

Mr Shanks was a part-time dancing-teacher, and once worked in partnership with Peter Marshall. He is a fiddler, and can both play and dance simultaneously. He demonstrated this for me with a bit of the Liverpool Hornpipe. He is also a piper.

Mr Shanks first learnt to dance under Professor McQuiston in Part Logan. McQuiston came from somewhere in Ayrshire, and gave lessons regularly in Ayrshire and Wigtownshire. Mr Shanks first attended McQuiston's classes at the age of 11 or 12, and then attended again soon after he had left school.

McQuiston's classes lasted for 2 months, 5 nights a week. On the first occasion when he attended the classes, Mr Shanks was taught steps only for the first 6 weeks, and then were taught dances only in the last fortnight.

The dances which Mr Shanks learnt from Mr McQuiston were:

Quadrilles, Lancers, Circassian Circle, Waltz Cotillon, Waltz Country Dance  
Petronella, Flowers of Edinburgh, Triumph, Haymakers Rant, Drops of Brandy, Peace  
Straw, The Nut, Paddy O'Rafferty, Jessie's Favourite  
Foursome Reel [Strathspey and Tulloch], Fichtone Reel  
Waltz, Polka (under the name "Berlin Polka"), Polka Mazowka, Dutch Polka, Common  
Schottische and Highland Schottische, La Varsovienne

McQuiston did not teach step dances in his public classes. He was, as usual, a fiddler.

When he was about 16, Mr Shanks attended the classes of Peter Marshall. He attended these classes for a year or two, and then began to help Mr Marshall - probably at the age of 18 or so. Afterwards, he worked in partnership with Mr Marshall, but left him, & taught on his own, before 1914.

Peter Marshall came from Kirkpatrick-Durham, near Castle Douglas. He covered a part of Dumfriesshire, and the whole of Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire. He died at some time before 1930 at the age of about 70. He taught for at least 4 or 5 years after 1918.

Peter Marshall did not teach any ballroom dances which Mr Shanks had not already learnt from Mr McQuiston, but he did teach various step-dances, and these Mr Shanks learnt from him. The step-dances taught by Peter Marshall were: Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Truibhas, Sairas Hompipè, Irish Jig, Liverpool Hompipè, and a clog dance.

Peter Marshall's system (and Mr Shanks' also) was different from that of most of the dancing-teachers of whom we have records. If Mr Marshall decided to open a class in Dunragit (say), he first visited the district locally, and then made a provisional booking of a local hall. If no hall were available, he used a "ban loft". He first held a free dance for the young people of the neighbourhood to see whether it was worth while to hold a class in that district. He advertised this dance locally by notices in the shops. After a couple of hours dancing, he would go round with a book taking the names of those who were interested in attending a class, and if he obtained sufficient names, he confirmed his booking of the hall, and began to teach the following night.

He tried to obtain the use of the hall for 5 nights a week for 6 weeks, though he might, of course, have to stand down for some other event. In any case he taught for 30 nights in that place. The last of the 30 nights was the final ball.

If he did not obtain enough names to make the class worth while, he went elsewhere, and tried again there. The number of people required to make a class worth while ~~depa~~ naturally depended on the expenses of the hall and of his lodgings and fares.

Sometimes Mr Marshall and Mr Shanks had classes of 120 or more, and they would quite often take £80 to £100 from a single class. The pupils paid half-way through the session of 30 nights.

Mr Marshall took the children first, and then had the adults in a separate class later in the evening.

Mr Marshall was "very very strict" in his classes. The girls sat on one side of the room, the men or boys on the other. For the first dance, he made the top boy take the top girl, and so on down the line. For the second dance, the top boy had to take the second girl, the second boy the third girl, and so on, the last boy taking the first girl. For the third dance, the top boy took the third girl, and so on. Each boy went across in turn, bowed to the appointed girl, and asked her formally "may I have the pleasure of this dance", then offered her an arm, and took her to her place in the dance. And when the dance was ended, the boys or men had to escort their partners to her place, and bow and thank her.

Peter Marshall was a fiddler, and could both play and dance at the same time. For his classes he wore an ordinary suit, ~~and~~ but on the ball night he put on an evening suit. He wore Highland dancing pumps for both the juveniles' and adults' classes. Most of his class wore black patent leather pumps.

He travelled from class to class by bus, train, or bike.

Pas de Basque was known to both McQuiston and Marshall as the "balance step".

According to Mr Shanks, both teachers taught it as follows

- 1.1. Step on RF in 2nd position [actually slightly in front of 2nd]
2. Close LF to 5th position [with the edge of the L heel just over the R toe] and momentarily transfer the weight to it
28. Beat with RF on the spot, and immediately following the beat extend the LF and bring it round to 1st position. The extension is a rapid one, and the movement slows as the foot comes back to 1st position



The extension is small, merely a few inches.

Mr Shanks had not heard of the "double balance".

Quick-time travelling step. McQuiston used the chassé, closing in near 5th. Peter Marshall used the hop-one-and-two, closing in near 5th. Marshall's step was definitely not the RSCDS skip-change-of-step.

Strathspey-time travelling step in the Foursome Reel was the usual Lowland step, with the straight swing-through on the hop.

Strathspey-time setting steps in The Foursome Reel were Highland Fling steps, both to McDunston and Marshall. Ladies and men did the same steps.

Quick-time setting steps

- I. 6 pas de Basque and 4 ball-kicks (see below)
- II 3 Kick out & to the side (as usual) and 4 ballkicks. (This from Marshall)
- III Spring, spring, spring step close (as usual). This also from Marshall.
- IV A form of plain balance, namely: begin with RF in 4th int aerial position
  1. 1. Balance backward on to RF, taking LF to rear 4th int aerial position
  - 2 Balance forward on to LF, taking RF to 4th int aerial position
  2. 1 Spring on to RF (bringing it back to the position of LF, at the same time beating LF twice in rear leg position
  - 2 Hop on RF and extend LF to 4th int aerial position (without taking it through front leg position.

This also came from Marshall.

Highcuts. Mr Shanks high-cuts were ball-kicks. He learnt these from Peter Marshall under the name "double-hit". Mr Shanks had never heard the term "pigeon's wing".

Pousette Both McDunston and Marshall taught this with waltz step and waltz hold.

Highland and Common Schottische. I did not see Mr Shanks perform these, but in the course of conversation he recited off the instructions for them. The Highland Schottische began "Beat before and beat behind, three to the side and hop...". The Common Schottische began "Three to the side and hop...".

Highland Fling. I saw only Two of Mr Shanks's Fling steps, both derived from Marshall. These were

Rocking Step.

- 1.1 Hop on LF and point R toe in 2nd position
- 2 Hop on LF and take RF to near leg position
- 2 Point R toe in 5th position
- 3, 4 Hop twice on LF, and shake RF leisurely in 4th int aerial position  
(the movements of the shake occur on 3: out; 2: in; 4: out).

2 4 rocking steps

etc.

Changeover Step.

- 1 Highland Fling step with RF
- 2.1 Hop on LF and point R toe in 2nd position
- 2 Hop on LF and raise RF to near leg position
- 3 Spring on to RF and beat LF twice in near leg position
- 4 Hop on RF and point L toe in 5th position.

etc.

Sword Dance. Roughly the standard one

Seann Truibhas. Began with the scowching<sup>\*</sup> step.

Clog Dance. Peter Marshall had a clog dance [one or more?], which he performed in clogs, with bells on the front, and jinglers in the heels. Mr Shanks recognized the "crunch" as one of Marshall's clog movements, though he did not know it by name. Marshall also had a step like the heel-roll.

Liverpool Hornpipe. Mr Shanks learnt this from Peter Marshall. Both he and Mr Marshall performed it in Highland dancing pumps.

The tempo is 13 seconds for 8 bars (i.e. a half step).

Only one movement in the dance received a name; this was the "treble", which in our terminology consisted of "flatter, drop, and treble". To avoid confusion, I here call this step the "flatter and treble", and use 'treble' in our sense.

Our treble, as performed by Mr Shanks, is as follows.

### Treble RF

- Counts & 1 Double beat with RF in semi 2nd int position  
Count & Beat with RF in 5th position and transfer weight to it  
Count 2 Beat with LF in near 5th position, finishing with both feet on the ground. The last beat with the LF is a very heavy one.

The 'flatter and treble' is then as follows.

### Flatter and treble RF

- Count 1 Hop on LF  
Counts and a Double beat with RF, the first beat being in 5th position } Flatter RF  
Count 2 Drop on RF in 1st position  
Counts & 3 & 4 Treble LF.

The last two bars of each step, except the last, are standard, and I call these the close:

### Close RF

7. 1-4 'Flatter and treble' RF  
2 } Double beat with LF in semi 2nd int position.  
8 1 }  
2 Hop on RF  
2 Beat with LF in near 5th position, and transfer weight to it. } Back treble LF  
3 Step forward on RF  
4 Close LF to 1st position

### Step I

- 1-6 'Flutter and treble' with RF and LF alternately.  
7, 8 Close RF  
9-16 Perform bars 1-8 alternately.

### Step II

1. 1-4 'Flutter and treble' RF  
2 Beat with LF in 5th position and transfer weight to it  
2. 1 Beat with RF in near 5th position and transfer weight to it  
2 Beat with LF in 5th position and transfer weight to it  
2 Beat with RF in near 5th position and transfer weight to it  
2 3 2 4 Treble LF  
3, 4 Perform 1, 2 contrariwise  
5, 6 'Flutter and treble' RF, LF  
7, 8 Close RF  
9-16 Perform 1-8 contrariwise.

### Step III

1. 1-4 'Flutter and treble' RF  
2 Beat with h heel in semi 4th position  
2. 1 Beat with RF on the spot  
2 2 Double beat with LF, the first beat being on the way from semi 4th position to 1st position, the second in 1st position  
2 3 2 4 Treble RF  
2 } Perform 1. 2, 2. 1-4 contrariwise  
3. 1-4 }  
2 } Repeat 1. 2, 2. 1-4  
4. 1-4 }  
5, 6 'Flutter and treble' RF, LF  
7, 8 Close RF  
9-16 Perform 1-8 contrariwise.



### Step IV.

1. 'Flatter and Treble' RF
2. 'Flatter and Treble' LF, making one complete turn to the left.
3. 1-4 'Flatter and Treble' RF
- 4 & 5 } Double beat with LF, the first beat being in semi 2nd int position, the second slightly to the rear of this position, on the way in towards rear 5th position
- 8 Beat with LF in rear 5th position and momentarily transfer weight to it.
- 3 Beat with RF in 5th position
- 8 3 2 4 Treble with LF
- 5, 6 Perform 3, 4 contrainverse
- 7, 8 Close RF
- 9-10 Perform 1-8 contrainverse.

The movements on 3, 4 are similar to those in our double treble, save that the 'catch in' is replaced by the 'flatter and drop'.

### Step V (A simple crab-walk, moving once round anticlockwise in a circle).

1. 1 Jump forward on to both feet, with the toes turned well in, and touching each other
2. 2 Swivel on the L heel and the R toe, turning the feet out, to bring the heels in contact
3. 3 Swivel on the L toe and the R heel, turning the feet in, to bring the toes together
4. Repeat count '2'.



1 to 2



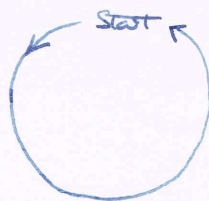
2 to 3



3 to 4

2-4 Repeat bar 1 three times

On these four bars, the dancer moves once round anticlockwise in a circle, facing outwards all the time



5, 6 'Flatter and Treble' RF, LF.

7, 8 Close RF

9-16 Perform 1-8 contrariwise.

### Step VI

1 'Flatter and Treble' RF

2. 1 Drop on LF slightly behind 1st position, and at the same time raise RF to a loose front leg position (the R knee should be turned well out, the R heel level with the bottom of the L kneecap, and the R foot about 4" from the front of the L leg).

2 Drop on RF in ~~1st~~ 1st position

3 & 4 Treble LF

3, 4 Perform 1, 2 contrariwise

5, 6 'Flatter and Treble' RF, LF

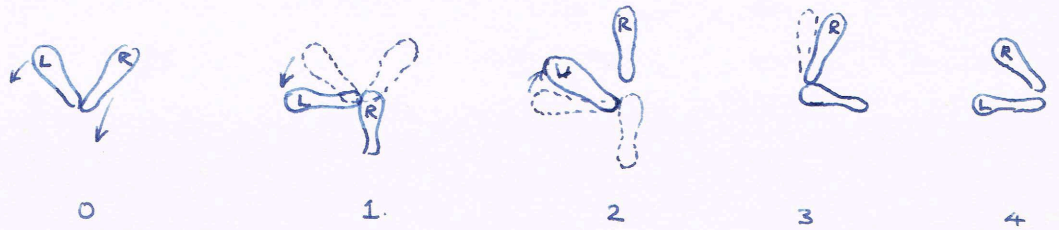
7, 8 Close RF

9-16 Perform 1-8 contrariwise.

Step VII (A hawm crawl movement, done in a circle, moving anticlockwise).

1. 1 Starting in 1st position, swivel the LF on the heel to the left, at the same time sliding the RF (on the ball of the foot) to near 5th position. The knees are bent, and the h toe is well off the ground (Diagram 1).

2 Swivel the LF on the heel back halfway to its original position, and slide the RF (on the ball of the foot) a little way past 1st position to the position shown in Diagram 2.

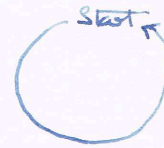


3 Swivel the RF on the heel & slide the LF on the ball of the foot to the positions shown in Diagram 3.

4 Swivel the RF on the heel & slide the LF on the ball of the foot to the positions shown in Diagram 4.

2-4 Repeat 1 three times.

On these four bars, the dancer moves one round anticlockwise in a circle, facing outwards all the time. The positions given in Diagrams 1-4 are only approximate, and have to be fitted to the fact that the dancer completes the circle in the four bars. The important point is to move the RF past 1st position on count 2, to achieve the circling movement.



- 5, 6 'Flatter and treble' RF, LF
- 7, 8 Close RF
- 9-16 Perform 1-4 continuously.

## Step VIII

- 1-6 'Flatter and Treble' with RF and LF alternately, making one complete turn to the left on bars 2-6 (one turn only; not one turn per bar)
- 7, 8 Close RF
- 9-14 Perform 1-6 contrariwise.
15. 1. Hop on LF, and point R toe in 2nd int position, with the toe pointed inwards
- 2 Hop on LF, and place R heel in 2nd int position
- 3 Step back on RF in rear 4th position, and lift LF off the ground.
- 4 Step forward on the LF on the original spot
16. 1 Kick R instep against L heel
- 2 Step back on RF in rear 4th position, and lift LF off the ground
- 3 Step forward on the LF on the original spot.

There is an exaggerated balancing action on 15.3 - 16.3.

[Miss May Shanks, aged 22 or thereabouts, is a very good Highland dancer, the winner of many medals at Games. She knows the Liverpool Hornpipe, and would be able to give an exhibition of it if required.]