



The THISTLE

A MAGAZINE OF SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING AND ALLIED SUBJECTS.

Issued by the West Point Grey Scottish Country Dance Club of B.C.

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EDITORIAL

In the last few days, here on the B.C. Coast, there has been a definite hint of spring in the air, and this has inevitably turned the thoughts of all keen dancers to the Camp which will be held on the holiday weekend from Friday, May 18th to Monday, May 21st.

This weekend gathering is always a pleasurable event and we look forward to welcoming a large number of fellow-enthusiasts from other groups in B.C. and below the border.

OUR DANCES, No. 4: Lincoln Assembly (by Janet McDonald)

This dance was devised in 1960 by Janet McDonald, then of Christchurch, New Zealand. It is named after Lincoln College, where a summer school of Scottish dancing was held. When we wrote to Janet telling her that to a Canadian the name would inevitably bring visions of an automobile factory, she replied "this is right, if you imagine the turn at the end to be the old-fashioned starting-handle". We do not know what Ford's would think of this comment.

Formation: Four couples in a longwise set.

Music: "Mrs. McLeod of Raasay" or any similar tune.

The figures:

- Bars 1 - 2 The first man, advancing very slightly, sets to the second woman (who of course sets to him in return) and
- 3 - 4 turns her with right hands. She finishes in her own position; he finishes between her and the third woman.
- 5 - 8 The first man does the same with the third man, but using left hands for the turn. At the same time, the first woman does the same with the second man, also using left hands. The first couple are now both on the men's side; the first woman between the second and third men, and the first man between the third and fourth men.
- 9 - 12 The first couple continue, this time with right hands again (the first woman with the third woman, and the first man with the fourth woman)
- 13 - 16 The first woman alone continues the figure with the fourth man (using left hands). The first couple is now at the bottom of the set on the "wrong" sides.
- 17 - 20 Each line of four advances and retires, with nearer hands joined.
- 21 - 24 The first man leads his partner to the top of the set,
- 25 - 26 they cross over, giving (or retaining) right hands,
- 27 - 28 cast off one couple (the second couple moving up to the top place) and
- 29 - 32 lead to the bottom of the set, turning with right hands into the bottom place on their own sides. The third and fourth couples move up one place on the last two bars.

Successive couples repeat the figure ad libitum.

LOCAL NEWS

Engagements: Nina Grudnoff and Hugh Thurston.

MUSICAL NEWS

A Canadian record of Scottish country dancing is now ready. It is by Stan. Hamilton's band from London, Ontario, and contains music for

The Hamilton rant	Leith country dance
Up in the air	General Stuart's reel
The flowers of Edinburgh	The machine without horses
Lochiel's rant	The Montgomeries' rant

SCOTTISH DANCE-GROUPS; ADDITIONS

West Vancouver.
Gleneagles Golf Club. Every Thursday 8 - 10 p.m. Mary Shoolbraid, 3223 West 3rd Ave., Vancouver 8. RE 1-5582.

Washington, D.C. U.S.A. Ben March Elementary School, 36th and Ellicott N.W. Mondays, 8.30. Harry Ways, 5902 Dalecarlia Pl. N.W., Washington 16. Tel. 537-1063.

Sechelt peninsula. No fixed times. Mrs. William Bow, 'Stronloch' R R 1, Gibson's B.C.

Oakville, Ontario. Oakville Scottish Country Dance Group. Mr. Bob Campbell, 105 Gloucester Avenue, Oakville. Victor 5-0364.

Mr. Campbell has sent us a very comprehensive list of groups in Ontario, which we will run in our next issue. This is the kind of thing which we would eventually like to have from everywhere.

If you know of a group which we have not yet included and which would like to be included, or one whose details are incorrect or incomplete, please let us know.

CORRESPONDENCE

From a letter from Bob Campbell, Oakville.

The historical account of the "Duke" in No. 1 was certainly interesting, although I disagree with some of the writer's points. As you might guess, the arm-hold is one of the points. There are so many arm holds used in the Duke that I am very careful about entering the dance now. The arm link is, alas, far from dead around here. The "County rollers" as we call them use this hold all the time. They are mostly to be found among the military groups. Then there is another school of thought on the subject. This is the group of dancers which uses a birling turn with arms held somewhat as in the reel of Tulloch. This last way of turning was introduced into this area by former pupils of a teacher in London, and has done nothing but spread confusion on the dance-floor. In the final analysis it has been my invariable experience that when these various arm-holds are used in preference to the hand-hold the dance degenerates into a brawl by the end of bar 16. I think the tempo is a contributing factor. It is usually 60 steps per minute or faster. My recordings are Blair 60, Shand 60 and Seton 61. This is not too fast for dancing but it is too fast for the arm-hold in my opinion. The velocity of the dancers is too great, technique goes to pot and one has only a brawl. For some peculiar reason these arm-hold dancers seem to have the feeling that the greater the velocity, the better the spirit of the dance. Another peculiar trait of theirs is that they have little or no use for strathspeys. Strange, isn't it.

(This is from a personal letter to one of the Editorial Board - not a "letter to the Editor" written for publication. We asked Mr. Campbell for permission to publish it because we thought that it was interesting and because it displays a view-point diverse from our own. In any case, we must get our correspondence column started somehow).

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"What is the step "Balance, as in McLaine's hogmanay" mentioned in your description of 'Drambuie'?"

This is an eastern step: McLaine's H. was collected in Nova Scotia; and the step also occurs in The Earl of Errol's reel (when correctly danced), which was collected in Quebec. It is very like the "forward and back" balance of Nova Scotian and New England square-dancing. It can be described to Scottish country dancers as follows.

Imagine a pas-de-basque (right foot and left) but danced by leaping a foot or so (not more) forward on the first beat of the first bar and then back to place on the first beat of the second bar, instead of being danced on the spot. Remove the extension of the free foot on the last beat of each bar (the so-called jete): as a matter of fact, the forward and back movement will make it more natural to dance the step without this extension, in any case. On beat 2 of bar 1 bring the left foot to 3rd position rear instead of 3rd position: this again is natural because of the leap forward. (On beat 2 of bar 2 the right foot goes into normal 3rd position as usual). We now have the balance step.

Any highland dancer who wants a description in terms of the Official Board's foot-positions should write to the editors.

What records can be used for 'Drambuie'.?

Any lively record with five-times-thirtytwo bars of music. We use Andrew Rankine's 'Ellwyn's fairy glen'. Murray Shoolbraid's music has not yet been recorded.

NORTHERN JUNKET

The square-dance magazine that is different. \$2.50 for 12 issues, from Ralph Page, 182 Pearl St., Keene, N.H., U.S.A.

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From the Editorial Committee. Prices include postage.

The annual subscription to "The Thistle" is \$1.25 (six issues).

The dancers birl and go around,
Their steps are light upon the ground,
That merry music's magic sound
 Has set them all a-prancing, oh!
Their faces smiling or intense,
They all the clever rhythm sense,
For surely there is no defence
 Against the country-dancing, oh!
 With flinging, and springing,
 At reel and jig they go;
 To suit it, they foot it,
 And deftly point the toe.

And when the "Petronella"s up,
Or "Duke of Perth" before we sup,
He would be quite a haughty pup
 Askance to be a-glancing, oh!
"The Glasgow Highlanders" strathspey,
Or "Monymusk", or any, say,
Oh yes, 't would be a doleful day
 Without the country-dancing, oh!
 For pleasing, and seizing
 The heart of every man,
 Nought fairer, or rarer;
 Deny it if you can!

Murray Shoolbraid.

THE SASH

One point on Scottish dress about which there has been much controversy is the question of how a lady in evening dress should wear the sash. Probably the main reason why there has been so much argument on the subject has been because many an opinion (sometimes a very definite one), has been given without being backed by any authority.

It is therefore good to see an article on the subject in "The Armorial", a magazine dealing with heraldry and related subjects (the tartan and its use is, of course, a good example of popular heraldry or, to use the current jargon, folk-heraldry) that is published in Scotland.* The article is unsigned and so is backed by editorial authority (the editor being Ltd. Col. Robert Gayre of Gayre and Nigg, K.C.M.M.) and acknowledges the assistance of the Lord Lyon King of Arms. No one could want better authority than this.

The main point is that the sash is worn over the RIGHT shoulder (that is the opposite shoulder from that on which a man wears his plaid - as common sense would dictate), except for wives of chiefs, chieftains and commanding officers of Scottish regiments, and for female chiefs and chieftains. Canadian regiments are, when in highland dress, under exactly the same rules as Scottish.

The way in which the sash is disposed is the familiar one: the middle of the sash is passed under one arm at waist level, the two ends are brought up over the opposite shoulder, and allowed to hang free, one in front and the other behind; the sash is secured by a brooch on the shoulder.

All this applies to ladies in their own clan. If a lady has married into another clan or into no clan at all, she wears the sash as follows: the centre is passed over one shoulder and the ends tied with a large bow at the opposite hip. (We note that this is the style worn by the young ladies who show visitors over Blair Castle.)

In both these styles, the sash passes across the chest, therefore ladies entitled to wear decorations of orders of chivalry cannot use them. Instead, they wear it as follows: one end is fastened from hip to hip across the small of the back (by buttons or a belt), and the middle of the sash is fastened on one shoulder (the same rule applying as for the first way of wearing the sash), the free end hanging down behind. (We note that this is the style introduced into Scottish country dancing circles by the Edinburgh branch of the R.S.C.D.S. It is a pretty style, and we note with regret that, strictly speaking, ladies need an order of chivalry to justify their use of it.)

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