

I really must get this sent out before I forget even more of what we did at the last class on May 10th! This was the week before the Duns & District Branch Weekend to which three of us were going, so I concentrated on dances which were on those programmes which were unfamiliar to us - most just hadn't been on programmes in our area for many years.

We began with **City Lights** which is actually a quite new dance (Book 52), with an allemande right in. The dance is an 8x32 jig by Nicola Scott of Birmingham. The central movement is "Corners Pass & Allemande Right" so 1st couple have it easy, just passing corners RSh whilst the corners advance, the lady turns under the man's arm, she dances out, he retires. The second 4 bars of the phrase 1s turn left hand (slightly counter-intuitive but does stop you getting dizzy) whilst the corners chase on 2 places. Good music of course from Jim Lindsay & his Band.

Our first reel was **Fife Ness** by Mary Shoolbraid Brandon which dates back to 1972, and was an RSCDS Leaflet dance in 1978. I danced it around that time but not since, I don't think, and certainly not in the East Midlands. An interesting dance, definitely with 3 active couples. Difficult these days to get promenade reels of 3 to look good and finish in place but we certainly managed to get the geography sorted, well enough to attempt it on the Ball night!

Strathspey time, and this was **Our Lady of the Snows** by John Drewry. One of his 4 couple, longwise set, 3s & 4s cross to opposite sides on 2nd chord, dances. There actually wasn't much to it at all in terms of formations, only RH/LH across and circles, so it danced quite well.

Our next jig was **Crystal Jig** by Margaret Henderson from Imperial Book 4. Dances didn't get into the Imperial Books unless they were unusual. In this dance it is in bars 9-16, where it begins with what looks like it is going to be RH across at the top & bottom (!L with 2s, 1M with 3s) but 1s also join LH so it is static. In that position all set, then all 1/2 turn partner, rejoin into the RH across position with 1s also joined LH, set again & 1/2 turn again. After that it is simply reels of 3 across and mirror reels on the sides.

Another dance enjoying a revival is the reel **Dancing Forth**, devised in 1999 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Edinburgh Branch, it was recently adopted by the RSCDS for Book 54. 1st couple set & pivot turn about to face 1st corners who they then set to & turn, dance reels of 3 across and then repeat the whole thing with 2nd corners. Not difficult and fine as long as you can twirl in reel time (but if not then easy to miss that move out!).

Another RSCDS dance from a while ago is **Summer Wooing** by Alan Macpherson, published in Book 38. This has an interesting method for getting 1s & 2s into the right order & on the right sides for the poussette at the end, and, I must say, was not elegant, even on the night in Duns where there were plenty of experienced dancers. Some could do it, and did it well, but for many (including me!) I'm sure there would have been a better way. :-) And the practice reminded me that I need to teach a quick-time poussette to my classes. Once, one of the 2 standard formations that all Day Schools seem to concentrate on (poussette & allemande), nowadays with so many newer, more popular, formations, and the demise of Day Schools, the poussette in quick-time has been overlooked.

The Festival Man (J8x32) was devised by Sheila Trafford for John Cass (of Newcastle Festival fame) and published in RSCDS Book 48. This is another dance which enjoyed some popularity when it first came out but has fallen out of favour again, certainly in the East Midlands but we liked it so it could be time for a revival ...

Staying in jig time, this month's challenge was **Aird of Coigach** by John Bayly. The secret in this dance is to be very singular - you don't see your partner except on bars 1 and 48 - and for 1st couple only to use their left hand, for everyone else it is right hand. After that everything is fine! And it was at class - we concentrated and got it right. On the dance floor in Duns I had one man in my set who said he knew the rule, but then promptly did the opposite when he was 1st Man. We had an encore, he assured us all he'd get it right this time, but he took that too literally as, once again he used his right hand rather than left! At least the other 3 repetitions we managed successfully.

Another 4-couple set strathspey a la John Drewry, though this was **James Senior of St Andrews** by Jenny Bradley. Another nice dance, this one from Book 42, which has fallen back in popularity but could be revived.

And we finished with **Da Rain Dancin'** - can't remember what the weather was doing then but there's maybe a bit more of a call for rain now - a bit of light relief. This is another dance, devised by Ron Wallace (California) in 1991, which came to wider attention when it was chosen for 30 Popular Dances, Vol 2. This dance contains an interrupted Hello-Goodbye setting and finishes with a circle.

Next month, June, I have had to move the class because I am required in Essex for my youngest grandson's 3rd birthday so the class is now on June 14th. The July class is also on the 2nd Sunday (12th) and there is no class in August.

For those of us in England, most classes are coming to an end, and so our dancing, where we can get it, is mostly social - and that's what I am looking forward to for 3 months, though most of my dancing will be in Scotland where there is so much more live music and a wide range of bands, compared to our daily fare "down south" in Sassenach land.

Hope to see you somewhere on a dance floor - June 14th & July 12th in Oakham, or elsewhere around the country this summer.

Regards,
Amanda