

What a great class again, and so good to welcome the "Bristol Four" who had come on a special day-trip! With me dancing we were 24, which of course is a perfect number, but gave us the first time challenge of dancing 3 sets in the Oakham hall - which we managed perfectly well after moving a few chairs.

Before we started I played Kenny Jamieson (of Schiehallion folk band) with Gordon Menzies song 1320, as it was the 705th anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath. We didn't have anything more on that but for anyone interested, it was part of my theme for The Sunday Class Dance on RadioGH, which was first broadcast on 4pm on Sunday. The archive is on my website <https://thesundayclass.org.uk/radiogh%20dances.htm> so if you don't hear it "live" this week then you can go there for the past 6 months worth!

I had a theme for the class this Sunday though I didn't announce it, just that there was one. However I can tell you all now that it was "Axes", or more specifically changing axes or dancing a figure on a different axis from normal.

I needed an 8x32 bar dance to begin with to warm everyone up, and chose **The Dancing Bells** which was barely on-theme, but did have Advance & Retire both up/down and across. The dance was devised by Ann Campbell of St. Andrew's of Brampton (Toronto) and the recording for this dance is by Bobby Brown & the Scottish Accent.

So the first dance within the theme was **Mrs Stuart Linnell** (R8x40), written by John Bayly after his daughter, Gillian's wedding in 1975. The dance was published in the Imperial Book 3, subtitled "The Jack McConachie Memorial Sword Competition Dances" 1971-77. The winner each year held the Memorial Trophy, a magnificent Dress Sword presented in memory of one of the founding members of the ISTD, Jack McConachie. This dance is a big favourite with many who were there on Sunday and that ensured that our newer members were helped in their set where necessary.

The Globe Inn (J8x32) by Jackie Johnstone has 12 bars of Dance to Points (like Corners but up/down & across) & Set which was quite challenging to begin with as some were not too conversant with the original movement, so turning it through 45 degrees didn't help! However, the repetitive nature of the formation meant that we all got it in the end.

Our next dance was probably the Challenge of the afternoon. **Boxing the Compass** is a 4 couple medley by Malcolm Brown devised for demonstrations. At the end of each iteration the whole set has moved through 90 degrees, as well as couples progressed within the set. And it is twice in strathspey time and then twice in reel time! We danced it 4 times in strathspey to begin with and one set struggled as they had a lack of recognisable men, but once they donned bands, we all did it to the "correct" recording.

Before tea we then had two 5-couple square sets for **Anniversary Tensome** (R5x32) by Barry Priddey - another of my favourite dances.

Trip to Paradise (S8x32) is by Ron Wallace of California, and the central formation is a Corner Targe. this reminds me of those memory games which you play with children where you have to remember which card is the one with the correct picture to match with the one you've just turned over. :-). In the dance, after the first 8 bars 1s are poised, as if to dance with 1st corners, but they simply remember that face, and 1s turn LH 3/4 while the corners all dance on one place. Now 1s should be looking at 1st corner person in a 2nd/4th corner position, and they can turn them all the way round RH. This is repeated, and then 1s find themselves facing their 2nd corner person - goodness knows which position they are in, and anyway they are about to move on while 1s turn LH ... It does work and the last 8 bars are an interesting variation on a circle where 1s need to cross over to finish. If you like your 8x strathspeys to have some "meat" to them then give this a try - all 3 couples are dancing for most of the time.

To move at a different pace - and it certainly was - the next dance was the 4-couple longwise set jig, **Georgie's Jig**, by Lewis Derrick and published by the St. Andrews Branch. For much of this dance you aren't dancing in a conventional position with regard to your partner, so you do have to think for yourself, and in the second RH across the rule is: If you were in, then get out and if you haven't been in yet, then now it's your turn! A dance which rarely appears on any programme but great fun if you can master it. :-)

And our final dance was the ultimate "on a different axis" dance - **Forty and Counting** (R8x40) by Malcom Brown, with the chaperoned chain progression with the corners. It's definitely easier to dance as 1st couple and corners really need to be concentrating hard for the two 8-bar phrases when they are moving. However, a very satisfying dance, especially to finish the class with, and I am so pleased that it was adopted by the RSCDS because otherwise it would have sunk without trace. As it is, some classes view it as a challenge to aim for - and hopefully, gradually it will creep onto programmes outwith Yorkshire and we can all get that great sense of achievement when we successfully get to the end.

A reminder of the future dates - all 4.30 - 7.30 at Oakham Parish Church Hall: **May 11th, June 8th, July 13th, August 17th, September 7th, October 5th.** For **November 9th** and **December 14th** we may change the time to 4.00 - 7.00.

For those of you who teach local classes, please let people within your class know about The Sunday Class if you feel that it could be suitable for them. You will know your own members well, and years of "experience" is not necessarily the measure needed.

Thanks for reading to the end of this and I look forward to hearing from or seeing you in the next few weeks.