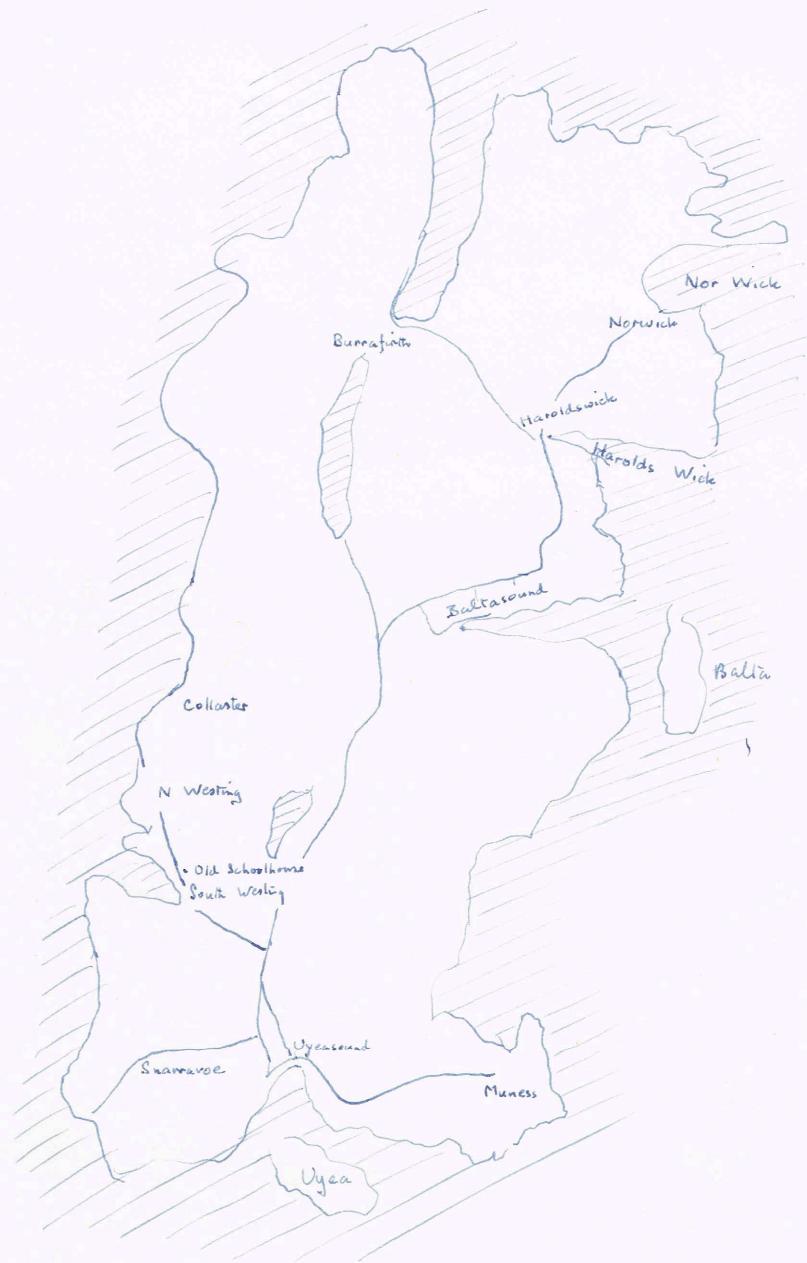


Shetland, September 1961 (with F.R.).

- Sept. 8th Friday Left Liverpool 9 p.m., drove overnight to Aberdeen, arrived 7 a.m.
- 9th Saturday Flew from Dyce airport, Aberdeen to Sumburgh, bus to Berwick, met by Cameron of Bressay, and then spent the Saturday night there.
- 10th Sunday Stayed on Bressay till tea, crossed back to Berwick, saw Tommy Anderson.
- 11th Monday Crossed by the "Overland route" to Unst.
- 11th - 14th Visits in Unst.
- 15th Friday Crossed back to Yell by the 'Overland' route.
- 15th - 18th Visits in Yell.
- 19th Tuesday Crossed back to Mainland by the Overland route. Visits in Berwick
- 20th Wednesday Visits in Berwick
- 21st Thursday Bus to Sumburgh, plane back to Dyce, ~~visited in Edinburgh, then~~ drove down to Perth and stayed there the night.
- 22nd Friday Drove home, making call in Edinburgh on the way.



Liste of Unst

11. 3. 61

Mrs Jemima Lawrenson, Kirkatown, Norwick, Unst, aged 81.

Born elsewhere on Unst, but spent her youth in Norwick. When she started to dance, the only dance in use was the "Shetland Reel".

The Shetland Reel here was for 3 couples, placed alternately and consists of "running the figure 8" and "dancing" alternately, beginning with running. In the figure 8, all return to their own places; The men usually placed their hands on partners' waists, less often on their shoulders; they sometimes inserted extra spins, and the men (only) finished the reel sometimes with 3 quick stamps. When setting, they held partners' hands, more or less at elbow level; backstep was the usual step, done by ladies as well as men. There were usually 3 tunes played for each Reel.

The Reel was done with the alternate positions, right from her earliest days.

In her young days, before she started dancing, they kissed their partners at the end of every Reel. This was the accepted custom, & the girls did not try to dodge away; there was no squeak on the fiddle, and no shout of "kiss your partner".

Auld Reel, Muckle Reel,

Mrs Lawrenson has never heard of Merry Men's Reel, Pretty Dancers Reel, Parton Visick, or any dance with continuous reeling. She has heard of the Jig, but never seen it, and the same with Shaaalds o' Doula.

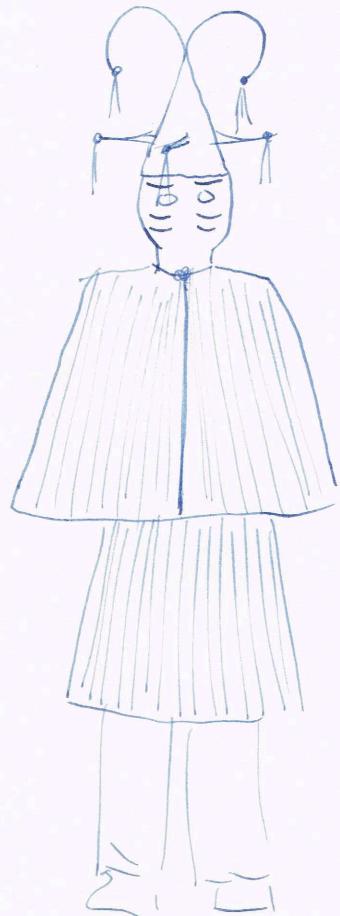
Quadrilles and Lancers came into Norwick, probably after the '14-18 War, but certainly after she stopped dancing. She had no knowledge of the Scotch Reel.

In her young days, weddings lasted for 2 days; the dancing on the first day ended at 5 or 6 a.m. On the second "day", it ended at 3 or 4 p.m. In those days the weddings were held in the houses, and the house itself & the "outhouses" were both pressed into use, for both the dinner & the dancing. Everyone sat down at the same time for the dinner, some in the house, some in the outhouse.

After the dinner, the dancing began. It ~~—~~ started with 3 Shetland Reels, collectively known as "The Bride's Reel". These 3 Reels were performed by the bride & groom, best man and maid, & the "married folk". In the first Reel, they danced in these pairs, & in this order from the top. There was then a pause, while the "married man" moved to top place & the other men moved down, & the second Reel followed. Then there was another short pause and a further change of positions, and the third Reel followed, the bride this time dancing with the best man.

After this, the dancing just continued in the ordinary way, with only Shetland Reels. The numbers varied, but 100 was a fairly average attendance at a wedding.

When she ^(very) was young, gusards came into the wedding, dressed in tall straw hats, a straw cloak, and a straw skirt to just below the knees. Ribbons were tied to the hat, & the face was covered with a cloth, painted with marks on it. They came in, did a Shetland Reel by themselves, and then departed, all without speaking a word. (There was usually six gusards & a fiddler).



Again when she ^(very) was young, the last two people in the bridal procession to & from the Church were called the Tail-sweeps. They were the youngest male relative of the groom & the youngest female relative of the bride. The boy carried a straw brush, made of a wooden handle about 18" long, with a bundle of straw tied to it. So far as she knew, he didn't sweep anything with it, nor did he play any special part in the Bride's Reel.

A few weddings in Unst still last for 2 days in

the same way as when Mrs Lawrenson was young, but "everything is in the halls now."

Most of the dancing in her young days took place in special "dancing-houses" - the places where the young people gathered - there were usually 3 or 4 of these in each district. ~~She~~ She herself did not go to such places, but this was her own inclination - they were not looked down on in any way.

Mrs Lawrenson's granddaughter said that at an Unst wedding nowadays, there are usually 2 or 3 Shetland Reels in the course of the evening - mainly for the older people, but younger people also dance them (including herself, aged c. 18-19). [She also gave us a demonstration of spinning]

Mr and Mrs William Gray, Valzie, Norwick, Unst, aged 84, 82, and their
two daughters

When Mr & Mrs Gray started dancing, the only dance in use was the "Shetland Reel," with 3 couples placed alternately. In their young days, partners held hands for setting, but their parents' generation had danced separately, both men & ladies having hands on waists. Not every man had the backstep, & they had never heard of a shuffle step. Mr Gray was a fiddler, and he ~~usually~~ ^{usually} played 2 or 3 tunes for each Reel.

They have never heard of Auld Reel, Muckle Reel, Merry Men's Reel, Pretty Dancer's Reel, Partin Visack, or a dance with continuous reeling, or dances with men or ladies only.

Mr Gray had heard of a Jig, but never seen it.

The "Brides Reel" was the first 3 Reels at a wedding, just as described by Mrs Lawerson, but the first change of partners might bring the best man to dance with the bride. The fiddlers actually stopped playing for a short time while the men changed places.

Mr Gray has seen Grusards at a wedding - in his young days. They just danced a Reel & then departed.

Weddings were one night, and a few friends in for a second night. There were no special dances other than the Brides Reel. Before ^{Mr Gray's} ~~the~~ time, they passed the hatt round for the fiddler; in his time, sometimes he was paid, sometimes not.

The Tailseeps were the two youngest members of the bridegroom & bride's families. They formed the tail of the bridal procession, & the boy carried a besom, wooden handle * decorated with ribbons, & a bunch of stems tied on. After the dance, the girl "swept the floor before the dancing began - just for a bit o' fun". This was still done after the 1st World War, & the quotation above is from Mr Gray's eldest daughter.

* But see second visit, 14.9.61.

Mr Gray's two daughters told us of the entry of the new dances to Norwich. "The Scotch fisher girls and the Scotch fishermen - they brought in the Scotch Reel, Highland Schottische, and the Eightone Reel". All these were brought in well before the first World War. (Most of the Scotch fishermen girls here were from Bucks & Faversham.) Quadrilles & Lancers were brought in after the 1914-18 War, probably by men returning after war service in the south.

Mr James Johnson, Marypark, Baltasound, Unst, aged 76

(Collister, N. Westing)

Mr Johnson was born and brought up in ~~Westing~~, and lived there till the age of 20 when he moved to Baltasund. Collister is now empty.

In Westing in his young days, the only dance was the "Shetland Reel". This was for 3 couples, placed alternately. He has no recollection of any special starting positions relative to the fiddler, nor can he remember the starting directions in the reel. Partners usually held hands when "dancing" [i.e. setting], though not everybody did. He cannot remember whether it was the older people who didn't hold hands. The alternative hand positions were either hands raised or on waists. In the reel, the men should not hold their partners in any way, though an occasional man who was not sure of himself might put his hands on his partner's shoulders so that he didn't lose her. He has seen dancers mix extra spins on the spot at the end of each reel.

The old fiddlers used to insist that "they had to run the reel at the right time", and if he was not satisfied, he would strike the strings above the bridge to indicate the beginning of the reel.

In the old days in the croft houses, the fiddler was "above the company", on a box or a barrel in a corner.

It was "recognized as an obligation" to kiss partners at the end of each Reel. The girls then dropped out, but the men could stay on the floor if they wished, simply choosing fresh partners. It was quite usual for the men to stay on the floor and dance 5 or 6 Reels in succession. The men who were sitting out had to "apply for the first vacancy", i.e. they had to ask those ~~who~~ who were dancing "to let them in when they were through".

At a wedding, the dancing began with 3 Reels, danced by the usual three pairs. In the first Reel, the bride danced with her husband, in the second with the married man, and in the third with the best man. Each of these Reels was of the usual length, the actual

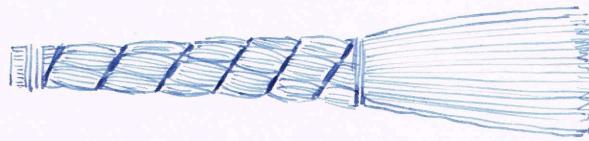
length being regulated by the fiddler. He was not sure whether the whole set of Reels, or only the first of the three, was known by the name "The Bride's Reel", but the name certainly covered either one or the other.

The "married folks" were the older sister or brother of either the bride and bridegroom; they had to be married, but were not necessarily married to each other. In the bridal procession, they preceded the bridal pair on the way to the church, but on the way back they followed the bride & groom & the best man & maid.

The last pair in the procession were the "Tailsweps"; these were the youngest & newest relatives of the bride and/or groom. Mr Johnson himself has never seen the Tailswep carrying anything, but he has been told by older people that they carried a besom; he has no knowledge of this besom being used for anything.

So far as he knows, the besom carried by the Tailsweps was of a standard type used as a household implement, made entirely of straw, bound with string. To make these

you start in the middle of the straw & finish with the [cut?] end. Tie it firmly at the middle, divide it into 5, 6, or 7 bunches, and bind each to the next, so that the string spirals round the handles.

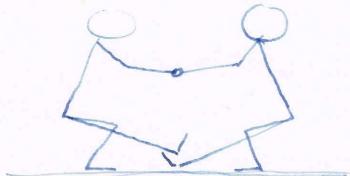


At the wedding, every man who was a dancer had an ambition to have at least one Reel with each of the bride & best maid during the night's dancing.

On one occasion at a wedding in Westing when Mr Johnson was aged about 10, he saw what was known as a "Bull Reel", danced by 6 men. On this particular occasion, the "Bull Reel" was danced by 6 men, all aged c. 70, and all ~~very~~ heavily bearded. It was danced with great vigor, & they sometimes slapped their

partner on the back when going through the Reel

A dance done by youngsters was "dancing cutty"; two people held hands, facing each other, & got down on their bumbers, where they hopped, shooting out alternate legs to the front



He has never heard of the Auld / Muckle / Many Mens / Pretty D's Reels, cont'd reelin', or Partie Viwick.

References. George Stewart, Fife-side Tales.

John Nicolson, Shetland Incidents & Tales.

[Mr Johnson ("Rasmie") showed us various examples of home craftsmanship — an example of a straw besom, a keshie made of dockens, and a toyake, a dish made of straws bound with string.



Query: Have the Folk Society examples of these?

Mr Gilbert Smith and Miss Eliza Smith, Barns, N. Westing, Unst, aged 77 & 63.

When Mr Smith danced first, it was "all Shetland Reels". Neither is sure of the figures, but in the dance "they ran the figure 8". When Miss Smith began dancing, c. 1914, the new dances had come in; she thinks that a dancing-master from the South had held classes in Uyeasound Hall c. 1910, & taught the newer dances then. Two quite elderly people, Sammy Sandison & Tommy Hunter (both now dead) attended these classes, and got special exercises "to slacken their leg muscles"!

Neither Mr Smith nor Miss Smith have any recollections of Auld / Muscle / Merry Men / Pretty D's / Bulk Reels, or cont' reelng, or of Tail-sweep, tatted socks, kissing partners.

The first dance at a wedding was the Bride's Reel, but they are not sure what it was.

In North Westing, they still celebrate Yule on the 6th January. The period of celebrations in Mr Smith's young days was "maybe 2 days", but ^{maybe 100 years ago} _(people round here) they had 24 days. It ended with "Up Helly Aa". What do ~~you~~ do now on 25th December? "They never seem to think anything about it".

On Yule day they played a form of football - all the men, young & old. In Shetland this football is known as "uppies and doonies". Then in the evening there was a dance. The procedure on New Year's Day (January 13th) was "something the same".

Old Yule was also observed at Haroldswick & ~~the~~ Norwich, at least up to a year ago.

[Miss Smith is one of the few people on the island who can do the fine spinning. She gave us a very good demonstration of carding, & showed us her "spinnie".]

Mrs Mary Ann Smith, Phail, N. Westing, Unst, aged 83.

Mrs Smith was born & brought up in Uyeasound, and lived there until she was 28 (1906), when she moved to the Westing. Her memories of dancing and of weddings therefore refer primarily to Uyeasound.

In her earliest days, the only dance in use was the Shetland Reel, and she has no memory of the other dances on our list - Auld Reel, Merry Men's Reel, ~~Parotin'~~ Visick, etc. So far as she knows, the new dances came into Uyeasound after she was married, i.e. after 1906.

The Shetland Reel, as danced in her younger days, was for 3 couples, placed alternately, and in the "dancing" partners held hands.

At the end of each Reel the men kissed their partners - this was the accepted custom, and the girls made no attempt to avoid it ("some may have been glad to get the kiss"). The men had the right to stay on the floor and bring on new partners, though the girls changed every time. "The men would maybe have stayed and keepit the floor for three Reels". There was no signal from the fiddler for the kissing. The fiddlers did sometimes strike the strings above the bridge, but this was only the signal to begin the reeling. I verified that the "dancing" and "reeling" periods were at least approximately 8 bars in length.

At a wedding, the "tailsweep" is the pair consisting of the youngest nearest relations of bride & groom capable of taking part in the procession - preferably the bride's youngest sister and the bridegroom's youngest brother. She can remember the term tailsweep being used in her youngest days but cannot remember the tailsweeps having any special duties, or their carrying a besom - they were simply the last pair in the procession.

The 'manned folk' were preferably a married sister of the bridegroom and a married

brother of the bride. The married man gave the bride away in her young days - in general the bride's father didn't go to the church, and if he did, he still didn't give the bride away.

Her own wedding was the first to be held in the hall at Uyeasound.

At the Westing, they still celebrate Yule according to the old calendar, Yule day being on January 6th. Some districts said that 25th January was the last day of Yule. On Yule day there was always dancing in the evening - a house was set apart, and the young people gathered there. This was generally, but not invariably, the house of a fiddler.

((and later))

In her young days, Baltasound and Uyeasound were the only fishing stations on Unst. She can remember the first Scotch girls coming to the gutting at Uyeasound - she had left school at the time, and was probably about 21. But there existed Scotch fishing boats earlier.

She has never heard of tatted socks.

[^(Another of) Mrs Smith and one of her daughters living with her both do the fine knitting. Mrs Smith's daughter is Mrs William Peterson, Toft, Myness, Unst, and she does both the fine knitting and the spinning of the fine wool. Mrs Peterson gave us a demonstration of the spinning when we ~~left~~ visited her at Myness next day.]

Mr William Johnson and Misses Katie and Margaret Johnson, Kirkknowe, N. Westing

Uist, ages 68, 70, 72.

In their earliest memories in the Westing, there were only Shetland Reels. All dancing took place in the houses then.

The Shetland Reel was always for 3 couples placed alternately, the reel being begun

 as shown. In the reel figure the men did not hold their partners. normally, though "they would do that just for fun sometimes". They would also "clap each other's shoulders and that when they passed". I asked about extra spins in the reel : "Some would run this figure 8 and they would be running round about and making all different [turns]". "Anybody that was supposed to be good dancers, they would be hearing about putting the spins in now and again". I also asked about the ladies passing backwards through their partner's place and falling back into their own places whilst facing their partners: "Some did that; that was just optional, I mean. It wasn't part of the dance". They have sometimes seen 'partner swing' substituted for the reeling, the swinging being performed by "hooking arms". They have also seen 'circle 6' substituted for the reel.

In the setting the men held their partner's hands. Three of the setting steps were the "backstep", the "forestep" (with a hop as in the backstep) and some sort of shuffle (this last was seen ^{only} at Uyeasound, performed by a merchant from Yell). Both men and women used the backstep.

I asked whether they kissed their partners at the end of a dance. "Oh yes, yes. Always had a smooriekin at the end - we thought it was never complete without that... there was always a cry at the end when they had finished off. Kiss the lasses, kiss the lasses. That was always the end o't."

In the old days people alluded to the Shetland Reel, and also to any tune for it,

as the "Steinbough" - this name was an alternative to Shetland Reel, both names being in common use. The company would call out to the fiddler "Boy, play a steinbough", and then, to the dancers, "Shak[e] her up, boys".

The house dancing was going out in their young days. "Before that there was no hall. The hall came up in 1900. Well that was the beginning o' it. Then the young folkes wanted something different from Shetland Reels." In their parents' day, evenings of dancing in the croft houses, called "rants", were common. "The fiddlers always sat up on some high seat at a wedding or that". None of them had ever heard of a special position of the set relative to the fiddler.

At a wedding in their young days, the Bride's Reels was 3 Reels, performed by the usual 3 couples. The bride danced with the bridegroom, then the married man, then the best man. There was a pause between each Reel, and each was full length. They would shout "Hurrah for the bride". This was supposed to be keeping it up, affably (company). They would shout "Hurrah for the bride". This was supposed to be keeping it up, affably leavily "(this in the middle of a dance). When they first described the Bride's Reels they had the bride's father in place of the married man, but later they said that in the old days it would have been the m^d. man. The Bride's Reel is now the Grand March & Cucassian O - this is the first dance at the wedding.

They have no real recollection of the Tail-sweep, except that the "tail" were the last couple, related in some way to the bridal pair.

There was usually only one fiddler at a house wedding. Did they pay the fiddler? Oh yes, they took a collection, sixpences and threepences, and that was called the fiddler's money.

They had no memory of any of the other dances on our list.

A Mr Clayton taught in Uyeasound c. 1911. They were too young to attend his classes; but at that time there was a large number of courting couples in Uyeasound, and they all went. The pupils learnt all the new dances, Quadrilles, Lancers, Cucassian O, Eightane Reel, Dashing White Sergeant, Pin Reel (Pinnie), Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, Rony O'Mere, Haymakers, My Love She's But a Lassie Yet, Strip the Willow, Highland Schottische, Scotch Reel.

Mr Clayton gave a prize for the best lady & the best man at the end of his classes. His pupils were called "the Claytonites", and other young people who had been unable to attend his classes learnt from them, either by watching them, or by dancing with them. Mrs Gifford (see later) does with a cousin of theirs for the prize.

My Lover She's but a lassie yet. This was a Country Dance, for sets of 4 or 5 couples.

"They [met in the middle and] took hands and went down the centre, back up, bowed to opposites, set and then they ran the figure 8 of the Scotch Reel and whirled, and then repeat." For going down the middle, they joined R hands, and came back (roughly) to 1st place improper and bowed to 2nd opposites. They then set to and swung the second opposites, then run the figure 8, and [I think] waltzed around, or possibly just swung on the spot in the manner of the North-East.

[They showed us the rock and the reel, and the stretching apparatus for spinning, and also let us try to rotate the 'spinnie' - no easy task, for the ~~wheel~~ goes easily in either direction.

They also told us about the Hally days o' Yule - this we put on a tape:
T.F. "In the old days - this may be before your time - what was the period of Yule? How long was Yule supposed to last?"

M.J. "Well you see we never mind that - what they called the hally days o' Yule and all that. I think it would be about a week."

K.J. "I can mind me mither speaking about that"

W.J. "Oh yea, she spoke about the hally days o' Yule"

T.F. "About the what days?"

W.J. "The hally days o' Yule dye see. Noo g'll tell ye better. You ken these same [spinning] wheels - that we have been working wi' noo. Well they ha'e the idea that if they span with them in the hally days o' Yule then the casting out cast the band and they they would break the whissiter (?) and they would do everything and they never span any, they would not ~~span~~ any during that week, that's true."

K.J. "And there's things that would come. You know, witches and things. And make them work all nonsense. The bands - the bands would break and..."

W.J. "They would cast the band and do the everything, break the whissiter in the eye of the wheel and do the everything, and she ended up at the end something about grand knot the poem, and they never span very much till Yule week was done."

"But we never had anything like that. But I can mind me mither telling us that."

T.F. "Was it just a week?"

W.J. "Just a week. She called it the hally days o' Yule. But I'll tell you the names o' them. I mind me mither. Tammasmas day and Tammasmas night, Toiligsmas day and Toiligsmas night, and Yule day and Yule night"

Mr John Smith and Mr Alexander Smith, Northouse, South Westing, Unst

Mr John Smith is the brother of the Smiths of the Barns. ~~He is~~ and is aged 80; Mr Alexander Smith is his son-in-law, and belongs to North Westing.

In Mr John Smith's younger days, the only dance in use was the Shetland Reel. Here Mr Alexander Smith interposed: Was there no the "Skinibough" — that was the same thing?". Mr John Smith said he thought it was.

We enquired about the "Skinibough" — this was the skin float made from a sheepskin which I saw on Whalsay — plugged at head and feet and painted with Anchangel tar; it was used for both line and net. The term "bough" is simply the Shetland pronunciation of bony — they still call the (now plastic) float on a net a "bough". Neither

Mr John Smith nor Mr Alex Smith knew the connection with the dance — Mr Alex Smith has heard the "older generation" use the term, & it was common in Mr John Smith's day

According to Mr John Smith, the kissing at the end of a Reel was not invariable — "they were'n'a going to kiss an old yan".

Mr John Smith was very vague about the Bride's Reel. Mr Alex Smith has seen the Bride's Reel done at Uyeasound about 1940, two Reels one after another. The top two couples were the bride & groom, & the best pair, & they interchanged partners for the second Reel. This may have been preceded by the Grand March and "a Boston" [Two-step], but he was not certain of this

Mr John Smith has ~~had~~ no memory of the Tail-sweep. His son ^(-in-laws) thought they were the youngest female relative of the household & ~ [capable of taking part in the procession], ~~he had heard from his father [born in 1878]~~ that, but he had never heard of their having any special duties. Mr Alex Smith had heard from his father [born in 1878] that somebody "swept the floor for the bride", but he doesn't know who did it, or when it was done.

Neither of them had heard of the Auld / Muchie / Merry Men's / Pretty Dancer's / Bull Reels, or of continuous reeling, or of men dancing together. Mr Alex Smith has heard of "dancing cutty", and thinks it was done by squatting on the hunkers - neither of them had seen it.

In South Westing they keep new Christmas (Dec. 25th), but in ~~N.~~ N. Westing they keep Old Yule. There was a lot of dancing at Xmas, when they gathered in one of the crofts.

Mr John Smith has never seen gussets at a wedding.

Mr John Smith was employed in his youth at the herring fishing. He began at the age of 15 or so as a gutter or packer at Sandison's station at Uyeasound. Sandison's employed 16 crews, all consisting of local boys and girls, three to a crew, "two gutters and a packer"; some of the crews were all boys. There were three other stations at Uyeasound, all smaller than Sandison's, and some of these employed Scotch girls. At the age of 19, he went on the boats - there were not many Scotch boats then. The herring season in Uist lasted from about June 10th until the end of August, but was more prolonged elsewhere.

[Mr Alex Smith showed us how to make the straw bessoms, and gave me a sample.]

Mr Andrew Irvine, Old Schoolhouse, South Westing, Unst, aged 60.

Mr Irvine is the taxi-driver ~~in~~ in the south end of the island, and drove us home to Baltasound after we had spent the day in Westing. On the way home we started talking, and I noted the following facts.

Mr Irvine was born and brought up at Snarravoe, on the West Side - there are no houses there now.

Mr Irvine's house is the dividing line between Old Yule (Jan 6th) & Christmas (Dec 25th), the first being celebrated in North Westing beyond his house, the second in his own house and in all the houses below him. He finds the double celebration somewhat expensive.

In the old days, Yule started three days before Yule day, & went on until 24 days after Yule. His father used to recall a great celebration on "Four & Twenty Night". He has heard the name 'Tammasmus', but doesn't know what it refers to.

A dancing master, Mr Robert (?) Clayton held classes in Uyeasound c. 1912-13. He himself was "considered much too young to go dancing", but his sister went - she had to walk 3 miles each way for the classes.

Mr Irvine himself used to go to dances at Uyeasound in the hall. About 1918-20, the Shetland Reel still occurred as every 3rd or 4th dance in the programme, the other dances being Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, Haymakers, Rong O'Mae, My Love She's But a Lassie Yet (a Country Dance), Dashing White Sergeant, Barn Dance, Highland Schottische, Handkerchief Schottische, etc. The Shetland Reel died out pretty well between 1920 & 1925, and by 1930 only 2 or so Shetland Reels would be done at a dance or wedding.

Mr James Johnson, Marypark, Baltasound, 2nd visit

We asked him a few further questions arising from yesterday's visits in the Westing.

Yule. Within his memory, the only celebrations took place on Yule e'en, Yule day, New Year's eve, & New Year's day. In the old days, before his own time, the celebrations ended with 24th day, 24 days after Old Yule. The football ended on 24th day, and the football, if it had lasted that long, had to be thrown on the sea, and the spring work then commenced. At Collister they celebrated Yule on January 6th.

Mr Johnson showed us an almanac which contained a list of the festivals, & T.R. made a copy of these.

"Slainbough". This was a common name for the Shetland Reel in Collister in his young days. The "slainbough" (skin buoy) was the skin buoy used for a float for lines & nets. The skin was taken off the sheep whole, by a process known as "buggy-flaying" - the head was cut off, and starting from the neck the skin was forced away from the flesh by thrusting the two apart with the knuckles, and was then peeled off over the body.

Weddings. In the old days, the married man gave the bride away at the church ceremony. It was uncommon for the bride's father to be in the procession - the old way of things was for the old people to stay at home.

Fishing. Even in his youngest days there were Scotch girls at the gutting, in both Baltasound & Uyeasound.

References. From the same almanac, Jessie Saxby, "nonagenarian", died 1940

John Spence, Shetland Folklore, Lerwick, 1895 (Spence was an Unst man).

13. 9. 61

Mrs Ann Johnson, and Mrs Caroline Nesbit, Seaview, Baltasound, Unst, aged 81 & 74.

Sisters of Mr James Johnson, brought up in Collister, N. Westing.

In their young days, the only dance was the Shetland Reel, for 3 couples, placed alternately, partners holding hands at elbow level when "dancing" (i.e. setting). "Backstep" was used as one of the setting steps.

They all kissed after each Shetland Reel - that was part of the dance. The kiss was supposed to be a light one - if he wrapped his arms round you, you fought with him. After each Reel, the ladies stood down, but the men could stay and take another partner - sometimes they stayed for 3 or 4 Reels. "I've seen some of the gentlemen with the sweat dropping here and dropping there" (Mrs J.)

"Skinbough" was an alternative name for the Shetland Reel. They have also both heard of and seen a "Bull Reel" with 6 men dancing together. This would have been nearly 70 years ago.

There was a dancing-Teacher in Uyeasound when Mrs ~~Nesbit~~ ^{Nesbit} was about 16-20, i.e. about 1907. This was not a professional Teacher - he was a Mr Wiseman, a cooper from Fraserburgh who worked at one of the yards at Fraserburgh. He and his wife were both good dancers, and in the winter nights he taught the local youngsters the new dances from the south - he made no charge for the classes. He was not a musician, but there was no shortage of fiddlers then. Mrs Nesbit attended these classes, and learnt Quadrilles, Lances, Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, Rory O'More, Haymaker, Highland Schottische, Waltz, etc. One of the girls at the class knew the Fowla Reel (in two lines), so they also did this from her tuition.

There was a Teacher at Baltasound when Mrs Nesbit was about 12 or 13 - before Mr Wiseman's classes.

The Tailweep or "tail" were the last couple - they were very precise at the N. end of
Unst about the daintiness of these, but not so fussy in their district. Mr Johnson thought
that they had to carry a brush or broom, & to "broom out the floor before the bride came in".
Mrs Johnson had herself once been a 'tail', but her partner did not carry anything.

They knew of "dancing cutty", either as a children's game or as something done by
adults to please the bairns. There was no special tune, and sometimes no tune at all.

When we asked about a song for 'cutty' and/or other dances, they volunteered the
information that their father's aunt ~~had~~ had told them that she used to be asked to
weddings to sing for the dancing "before there was all these people who could play the
violin". "She was offa cheery" - they could remember her very well. We asked here
if they meant that she sang a song between the dances? "Oh no, she used to sing
for the dances; she could sing like a bird". She told them this herself, and their
father had also told them that he had attended weddings where she sang. They
were not sure whether she sang words or just doddled, but they thought it was probably
the latter.

On the way back to the hotel, I asked Mr James Johnson if he ~~had~~ remembered
this aunt, but he said he hadn't heard of her singing at weddings.

Mr and Mrs John Peterson, Muness, Unst, aged 72 and c. 65.

^{6 Mrs}
Mr Peterson belongs to Muness. With them was their daughter-in-law, who came from Haroldswick.

Mr Peterson is a fiddler, but was very ill last winter, and now plays very little.

He began to play for dances c. 1906, at the age of 17 or 18 - at that time all the local dancing was in the hall at Uyeasound. He never danced himself.

The Shetland Reel in their young days was for 3 couples, placed alternately, and began with "dancing". In the reel, everyone returned to their own places, and

Mrs Peterson thought the figures began with  (?). In Muness, common steps

were the "backstep" & frontstep ("forestep"), the former being done by both men +

ladies. In Haroldswick Mrs Peterson has seen the backstep, and also a step like
^{Junior, their daughter in law}
^(Senior)
^{Mr Peterson herself} the single cenn-cosiche. ~~He~~ also had another step for the Shetland Reel.

1. 1 Step forward on ~~8~~ RF in (flat) semi 4th position and at the same time lift LF just off the floor above its original position

8 Hop on RF

2 Step back on LF in original position and lift RF just off the floor.

8 Hop on LF

2. 1 Bring RF to 1st position & lift LF just off the floor

8 Hop on RF

2. 2 Perform 1. and 2. 1b contrariwise.
³ *

4 - 6 Repeat 1 - 3.

7. Repeat 1.

8 Stamp with RF, LF, RF

Mr. Peterson has seen the men kissing their partners at the end of the Reel, accompanied by a shout of "kiss the lasses." This kiss was a real smack, not just a light peck. This was discontinued to in Uyeasound between 50 & 60 years ago. He cannot remember the men holding the floor for several reels in succession.

Mrs. Peterson recalled that an old man who played for dancing in her young days banged 3 times with the bow (how?) to signal the beginning of each reel - this was in answer to an enquiry whether the fiddle signalized the kissing. She herself had not seen the kissing.

The "Skin'bough" was another name for the Shetland Reel - they have no knowledge of its origin.

At a wedding, the dancing began with 3 Bride's Reels. The bride danced first with her husband, then with the best man, then with the married man. Each Reel was full-length, with a pause between each for the change of partners. In the procession, the "tail" was the youngest of the family, but they had no recollection of the besom.

Mr. and Mrs. Peterson had both heard of "dancing cutty", but had never seen it. Mr. could remember his mother & aunts singing the song that went with it (they came from Fetlar). I tried

"Hey quo Cutty", & Mr. Peterson added "How quo Cutty".

Mrs. Peterson added

"Come dance wi' me",

and there they stuck.

Frank asked next if there was much singing for dancing, or was all dancing to the fiddle? Mr Peterson replied that "in the old days the fiddle wasn't allowed - the ministers didn't allow it; it was an instrument of the Devil". So "there was a good deal of singing."

Was it singing actual words or just doodling? "No, it was just doodling".

This singing was in his parents' time in Maness, not in his time, but he had heard of it from his parents & other older people.

At this point his daughter-in-law interposed to say that ~~he~~ she had been told that her mother's grandmother used to sing for dancing at Haroldswick - she could sing all the fiddle tunes.

Further conversation elicited the fact that it was only the Free Church (Wee Free) ministers who banned the fiddle. The Established Church ministers allowed fiddling & dancing. In fact in their parents' time the two churches were of roughly equal strength. Mr Peterson commented that "it was a different age in those days. The parsons virtually ruled the place" ("The parsons and the lairds" interposed Mrs Peterson).

Neither of them knew anything of the older older dances on our list. The Scotch Reel came in to Uyeasound between 50 & 60 years ago. In 1912 & 1913 a dancing-master from the South visited Baltasound & Uyeasound - weeks about in each place. They could not remember his name. Sometimes he wore Highland dress, sometimes knickerbockers.

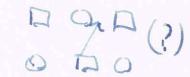
In their young days, they celebrated Yule on January 6th.

Mrs Caroline Dunlop and Mrs Georgina Humphrey, Uyeasound, Unst, aged 66 & 60

Mrs Dunlop and Mrs Humphrey are sisters, born in Fetlar, but brought up in Uyeasound. We actually called to see their mother, Mrs Thomas Hunter, aged 90, but she could give us no help, and contributed virtually nothing to the conversation.

Mrs Dunlop & Mrs Humphrey's father, Thomas Hunter, was a Fetlar man, - he died in 1944 aged c. 84, and he and his sister - their aunt - told them a good deal about dancing in their young days. Thomas Hunter had been a fiddler, and at one time was the only fiddler on Fetlar.

Their father told them that in his young days on Fetlar, the men took up partners for the Shetland Reel, then at the end of the Reel they kissed their partners, then stayed on the floor & took up fresh partners, and so as long as they cared to dance - the men might stay on the floor for 4 or 5 Reels.

In their own day, in Uyeasound, the Shetland Reel was for 3 couples, placed alternately, partners holding hands when dancing. In the reel, they always return to places, & begin with running the reel, then "dancing". The pattern is 

When their aunt was aged about 40, she came to Unst & saw the dancers holding hands in the "dancing", and she told Mrs Dunlop & Mrs Humphrey that they should not do so - it was incorrect. She also told them that in her day the ladies "kind of went tripping round the reel" with very small steps.

The steps used within their own memories were not very numerous. Mrs Humphrey showed us the same step danced by Mrs Peterson. Men did "backstep", ladies did it sometimes (though not in their aunt's day).

They knew the Shetland Reel both by this name and also under the name "Steinbough" - the latter name was common among older people.

[When we were talking about the meaning of "Steinboong", they produced Takobseini Dialect Dictionary, and Frank skimmed through a part of it. He found Brill = Stein boony. Is this a possible derivation - omit the B?].

They have both seen the 3 Bride's Reels at a wedding in the hall at Uyeasound when they were little children. They can't be sure whether this was done in Fetlar. Mrs Hunter here could not help us, either. ~~They~~ Mrs Dunlop had heard the last part in the procession called the "tail-whiskers".

Both had heard their father speak of clog - the dancer sits on his or her hunkers and shoots alternate legs out. Mrs Hunter made her sole contribution here and confirmed this. They had never heard of any of the other dances on our list.

We touched on singing for dancing and the disapproval of dancing by the Free Church ministers. They were of the opinion that in Shetland this had very little effect, and cited the case of their father's uncle-in-law, ^(in Fetlar) who was both a great fiddler and also a Free Kirk elder.

Both Mr Dunlop and Mrs Humphrey attended Mr Clayton's classes at Uyeasound - he came twice c. 1812. Mrs Humphrey was very young for the classes, but he didn't have very many pupils, so she went to make up the numbers in the class.

The story of how Mr Clayton came to Unst is interesting. About 1810-12, Mrs Dunlop was staying in Berwick. She attended a dance, where all the 'new' dances were being done, and was unable to dance any of them. An old friend of her family took her up to dance, and when he found that she couldn't dance, he said that she should attend the classes of a Mr Clayton, who visited Berwick every year to teach dancing. She was too shy to say no, and her friend apparently went

ahead and made the arrangements, — for some time later — he was visited at her lodgings by Mr Clayton himself! The lady with whom she was staying announced that there was "a big stout man wanting to speak to her". He told her that her friend had given him her name — did she want to come to his classes. Again too shy to say no, she agreed to come. It cost her about a guinea or 30 shillings. In the end, she found she thoroughly enjoyed the classes, and learnt all the new dances. When he got to know her a little better, he spoke to her about Unst, and thus discovered that there were halls available at Uyeasound and Baltasound, and that the young people there did not know much about the new dances; & and his first visit to Unst followed soon after.

On each of his visits, Mr Clayton taught in both Baltasound & Uyeasound, probably 3 nights on each, the last night of the course being an "assembly". The dances which he taught included Quadrilles, Lances, Windows Cotillion (a square dance in waltz time) for 8 couples), Eightons & Foursome Reels, Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, Waltz, Two-step, Highland Flig & Sword Dance. He taught very few Country Dances.

One of his Quick Reel steps was 'Shuffle over the Buckle', a single shuffle done in crossed position.

As a further means of identifying him, they mentioned that if anyone expressed any doubt about the way in which he taught, he drew himself up, and very coldly stated that he had been teaching for many years, and had taught Royalty, and what did his doubts know etc.

Before Mr Clayton's visits, there was a cooper, Mr Wiseman, who gave classes in Uyeasound, and he brought in Quadrilles, Lancers, Petronella, Ring O'More, and My Love She's But a Lassie Yet. Before Mr Wiseman's time, it was all Shetland Reels.

My love she's But a lassie yet. Country Dance, longways, C, took R hands & walked down middle & back, & up to face 2nd opposite (how?) They then set to 2nd opposite & swing. Then waltz and change places.

This dance was definitely known in Uyeasound before Mr Clayton's visits.

Finally, two odd notes: There was a woman who taught in Lerwick c. 1910. Also the saying "As bare as the back o' Yule day" - to indicate the state of the cupboard after the festivities were over.

Mr and Mrs Peter Monat, Voehead, Baltasound, Unst, aged 85 and 73.

Mr Monat was born and brought up in Baltasound, Mrs Monat in Haroldswick.

In their young days, the only dance in use was the Shetland Reel for 3 couples.

Sometimes they held partner's hands while dancing (i.e. setting) and sometimes didn't. The men "keepit" the floor for maybe two Reels. The kiss at the end of each Reel followed automatically, but Mrs Monat recalled that the fiddler signalled this - he "screachet".

They had seen 6 men dancing a Reel together at a wedding, just for sport. Mrs Monat has seen this on Whalsay, and there it was called the "Bull's Reel".

At a wedding the Bride's Reels were the first three Reels, the bridegroom dancing with the bride, the best maid and the married woman in that order.

Mrs Monat remembered the "tail" from her Haroldswick days (Mr Monat had no recollection of this). In the old days they used to carry a broom - a straw besom. Mrs Monat has seen this in Haroldswick, but does not remember the tail doing anything.

When Mrs Monat was 20 or so, c 1908-1909, they had the dance Rony O'More in Haroldswick, and when they got up for it they said that this was Mrs Saxby's dance - she called it the Pretty Dancer's Reel. Their Rony O'More was in Country Dance formation, with men one side, ladies the other. However, Mrs Monat has never heard this name for Rony O'More directly from Mrs Saxby, and indeed never heard her speak of the dance, although she looked after Mrs Saxby in the later years of her life - Mrs Saxby died at the age of 98 or 99.

Neither Mr nor Mrs Monat had heard of continuous reeling or of an Auld or Muckle Reel.

"Dancing cutty" was just hopping round on their hunkers, 4 people maybe, and they would reel in and out of each other, and they had to try to last out the longest - it was hard on their legs. This was done by young people at a party, and Mrs

Monat thought that suitable tunes would be Cock o' the North, Ahunt The deck's o Voe.

Mr Monat was taught in Baltasound by Clayton's predecessor. He learnt My love she's but a lassie yet from other boys at the hall, and his memory of it was very vague.

Other odd notes

- a) In Haroldswick Yule was January 6th, and the end was "Four and Twentieth day".
- b) There seem to have been Scotch girls in Baltasound even in Mr Monat's earliest days.
- c) The custom of bedding the bride was unknown in Unst even in their very earliest days.

Mr William Gray, Valvie, Norwich (2nd visit).

Some odd notes.

- (a) The name "Stenibrough" was used as a name for the Shetland Reel, but in his day it was not particularly common.
- (b) In Mr Gray's young days the lessing of partners at the end of a Reel was automatic and needed no signal, but his daughters knew of the squeak above the bridge and the shout 'lass the lasses'
- (c) The custom of the men staying on the floor for a number of Reels was not usual here, but Mrs Gray had seen it once at a wedding in Uyeasound.
- (d) He still had no memories of the Pretty Dancers' and Merry Men's Reels, and no memory of a Ball Reel.
- (e) A correction to my earlier notes - the daughters now say that the besom used by the tailswEEP was of straw only, without a wooden handle. They still say that the tailswEEP had to sweep up the tea.
- (f) In Norwich about half the people still keep to 6th January for Yule; 24th day after Yule was the last day. The 13th day of January - old New Year's Day - was also the occasion for a dance.

Henry Henderson, Spragatup, Haroldswick, Unst, aged 92.

Born and brought up in Haroldswick.

Very unclear; we got the impression that he had heard of - and probably known - a dance called the Pretty Dancers Reel, but unfortunately he was so confused that we were not at all sure whether this was some sort of Shetland Reel or a different dance.

Mrs G. Abernethy, Cratoun, Haroldswick, Unst, aged 77.

Born and brought up in Haroldswick.

Could remember Shetland Reel, but had no memory of other dances. When we mentioned Jessie Saxby's book she commented "Ach, you shouldn't believe ~~all~~ all that goes into books - they have to make their books sell". Shetland Reel was 3 couple, alternate placings.

She was once a "Tail" at a wedding. Before her time, the male tail-sweep was supposed to carry the broom, though on the occasion when she was tail he didn't have one. He should have swept out the house just before the bride entered after her return from the church, and this was to sweep away ill luck.

She had not heard of bedding the bride.

Charlie Priest, Roadside, Haroldswick, Unst, aged 88.

Clear memory, but not inclined to be helpful.

Asked him first about the Pretty Dancers' Reel, but he hadn't heard of that. I then asked him about the Merry Men's Reel, and he said that he had heard that spoken of. I next asked him if it was done by all men or by both men and women, and he thinks it was all men. It was done at any time in an evening's dancing, not necessarily at weddings.

The Shetland Reel to him was for 3 couples, placed alternately.

Mr and Mrs Alice Giffard, Mr and Mrs James Sutherland, and Mr James Gray, Post Office.

Uyeasound, Unst.

Mrs Giffard is the sister of Mr Sutherland, and both they and Mr Giffard belong to Uyeasound. Mrs Sutherland is the daughter of Mrs Hunter, whom we interviewed on the 13th, and was brought up in Uyeasound, though she may have been born in Fetlar. Mr Giffard is aged 87, his wife 76, Mr Sutherland ca 80, and Mrs Sutherland ca 60.

Mr Sutherland is an ex-fiddler, but is stone deaf, and does not contribute much to the conversation; Mr James Gray came in later, and again did not contribute much.

The hall in Uyeasound was built in 1900, and until that time, the only dance in use in Uyeasound was the Shetland Reel. None of them had heard of the other dances on our list, though we went through them all.

The Shetland Reel was for 3 couples, placed alternately, alternately running the figure 8 and "dancing", and in the dancing they held hands at elbow level. Most people had relatively few "dancing" steps, certainly ≤ 6 . Most of the men had the backstep.

At weddings at least - they weren't sure about house dances - the men kept the floor for as long as they liked, taking up a new partner for each Reel. It was the accepted custom to leave partners at the end of the Reel, and this was sometimes accompanied by a squeak on the fiddle made by playing above the bridge.

They had all heard the term "skimbough", and Mr Sutherland & Mr Giffard at least, knew that it derived from the skin float. Mr Giffard said that he first heard the term used by the East Coast fisherman - they called the Shetland Reel by this name. Here Mr Sutherland made one of his rare contributions - he said that he was sure the term was Shetland, and he thought the term was derived from the fact that the "skimbough" "floated lightly and danced about" - a theory advanced by F.R. a few hours earlier when we were walking to Nossle. The "skimbough" was sometimes made of a dog-skin - it

lasted better than a sheep's skin. Mr Gifford recalled one man taking a dog down to the harbour and drowning it, and then making a "skinbough" from its skin.

All remembered the Bride's Reel - this was the usual 3 dances by the usual 3 pairs, the bridegroom dancing with the bride, best maid, and married woman in succession. With the "keeping the floor" convention, the bridegroom not only would have these 3 Reels, but would also have others to follow - 3 or more. All this stopped in Uyeasound c. 1914.

They had heard of "cutty", and thought it was done on the 'bankers', but had never seen it. They had also heard the rhyme; but could not remember it.

They had heard of the "Tailsweep", but nothing more than this.

The first dancing classes held in Uyeasound were held by a cooper at one of the fishing stations, a Mr Wiseman. These were just "friendly classes", run informally - he found that the local youngsters did not know the ~~new~~ new dances & were keen to learn, so he helped them to do so. The dances he taught included Petronella, My Love She's but a lassie yet, Haymakers, Quadrilles, Lancers, though some of these may have been done before his classes. He did not teach the 8-some Reel.

In 1912-13, ~~a~~ a Mr Clayton (Christian name unknown) came for two winters & held dancing-classes. These were formal classes, run on strict lines. Mr Clayton was about 50, rather portly, light on his feet. He gave classes in Berwick for many years, and Mrs Gifford recalled that she knew a father and son who had both attended his classes in Berwick. All except Mr Gray attended Mr Clayton's classes.

The dances taught by Mr Clayton were:

Quadrilles, Lancers, Windsor Cotillion (a square dance for 8 couples), Spanish Waltz, Eightome Reel, Scotch Reel and Reel of Tullock (as one dance).
Petronella, Rory O'More, Mistetae Bough (a longways Country Dance done with decorated hoops - each couple had one , this was ~~for~~ a sort of display dance for his finishing assembly).

Waltz, Polka, Barn Dance, Valse Waltz, Highland Schottische, Boston Two-step

Highland Fling, Sword Dance (6 steps of each)

Ide also taught the etiquette of the ballroom.

At the end of the class, there was an "assembly", when the pupils brought a partner to the "assembly". At this assembly there were exhibitions of the Highland Fling & Sword Dance, and the best pupil got a medal.

Clayton's Highland Fling was:

- Step 1. $\frac{1}{2} \cdot 1$ Hop on LF, point RF in 2nd position
2 " , place RF in rear leg position
3 " , place RF in front leg position
4 Spring onto RF, place LF in front leg position
 $\frac{2}{3}, 3$ Perform $\frac{1}{2}$ contretemps, then repeat $\frac{1}{2}$.
4 Turn with LF with '~~repete~~' the 'fling' movement.
 $\frac{5}{2} - 8$ ~.
- Step 2. $\frac{1}{2} \cdot 1$ Hop on LF, point RF in 4th int position
2 " , bring RF to front leg position
3,4 Repeat 1,2.
 $\frac{2}{3} - 8$ Repeats of $\frac{1}{2}$ & turn as in Step 1.
- Step 3 or 4.
 $\frac{1}{2} \cdot 3$ 'Fling' with RF 3 times
4 Turn with LF with 'fling'
 $\frac{5}{2} - 8$ ~.
- Step 5. $\frac{1}{2} \cdot 1$ Hop on LF and point R toe in 5th position
2 Hop on LF and place R heel in 5th position
3 Hop on LF and place RF in front leg position
4 Spring onto RF and place LF in front leg position
 $\frac{2}{3} - 8$ Constructed as in Step 1.

Step 6. Fling with RF, turn with LF 3 times in succession, \sim all.

All these steps were used in the Scotch Reel. The quick Reel steps were "Pas de Basque" (Vernon I), Pas de Basque & Balance, Kick out & to the side (using new Sit position on 2.2), Single balance, and "Shuffle over the buckle". [These are my names except where I use quotes]. "Shuffle over the buckle" was a single shuffle into a crossed position. There was also one other step which they could not remember.

Mr Clayton's normal Scotch Reel & Reel of Tullock was 6 Slow steps, 6 Quick steps - it was very exhausting!

His Petronella was performed with the chassé and pirouette - before his classes the pas de Basque was used for the turns in the diamond figure.

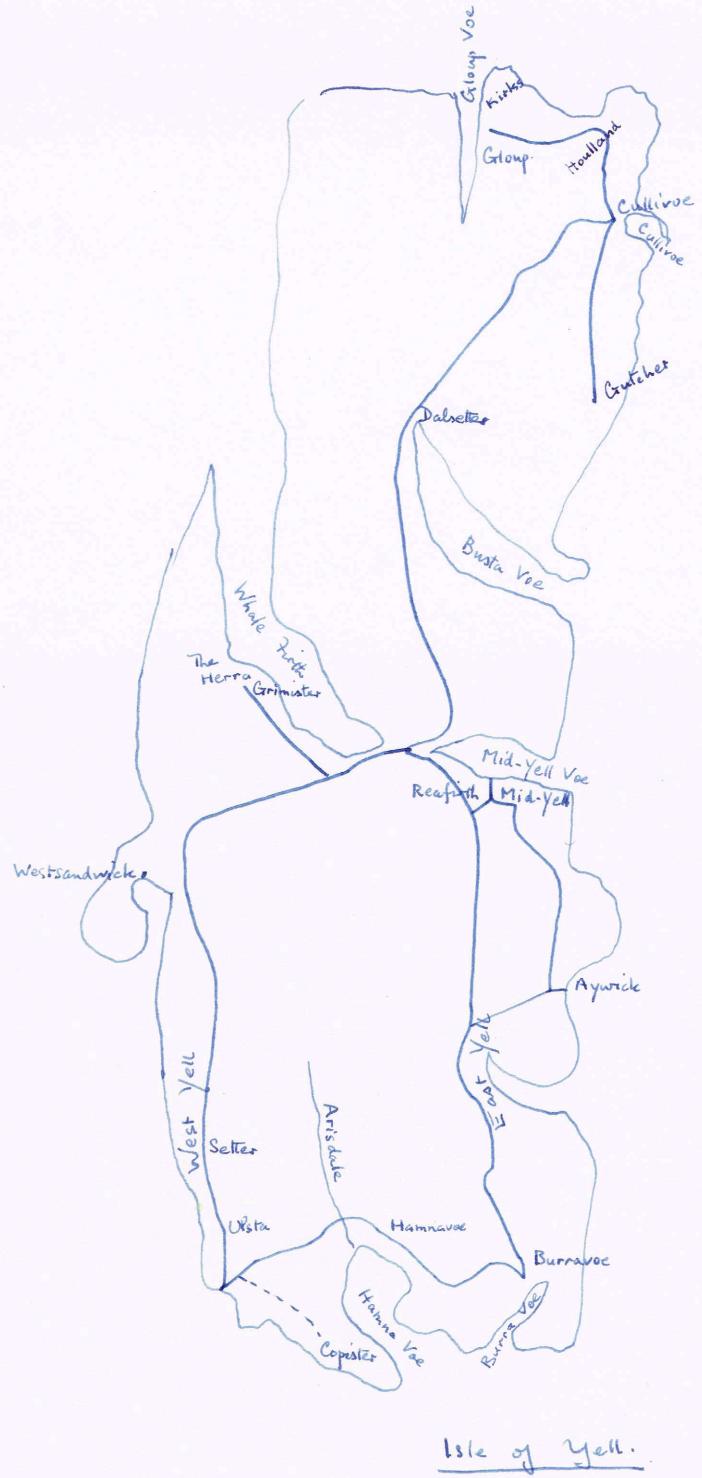
My Love She's But a Lassie Yet. Possibly known in Uyeasound before Mr Wiesenack's classes, but certainly before Mr Clayton's. Longways Country Dance, 4 or 5 couples to a set

- (1). C₁ join R hands and go down the middle and back with the galop step. Return to ~~L~~ L₁ facing M₂, M₁ facing L₂, C₁ back to back in middle, & bow.
- (2) Set to opposites (Step R, L, R & close LF to 1st posn, moving to right, then \sim , 4 bars in all), then swing opposites (twice round (?)) with ballroom hold.
- (3) Reel of four across the dance, using a walking step
- (4) Waltz round to next place

The set & turn used in (2) were those used in the Quadrilles:

The Sammy Sandison who attended the classes and required special exercises was aged c. 50 at that time [it must have taken a lot of courage for him to attend with a crowd of teenagers]

The last thing - the first Scotch girls to come to the guthing at Uyeasound were within Mr Gifford's memory.



Isle of Yell.

Mr Charles Inkster, Reafirth, Mid-Yell, aged 87.

Our first visit on Yell, and a very good source. Belongs to Mid-Yell.

When Mr Inkster was very young, the only dances in use in Mid-Yell were The Highland Schottische and the Shetland Reel. Then, about 1890, when he was aged c. 17, one of the day-school teachers, Mr Alexander Watson, from Glasgow, held day-continuation classes, and one of his subjects was dancing. Every Monday night from 8 p.m until midnight he taught dancing, every Friday he taught singing, and on the other week-nights he taught other subjects, including navigation (a number of the islanders became deep-sea captains, thanks to Mr Watson's teaching), and swimming.

The dances taught by Mr Watson at his classes included Quadrilles, Lancers, Circassian ⚭, Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, and Haymakers, Eightome Reel and Scotch Reel, but neither of Rory o'More and My love she's but a lassie yet. The Mid-Yell folk knew a little about the Eightome Reel and the Scotch Reel before Mr Watson's classes, and by this time they also had the Polka. Mr Watson included the etiquette of the ballroom in his classes. Mr Inkster had never heard of any other dancing-teacher on the island.

The Shetland Reel was for 3 couples, with the men on one side and the ladies on the other. Mr Inkster's ~~said~~ daughter said that nowadays partners held hands ^(at elbow level) in the setting ("dancing"), but Mr Inkster thought that this was not common in his youngest days. The Reel began with "dancing". His description of the reel's figure was very vague, but all returned to places, and the men did not put their hands on partner's shoulders to guide her. There were no extra spins in the reel, but people sometimes turned on the spot in the dancing. He knew of no convention re the placing of the dancers relative to the fiddler.

At the end of the Reel the old fiddler would put his bow at the back of the bridge and make a squeaking sound, and the men kissed their partners. The squeak was the signal that the Reel was ended.

In Mid-Yell, the men would hold the floor for two or three Reels, each with different partners. He recalled, however, that at a Christmas dance at The Henna, when he was about 24, there was a slightly different system. The fiddler—an old man—was seated on a chair above a chest. Three men took up partners, danced a Reel, and at the end of the Reel kissed them and took them back to their chairs, then took up a fresh set of ladies, and so on until they were tired. They then took up three men, danced a short Reel with them, and left them in possession of the floor, to take up three girls.

"Skimbough" was a Shetland name for the Shetland Reel, derived from the name of the skimbuoy; probably the connexion lay in the float bobbing up and down in the water. The name was common later, but he never heard it in his youngest days.

He has never heard of an Auld Reel, a Muckle Reel, of continuous reeling, or of a Miller's or Millstone Rant. He has also never seen the Fowla Reel on Yell. He has seen 6 ladies dance a Reel together when men were scarce.

Both he and his daughter have heard about "dancing cutty", though neither have seen it. They gathered that when one "danced cutty", one bent down. They have heard a verse, but could only remember "Who would dance wi' Cutty".

Mr Inkster has seen the Tug when he was a young lad. The tune was the Irish Washerwoman, played at a tempo of roughly $14\frac{1}{2}$ seconds for 16 bars. It was danced in pairs. The couple "danced" opposite to each other, using setting steps similar to those used in the Shetland Reel but a lot quicker. They then

"caught each other" and swung each other, using ballroom hold, and swinging in one direction only. There was no change of partners. When he saw it, it was done by Shetlanders.

The "Bride's Reel" was the first three Reels of the wedding. The bride danced first with the married man, then with the best man, and then with the bridegroom, each Reel lasting for 3 or 4 minutes. The fiddler halted between each ~~pair~~ pair of Reels. (Usually in Yell they tried to get a near relation for the fiddler).

Even in Mr Inlester's youngest days, the bride's father gave the bride away, and he has no recollection of the married man doing it.

The end couple in the bandal procession was called a "Fairie", but he has no knowledge of their carrying anything or of having special duties.

At Halloween they would go guising, and have a dance at night.

Yule was celebrated on two different dates in Yell. Mid-Yell southwards celebrated Yule on January 5th, while from the other side of Mid-Yell northwards it was January 6th (the two sides of the Voe visited each other on the 6th and 5th for football). In the Herra, they still keep O.S. Yule on January 5th.

Most of the rest of the island changed over to the N.S calendar in the 1880's. One or two of the local people pressed for the change, and went round to get the votes of the people. The majority agreed to change over then, but a number of people held out for some years and only gradually changed over.

In Yell there were seven fishing stations on the south and two on the North side. The place was teeming with people, for there were not only the boat crews, but also the girls for the gutting and packing. Scotch girls started coming to Yell about 1881 or 1882. The fishing went on till September. The crofting

flourished at the same time, because the crafters could sell their produce to the fishermen. The church in those days was packed full, with people sitting on the stairs; now the average congregation is about a score.

He has no knowledge of singing for dancing.

Miss Georgina Irvine, 72 (ages given by
Miss Christina Irvine. 24 Mrs Keast) Sea View Cottage,
West Sandwick, Yell.

15.9.61

I saw the Misses Irvine in the middle of their morning work and could not get them to settle down to a long interview.

Both were born and brought up in West Sandwick.

Shetland Reel. From their youngest days the Shetland reel was a dance for 3 couples who stood with one man and two women on one side with their respective partners opposite. They have no recollection of seeing or hearing people talk about a form of the dance in which the three men stood on one side. The dance started with dancing, then reeling and dancing alternated. Partners had always, to their knowledge, held hands for the dancing. At the end of each reel the men kissed their partners. There was no squeak on the fiddle to indicate kissing time, but sometimes someone would call out, 'kiss the lasses'. The men would bring up new partners; they danced with other partners until they were ready to leave the floor. The Shetland reel is still danced occasionally at weddings.

The Wedding reel was a set of three reels in which the bride and groom, the best man, best maid and the married folk took part. ^{Every} Each man danced with every woman, the bride partnering successively the married man, best man and bridegroom. I did not ask about the tail-sweep.

They had no knowledge of a dance involving continuous reeling, and had not heard of an auld reel or muckle reel.

They had both heard of the Tig, but had ~~to~~ not seen it or heard anything about it. They had not heard of or seen any dance in which partners set to and turned each other. They had not heard of the Millstone want.

Both had seen the Guddy danced by a group of teenagers when they were about the same age. They did not take part themselves. It was just hopping round with hands under thighs. Every person moved independently of the rest. They thought that there was a special time, but could not say what it was.

They have no knowledge of singing for dancing. So far as they knew, there had always been fiddlers available to play.

They started dancing between 1890 and 1900 (I could get no closer than that) at which time Quadrilles, Lances, Scotch reel and other dances were performed. It should be noted that there were three fishing stations at West Sandwick. However, they had no knowledge of any dancing teachers in the district.

Mr and Mrs Bruce Henderson, Arisdale, Yell, aged 70.

Mr Bruce Henderson is well-known in Shetland as a story-teller, and has been visited by a number of collectors, including Calum MacLean. He was born and brought up in Arisdale; Mrs Henderson was brought up in Whiteness on the Mainland of Shetland, and she contributed little to the conversation.

In Mr Henderson's young days there was nothing but the Shetland Reel, the Scotch Reel, and the Highland Schottische.

The Shetland Reel was for three couples, placed alternately, and began with "dancing". Partners took hands in the "dancing", and most men used the backstep. Mr Henderson's description of the reeling figure was very vague; he thought that the middle lady turned her back on her partner and went off to her left. He had an idea that the two rows interchanged positions.

He has seen the men hold the floor for six Reels in succession, with different girls for each Reel. Kissing partners at the end of each Reel was inevitable. He has seen 6 men dancing together. The Shetland Reel was also known as the "Skimbough", right from his earliest days.

He has seen people "dancing cutty", ^{both} teenagers or children, most often at Hallowmas. Usually the dancers would form two lines, all on hunkers, with hands clasped under knees, boys in one line, girls in the other. For example, the top couple might go down the middle and back, and then return to the bottom by a zig-zag path, jumping from one side to the other. The girls had to try to jump higher than the boys. They had no musical instrument for this, but decided for themselves. The Shetland word for deciding is "nudling", pronounced like "yule".

When he was a young boy, Mr Henderson saw a dance of which he did not know the name. This was done by ^{(mentioning) ladies} 3 pairs, 3 facing 3. They "danced" with hands held

with partners, then swing partners, first in one direction, then in other, using ballroom hold with the ladies hand well down on the man's upper arm. They then changed places and repeated the whole. This was usually done at the opening of a dance.

[This seems to have been the Jig: he has heard of this dance, but to his knowledge never seen it done.]

Mr. Henderson had no knowledge of any of the other dances on our list. The Foula Reel was done in the district after he stopped dancing. ~~Also~~, when he was aged about 22, a Mr Little, a school-teacher, taught dancing at Buona Voe in his spare time, twice weekly, and he taught all the newer dances

(c. 1913)

The Bride's Reel was the first dancing at a wedding and consisted of 3 Shetland Reels danced by the usual three couples. The bride and bridegroom start at opposite ends of the set and come together for the final Reel of the three - there is a pause between each Reel.

In his time, the bride's father gave the bride away. The 'tail' was the last pair in the procession; he has never heard of their carrying anything or of having any special duties.

In Mr Henderson's early days, Guisards came to the weddings - they came in, danced one Reel, and then cleared out. However, if the bride and groom invited them to stay, they shed their masks and joined in. This stopped about 1906.

Apart from weddings, dancing took place in each district on only four occasions each year, one at Hallowmas, and then they danced for nearly a week through the Helly nights o' Yule. [The next is from tape]

B.H "The Helly nights o' Yule is Mauncemas e'en and Maunceemas night [surely day?], Tammasmas e'en and Tammasmas night, Toiligsmas e'en and Toiligsmas night, and Yule

een and Yule night"

T.F.R. "When did you have dances?"

B.H. "Well probably one in Burravoe, the district of Burravoe, one night, one in the district of West Yell the other night, probably one in East Yell, probably one in Mid-Yell. You know we were'na attending all that but every yin had them for the different nights o' Yule."

T.F.R. "When was the next dance after that?"

B.H. "Well there was one on Yule night and the next one was on New Year's night, and the next one was on the 24th, you see, and then it was supposed to be that all festivals of the season in Shetland was done then".

T.F.R. "And was that the 24th night after Yule?"

B.H. "Yes"

T.F.R. "On the 24th night after the New Year?"

B.H. "The 24th night after [here Mrs H interposed "the New Year"] after the New Year".

Thus in Yule there were about 6 weeks. Through the Helly nights o' Yule they stopped a' their spinning and took their machines apart as far as possible.

In The Herra they held Xmas at the O.S. Yule for the last time last year; they have decided to change from O.S. to N.S. from now onwards.

All the dancing in Mr Henderson's young days took place in the houses, and the only instruments were the concertina and fiddle. The men wore their big boots; the girls had laced up Shetland made boots, with heel wons, "pigged wi' pigs", but no toe wons, Shetland made stockings, dark skirt, and a blouse of white, blue, or some other colour.

In the course of this conversation Mr Henderson told us a number of his stories. A number of these were of the widespread type, but some were concerned with local traditions. In particular, he told us a story of riding the marches, and dancing round a maypole, plaiting ribbons round the pole, which he said refers to the period before 1550. "There is probably no writing on this, but this has come down by one learned person telling another." Laurence Williamson was mentioned several times in the conversation; apparently he died in 1935-6 at the age of c. 84.

Mrs Henderson mentioned only two things worth noting, firstly that the term "Skinbough" was commonly used for a Shetland Reel in Whiteness in her young days, and secondly that in Whiteness on the day of a wedding the people flew flags from the top of their houses.

Mr Gilbert Spence, aged 81, Mr and Mrs William Spence, aged 79 and 72, The Henna,

Yell.

The two Mr Spences are brothers, were born at Dalseter, and were brought up at Grimister in the Henna. Mrs Spence was born in Northmavine, but moved to Setter when she was 14, so that all her dancing took place in Yell. Mr Gilbert Spence is a fiddler, and played several tunes for us, and though his fiddle was dreadfully out of tune, his skill was still apparent.

[W.] When they first started dancing, the principal dance was the Shetland Reel. This was for 3 couples, placed alternately, and began with "dancing", with partners holding hands. The reeling figure was the usual figure 8 in' paws', all returning to original places. "And when the Reel was done you kissed the lassie." Then she sat down, and you took up a fresh one. You danced wi' all the lasses in turn. "You could wring the sweat out of your hanky. It was chiefly those earthen floors you danced on; it was very heavy". "When you finished wi' all the lasses that was in chiefly then you sat down". The usual way was for the three men on the floor to take up another three men, then dance with them, and then the original three sat down. ^{Each} group of three men would usually dance 3, 4, or 5 Reels in succession. There was no special name for the mens' Reel.

When they kissed partners, the fiddler sometimes squeaked. "I think it was about finished in our day". But they "very often" shouted 'Kiss the lasses'.

We asked if they had heard of the "Stainbough". Mr William Spence said that "that was a sort of a nickname" for the Shetland Reel.

Although the principal dance in their earliest days was the Shetland Reel, the Scotch Reel and the Irish Jig were performed far as far back as they could remember.

The Scotch Reel was probably starting in-line, and possibly strathspey only. The Irish Jig was done at the end of the Scotch Reel, the two being run in together. The Irish Jig was performed to the tune 'The Irish Washerwoman', and involved swinging, but possibly only with ones own partner.

The Fowla Reel was revived from the memories of old people in the Herra, at the time when W. and G. were about 20. There were three tunes for this dance, the Shaalds o' Fowla, Jiminy Ländie, and Tailous [Tillie] Plump. Gilbert couldn't play these — there was only one man who had them, and when he died, the tunes went too. In later years they used Pop goes the Weasel for the dance.

The Fowla Reel was performed by 4 men and 4 ladies, included arming, an arch figure, and probably a push-pull poussette.

"Cutty" belonged to the generation before theirs. Mr William Spence recalled seeing an aunt of theirs demonstrating it to the bairns, down on her hunkers, hands clasped under knees, singing the words

Hey quo Cutty, hhow quo Cutty,

Wasn't she both wise and witty

That sold a coo and bought a cuddy

Cutty is the old clay pipe.

They had no recollection of an Auld or Muckle Reel, of continuous reeling, or of a Miller's Rant.

Mr William Spence recalled "that" "there was a dance done afore our time called Tam-tum. It was done afore our time. Our mother saw it done". Was it similar to The Shetland Reel? "No, I think it was quite different". They thought it was done by all men, and that they dressed up for it; there was some point in it "where the men slappit each other very hard". They had no idea how many took part in it.

New dances emanated from Mr Watson at Mid-Yell, Quadrilles, Lancers, etc. Mr Gilbert Spence played the fiddle for these classes, while Mr Watson played the organ. Another dance brought in was the cakewalk, brought back by someone who had learnt it in the south.

"At the first o' our time, all the young ones would go up to a house - chiefly the house o' a fiddler - probably once a week". They would gather in a house where there were lots o' young people. "The old man would tell them that he would stop playing if they didna gie the lasses fair play". In this craft dancing, at least three-quarters of the men wore boots, while the ladies had shoes.

Once in the winter, there was a big dance in the schoolhouse, with whisky. Some people wore dancing-pumps for this.

Mr Gilbert Spence said that at a wedding they still dance a Shetland Reel, and they call it the Bride's Reel. It was done by the usual three couples. When we enquired in what order they danced, Mrs Spence said that she thought the bride danced first with the best man, then with the married man, and ended with her husband. They danced three full-length Reels, with a pause between.

In their memory the bride had always been given away by her father. Mr William Spence had heard of the "tailie", the last of the procession and some relation of the bride. But this was before their time.

January 5th is still their Yule, though there is some talk of changing it. School and public holidays cause difficulty with the old system, particularly with people who go to Lerwick for school. "Four and twenty night" was the 24th night after Yule - that was the end of Yule. Also there were the Helly days - 5 days before Yule - when there was no knitting. North Yell kept Yule on January 6th. In their young days, even Lerwick kept O.S. Yule.

Mr and Mrs Simpson Henderson, and Misses Ann and Winnie Henderson, Kirkabister,

Group, Yell

Mr Henderson is a fiddler, aged 73; his wife is younger, and his two daughters are about 20.

In Mr Henderson's youngest days, the only dance done in the vicinity was The Shetland Reel. This was for 3 couples, placed alternately, and began with reeling, the middle lady moving as shown. There were no extra spins in the reeling figure, but as the ladies passed through their partner's place they would turn to face their partners and dance backwards into their own places.

The setting steps for the Shetland Reel were very few. The backstep was used by men, and Mr Henderson thought it was not done by ladies. Some men did a sort of Schottische step, and in his young days a shuffle step was used - Miss Ann Henderson has also seen older people do this some few years ago. Mr Henderson has seen the Whalsay shuffle done by Whalsay men in Lerwick, and their shuffle is the same as that which he saw in Yell. Mrs Henderson said that about 40 years ago, an old lady in Howland, then aged c. 70, showed her a setting step for ladies in which the dancer moved from side to side. I demonstrated various steps, and both she and Mr Henderson were pretty certain that the step in question was the same as the Whalsay ladies sidestep. It was definitely not a pas-de-Basque-Type step.

When they finished the Reel, the men kissed their partners. The kiss was not a mere formal peck - they took the girl in their arms and kissed her properly. No signal was given for this by the fiddler but occasionally - not usually - someone would shout 'Kiss the lasses'.

The men stayed on the floor for 3 or 4 Reels at a time, until they were satisfied. They took up fresh partners for each Reel, and when they had had enough, they took up 3 men and danced a Reel with them, then left the newcomers in possession of the floor. When the three men left the floor, the rule was that the first to be satisfied left the floor, and the others had to follow suit. The men's Reel was not necessarily short - the length depended on the fiddler. Those standing out had to make arrangements in order to get on the floor - A would go to B and ask if, when B got a chance on the floor, would he then take up A as his final partner.

In any one Reel, they used only one tune throughout. If they were not quick enough to start the reeling figure the fiddler squeaked above the bridge.

About 1910, a local man, Mr Peter Sandison, held dancing classes at Cullivoe, and Mrs Henderson attended these. This Mr Sandison learnt the dances from books. From that time the local repertoire included Foursome Reel, Reel of Tulloch (as a separate dance), Eightsome Reel, Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, Haymakers, Quadrilles, Lancers, Caucasian O, Polka, Highland Schottische, Tacky Tar Schottische, Boston Two-step. The Foula Reel was done from c. 1921-2, not before.

Ann and Winnie Henderson knew one version of the Foula Reel which they learnt from girls from the West Side when they were at school in Berwick. This was as follows:

1. Strip the Willow figure double (i.e. turning on each side at the same time) down and up.
2. Anch, down over the ladies, up over the men, L_1 always on the outside.
3. Then zig-zag to the bottom, holding hands with partners, M_1 going forward to begin the zig-zag, and passing right through from side to side.

This was also the same as Mrs Henderson's version from Yell.

Both Mr and Mrs Henderson have heard of Cutty. Miss Ann Henderson has seen a lady from Fetlar of c. 60 do it - hands under knees, but not clasped. It was something bairns do, and they don't remember the verse.

None of them have ever heard of a Muckle or Auld Reel, or of continuous reeling, or of a Miller's or Millstone Rant.

"The Bride's Reel" began the dancing at the wedding. It was done by the usual three couples. The bridegroom dances the first of the three Reels with the best man, the second with the married woman, and ends up with the bride. In the old days the bridegroom best man and married man kept going for further Reels with fresh partners if they wished, and if there was space, there was another set on the floor for these subsequent Reels.

In Mr Henderson's day the bride's father accompanied the procession and gave the bride away. The bedding of the bride was out in his day, but he has heard his father say that it was done in his day.

Gourards usually came into a wedding and danced a Reel; in his day they only retained the straw hat and not the rest of the regalia.

During the period of the fishing, there were 12 or 13 herring fishing stations at Cullivoe and two at Goutcher.

Group Voe was used only for white fishing, which took place before the herring ~~—~~ fishing boomed. There were 32 sixeams based at Group, but 6 of them were lost in the big storm of 1882 (?) and that brought the fishing to a stop. This white fishing was entirely Shetland folk, and Group was never used as a port during the herring boom.

In the days of the white fishing the fishermen were lodged in booths on the

shore. These booths had a shingle floor, and were fitted with a low bunk about 12" high. The men slept there, a crew to a booth, sharing blankets in pairs, all on the same bunk.

The fishermen had a "toy" at Johnmas, 1st July, when the fishing was finished. They had a supper and a dram (or a bottle!), and then they would dance to a fiddler, on the shingle, in their heavy sea-boots (leather boots up to the knee). The dancers were all Shetland Reels, and all men.

In Gtoup they celebrated O.S. Yule on January 5th. Mrs Henderson says that the N.S. date was kept from 1906 onwards, though a few kept up the O.S. date a bit longer. Yule ended on "Tow and Twenty Night", 24 nights after Yule.

In Cullivoe in the hall, the Shetland Reel is still danced, not only at weddings, but also at ordinary dances. [I had unexpected confirmation of this from a young Welsh boy I met in Cardiff in May 1962 at the URDD festival. He told me he had been at the Regatta club dance in Cullivoe in ~~19~~^{August} 1961, and they had danced Shetland Reels then.]

Mr. Lell Robertson, The Herra, Yell, aged. c. 30.

We met Mr Robertson at the Henderson's — he was then engaged to Ann Henderson and is now married to her. He is a good fiddler, the nephew of another fiddler, and a great friend of Tommy Anderson.

Mr Robertson told us that in the Herra they used to play three tunes for the Foula Reel, two of unknown title, one called Tillie Plump. These three tunes, which he played for us, went with the three figures of the dance, and all were on the Scordatura (the 3rd string was tuned up and the 4th tuned with it. Note that for the Shetland Reel only the 4th string was tuned up).

Tam-tum = Tom Thumb.

Mr and Mrs John Leask, Westsandwick, Yell, aged 58 and 63,

Mrs M. H. Manson, Ladybank, Westsandwick, Yell, aged 75.

Mr Leask is the bus-owner on Yell, and it was he who "lent" us a car to enable us to get round the island. He was brought up in Tingwall on the Mainland until the age of 13 and then lived in Lerwick; Mrs Leask was brought up in Fetlar; Mrs Manson at Hamnavoe in South Yell. All were met at Mr and Mrs Leask's house.

Mrs Leask. Re Fetlar.

In her youngest days, the only dance was the Shetland Reel; this was for 3 couples placed alternately and began with "dancing".

It was customary in her young days for the men to hold the floor for 3 or 4 Reels in succession. It was a matter of courtesy for the men to dance with each of the girls. Occasionally at the end of a Reel some men would shout "Kiss The Lassies", but she has no recollection of the men taking up other men before giving up the floor.

Some people put in extra ~~two~~ spins in the reelng figure "when showing off". When Mrs Leask was 12, c. 1910, there was an old woman in Fetlar, Kirstie Donaldson, ~~then~~ aged c. 80, who was in great demand as a partner. Nowadays in Yell and Fetlar they take hands for "dancing" with partners, but Kirstie "danced" without giving hands, placing her knuckles on her waist. She tripped around and made a pattern on the floor, while all the others danced on the spot. Sometimes she turned right round before setting off on the reel. Mrs Leask demonstrated the old lady's step, and it was precisely the Whalsay sidestep, done in the pattern ↗ ↘. Her travelling step was built out of the same movement, maybe done twice or three times.

As time went on, the young women went to the fishing (gutting) in Berwick, and they brought in the new dances, the Scotch Reel, Polka, and Highland Schottische. This would be about 1912, when she was a girl at school, and she and the other girls practised the new-fashioned dances in the playground.

There were never formal classes in Fetlar, but from 1921-8 the Laird, Sir Watson Chain, gave them the privilege of a monthly dance throughout the winter, from 7 p.m. till 1 a.m. The M.C. for these dances was a Johnny Sinclair, a Fetlar man who had been a mason in Berwick and who had returned to Fetlar to settle down, and he called the dances and showed them how to do them. [Johnny Sinclair is now dead, but his influence still survives, for John Graham has told us that at Regatta Club dances in Fetlar the dances are done in better style than anywhere else in Shetland.]

"Skimbough" was an alternative name for the Shetland Reel, less common than S.R. itself. But in the old days it was just "We'll hae a Reel", not "We'll hae a Shetland Reel".

The usual instrument for dancing in Fetlar was the fiddle. They also had melodeon, mouth-organ, and tin whistle. "But we did sometimes all just sing if there was no-one there". This was "mudling".

Mrs Leask remembered "dancing cuddy", done either by bairns of c.10, or to amuse younger bairns. She had also heard of the Jig, but knew nothing of this or of any of the other dances on our list.

Mrs Leask described the first wedding she attended on Fetlar, in 1910. There was the procession two miles to the church, bride and best man, then bridegroom and best maid, followed by the married folk. On this occasion the bride's father gave the

bride away. Mrs Leask was "tailswep", one of the last pair (though not related to the bride). On the way home from the church, the bride went with the bridegroom.

The "Bride's Reel" was three Reels, in which the bride danced successively with the married men, the best man, and the bridegroom.

The wedding was on a Thursday, this being a lucky day for a wedding in Fetlar, and on the following Thursday the young men gave a return invitation to the entire company - this was the "calling", and the young men stood the entire cost. In Mrs Leask's day weddings lasted one day and went on until the early hours of the morning. She has no recollection of bedding the bride.

Mrs Manson, ne S. Yell.

In Mrs Mansons young days, c. 1904-5, the only dances in use were Shetland Reel, Scotch Reel, Highland Schottische, and Polka. The Shetland Reel was for three couples, placed alternately, and she thought it began with "dancing". Men very often kept the floor for 3 or 4 Reels in succession, but there was no men's Reel when they gave up. Sometimes the men kissed their partners at the end of the Reel, usually with a shout of Kiss the lasses; there was no squeak on the fiddle.

Quadrilles and Lancers came into Hamnavoe about 1910, and again were brought in by local girls who had been to Lerwick for the fishing. In those days there were no fishing stations at Hamnavoe and Burnavoe.

Mrs Manson agreed with Mrs Leask's description of the Bride's Reel, and of "dancing cuddy". She also knew the term "nuddling". She has no recollection of bedding the bride, and knows nothing of any of the other dances on our list.

Mr Leask.

Since most of his time was in Lerwick, he contributed relatively little. He thought that in the Shetland Reel in Yell the dancers stood still for 8 bars and then began with reeling'. He remembered hearing of "dancing cuddly" from his grandmother in Wensleydale, but has no memory of any of the other dances on our list.

He has heard the term "Steinbough" in Tingwall. "Come on boys, well have a Steinbough".

He recalled Mr Clayton visiting the Lawd's house at Laxfrath in Tingwall (the Lawds were the lessees) to give private dancing-lessons to their children; the local children did not join in. Mr Clayton also held classes at Lerwick (and Mrs Leask recalled his class at Uyeasound).

In the course of the conversation, we told them about the Whalsay Auld Reel and also of the duties of the Tailswep. Mr Leask remembered hearing as a boy in Tingwall that the last couple in the wedding procession carried a home-made broom.

Mr Leask has also seen Guisers come into a wedding at Nesting; the leader came in first and swept the floor, then the others entered and danced a Shetland Reel. All were dressed in straw.

Mrs Manson has heard of this in South Yell, but never seen it.

Finally two odd notes:

- (a) "The lang bed" is the communal bed used by people at a wedding
- (b) The last oxen in Fetlar were sold just after the 1914-18 War.

Miss Catherine Nicolson, Southerness, Copister, Yell, aged 82.

Miss Nicolson was born and brought up in Copister. She was a very good source.

Up to the age of 17 or so (c. 1896), the only dance in use was the Shetland Reel. This was for 3 couples, 3 men one side, 3 girls opposite them; they "danced" first, holding hands, then reeled the figure 8. I tried to check the fact that there were 3 men on one side, and she was fairly adamant about this.

There was much 'hushing' in the "dancing" part. They kissed partners at the end of the Reel - this needed no signal, but sometimes the men shouted 'Kiss the kisses'. The Reel wouldn't have been finished without that [i.e. the kiss]. The kiss was not just a formal peck.

We asked if ladies danced the backstep? "Oh no". As a young girl, did she notice that the older generation danced differently? "Yes, they danced far nicer". Did the older generation hold hands? "Sometimes yes, and sometimes no". What did they do? "They just held their hands by their sides". Frank tried to get her to describe the step used by the older ladies, and she came very close to describing the Whalsay sidestep, but not quite. I therefore demonstrated the Whalsay sidestep, and she was quite certain that it was that step the ladies used. Her old aunt used that step - she died about 38 years ago at the age of 84.

Frank then asked her if they used a similar step in the reeling figure. At first she said no, then suddenly thought again and said yes. I demonstrated ~~the~~ travelling sidestep and the chassé, and she chose the chassé.

There were no extra spins in the reel figure.

The men in Copister normally kept the floor for several Reels in succession, each with different partners, but she has never seen them take up other men when giving up the floor.

We asked if the old people in her young days called the Shetland Reel by this

name, or whether they referred to it just as a "Reel". Did they say "We'll ha'e a S.R." or just "We'll ha'e a R" "Oh no, Shetland Reel". What about Skimbrough? That was the Shetland Reel; that was the old name before my time".

Without our asking, she volunteered information: "There was a dance they called "Cacutty Dance"" (the 'Ca' being pronounced as in Call). "There was a time, with words

"I've left me coo, me calf, me cutty

"An' I'm linkin' awa' me lane, quo Cutty"

The time was played on the fiddle. Two people got down on their hunkers, joined hands with each other, and moved over the floor. If there were more than two, they paired and moved round in a circle. This was done maybe once in the course of an evening, or adults might do it to amuse children. The dancers never did the Cossack type step with the leg out sideways. She does not know if there were further words.

Miss Nicolson had heard of the Pretty Dancers Reel, but doesn't know where. She had also heard of the Jig, but again not seen it. She had no recollection of any of the other dances on our list.

There were no dancing-teachers in West Yell. Most of the local girls, including herself, went to Berwick for the gutting and they learnt the newer dances there and brought them back to Yell and taught them to others there. At Berwick the girls danced in the huts - when the men from the boats couldn't go out because of a storm they would come into the huts for a dance, together with a few of the local Berwick boys. The Scotch men would always leave at 10% sharp.

Mrs Nicolson saw Foula fishermen doing the Foula Reel when she was in Berwick

for the gutting.

The "Bride's Reel" was the usual 3 Reels, and the bride danced the last of them with her husband. The bridegroom, best man, and married man could then stay on the floor for as long as they pleased, taking up different partners "until they were satisfied".

The bride's father gave the bride away. The last two in the procession were "tailie", and were the furthest relatives of the married couple — at least, they weren't "near friends".

We asked about the bedding of the bride, but this is outside her memory, although she has heard of fastening bells to the bed. She did tell us, however, that just before the bride retired she hid herself, and the others had to search for her.

In Copister they celebrated Yule on January 5th. She and her father went up to a friend's [relative's?] house where the son was a fiddler, and there they danced. This took place on Yule night, New Year's Night, and "Tow and Twenty Night" (24th night after Yule). These were the main occasions for dancing.

When she was a little girl, she saw a Johnsmas Toy at West Yell. The men were from her district, and had come home for the toy from Fetland, where they were taking part in the white fishing. They had the feast outside, and there was dancing, in which the local girls joined.

Mr and Mrs Jimmy Scollay, Crossroads, Burravoe, aged c. 75

Mr Scollay is a good fiddler. He was born and brought up in Aywick, and danced in the houses there. He also used to ~~walk~~ walk into Burravoe and dance in the tin hut there.

In his young days, the only dances in use were the Shetland Reel, ~~and~~ The Scotch Reel, ~~and the Polka.~~ The Shetland Reel was for 3 couples placed alternately. The first part of the tune was the "dancing turn", the second part the "reeling turns", and the dancers stood still while the fiddler played the first part once, then started with the reel on the second part of the tune. The fiddler could give "double dancing" or "double reeling" whenever he felt so inclined.

They kissed partners at the end of each Reel. "Oh man, that was the best of it". There was no signal on the fiddle for this, and no shout of kiss the lasses - The kiss was taken as a matter of course. It was customary for the men to hold the floor for 3 or 4 Reels, taking a different partner each time, but there was no men's Reel when they gave up the floor.

All held hands with partners in the dancing, even in his youngest days (but see also later re the sidestep).

He has heard of a "Pretty Dancer's Reel" in Shetland somewhere, but has no knowledge of this. Of the Jig, "What dance was this? Was this no the dance they called the Scotch Reel" (this was after Mrs Scollay had described the Scotch Reel - see below). He had no knowledge of any of the other old dances on our list except for "Dancing cutty", which was "just bacon's play".

Mrs Scollay gave us a description of the Scotch Reel. Start in time as usual



The reel figure was done in Strathspey time only. The quick time was done to the Irish Washerwoman, and was alternately reel and swing or vice versa.

The Tonla Reel was for 4 couples, and was done in Mr Scollay's twenties. One tune, The Shapinsay o' Tonla, was used throughout.

There has never been a dancing-teacher in his district.

The "Bride's Reel" was the usual 3 Reels. The bride danced successively with the best man, the married man, and the bridegroom.

"Tailie" were just the last 2 people in the procession, not any special people.

Mr Scollay saw the Whalsay sidestep done by an old lady of c. 70 (?) when he was a lad of about 20 - Joan Robertson of Burravoe. He gave us a wonderful account of this incident - he was dared to try to be allowed to take her home after the dance, and the first step in his campaign (successful!) was to ask her to dance a Reel with him. In the setting there was a great deal of bobbing about - when he took her hands he found her "terribly hard to steer", because she wouldn't remain on the spot. She must have been a very formidable figure, deep-voiced, with rows and rows of beads, "like an armadillo". He has heard older people say that they used to do the sidestep, but Joan Robertson was the only one he ever saw do it.

Mr Scollay's grandfather was one of the only fiddlers in the district in his day. Mr Scollay's mother died c. 1942 at the age of 57, and as a child she accompanied her father when he fiddled for the dances at the Laird's (MacQueen's) House - The Manse House, and she told Mr Scollay that on one of these occasions she saw the Polka done there.

At a cairdin', they sometimes had a Reel or two, and afterwards the lads and lasses

slept in "a long" bed".

Ide played us several tunes which we put on tape. His strathspeys were 46 bars per minute.

Mr Magnus Johnson, The Herra, yell.

Mr Magnus Johnson was the old man mentioned by Mr Gilbert Spence who had the three tunes from the Herra version of the Foula Reel. Mr Johnson died a few years ago, and the following conversation, between Mr Johnson and Tommy Anderson, was recorded by Tommy about 1954, when Mr Johnson was aged c. 67. I underline Tommy's questions.

Foula Reel. "8 couples"; ~~Now~~ Now what way did they do this. "Well the 4 men on one side and the 4 women on the other. And then they danced just like a Shetland Reel". Yes. "The Foula Reel [this may refer to the tune; see below]. And then when they started the amin'; the two at the top - the wife started first, and took the one opposite to the other and armed right around and shook him up". like a circle? "No, no, wi' each partner and came up to the top again". Then the man he started the same. Then all the rest was holding hands and they gaed dancin' down the middle to the foot and the next two started ~~on~~ until they had all change places"

The Foula Reel tune was "for the Shetland Reel piece before they started the amin'". "For the amin' piece you played Tillie Plump for that. Then when the amin' was over, then you danced it like a Foursome Reel or an Eightsome Reel, or whatever you would ca' it, wi' Jimmy Handie, or some other tune - an ordinary Shetland Reel."

These three tunes came to Magnus Johnson ~~from~~ via a second person from Thomas Henry, who died as an old man about the time that Magnus Johnson was born.

Mrs Catherine Lawrenson, 68 St Olaf St, Lerwick, aged 70.

This was our second visit, for we met Mrs Lawrenson in 1959.

The following notes are additional to what we noted on our previous visit.

- (a) Mrs Lawrenson has no recollection of the men keeping the floor for several Reels in succession when she went to weddings in Delting.
- (b) She has now remembered much more about the Flugga. Begun with a Shetland Reel of the usual type. The music then changes to the Flugga tune, and the dancers go through motions similar to those in a Sailor's Hornpipe
- (i) Started to reel, waving arms, swaying, and ducking heads, rather like a boat in a storm
 - (ii) Haul ropes in while "dancing"
 - (iii) As (i)
 - (iv) Throw ropes over hay screws (to keep them down in a storm)
 - (v) As (i)
 - (vi) Kick sheaves into corn screws.

The dance was supposed to commemorate a great storm at sea.

- (c) "Cutty" was just a bairn's game; you were supposed to be dancing in and out of a cuddy (the straw basket in which peats are kept by the fire = a small hibbie). There exist various types of cuddy, e.g. a limpet cuddy, a drip cuddy (for drying fish in salt in the open air - the process took most of a week), a salt cuddy).

She knew the rhyme

Holey quo cuddy and Hoo quo cuddy

And wha will dance wi' me, quo cuddy,

In the cuddy and out the cuddy,

G'll link awa' me' lane, quo cuddy.

- (d) She did not hear the name "Skimbough" for a Shetland Reel until she was about 20.
- (e) She has no knowledge of the Tug.
- (f) She uses the term "Ram Reel" for a men's Reel.

Tommy Anderson, Lewick

His grandmother used to sing for dancing.

20. 9. 61.

Peter Fraser, Lewick

We saw Peter on our first visit in 1959. The following notes are supplementary to those made on our previous visit. All refer to Timiniearth.

- (a) Men did not hold the floor - they danced only one Reel at a time.
- (b) In his young days, they kept O.S. Yule. The "4 and 20 Night" was not recognized or noted in any way, and the name was unknown. The seven weeks of Yule started in December and ended in February.

The spring work ("Voer") started with the land which had been uncultivated for 2 or 3 years; they began to delve about March 17th.

- (c) The term "Steinbough" was used in his young days, but was not very common.
- (d) He has no knowledge of Da Barmi or of Cutty.

John Graham, Lewick

20. 9. 61.

When we told John of the disappointing results from Yell and Unst, he immediately commented that "that would be the Ingmans". Dr James Ingram was Minister in Unst from 1821 to his death in 1879 at the age of 103; his son was first a teacher in Fetlar, and then became Minister of the joint parish of Fetlar and N. Yell, a post which he held till his death in 1892 at the age of 83.

John has a newspaper cutting recording the death of the son (?), and it appears that both were godly men in the strictest of Presbyterian senses!

Mr George Nelson, Veegarth, Tingwall, Mainland of Shetland, aged c. 60.

Mr Nelson is President of the Shetland Old-time Dance Club, and also a Committee member of the Shetland Folk Society.

John Graham had shown us an article which Mr Nelson had written for the New Shetlander on old-time Shetland fiddlers, partly from a series of articles in The Shetland News c. 1896, and partly from traditional information. In this article, Mr Nelson claimed that a John Moffat ran a dancing "assembly" in Lerwick in the first half of the 19th century, where the Southern dances were introduced, and we tried to obtain further information about this. The only real information we obtained was the reference to The Shetland News, ~~which~~ and this certainly does not give the impression conveyed by Mr Nelson's article. In effect, Mr Nelson admitted that he took a little bit of traditional information and padded it out by the use of his imagination. We wrote to him subsequently, but he still couldn't give chapter and verse for his statements, so we presume that they can't be substantiated. The extract from the Shetland News and the two letters follow these notes.

Our evening together was very pleasant, though not very rewarding; I think we more or less successfully concealed what we thought of his academic standards!

Other notes from the conversation are as follows:

- (a) When he was a boy of about 16, his father's cousin recalled the Waltz Cotillion being done in Bressay in her young days. She danced it before she was married, and since she was born c. 1868 and married young, this would have been in the eighties.
- (b) He has no recollection of the men keeping the floor in Tingwall.
- (c) In his young days "Skimbough" was used as a term of contempt for the Reel, and old people didn't use it.

- (d) Babby Bowster was done in his father's young days in Tingwall, c. 1890. There was
an extra man or lady, and some change of partners - though Mr Nelson himself has not seen it.
- (e) He has heard the name Tailsweep used in Tingwall in his young days.

Old Shetland Fiddlers IV

John Moffat, of Lerwick

Another noted fiddler,

who died in 1857, according to the calendar of one of our local Almanacs, was John Moffat, who about fifty or sixty years ago kept a small public house situated a few yards to the south of the Steamers' Office. John's house of four rooms became the rendezvous of the sailors who frequented Lerwick, in addition to the fast young men of the town. This was not wonderful, for John supplied drink ad lib., and music not a little. A sprinkling of the giddy gals of the period helped to enliven the scene.

[Due to misprints, the numbering of the ten articles is erratic.]
There are several IV's!]

There was little room for reels in Moffat's unsparing salons, but youth and vivacity, aided by his never ending fiddle, and may be something less harmless, found vent in litting about to the step-dancing music of mine host. The hornpipe and pas de deux witnessed only for once was seldom forgotten by those who had a night of it at the crib in question.

It cannot be denied that Moffat's house became a kind of focus of rowdiness not unmixed with latent, if not indeed with open and above board dangers to the morality of the place.

--- Thanks to the rising genius of the "Bruckie reel"
celebrity - of whom more anon - the Greenland whaler, the
Dutchman^f, the jolly young Shetland seaman returned after
a long voyage, "struck its" on fresh fields and pastures new.

^t

I could find no mention of anyone whom I could identify
as this celebrity in subsequent articles in the series. T.R.

^f The article also mentions Hullites, Dundonians and Gockneys,
as visitors to the house. T.R.

Shetland News. Saturday Feb 15th 1896 p7 col 3.

Gilbert Gilbertson of Whalsay.

A very few years after the departure of Daa Willie, a famous
violinist reached the zenith of his fame; this was no other than
Gilbert Gilbertson of Whalsay, who was in the extreme east of
what Daa the "Dungean" is said to have been in the western
part of Shetland. Both were expert players, and displayed
their skill before laird and squireon, at weddings,
sword-dances, Xmas. and Hallowe'en gatherings, and
other native "fays".

Dear Mr. ~~Nelson~~ Nelson,

May I, on behalf of Dr Rhodes and myself, thank you for the ~~the~~ very interesting and delightful evening we spent with you last week - it was most kind of you to take so much trouble.

~~May I take this opportunity of querying one or two points~~

We were most interested in what you told us of the old fiddlers, and of John Moffat, and on the following morning we had a look at the volume of the Shetland News to which you referred us. ~~Concerning John Moffat, we wondered if we had only found part of the accounts you mentioned.~~ We found the series of articles on old Shetland fiddlers, and were most intrigued by one or two remarks in them. In that on Gilbert Gilbertson of Whalsay, for instance (Shetland News, Sat. Feb. 15th, 1896, page 7, col. 3), there is the passage that both he and Daa "were expert players, & displayed their skill before laird & squire, at weddings, sword-dances, Xmas & Hallowe'en gatherings ...".

Does this mean that sword-dances took place in ~~the~~ places other than Papa Stow? ~~these~~ We should be most grateful if you could tell us of any such occurrences before 1896.

In ~~the article of~~ another article, on John Moffat himself, ~~there is a reference~~ (News, Sat. Feb. 1st, 1896, p. 7, col. 3) there is a reference to the "Bruckie Reel" ^(Bruckie Reel) celebrity", though we couldn't find any explanation of the term. I believe you mentioned the term when we saw you - could you tell us what it means, please?

Concerning John Moffat himself, we wondered if we might have missed ~~an~~ another account of him, for in the particular article mentioned above, we could not find any real indication that he ever taught dancing - indeed, the evidence seems to indicate the reverse. Could we ask, please, whether you have a further reference

which shows that he taught dances, and, in particular, taught the "new" dances from the south?

I am sorry to bother you with these queries, but we should be very grateful for your help.

With very best wishes to you

Yours sincerely,

Tom. F.

Kensgarrik
Gilli
Shetland

11/10/81

Dear Dr Bell

Thank you for your letter of the 1st inst. The first paragraph of which conveys your wishes for a nice evening spent at Kensgarrik, let me say that I enjoyed it as you did, and we will be very glad to have you again, should you ever think about travelling to the islands again.

I was glad to hear that you had the opportunity to look up the files of the Shetland News, dealing with the fiddlers of by gone days,

I think when we speak of sword dances coupled with its reference to soldiers and lairds the reader may have had in mind the parties that were run in Basle Lourie by the Fiddlers

2

Gifford was a very big laird, he had a lot to do with the government of the islands, he was the only gentleman of note in the County who was not a Jacobite, so very often he had officers of the crown staying with him.

There is a note I think in the same SN paper which you looked up, that refers to a captain of his majesties forces asking for certain tunes to be played at a party when he was resident in Busta.

From this we might conclude that the sword-dances referred to was purely Scottish. I have not heard of the Papa Stour sword-dance being performed outside the island.

Busta Lad - a fiddler of his own (Blind Henry) although this man was totally blind, he managed to steal the heart of the footman's daughter, and on their marriage Gifford gave them one of his best crafts on the estate on condition that Henry played at

Busta as required and paid a nominal sum of one penny per annum.

In regard to John Moffat it is a landed down story that John liked dancing I would draw your attention to a paragraph in the article which you read which is as follows,

There was little room for reels in Moffat's spacious saloon, but youth and vivacity ruled by his year ending fiddling and maybe something less harmless found vent in letting about to the slip dancing music of minstrels. The Hornpipe and Pas-de-doux unlaced was seldom forgotten.

Who imagined the fore mentioned youths the Hornpipe and the various Pas-de-doux if Moffat didn't; traditionally he gets the credit.

The practice was referred to was a favor. In the glossary of the Shetland dialect

4

by James S. Angus this is what Brücke
Brücke noun, refuse,
Brücke verb, to crush, to crumble,
a state of disintegration; in a crushed-
state: an interruption, or unsatisfactory
ending to a project or enterprise

De Seelander would qualify this by saying
concerning an enterprise that was not
properly carried out, badly managed,
"It was awful brücke,

So the brücke nuts was the state of
dancing lapsed into after Woffat and
his disciples (James Nelson) etc passed on
and the fiddlers that followed were
spoken of as the fiddlers of the
brücke nuts

Towards the end of last century the state
of dancing in Shetland improved and
continued to improve, reaching its best

5

about the second decade of this century
when its standard of dancing in Leamington
was very high, and a big number
of different dances performed.

In about the 1930's this standard began
to drop, so that in 1961 we again
had ourselves in the period of the
brutskie rules. Since this was the reason for
the formation of the old time dance
group in Leamington six years ago
I hope its foregoing may be helpful
to you in some way.

With Kindest Regards

Yours sincerely

Ernestine

Captain Andrew Smith, 27 Boswell Drive, Edinburgh, aged c. 70.

Wardie,

Brother of Miss May Smith of Walls, Mainland of Shetland, whom we met on our visit in 1953. Captain Smith was reputed to know the Auld Reel of Tinnigarth Vene, but this turned out to be false.

Among various things he showed us were

- (a) Correspondence with Frances Collinson indicating that 'Ahint the Decks o' Voe' is the same as 'Glen Lyon's Reel', and that 'Beneath the decks o' Voe' is the same as Captain Ross.
- (b) An extract from a book of Newspaper cuttings in the Museum of Antiquities, among Irvine's MSS. This was from the Shetland Times, 1875, and gave the account of the wedding in 1837 (?) which we have reproduced in our notes from the Orkney and Shetland Cradle for 1891.
- (c) Some Shetland tunes from a MSS collection of 1862 by J.D. Hoseason, also in the National Museum of Antiquities.

1, 2/10/61.

Dear ——,

Thank you very much for the help you gave Dr Rhodes and myself on our visit to Shetland last month. The information you gave us was most valuable, and we are most grateful.

Yours sincerely

T. M. J.

To Mr James Johnson, Marypark, Baltasound.

Mrs Mary Ann Smith, Phail, Westing

Mrs Ann Johnson and Mrs Caroline Nesbit, Seaview, Baltasound.

Mr and Mrs John Peterson, Muness,

Mr Charles Intester, Reafirth, Mid-Yell..

Mrs Catherine Nicolson, Southerness, Copister

Mrs Temima Lawson, Kirkabost, Nossie, Unst (with paragraph to thank her grand-daughter for spinning for us).

Mr and Mrs William Gray, Valvie, Nossie, Unst (with thanks for hospitality).

} Unst.

} Yell.

Dear — ,

May I, on behalf of Dr Rhodes and myself, thank you for the most interesting and delightful evening which we spent with you a fortnight ago, and for all the help you gave us in our search for information about dancing in Shetland in the old days. The information you gave us was most valuable, and we are very grateful.

To. Mr and Mrs Bruce Henderson, Arisdale, South Yell.

Mrs C. Dunlop and Mrs G. Humphrey, Uyeasound, Unst (with added paragraph to say we had traced Clayton to 1900 in newspapers and identified him as Ewan Clayton).

Mr and Mrs A. Gifford and Mr and Mrs J. Sutherland, Post Office, Uyeasound, Unst (the same).

Mr and Mrs Simpson Henderson and family, Kurks, Coloup, North Yell
(with added paragraph to ask Miss Ann Henderson to thank her fiancé Bell Robertson for playing to us).

Mr and Mrs Jimmy Scollay & their daughter-in-law, Cross Roads, Buravoe, S. Yell
(with added paragraph to thank Mr Scollay for playing for us).

Mr and Mrs T. Hebble, West Sandwick, Yell.

Missed K. & M. Johnson & Mr W. Johnson, Kirkhouse, Westing, Unst (with added paragraph to say F.R. had purchased a spinning wheel, & to say that I hadn't yet dealt with the tape).

Miss E. Smith & Mr G. Smith, Bams, Westing, Unst (with thanks for demonstration of carding).

Mr and Mrs Spence & Mr Spence, The Herra, Yell (with thanks for playing 80

Wurks Group
Cullinan North Yell
Shetland
22nd Oct 1961

Dear Friends

I got your letter of which I was so glad I do assure you I did enjoy your visit very much & hope to live to see you again we are having a busy time just now getting ready for Ann Wedding her & Lee Robertson him that played on the fiddle to you is getting married on the 8th of Nov in the Public Hall at Cullinan so I am hoping we will have a fine night I wish you had been there they will be some Shetland Reels going we are still having plenty of wet weather I hope at some you will drop me a few lines again I will be glad to hear

from you tell your friend Dr.
Rhodes I was asking for him +
hopes he is keeping well I was glad
you kept the time the Group
lasses Tom Anderson is coming up
sometime in the near future when
I hope to see him Well I have no
news that would interest you.
so I will have to close
with all my best wishes
Yours Sincerely
Simpson Henderson

Dear Mr Henderson,

It was nice of you to reply to my letter - I had hoped to send Ann and Lell Robertson our best wishes before her wedding, but I have had such a hectic term that my letter-writing simply stopped. I hope everything went off well with the wedding - I wish I could have been there!

Our mathematics department in The University have moved into a new building at the end of September, and I was landed with the job of directing the second half of the move, and also with a good deal of the tidying up once we were in. Our old building was built of prefabs,^(huts), and it is in tremendous contrast to our new building - six storeys, with almost ideal conditions for working in, and with views of the Welsh hills and the Irish sea from the upper storeys. - that is, when you can see them for the fog, for we have had wild fog here these last few weeks culminating^(last night) in a really thick one which brought everything to a standstill.

Frank managed to obtain a spinning jenny from Chas, and he has had it put in working order, and is now trying his hand at spinning - he says that his first attempt looked a bit irregular in thickness! My own Shetland handicraft were limited to trying to make one of the ~~the~~ straw bobbins that ~~were to be used~~ for sweeping the old open hearths, and also for sweeping the floor before the Brides Reel at a wedding - someone in the Westing in Chas showed us how they were made, ~~they were made~~ and I managed to obtain some oats and make one. Our English oats, however, is quite different from the Shetland oats in the strength and length of the straws - the closeness with which the English oats is sown makes its straw of very poor quality compared with Shetland straw. I'm sure you could never make a toy as of English oat straws.

Mr Bruce Henderson
Ainsdale
Barravoe
Dec. (15th, 1962)

Dear Sir

it is a long time since
I received your letter and I have
been looking out ever since for
a Photo of a Shetland wedding
and strange to say I got one from
the south of England from a
woman who had one. We were
very pleased to have you and
your friend visit us and if you
ever happen to come again I hope
you will give us a call. We
happened to be at a Shetland
wedding the other night. it was



very nice and we enjoyed it very much. We are getting very busy for Xmas hope the weather keeps good we have had the snow but not the fog.

I will close hoping that you will get this all right. I am just sending it to the address that was on the letter

Yours very truly
Bruce Henderson



January 1963.

Dear Mr Henderson,

I must apologize for my long delay in acknowledging your kind letter of December 15th - it came while I was heavily committed with mathematical work, and I am afraid that I did not realize until now that I had been so long in answering it.

It was very good of you to go to so much trouble to obtain the photograph of a Shetland wedding in the old days - it gives one an excellent picture of what it must have been like, and I am very pleased to have it.

We have recently heard that our book on dancing in Scotland and the islands has been accepted by a publisher and should appear in the autumn. We have included an account of social dancing in the Mainland of Shetland and some of the smaller islands, but our collecting in Yell and Unst came too late to be included, and we shall have to publish it elsewhere. I will let you know when we eventually get it in print.

With very best wishes to your wife and yourself

Yours sincerely

Tom F.

Further addresses in Shetland. (1) Mainland.

James Pole, Sand, Nr Gardenhouse [a fiddler, c. 83]

Arthur Irvine of Brae [see him about the Hugga]

Mrs Irvine, P.O. Cunningsburgh [mother of John Irvine the fiddler, from Levenwick, c. 80]

Mrs Ann Smith, Vaxter, Cunningsburgh [c. 80, daughter of a man who lived on Foula]

Arthur Irvine, Cutlestane [a good Shetland Reel dancer]

John Fraser, Lerwick [c. 80, fiddler from Papa Stour]

James Angus [c. 60, works at Ministry of Labour Office in Lerwick, has information on the use of the Men's Rent in Cunningsburgh. From J.H. Johnson.]

Mrs Robertson, Cockle Haa, Hellafirth [these people were good sources, from J.H. Johnson.]

Mrs A.J. Smith, King Harold St, Lerwick [c. 80, old Lerwick resident]

Mrs Elizabeth Smith, ex-teacher, Bigtown [c. 65, taught for many years in Foula]

(2) Foula.

Mrs Kenneth Gaer, Foula [Missionary's daughter from Peebles, intelligent person]

(3) Yell.

Andrew Barclay Henderson, Group [c. 70, a fiddler].

Andrew Gaer, Westsandwick [a teacher, Foula born]

Mr R.J. Robertson, Grimister, Henna [c. 70, fiddler, uncle of Bell Robertson].

Peter Clark, Linkhouse, Mid-Yell [c. 85]

William Smith, North the Voe, Mid-Yell [old]

Mr L. Johnson, Setter [70+, now holds Lawrence Williamson's MSS].

Mrs Blands, Ulsta [c. 86]

Mrs John Tulloch, Setter [85].

Mrs Agnes Jamieson, Culhvoie [c. 75, daughter of the solo dancer, Mr Williamson, who danced the Smugglers]

(3) Unst

Mrs Matheson, Burrafirth [c.80]

Mrs Sutherland, Burrafirth [c. 70+]

James Sutherland, Dandies, Uyeasound [80+, ex-fiddler and keen dancer]

Mrs Sutherland, No. 6 Ordale [80+, clever mentally]

Laurence Davidson, Greenbrae, Uyeasound [Attended Clayton's classes].

(4) Fetlar

J. T. Laurenson, Aithbank, Fetlar [c. 60, a man with a good memory of what his parents told him; writes good letters; seen John Graham]

(5) Mainland of Scotland

Mrs Gray, 3 Ferry Place, Tomy, Aberdeen [c. 85+, grand-aunt of Mrs Charlotte Jamison of Baltasound. Comes from Haroldswick].

Miscellaneous addresses in Shetland

J. Williamson, Caldbeck, Unst (makes Toyake's).

Mrs William Peterson, Toft, Muness, Unst (does the fine Unst knitting).

Richard Moar, Westsandwick Hotel, Yell.

Henry Thomson, Sunnyside, Ollaberry [for Put hame the borrowed clothes,
Out by east the Veng, and Jeanie choke the bairns]

Bobby Peterson, Breiwick, Tingwall [for Kale and Knockat Corn and Willafjord.]

P. Blance & Co, 122 Commercial St, Lerwick [sells the rugs at 65/-]

Tommy Anderson, Pearl Assurance Co, Lerwick 253, usually between 9-12.

Croudie's, Ironmongers, Lerwick, sell cards for spinning.

Charlie Thomson of Haroldswick might repair a wheel.

Mrs Ann Scollay, Crossroads, Burrae, Yell [knitting, does mitts]