

THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY
YORK AND NORTH HUMBERSIDE BRANCH

BROUN'S REEL

December 2023

A NEWSLETTER

No. 175

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Joyce Cochrane

IN DEFENSE OF STRATHSPEYS

I would argue that strathspeys are only boring if you let them be.

At one time it was recommended that you should not teach strathspeys to children under the age of 9 as their muscles were not sufficiently developed to do the steps properly.

Teachers used to encourage people to "feel the urge" in the music to help drive them through the first beat in the step. Without this impulse in the traditional strathspey tunes, which is lacking in airs and some of the modern "strathspeys", you get a wishy washy, floaty style of dancing. No wonder some people find strathspeys boring.

Iain Keegan

COURTESY AND ETIQUETTE (part III)

In the last edition of Broun's Reel, two articles by Helen and Malcolm Brown picked up on a theme I had introduced in an earlier editorial, concerning the norms and conventions at a dance. To Helen, these stemmed from, and led to, courtesy and respect towards other dancers. At a couple of dances following that issue of Broun's Reel, it was sad to see that these were often still not observed!

In conversations with others in the last few months, some further points have been raised, which apply equally at classes too. I suppose that "courtesy and respect" are at the heart of these too, though this time courtesy to the MC or to the teacher rather than other dancers.

"Do you need a walk-through?" asks the MC at a dance, and the response is affirmative. "WE don't need a walk-through" say couple number one, feeling rather superior as the other sets walk the dance. At worst, they may even have a quiet chat, not helping the MC or those trying to follow the MC's instructions – compounded when someone moves out of place to join in the conversation.

“We know the next bit” think the dancing couple in another set, zipping through the figures and going onto the next 8 bars as well. The poor MC has no hope of working out who has done what, or failed to do it, or where anyone in the room is in the dance. Neither does the inexperienced couple in third place who were confused by hearing the MC’s instructions, 4th woman’s instructions and watching 1st couple clearly doing something that was neither. “Well, we knew what we were doing” is unhelpful to say the least!

In class situations, this is paralleled by the helpful dancer who keeps giving instructions to a less experienced partner. Hand signals, head nods (and even the odd word – “Up” or “left”) is OK) are helpful, as are holding on for a split second or letting go a fraction early. But to give all the instructions while an MC is recapping or a teacher coaching through the dance seems disrespectful, even given the best of intentions. Whose instructions should the poor dancer follow? Is it even implied that there is no need to listen to the teacher or MC? Certainly unintended, but possibly the effect.

One year the annual workshop and dance at Bedale covered some more abstruse John Drewry dances. I had completely failed to grasp the middle section of one dance, but found myself making up a set for it in the evening. I’m somewhere in the middle, lost, and four people, one at each corner, all yell something at me. After the dance, 4th woman asked, “But why did you come to me instead of going round first corner?” “Because you yelled the loudest,” I replied. Multiple well-intentioned instructions had all failed!

So PLEASE, for the sake of the poor MC:

- don’t get ahead of the instructions in the recap
- don’t talk while the MC or the teacher is talking
- ask the MC or the teacher instead of your partner if in doubt
- remember you can help your partner without words!

Joyce Cochrane

BRANCH DANCE, DUNNINGTON, SATURDAY 13th JANUARY

This is our first January dance since before the pandemic began, and will take place at Dunnington Reading Rooms on Saturday 13th January. The dance will run from 2.00 – 5.00 pm, with a break for light refreshments. Tickets cost £8: remember you can also pay by bank transfer in advance or at the door with your phone. The programme, danced to recorded music, has been drawn up by Helen Brown, with suggestions from Ruth Potter, and is as follows:

A January Welcome	Jig	Lets All Dance Too
Hedwig's Reel	Reel	RSCDS Graded 2
Cashmere Shawl	Strathspey	Boyd (Strathtay Album)
Toast to the Mousies	Reel	RSCDS Book 53
New Year Jig	Jig	RSCDS Bk 51
Something in the Air	Strathspey	RSCDS Book 53
Scott Meikle	Reel	RSCDS Bk 46
Machine Without Horses	Jig	RSCDS Bk 12

Interval

Links with St Petersburg	Jig	RSCDS Bk 46
MacDonald of Keppoch	Medley	RSCDS Bk 49
The Countess of Dunmore's Reel		RSCDS Book 49
Inchmickery	Jig	Goldring 14/2000
Minister on the Loch	Strathspey	RSCDS 4/2008 (Goldring)
Bill Clement MBE	Jig	RSCDS Book 47
Reel of the Royal Scots	Reel	RSCDS Lflt 27.

Extra:

The Montgomeries' Rant	Reel	RSCDS Book 19
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BRANCH DANCE, COTTINGHAM, 24th FEBRUARY

Our branch Afternoon Tea Dance, the last of our afternoon dances for the season, takes place on Saturday February 25th at the Darby and Joan Hall in Finkle Street, Cottingham, beginning at 2.00 pm. As in previous years, the afternoon tea will be provided. Tickets cost £8.

The programme, which has been devised by Helen Russell, will be danced to recorded music and is as follows:

The Coanwood Stuarts	Jig	Goldring/24 G&S
City of Stirling Reel	Reel	RSCDS Book 53
The Falkirk Lass	Strathspey	RSCDS Book 53
The Hazel Tree	Jig	Drewry /Brodie
The Clansman	Reel	RSCDS Bk 32
Cape Town Wedding	Strathspey	RSCDS Bk 39
A Capital Jig	Jig	RSCDS 5/2009
The Montgomeries' Rant	Reel	RSCDS Bk 10
The Happy Meeting	Jig	RSCDS Bk 29
The Whistling Wind	Reel	RSCDS Bk 36
The Duchess Tree	Strathspey	Drewry/Brodie
Chased Lovers	Jig	RSCDS Book 53
Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan	Reel	Goldring 14/2000
The Minister on the Loch	Strathspey	Goldring/RSCDS 4/2000
The Wild Geese	Jig	RSCDS Bk 24
Reel of the Royal Scots	Reel	RSCDS Lflt.
Extras:		
MacDonald of the Isles	Strathspey	Haynes/Carnforth 2
Jennifer's Jig	Jig	Drewry/RSCDS Book 53

The remaining dances in the season's calendar will take place as usual.

BRANCH WEBSITE

Our branch website has reverted to its old name www.rscdsyork and is being run by Malcolm Brown. (The earlier rscdsyork.website will also work for the time being.)

Y&NH BRANCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The branch Facebook and Instagram pages are getting lots of hits and visits; thanks to Angie Francksen for her work on social media for us. Almost all organisations now have a Facebook page. Our pages really do look very professional.

HARROGATE WEEKEND 2024

Friday 2nd – Sunday 4th February, Cairn Hotel, Harrogate

Teacher: Rachel Shankland

Class & Friday night musician: Alan Ross

Saturday night band: Susan MacFadyen

If you do not have a leaflet and application form, these are available on the website (rscdsyork.org) or from Joyce or Jennifer. If you would like more information, please ring or email Joyce.

Joyce: 01482 871790 jcochrane@jcochrane.karoo.co.uk

Jennifer Robinson: e-mail: jar.doha@gmail.com

We are delighted that RSCDS Chairman, William Williamson, and his wife Linda, will join us on the Saturday evening.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- December 9 Y&NH Branch Christmas Dance, Memorial Hall, Pickering – 1.00 p.m. – Ian Slater
- 9 Brighouse SCDC Christmas Dance, Waring Green – Ian Slater

- December 16 Leeds RSCDS Christmas Dance, St. Chad's – George Meikle
 28 Leeds RSCDS Hogmanay Dance, West Park URC – Ian Slater
- 2024**
- January 6 Great Ayton SCDC New Year Dance, Parochial Hall, Great Ayton – Marian Anderson
 13 Y&NH Branch Afternoon Dance, Dunnington – recorded
 20 Leeds RSCDS Branch Dance – Phill Jones
 27 Harrogate Saltire SCDC Burns Ceilidh, Knaresborough – Leonard Brown
- February 2-4 Y&NH Harrogate Dance Weekend, Cairn Hotel, Harrogate – Rachel Shankland, Susan MacFadyen
 2 Richmond RSCDS Monthly Social, Town Hall, Richmond – recorded
- February 24 Y&NH Branch Afternoon Tea Dance, Darby & Joan Hall, Cottingham – recorded – afternoon tea provided
- March 23 Y&NH Branch Annual Dance, Stockton on the Forest – Ewan Galloway – Faith Supper
- April 6 Y&NH Branch AGM & Dance, Market Weighton Comm. Hall – recorded – Faith Supper
- May 11 Y&NH Branch Dance, Memorial Hall, Pickering – Robert Whitehead – Faith Supper
- July 13 White Rose Festival, Gateways School, Harewood – Ewan Galloway

BROUN'S REEL, our newsletter, is published four times a year and can normally be collected at the Branch Dances held in September, December, February and May. Readers wishing to obtain Broun's Reel by post should send 4 (or more) first or second class stamps, together with a note of name and address, to Joyce Cochrane, 22 Newton Drive, Beverley, HU17 8NX. Please don't also collect a further copy from the dances, or we might run short!

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