



the Harrisburg Scottish Country Dance Society

Summer/Autumn 2009

DANCIN' IN THE STREETS?

In the Middle Ages and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries each village and city had its *Tanzplatze*, dancing courts or plots, according to Bohme. Even at a formal ball in the city one finds dancing in the open; as in *Lizie Lindsay*.

*Now there was a ball In the city,
A ball o great mirth and great fame;
And fa danced wi Donald that day
But bonny Lizie Lindsay on the green!*

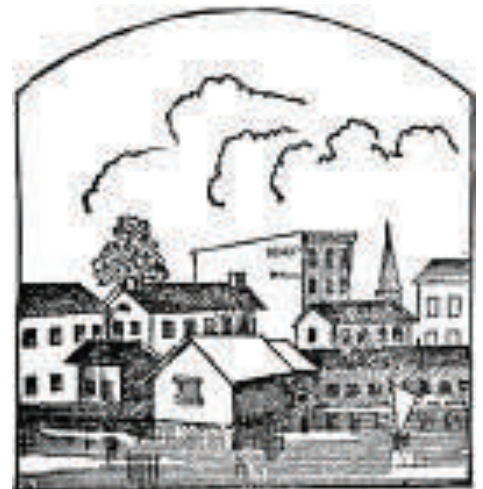
Here, the city, which is Edinburgh, has a green. The dancers are not of the peasant class, for in the story *Lizie Lindsay* is a "lady," and Donald a young "laird." That it is a dance in which ladies and men dance together is shown by Donald's dancing with *Lizie*. In a further text of this ballad dancing is not mentioned, but the "young lairds and ladies went forth to sport and play." In still another version the ball is spoken of as an assembly

*There was a braw ball in Edinburgh,
And mony braw ladies were there,
But nae ane at a' the assembly
Could wi Lizzie Lindsay compare.*

A green in town or city was ordinarily a courtyard, or it may have been a piece of public grassy land. The green of *Lizie Lindsay*, to accommodate a ball of such fame as that of the ballad would have had to be quite large.

All dancing in the ballads did not, however, take place in the open. In the romance, *Thomas Rymer*, where the knights danced by three and three, the dancing is in the elf-queen's castle; in *The Wee Wee Man* the pipers are playing on "ilka stair" and the ladies dancing in "ilka ha." In the *Motherwell* version of *Fair Janet* there is dancing "owre" the floor, but in another version, the dance, a reel, is on the green:

She hadna well gane thro the reel, Nor yet well on the green.
Can it be that the second line, "Nor yet well on the green," implies that the reel was begun within the house and then carried out upon the green? (Con't on page 3)



GHILLIE GAB

Several of us from HSCDS had the pleasure a couple weeks ago of attending a concert at Long's Park in Lancaster, featuring Alasdair Fraser, fiddler, and Natalie Haas, cellist. I could have listened to just the two of them all evening, but a surprise was the addition of Bruce Molsky, fiddler, guitarist and banjo player. He treated us to a performance of old timey fiddle music, the influence of Scottish jigs and reels very evident in the pieces he played. I spoke with Bruce afterwards and he said that he spent an early part of his life talking and playing with the older people of Appalachia – the ones most familiar with the traditional tunes. When Alasdair and Natalie joined him onstage, there was a natural transition to the traditional Celtic music. Alasdair brought original music from Scotland. Bruce added perspective from Appalachia. The traditions even "survived Natalie's training at Julliard", and it all came together as fabulous music.

Afterward, I reflected on the highs and lows of Celtic music. As much fun as it is to listen to the jigs and reels, a true representation of Celtic music would be incomplete without the slow, mournful laments and the quiet, lilting airs. When I first discovered Celtic music (playing it constantly), my then 15-year old son, Cameron, observed and shared, "Mom, why do you listen to this music? It's so sad." Apparently, he reacted more to the laments. Last night I sat enrapt by the tender and quieter pieces, expertly performed by Alasdair and Natalie. And I joyfully clapped and danced as we ended the evening on a high note. Afterwards, I also spoke with Alasdair about the highs and lows – the "ebbs and flows" of Celtic music, as he put it. You can't have one without the other. Laments, happy dance music. Life.

Sue Zuke, Happy Dancer



EVENTS

Saturday, August 22, 2009

Cumberland/Frederick/Harrisburg August Workshop & Dance

2:30 p.m., Walkersville Town Hall, Walkersville, MD

Teacher: Margaret Grandine

Admission: \$5 and a contribution to the pot-luck

Contact: Valerie Hill, vlhill@juno.com

Saturday, August 29, 2009

No.Va. Summer Frolic

8:00 p.m., Trinity Presbyterian Church, Arlington, VA

Music: Terpsichore - Elke Baker, fiddle and Liz Donaldson, piano

Friday-Sunday, September 25-27, 2009

Scottish Weekend

Teachers: Graham Donald, Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, Mel Briscoe

Music Director: David Knight

Saturday, October 17, 2009

Frederick Scottish Country Dancers 15th Annual Dance

8:00 p.m., Walkersville Town Hall, Walkersville, MD

Musicians: Alexander Mitchell, fiddle; Liz Donaldson, piano

Admission: \$15

Contact: Valerie Hill, vlhill@juno.com

Friday-Sunday, November 13-15, 2009

Argyle XXVI

Classes at The Durant Center, Alexandria, VA

Dances at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, Middle School, Lower Gym, Alexandria, VA

Teachers: Ann Dix, Geoffrey Selling

Friday Music: Waverley Station - David Knight, fiddle and Liz Donaldson, piano, with Ralph Gordon, cello and bass

Saturday Music: Terpsichore - Elke Baker, fiddle and Liz Donaldson, piano, with Ralph Gordon, cello and bass

Saturday, December 5, 2009

Alexandria Christmas Walk Dance

2:00 p.m., The Durant Center, Alexandria, VA

Wednesday, January, 20, 2010

No.Va. Burns Night

8:00 p.m., The Durant Center, Alexandria, VA

Music: Mike Dunn, fiddle and Liz Donaldson, piano Admission:

\$5 drop-in fee

Friday-Sunday, April 9-11, 2010

A Capital Weekend

Kensington Town Hall (Armory), Kensington, MD

Music: Laura Risk (fiddle), Nicholas Williams (piano, fiddle), and Dave Wiesler (piano)

Saturday, May 1, 2010

Terrapin Spring Ball

8:30 p.m., Grand Ballroom, Stamp Student Union, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Admission: Free! (donations gladly accepted)

☞For Delaware Valley events check:
www.delval.rscds.us

☞For an extensive list of Scottish Highland festivals with details check the website at <http://www.asgf.org/>

DEMO DATES

September 5, 2009—McLain Celtic Festival—12:30 pm

October 24, 2009—Masonic Village



BEGINNERS

CLASS

UOur annual eight week

Beginners Class will start Monday, September 14. This is a good time for those who want to give Scottish Country Dancing a try as the first lesson is free. The first hour of class is for beginners and

“seasoned” dancers are desired to assist.



DANCIN' IN THE STREETS? (CON'T)

In Motherwell's version of *Prince Robert* the dancing is indoors:

*Bat when he came to Sittigin's Rocks,
To the middle of a' the ha,
There were bells a ringing, and music playing,
And ladies dancing a'.*

The "ha" is a castle or manor-house. The dancing room or place for dancing is in the "middle of a' the ha." Toward the close of the Middle Ages the nobility always danced in the halls of their castles or citadels. Country people made merry in dance and play in open places, on the streets, and on the heath. Here the nobility is dancing in the "ha," or castle, and it is to be noted that the accompaniment is instrumental. *Tam Lin* gives another dance in the open:

*There war four-an-twentle fair ladies
A' dancin in a chess
An some war blue and some war green,
But Janet was like the gress.*

The suggestion as to the meaning of "chess" forbids a very natural supposition that "dancin in a chess," is a peculiar dance formation, such as dancing in a ring or in a row. But this pleasing notion is quite upset if "chess" be defined as "chace," forest.

On the whole, one may say that according to the ballad, dancing in the open was more common than dancing indoors, irrespective of whether the dancers are of the upper or of the lower classes. The out-of-doors seems more in keeping with the animated and lively dances of our forefathers than do the narrow and rigid confines of a room. It is too much to limit with four walls the movements of so natural a means of expression as dancing, that is, dancing of early times.

A not unimportant point, and one which is suggested by the foregoing consideration of the occasion and the place of dancing, is the time of dancing. Among the pleasures of spring, says Bohme, dancing took first place. In the winter time rooms were emptied for the purpose of dancing, and dances were often held in the barns. Since the dances of the ballad were usually held in the open, on the green or in the wood, one may infer that they were ordinarily danced in the spring or in summer. In *Tam Lin*, where four-and-twenty ladies are dancing in a "chess," Janet's costume is described as green like the "gress."

The ballad has more to say, however, about the time of day than the season of the year. In *Fair Janet*, dinner is "past and done" before dancing begins:

*When dinner it was past and done,
And dancing to begin,
'O we'll take the bride's maidens,
And we'll go fill the ring.'*

There is no evidence here to indicate whether the dinner is the midday meal or the last meal of the day. In the Motherwell text, however, it is "supper" instead of "dinner":

*Supper scarslie was owre,
Nor musick weel fa'n to,
Till ben and cam the bride's brethren,
Saying, Bride, ye'll dance wi me:*

Dancing in this version is indoors and probably by artificial light, unless one thinks of the season as being summer and the natural light of day as still lingering far into the evening.

The afternoon or evening seems to have been the favorite time for dancing. At either of these periods of the day, more than at any other, people were likely to be at leisure. The evening, at least, was the coolest part of the day; and dancing was apparently a favorite pastime with which to conclude a day of sports. The coronation dinner of Richard II was followed by a dance which lasted for the remainder of the day.

How many merrymakers in times past have finished the day as did Robin and his revellers in *Robin Hood and Little John*?

*Then musick and dancing did finish the day;
At length, when the sun waxed low,
Then the whole train the grove did refrain,
And unto their caves they did go.*

*Extracted from MINSTRELSY, MUSIC, AND THE DANCE IN
THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS BY LOWRY
CHARLES WIMBERLY, A. M., 1921*



CLASSES

The Harrisburg Scottish Country Dance Society holds regular dance classes on Mondays at 7:00 P.M. (except for the last Monday of the month and Public Holidays such as Memorial Day, Labor Day).

Classes are held at:

Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church,
5501 Locust Lane,
Harrisburg, PA

All levels of dancing ability are welcome, though it is suggested that dancers be at least 16 years of age. No partner is necessary. Soft-soled shoes such as tennis shoes are required.

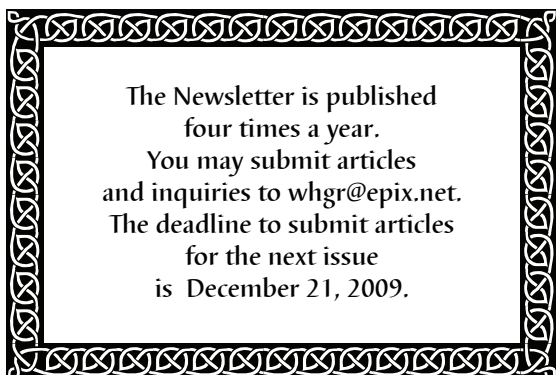
Beginning-level classes are offered in the Fall, but beginners are welcome to join the group at any time of the year.

Contact:

Tine MacKay 717- 285-4946

Sue Zuke 717-569-0668

www.geocities.com/scottishcountrydance




August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 Class	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 No					

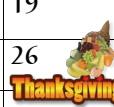
September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 Demo
6	7 No	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Class	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Class	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 No	29	30			



October 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Class	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Class	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Class	20	21	22	23	24 Demo
25	26 No	27	28	29	30	31 

November 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Class	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Class	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Class	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Class	24	25	26 	27	28
29	30 No					

December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Class	8	9	10	11	12 
13	14 Class	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Class	22	23	24	25 	26
27	28 No	29	30 