

Mrs Griselda MacFarlane, Moness, Robertson Terrace, Jaffar (3rd visit) (till May)

My previous visits were on April 4th and 5th, 1959.

PO Box 472

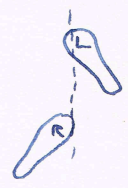
Blantyre

Nyasaland

(1) Dancie Neill received his presentation cup in 1908.

(2) Pas de Basque. I had some difficulty in noting the position on the count '2' on my previous visits, and we persuaded Mrs MacFarlane to show us the step again. She actually danced the following

- 1.1 Spring on to the RF, moving about 9" to the right
- & Place LF in the position shown [a loose crossed position]
- 2 Beat with RF on the spot.



The step finishes with both feet on the ground; there is no extension.

We queried the position on the count '2', and she said that LF should be in 5th position, i.e.



be pointed. She appeared to point her toe in the position already achieved, i.e.

and not



But we could not get her to reject one of these as wrong. And quite definitely she always danced the step in the crossed position.

The difficulty arises from Dancie Neill's method of teaching the pas de Basque to small children. He drew 4 circles on the ground, at the corners of a square, about one foot's length apart.



His first attempt at the step was ' RF in ①, LF in ②

LF in ③, RF in ④'

He then gave them

' RF in ①, LF in ②, beat RF in ①

LF in ③, RF in ④, beat LF in ③

Now this gave the crossed position used by Mrs MacFarlane. But once he had taught them the rhythm ~~by this device~~ by this device, he ticked the step up, and taught them to use 5th position [but which 5th position?].

(3) Spring four. There was exactly the same difficulty here. Mrs MacFarlane did it with the same crossed position as she used in the pas de Basque*, but said that 5th position should be used. I incline to the view that they should be in flat 5th position, as in 4,5.4.59/12

(4) Rondé. I verified the description given in 4,5.4.59/12.

(5) Bow. Start with feet together, hands clasped in front of one's waist. Step with RF to the right, and close LF to RF, at the same time bringing hands down towards one's sides, and bowing from the waist. The whole action is one continuous whole:



(6) Curtsey. Start with feet together. Step with RF to the right, place LF in near 4th behind 5th position, sink on back foot. Hold skirt ~~with~~ between finger & thumb of each hand; thumbs forward when taking hold, but when you have hold, bring the backs of the hands to the front.

* or in semi 4th in front of 5th position.

(7) Seann Truibhas † "Highland Laddie", Blue Bonnets, and Seann Truibhas are all much the same".

Mrs MacFarlane showed us six steps of her father's Seann Truibhas. The order is not guaranteed, except that Steps I and VI are the first and last steps of the dance. Step is clearly misremembered.

In the descriptions which follow, I use 'ronde' with the meaning (and counting) given on p. 12 of the notes for 4,5.4.59. I use also 'spring four' with the meaning given in the same place, save that the counting here is 1. 1, 2, 3, 4.

I also require the following movement, which I call 'heel and toe' for want of any better name. I describe the movement with the LF.

- 1. 1 Spring on to both feet, with the RF in near 5th position.
- 2 Make a small step to the left on the L heel.
- 2 Close RF to near 5th position
- 2 Make a small step to the left on the half-point of the LF
- 3 Close RF to near 5th position
- 2 Make a small step to the left on the L heel
- 4 Close RF to near 5th position.

Step I.

- 1. 1 Spring on to both feet, with LF in 5th position
- 2 Step on LF in 2nd int position (the weight is kept on the RF until the LF is in that position, so that the effect is almost that of 'point L toe in 2nd int position, and then step on it').

† Cf pp. 21, 22 of the notes for 4,5.4.59.

- 2 Close RF to near 5th position
- 3 Spring on to both feet, with RF in 5th position (i.e. simply interchange the positions of the feet. There is very little lateral movement of the feet on this spring).
- 2-3 Repeat bar 1 twice, but make the initial spring on the count '1' in a similar manner to that on count '3'.
- 4 Spring four LF, RF, LF, RF
- 5-8 Perform bars 1-4 contrariwise.

Step II.

- 1-3 Perform 'heel and toe' with LF, RF, LF
- 4 Spring four, RF, LF, RF, LF
- 5-8 Perform bars 1-4 contrariwise.

Step III.

- 1. 1 & 2, 3 & 4. Chassé forward with RF, LF.
- 2 1 & 2, 3 & 4 Rondé RF, LF, moving backwards.
- 3 'Heel and toe' with LF.
- 4 Spring four, RF, LF, RF, LF
- 5-8 Perform bars 1-4 contrariwise.

Step IV.

- 1. 1. Hop on LF and raise RF in ~~an~~ low aerial semi 4th position, with the heel lowered, ready to place the heel on the ground.

- 2 Place the R heel on the ground in semi 4th position
- 2 Beat with LF on the spot
- 2 Place the R toe on the half-point on the ground in semi 4th position
- 3 Beat with LF on the spot
- 2 Place the R heel on the ground in semi 4th position
- 4 Beat with LF on the spot.

On this bar, the dancer makes a complete turn to the right, keeping the LF always on the same spot.

2 1 & 2, 3 & 4. Repeat the counts 1. 1 & 2, ~~3~~ twice, facing the front throughout

3, 4 Perform bars 1, 2 contrainse.

5, 6 "Heel and toe" LF, RF

7 Spring four.

[This step must be wrong. It is probably

1, 2 As above

3, 4 As in Step III.]

Step V:

Exactly as in ~~Step 6~~ Step 7 of Blue Bonnets (p. 17 of the Notes for 4, 5. 4. 59) save that the counting 1. 1, 2; 2. 1, 2; is replaced by 1. 1, 2, 3, 4. The step is thus 16 bars long.

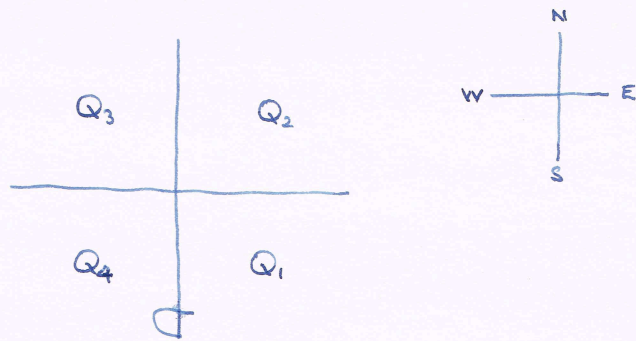
Step VI:

1. 1 2 2, 2 3 2 4. Hop 1 & 2 with RF, LF, moving round to the right in a very tight circle.

- 2 1 & 2 Rondé RF
- 3, 4 Spring two, RF, LF
- 3, 4 Perform bars 1, 2 contrariwise.
- 5-8 Repeat bars 1-4.

(8) Sword Dance. The first step of Mr Neill's Sword Dance was the standard one.

The following step is worth noting.



Begin in Q1, facing the centre.

- 1. 1, 2. } 'Highland Fling step' with LF in Q1, facing the centre throughout. The
- 2. 1, 2. } 'Highland Fling step' here begins with true 2nd position, with the
- weight equally divided between the two feet.
- 3. 1 Spring on to LF in Q4 and point R toe in Q1, facing N.
- 2 Hop on LF in Q4 and bring RF to rear leg position, facing N.
- 4. 1 Hop on LF in Q4 and point R toe in Q3, facing N.
- 2 Hop on LF in Q4 and bring RF to front leg position, still facing N.
- 5. 1, 2. } 'Highland Fling step' with LF in Q2, making 5/8 of a turn to finish
- 6. 1, 2. } facing the centre (As before, use true 2nd position).
- 7, 8 Spring four in Q2, facing the centre.

Query: is there 1 5/8 turn on 5. 6 or only 5/8 turn? And if the latter, is the whole 5/8 made on count 5.1.?

- (9) Mrs MacFarlane protested about the staccato movements of Bobbie Watson on Television. Highland dancing as she knew it from her father was much more smooth and graceful.
- (10) She does not remember an Elizabeth Dunbar among her father's pupils.

Monroes

Robertson Esq

Fitzpat 24/9/59

Dear Mr Flett,

What a pity you
left Fitzpat on Thursday evening
as the Angus County Ball
took place the next evening.
This could have taken you
down to the hall and introduced
you to Sir Torquill Monro, who
was a member of the committee
also the Earl of Airth's convenor.
You will notice the committee
were all pupils of my father.
I have marked out some
familiar names of those
who attended. As the dance
is not advertised you just know
it is to take place when you
see workmen going out and in.

Answered. 16. 10. 59.

They have to pitch up an
extra tent outside as the room
inside is not big enough.

I hope you had a nice time
in Edinburgh. Neil is off to Aberdeen
to attend a meeting of The Round
Table. Perhaps you'll be up this
way again in the future. I'll
be returning about the end of
May. Kind Regards to you
and your wife

Yours sincerely,
Giselda Macfarlane.