milk.

Also Mrs Moar, of about the same age.

Mr Moar was a fiddler, and can probably still play. He himself comes from Wester Skeld, his wife from Westerwick, just beyond Wester Skeld.

In his young days, most of the dances performed during an evening's dancing were Shetland Reels.

Question. What other dances were done?

Answer[†] "There were eight that used to dance, and they played the Foula Shaalds. They sort of formed the figure 8."

Question. How many people took part in this?

Answer. "I think there were 8".

Question. Have you heard of the 4-Man's Reel and the 8-Man's Reel?

Answer. "Yes".

Question In the 8-Man's Reel, how many people were there on the floor, and how did they stand?

Answer. "Well, they stood four on this side and four on the other side."

Question Can you remember whether they were alternately man and woman on each side?

Answer "Yes, yes. Four men and four ladies" [He understood the question, and I took this to mean that there were 4 men on one side, and 4 ladies on the other.]

Question In the 8-Man's Reel, did they run the figure 8?

At this stage, I could get no clear description of the pattern. Mr Moar's recollection of the 4-Man's Reel was even hazier. But the names 4-Man's ad-

[†] Mr Moar, except where noted.

8-Man's Reels were in common use in his day.

I then turned to Mrs Moar.

Question. Was there a 6-Man's Reel?

Answer (Mrs Moar). "Yes. That was three on each side".

~~Question~~ What about the 8-Man's Reel?

Answer (Mrs) That was 4 on each side.

Question. Can you remember how they did it.

Answer (Mr) "They played on for a time, and then they ran the reel from the middle, and they run in and out among each other".

Question. Was that the 6 or the 8-Man's Reel?

Answer (Mr) "No. That was the 8-Man's Reel. But the 6-Man's Reel was something the same".

Question. Was the Foula Skerlds the same as, or different to, the 8-Man's Reel.

Answer (Mr and Mrs Moar). "Different".

They had no memories of a Reel in which the lines changed from // to ==.

There was a dance in which they took hands, and went zig-zag round through them. This may have been Foula Shaalds.

They also had a Reel for 4 people in which they crossed hands.

Question. Did they cross hands in the 8-Man's Reel?

Answer (Mr Moar) "I don't think so". (Mr Moar) Agreed with Mrs Moar.

Question. So they just danced and ran the reel?

Answer (both) Yes.

Question. Was it the same music for the 6-Man's and 8-Man's Reels?

Answer (Mr Moar). "No, there were different songs."

Mr Moar mentioned Caber Fei and Deil Amanag the Tailors for the 8-Man's Reel, Soldier's Joy for the 6-Man's Reel. He decided Caber Fei & Soldier's Joy. The first took 13 seconds for 8 bars, the second 14 seconds for 8 bars. Both were 2-part tunes.

In both dances, they "danced" first, and "reeled" next.

I then asked about the Jig. In this, they danced first, then turned. They thought that partners took hands, and changed places.

The Brides Reel was the first dance at a wedding.

There were no slow and quick parts in Reels - only one tempo throughout.

It is probably 50 years since they last saw the 8-Man's Reel danced.

I then turned to the question of a Shind Reel. My first question was. Question. Have you ever seen a dance in which the dancers just kept doing a figure 8?

Answer (Mrs Moar) "Yes."

Question Can you remember whether the man followed behind the lady, or whether they were holding on to each other in some way?

Answer (Mrs Moar) "Yes. They were arm in arm."

Question. Can you remember how they did the dance?

Answer (Mrs Moar). "They just kept it on until they came to some turning. Then they slipped and went some other way".

Question. But they didn't 'dance' [i.e. set]?

Answer (Mrs Moar) "No".

Question. Did both men and women take part?

Answer. "Yes".

Question. How long ago was this?

Answer. When Mrs Moar was nearing the age of 20. In Westerwick.

At this stage, Mr Moar volunteered the information that he also had seen a similar dance in Skeld in his younger days.

- (1) She knew the names 4-Man's, 8-Man's, and 8-Man's Reels. She also knew them ~~as~~ as the 4-penny, 6-penny, and 8-penny Reels.

The 4-penny Reel was definitely the 2-couple cross-handed Shetland Reel, but she was not clear about the other two.

How many people took part in the 8-penny? "Surely 8 people were in the 8-penny Reel". Did they cross hands? "No, I don't think we ever touched you another". But there is possible confusion here with the Sixsome Reel.

- (2) She has no memory of a dance of Auld Reel type.
(3) She knew a version of the Pin Reel, unnamed, with 4 chaps and 5 women dancers.

Mr Magnus Robertson, and Miss Robertson, Wester Skeld, aged ca 75-80.

She remembered having heard of an 8-penny Reel, but nothing more.

Parkside

Mr and Mrs Robert Ridland, Wester Skeld, aged ca 75.

Not at all prepared to be helpful - a very uncouth pair. But I gleaned a little.

- (1) Both Mr and Mrs Ridland thought that the 8-Man's Reel was simply a double cross-handed 4-some. It does not have a figure 8.
(2) The Sixsome Reel has the figure 8.
(3) Mrs Ridland's mother, who was born in 1854, danced the Foula Shaalds in her younger days, and taught it to Mrs Ridland. I verified that it was the usual longways type dance. Mrs Ridland also knew it as the Foula Reel.
(4) The Pin Reel was done in Mrs Ridland's younger days.
(5) The Bride's Reel was the first dance at a wedding.

Miss Margaret Tullock, South houses, Easter Skeld, aged ca 76.

We had talked to Miss Tullock on our first visit to Skeld on Sept. 15th, and she gave us the names of some old people. At that time, however, she denied all knowledge of dancing. I visited her on the 19th when it was dark, and didn't know who I was visiting until I actually arrived at her door, for on the first occasion we did not get her name. Miss Tullock was brought up in Easter Skeld.

Miss Tullock's two brothers were fiddlers, and she had actually danced a good deal.

- (1) She knew the 6-some, and 4-some cross-handed, Reels under the titles 6-penny and 4-penny Reels, but had no recollection of an 8-penny Reel. She did not know the names 'a-Han's Reel'. She knew, of course, of the possibility of having two 4-some sets side by side on the floor.
- (2) Toula Shaalds was done in the district in her young days, but Polkas, etc., were not.
- (3) She has no memories of a dance of Auld Reel type.
- (4) Double Reels were done whenever the dancers pleased - someone would call double reels, and then the fiddler had to play an extra part again. On this, the dancers simply went through the reel a second time, without pausing.
- (5) Kiss the lasses. She "minds some of the fiddlers squeaking on the fiddle - and then people would say - oh, that's kiss your partners".

Mrs James Isbister, Easter Skeld (2nd visit).

A short visit, but it produced no further information.

Question. There was an 8-Man's Reel?

Answer "Yes"

Question Was there a 4-Man's Reel?

"
Answer Yes. And there was the Shetland Reel. That was for six"

Question How many people took part in the 4-Man's Reel?

Answer "Just four, I think"

Question And in the 8-Man's Reel?

Answer "I think there was 8 on each side."

Question Was the 8-Man's Reel just a collection of 4-Man's Reels side by side?

Answer She could not be certain just what it was, whether it was this, or a
separate dance with a figure 8.

Mr John Moar, The Stove, Easter Skeld, aged ca 80

No information.

Mrs John MacLeod, School house, Cunningsburgh.

Mrs MacLeod learnt the dance from the Rev. A.B.A. Wilson ca 1944. Mr Wilson wanted to see the dance, just for his own interest, and he obtained the tune, and information about it, from Miss Lawrenceson. The last was actually present at some of the practices.

The dance was performed at Mr Wilson's own wedding reception at Cunningsburgh.

As Mrs MacLeod learnt it, it was performed by 8 ladies, and was similar to what we saw on Sept. 15th.

[Mrs MacLeod later obtained Mr Wilson's address:

Rev. A.B.A. Wilson, Tomyburn Manse, New Dunfermline, Fife.]

Mr John MacLeod.

Mr MacLeod once put on the Bride's Reel at a wedding for a Picture Post photographer. It was done on that occasion by 4 mixed couples, but this was just for the occasion. Mr MacLeod was well aware that it should be done by 8 ladies. [I mention this since we were told that Mr MacLeod was in opposition to Mrs Malcolmson over the composition of the Bride's Reel; this is quite false.]

Mrs Margaret Smith, Aith, Cunningsburgh, aged 74.

In conversation with myself and Mrs Mar Macleod. I began by asking her about the Brides Reel. In her time, this was just the ordinary Shetland Reel, the first dance at the wedding, danced by the usual 3 couples.

Some general conversation followed. Then, without any question from me, she asked me : "Have you heard of the Auld Reel. That's just dancing on one leg, do you see". [Then followed something I couldn't get down in time.]

I asked her to explain the Auld Reel further. "One leg. But the figure 8, they neeeded. First one leg. Then the other. But only one leg at a time".

Mrs Smith, Joan Lawerson, ~~and~~ Lawrence Christie [now dead] and 5 others performed it at the wedding of Lawrence Smith and Mrs Christie's daughter in January 1946.

Question. How did you do the Auld Reel?

Answer. "You stepped along on one leg. And just" [something about reeling and turning back].

Question. How did you stand to begin it?

Answer. "Just as in a Schottische. Holding one another."

She then demonstrated the hold with me. Stand together, with bodies at about right angles to each other, never arms round each other's waists, and further hands held up.



Question. And how did you reel?

Answer. "When we reeled, we reeled back & let the other ones go round. And you danced on one foot".

Question . Which foot were you on when you were on the right of your partner.

Answer "On either, but just one".

Some more general conversation [In between my questions, Mr and Mrs MacLeod, bless them, kept her in conversation. So I was able to note both question and answer.] Then:

"The Auld Reel was always called for at weddings".

Apparently the dance went to various tunes. Those she could remember were "Ahunt [Ahint] the decks o' Voe" and "Napoleon's March to Moscow".

"But in my time the Bride's Reel was done just like a Shetland Reel".

After some further conversation, I returned to the Auld Reel.

Question: The Auld Reel [this to get her attention]: You stood as if doing a Schottische?

Answer. "Yes, exactly the same". Then: "Some swang their arm".

Question ? You mean they had one arm free?

Answer "Yes"

Question But the other arm?

Answer "Yes, Round the waist".

Question How did the 4 couples stand. In a sort of a square, or in a line?

Answer "In a sort of a square".

Question Was there any 'dancing' in the Auld Reel.

Answer "No. No dancing. You just hopped round and reeled." [Something I didn't ~~s~~ manage to get down.] Then] "We reeled a figure 8, you see".

I tried to get her to explain the reel. All I could note was. "Just at the middle o' the time you reeled back and let [the others go].

After some more general conversation, I tried again.

Question. You started off ^{with} the reel?

Answer "Yes, just reeling all the time on one leg"

Question No dancing on the spot?

Answer "No".

From the general conversation which followed, I noted: "Oh, in my father's and mother's time they danced the Auld Reel frequently".

Again I questioned on the reel.

Answer "We just reeled the figure 8 all the time".

Question. You said you "reeled back". Does that mean you went backwards along the same track as you had come along?

Answer. "Yes".

Question What did the others do when you were going back?

Answer. "They were going forwards and going another way and going round, just a figure 8".

Question. How far back did you go?

Answer "Oh, just when we were dancing. We didn't go far. Just to keep it time with the couples we were along with".

Question. What did you do when you started going forward again?

Answer "Then you could turn and come the other way facing you".

And from the following general conversation.

"It was a very tiresome dance. The one leg a' the time."

Then more questions

Question Were you at the ends or in the middle when you reeled back?

Answer "We would be at the ends like".

Question. But could you be in the middle?

Answer "No. Only at the ends".

Question. What did the couples do in the middle while you were going back at the end?

Answer "Yes. They turned and went the other way".

Question Did you turn and start going back or did you go forwards again?

Answer "We went forwards again".

Question Then did you keep going round the figure 8 the same way?

Answer "Yes. The same way all the time".

We then tried a demonstration. At this stage Mrs Smith tried to show us the step, and succeeded in producing precisely the step used in the demonstration on September 15th.

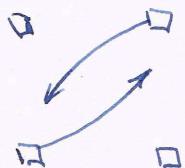
The four couples were apparently placed as shown, and the two marked began the reel by passing in the direction marked. All this was quite definite, but the movements of the other two couples were less definite. She suggested that they also crossed to the diagonally opposite place, then the first pair of couples crossed back, & so on. But this didn't give a figure 8, and clearly this didn't satisfy her. We then tried the figure of a Scotch Reel, begun with partners side by side, and this seemed to her more likely. At this stage we abandoned the demonstration, and tried some more questions.

Question. The dance was called The Auld Reel?

Answer "Yes"

Question Was it done by 4 couples?

Answer "Yes. 4 or 8." But the 8 couples really made up two sets



of 4 couples, i.e. they didn't mix.

Question. Was it danced at weddings if someone called for it?

Answer "Yes".

Apparently they could call for the Auld Reel, and then ask the fiddlers to play one of several tunes for it; Com Rigi was one of these tunes.

I then asked Mrs Smith what the actual step for the dance was. She said that it was simply a hop on one foot, with the other foot held up just off the floor. I pointed out that earlier on she had done a step [similar to the demonstration step] with both feet on the ground. With a smile, she told me that that was just her crippled leg.

Then some further questions.

Question. When did you pay the fiddlers at a wedding?

Answer "After supper. Someone went round with a hat. Just about a shilling then".

Question. The Shetland Reel was always for six people?

Answer "Yes"

Question. But could you ever have a Shetland Reel for eight?

Answer "Yes". And apparently this was performed with a figure 8, and with "dancing" opposite your partner. This Shetland Reel for 8 was done in her young days.

Question. Was the figure 8 in the Shetland Reel for 8 people the same as that in the Auld Reel?

Answer "Just the same".

To her knowledge, Mrs Smith has never seen the Bride's Reel performed by the Cunningsburgh group at a concert, though she has seen 8 ladies do

the Auld Reel on the platform in the Cuningsburgh Hall [this must have been a performance of the Brides Reel]. Her comment was that "they didn't do the step properly".

Mrs Smith had never heard of a Brides Reel done by all women, or all men.

In her young days, the last dance at a wedding was Bab at the Bowster. "One lady rose frae the company. This was the last dance of the night. Threw a handkerchief on the floor and danced round it. Then she kissed a lad. Then they held hands and danced round the handkerchief. The man gae out and kiss'd a lass. The new one danced with the other two and then went out and kiss'd another". And so on. "Then, when a' the company were in, they were kissed out." "Some ran away - but they watched at the door to see they didn't get out".

There would probably be 50 or 60 in the house for this dance! —