

The Scottish Country Dance

Its Origins and Development II

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In Part I of this paper (*Scottish Studies* 11: 1) we discussed the early history of the Country Dance, both in Scotland and England, and we showed that the Country Dance, as a dance form, was imported to Scotland from England about the year 1700. We discussed also the sources of our knowledge concerning Country Dances in Scotland, and in particular we considered the five main eighteenth-century Scottish manuscript collections of Country Dances, namely the Holmain, Duke of Perth's (Plates III and IV), Young, Castle Menzies, and Bowman MSS.

We now examine more closely the Country Dances in these five manuscript collections. Our primary aim here is to trace the development of the Country Dance in Scotland, but to do this it is necessary to find, as accurately as the information available allows, the meanings of the technical terms used in the dance instructions, and the phrasing and tempo of the dances.

We consider first the interpretation of the technical terms used in the dance instructions in the manuscripts. To indicate the difficulties involved, we reproduce below the original instructions of five dances, one from each manuscript.

ARGILES BOWLING GREEN (Holmain MS). First sett to your partner, & cast off one pair, sett again, & she turns up & he turns down betwixt the third pair, she betwixt the 2d pair, then leads up joining three hands & meets, then 3 hands round, & reels, then he setts to the 2d woman she to the 1st man & turns them, then he setts to the 1st woman, she to the 2d man, & turn your partner, then 4 hands round with the 1st pair, & cast off, then meet and turn your partner.

ATHOL BRAES (Duke of Perth's MS; Tune in Common time, 32 bars). FIRST Man sett to the 2d Woman and turn. Then first Woman sett to the 2d Man and turn. THEN cross over 2d and 3d Couple. Then lead up to the head, and cast off. THEN sett across & turn. THEN reels. Then sett to your partner and turn.

A KISS FOR A HALFPENNIE (Young MS; Tune in Common time, 16 bars. We have given in brackets the numbers of bars of music required for the various parts of the

dance; in the original MS, these are indicated by the use of coloured ink.) SETT and cast off one pair; lead down in the middle of the 2d Pair and cast up (8). First Man figures round the 2nd Woman and the Woman round the first Man at the same time; meet and sett: the Man figures round the first Woman and the Woman round the 2d Man at the same time, meet and sett as before (8). SETT cross Partners (8). Run the Heys, sett, and turn your Partner (8).

THE MONTGOMRIE'S RANT. A STRATHSPEY REELE (Castle Menzies MS). 1st pair goes back to back and casts off then back to back again and ye woman casts up, and ye Man down, then reels above and below then the 1st pair sets hand in hand to ye 2d Woman then to ye 3d Man then to ye 3d Woman & then to ye 2d Man; then leads out att ye sides.

OVER THE WATER TO CHARLIE. NEW WAY (Bowman MS). Sett and cast off, lead down cast up, hands round with the second pair, and back again & sett cross partners & double Reell.

As for all longways progressive dances, the instructions given above describe one round of the complete sequence of figures, performed by the first couple starting in top place and dancing with the couple or couples immediately below them. The couples are usually numbered successively from the top, but in some descriptions the 2nd and 3rd couples are referred to as the 1st and 2nd pairs (see *e.g.* Argiles Bowling Green and A Kiss for a Halfpennie above). The English collections of this period show that when the set is viewed from the top, the men are on the right and the ladies on the left. A set consisted of 'as many as will'.

Although many of the technical terms used in the instructions in the manuscripts are still in use today, it would be wrong to assume without further investigation that these terms had the same meanings in the eighteenth century as they have at present. For example, the term 'right and left' had at least three distinct meanings between 1700 and 1850 (see Flett 1964). The only Scottish book which might have helped in the interpretation of the terms used in the manuscripts is the work by William Frazer mentioned in Part I, of which no known copy survives. Fortunately, we are able to consult two English books which give considerable help, namely Nicholas Dukes's *A concise and easy method of learning the figuring of country dancing*, London, 1752, and Matthew Welch's *Variety of English Country Dances . . . the figures entirely . . . explained*, London, 1767. Both books give diagrams showing the patterns of the various figures, and in addition Dukes indicates when and where the dancers take hands. However, neither book includes all the terms used in the Scottish manuscripts.

We now consider some of the most common terms appearing in the manuscripts.

Hands round and *Hands across*. These are described by Dukes and Welch, and are the usual present-day figures of these names, *i.e.* in 'hands round' the dancers join hands and

A COLLECTION OF

Songes
Songes
Songes

Written for the use of his grace the Duke of PERTH.

By Sam. Young.

PLATE III. Title page of the first part of the Duke of Perth's MS. (See p. 125; also *Scottish Studies* II:4.)

Argyle's bowling Green.

First Couple set, and cast off. Then, all again, and the first Man cast down
and fall in 'twixt the 3^d Couple; the first Woman cast up and fall in 'twixt the
2^d Couple. Then lead three hands abreast, and then three hands 'twixt of the
two you had abreast. Then role with the one you had three hands round. Then
set aways and turn. Then, all to your Partner, and turn. Then hands round
with the 2^d Couple. Then cast up and cast off.



PLATE IV. A page of dance instructions from the Duke of Perth's MS. (See p. 125; also *Scottish Studies* 22: 4.) The version of Argyle's Bowling Green given here is slightly different from that in the Holmain MS. quoted on p. 125.

dance round in a ring, while in 'hands across' they give right or left hands in the centre and dance round in a 'star' formation. In the manuscripts 'hands round' and 'hands across' are once round in one direction only unless otherwise stated.

Right and Left. Under this name Dukes describes the chain figure of four used in Scottish Country Dancing today, in which the dancers give hands as they pass. Welch gives two figures, neither very clear, in which the dancers do not appear to give hands. In the dance *My Own Kind Dearie* in the Duke of Perth's MS the figure is called 'Right and Left hands' (see p. 129), so that Dukes's figure is the more likely interpretation.

Cast off and *Cast up.* Dukes uses 'cast off' to mean moving down one or two places by dancing down behind the other dancers outside the lines of the set. To 'cast up' means to dance up in a similar manner.

A man in 1st place facing his partner can cast off either by making three-quarters of a turn to his left and then dancing down, or by slipping directly into second place without turning. According to Dukes the first method was 'the manner it used to be done formerly', the second being 'the modern method'. The first method is almost certainly the appropriate one for the dances in the Holmain, Duke of Perth's and Young MSS, but in the dances in the other two manuscripts either method would be appropriate. Similar remarks apply to 'cast up'.

The terms 'cast off' and 'cast up' are still in use today, and in present-day usage the first method is employed.

Figure 8. This term occurs in the four later manuscripts, and in the Duke of Perth's, Young, and Castle Menzies MSS it is clear from the context that in a 'figure 8' one person dances a figure 8 round two others, who stand still. Dukes gives this same figure, but calls it a 'whole figure'. In the Bowman MS the term 'figure 8' appears to have two meanings; one is that explained above, but of the second we know only that it is different from the first.

Cross over two couples. In this figure, which is described by Dukes and Welch, the dancing couple cross over, cast off into second place on opposite sides, cross over again, and cast off into third place on their own sides. Dukes indicates that the dancers do not give hands when they pass each other in crossing over. The figure was comparatively modern at the time of the Scottish manuscripts, for it first occurs in Walsh's *Twenty four Country Dances for 1713* and in the second volume of Playford's *Dancing Master c. 1714*. It is absent from the Holmain MS. The figure appears in present-day dancing, but the term 'cross over two couples' is not used today.

Lead out at the sides and turn your partner in the middle. This occurs in two dances in the Duke of Perth's MS and the Young MS. Dukes gives a figure called 'Lead out sides and turn in the middle' in which the 1st couple lead out between 2nd and 3rd men, cast back into the centre (1st man round 3rd man, 1st lady round 2nd man), give nearer hands and lead out between the 2nd and 3rd ladies, cast back into the centre (1st man round 3rd lady, 1st lady round 2nd lady), and turn each other with both hands. This is a possible interpretation, but a more probable one is a closely similar figure in which an extra turn is inserted when the dancing couple meet in the centre after leading through the men. This latter figure occurs (without any specific name) in Killiecrankie in the Holmain MS and in a number of dances in the Walshs' *Caledonian Country Dances*.

Lead out at the sides (or at both sides). This is not described by Dukes or Welch, but it is probably the same as 'lead out at the sides and turn your partner in the middle', with one or two turns as indicated above. None of the 'lead out at the sides' terms are in use today.

Sett across and turn. This term is used very frequently in the Duke of Perth's and Young MSS, but is not used by Dukes and Welch, nor is it to be found in any English collection, although the very similar term 'sett across corners and turn' occurs in just one dance in Johnson's 200 *Favourite Country Dances*, Book VI, 1751. Johnson's term suggests that the 'sett across and turn' of the manuscripts may be the figure described by Dukes under the name 'set corners and turn hands', which is the figure known today as 'set to and turn corners'. The term 'corners' as used by Dukes has its present-day meaning, *i.e.* when the 1st couple are dancing with the 2nd and 3rd couples, then the 1st man's 'first corner' is the 3rd lady, and his 'second corner' is the 2nd lady, while the 1st lady's 'first corner' is the 2nd man and her 'second corner' is the 3rd man. Thus the two first corners are diagonally across from each other, and similarly for the two second corners. In 'set to and turn corners', the 1st couple set to and turn their first corners, then set to and turn their second corners. Dukes adds the information that the turns are two-handed.

More positive evidence that 'sett across and turn' is the same as 'set to and turn corners' can be found by studying the instructions of those dances which are common to several collections (see Appendix I). As evidence of this nature, we set out below the versions of Lennox Love to Blantyre given in the Holmain and Duke of Perth's MSS, and the versions of My Own Kind Dearie given in the Duke of Perth's MS and in two of John Walsh's collections. In each case one version has 'set to and turn corners' where the other version has 'sett across and turn'. (Here and later, in any version of a dance where the phrasing is given we insert in brackets the number of bars of music required for each part of the dance. Question marks indicate that the phrasing is doubtful.)

LENNOX LOVE TO BLANTYRE (Tune in Common time).

Holmain MS

First Cross hands and go $3/4$ round
and cast down below the first pair
then Cross hands with the third pair

set below them and cast up one
pair,
then right & left,

then sett to the 2d woman, She
to the first man and turn them
then to the 1st woman She to
the 2d man
& then reel the man with the
two women & the woman with
the two men
then Sett to their partner and
turn her.

Duke of Perth's MS

FIRST Couple hands across with the
2d Couple quite round and cast off.
Then right hands across with the 3d
Couple and cast off.

THEN sett and cast up to the 2d
Couple's place.

Then Right and Left with the 2d
Couple.

SETT across and turn.

THEN Reel.

Then sett to your partner and turn.

MY OWN KIND DEARIE (Tune in Common time).

Duke of Perth's MS

FIRST Couple sett and cast off
then lead down thro' the 2d Couple
and cast up.
Then sett cross and turn.

RIGHT hands across with the 2d
Couple,

then left hands across with the
same.

Sett to your Partner and turn her,
and Right and Left hands.

*Walsh's Compleat Country
Dancing-Master, Vol. I. 1731,
and Caledonian Country Dances,
Book I*

The 1st Cu. foots it and cast off (4)
1st Cu. foots it in the 2d Cu. place
and lead through the 3d Cu. (4)
1st Man foots it with the 3d Wo.
and turns her, his partner doing
the same at the same Time with the
2d Man (4?)

The 1st Cu. does the same at the
other corners (4?)

First and 2d Cu. hands across quite
round with their Right Hands and
foot it (4)

then do the same back again with
your Left Hands (4)

First Cu. foots it and turns (4?)

1st and 2d Cu. Right and Left
quite round (4?).

These and similar comparisons establish beyond any doubt that 'sett across and turn' is in general the same as 'set to and turn corners'. We insert the cautionary 'in general' because 'sett across and turn' is sometimes used in the manuscripts to mean 'set to and turn *one* corner'. This is clearly shown in the following comparison of the versions of This is Not My Own House from the Holmain and Duke of Perth's MSS.

THIS IS NOT MY OWN HOUSE (Tune in Common time).

<i>Holmain MS</i>	<i>Duke of Perth's MS</i>
Cross four hands & cast down one pair,	FIRST Couple cross hands with the 2d Couple, and go quite round and cast off.
cross hands again, & turn down another pair,	Then cross hands with the 3d Couple, and go round to the 2d Couple's place, and cast off.
then sett & lead up to the head, then cast down	LEAD up to the head and cast off.
then sett, & turn your partner,	Sett to your partner and turn her half round improper.
then go round the 2d woman, she round the 1st man, then back to back, & go round the 1st woman she round the second man, then turn her,	THEN back to back, the first Man cast round the 3d Woman, the first Woman cast round the 2d Man till you come where you was. Back to back again, first Man cast round the 2d Woman, the first Woman go round the 3d Man.
then sett to the 2d woman, she to the 1st man, & turn,	SETT across and turn.
then sett to the 1st woman, she to the 2d man, & turn your partner.	Then sett across again and turn your partner.

Sett cross partners. This term is used very frequently in the Young and Bowman MSS, and occurs also, though less frequently, in the Duke of Perth's MS. As far as we know, the only occurrences of the term in English collections of this date are in eight dances in Books III and IV of the Walshs' *Caledonian Country Dances*. One of these eight dances, Ragged Sailor, is also in the Young MS, and two others, The Mouldywort and Welch Fuzileer, are also in the Bowman MS. The 'set cross' of the Castle Menzies MS is presumably the same term.

Again we can find the meaning of the term by comparing different descriptions of various dances, and such comparisons show that 'sett cross partners' is merely another term for 'set to and turn corners', so that it means the same as 'sett across and turn'. There is very clear evidence for this in the two descriptions of The Ragged Sailor and

the three descriptions of The Old Wife Beyond The Fire and of Confederacy which follow.

THE RAGGED SAILOR

<i>Young MS</i>	<i>Caledonian Country Dances, Book III</i>
SETT the first Man to 2d Woman and turn her; the 1st Woman the same to 2d Man (8). Cross over and figure in, lead down 1 pair and cast up (8). SETT cross Partners (8) Four hands round and Right and Left (8).	The 1st Man sets to the 2d Wo. and turns her, the 2d Man does the same to the 1st Wo. then the 1st Cu. cross over and make the Figure of 8 with the 2d Cu. then they lead down the 3d Cu. and cast up again then they Set cross Partners always turning the cross Partner after Setting then they lead out at both sides.

(The music for The Ragged Sailor in the Young MS is in 6/8 time, but would now normally be written in 9/8, and the numbers in brackets here give the musical lengths of the figures for the tune set in 9/8 time. In the Caledonian collection, the tune is set in 9/8 time, but no phrasing is given.)

THE OLD WIFE BEYOND THE FIRE (Tune in Common time).

<i>Duke of Perth's MS</i>	<i>Bowman MS</i>	<i>Caledonian Country Dances Book II</i>
FIRST Couple back to back and cast off. Then back to back again and cast off below the 3d Couple. LEAD up to the head and cast down. Lead down thro' the 3d Couple and cast up. SETT across and turn.	Turn your partner & cast off, lead up two pair and cast off, lead down and cast up, sett cross partners	The 1st Cu. turn and cast off (4) Then turn again and cast off again (4) lead up to the top, foot it and cast off (4) Lead thro' the bottom, foot it and cast up (4) Then foot it Corners and turn (4) Foot it the other Corners and turn (4) Lead out on the Wos side (4) Foot it to your Partner, and turn her (4)
Then the Side reels. Sett to your partner and turn.	and Reell	

CONFEDERACY (Tune in Common time).

<i>Duke of Perth's MS</i>	<i>Bowman MS</i>	<i>Caledonian Country Dances, Book II</i>
FIRST Couple Right hands across with the 2d Couple quite Round. Left hands back again quite round.	Right and left hands across	Turn hands cross all four, back again,
THEN cross over 2d and 3d Couple. Then back to back below the 3d Couple and cast up.	Cross over Two pair, turn your partner and cast up	cross over two Cu. Foot it back to back, and cast up one Cu.
SETT across and turn.	sett cross partners	foot it cross and turn, foot it cross and turn your Partner,
The first Man cast round the 2d Man, and first Woman cast round the 3d Woman, and turn other in the Middle. The first Man cast round the 3d Man, the first Woman cast round the 2d Woman, and turn other in the middle.	and Reell turn your partner	foot it and slip round twice.

Other corner figures. Once we have identified the 'cross partners' as the same as 'corners', the interpretation of other terms involving 'cross partners' is easy. For example, 'arm your cross partners, then your own' means turn first corner with the right arm, partner with the left, second corner with the right arm, and partner again with the left. Dukes specifies a hand-hold for the turns, but in the Holmain, Duke of Perth's and Bowman MSS an arm-hold is used, while the Young MS once uses an arm-hold and once a hand-hold.

Hey and Reel. Among the Scottish manuscript collections, 'hey' occurs only in the Duke of Perth's and Young MSS. The figure 'hey' is described by Dukes (and less clearly by Welch), and is the figure known in Scotland to day as a 'reel of three' ('hey' is in fact the English name for this figure, and the term 'reel' is not used in English collections).

The term 'reel' is used in all five Scottish manuscripts, and the two terms 'reel' and 'hey' never occur together in the same dance. From the context, a 'reel' is performed

by three people. So far as we know, there is no eighteenth-century description of a figure 'reel' (the earliest is dated 1811; see Flett 1964:132), but the manuscripts themselves provide strong evidence that the figure 'reel' which occurs in them is the same as the contemporary 'hey', so that it is the same as the figure known today as a 'reel of three'.

It may seem mere pedantry to seek for proof that the 'reel' of the manuscripts is indeed the same as our present-day 'reel of three'. However, we have reason to be cautious here, even apart from the usual danger of presuming on a similarity of names, for in the dances described in the Young MS, where the phrasing is given, the musical length of a 'reel' is only half that of 'sett across and turn' (i.e. 'set to and turn corners'), while with modern phrasing a 'reel of three' has the same musical length as 'set to and turn corners'.

The evidence for identifying the 'reel' and the 'hey' as the same figures is obtained by comparing the different descriptions of the ten dances which occur in both Scottish and English collections and in which the Scottish versions contain the figure 'reel'. In six of these dances, the 'reels' of the Scottish versions are replaced in the English versions by entirely different figures, i.e. by figures which for one reason or another cannot be a possible interpretation of 'reel'. In the other four dances, the English versions have 'hey' where the Scottish versions have 'reel', and we may reasonably deduce that these two figures are the same. We set out below the Scottish and English versions of three of these dances, Ca' Hawkie, Dusty Miller, and Hunt the Squirrel. The fourth is Old Age and Young, whose figures in the Duke of Perth's MS are similar to those of Dusty Miller.

CA' HAWKIE (Tune in Common time).

<i>Young MS</i>	<i>Walsh's Twenty Four Country Dances for the Year 1742, and Caledonian Country Dances, Book IV</i>
FIRST Couple sett and cast off	First Cu. set and cast off (4)
Sett again and cast up (8)	Set again and cast up (4)
First couple Right hands across	First Cu. Right hands across with the
with the 2d Couple quite round	Second Cu. quite round (4)
Then lead down thro' the 3d	Lead down thro' the third Cu. and
Couple and cast up (8)	cast up (4)
SETT across and turn (8)	Set opposite Corners (8)
Reel at the sides	Heys at the sides (4)
Then sett to your Partner and	Right and Left with the third Cu. (4)
turn (8)	

(The title is that of a Northumbrian song, 'Call Hawkie through the water'. In the Young MS the title is given as 'Hakie', and in the two English collections as 'Hawkie').

DUSTY MILLER (Tune in 3/2 time).

Holmain MS

First lead down throw one pair
going round the 2d man, she
the 2d woman turn at the foot,
then lead up the same & cast
down one pair, & turn your
partner,
then go round the 2d woman &
turn your partner,

then round the first & turn your
partner,
then sett to the 2d woman &
turn her,

then to the 1st woman & turn
her,
then reel with the two women,

& sett to your partner, &
turn her.

*Walsh's Compleat Country Dancing-
Master, Vol. I, 1731*

The 1st Cu. lead thro' the 2d Cu. and
on the Outside below the 3d Cu.
and turn (4)
then the 1st Cu. lead thro' the 3d Cu.
and on the Outside of the 2d Cu. to
the Top and turn (4)
the 1st Man turn the 3d Wo. as at the
same time does his partner the 2d
Man, then meet and turn (4)
do the same at the other Corners (4)

The 1st Man Foot it with the 3d Wo.
as at the same time doth his Partner
with the 2d Man, and turn (4)

do the same at the other Corners (4)

then the Man heys on the Wo.'s side,
as at the same time doth his Partner
on the Man's side, 'till they come
into the 2d Cu. Place,
and turn (8)

HUNT THE SQUIRREL (Tune in 6/8 time).

Holmain MS

First crossover & reel
with the women,

& then with the men, &
come to your place,

then lead down the woman going
foremost round the second
woman & come back to her
Place round the first
woman while the man goes
round the first man to his
place;

Then lead down the man going
round the 2d man, & return
to his place round the first
man, while the woman goes to
hers round the first woman.

Then change places, Crossing the first
man to the 2d woman's
place, the 2d man to the first
woman's place,

then clap hands round till you
come to your place,
then right & left, then lead
down throw the 2d pair &
come up again, & turn round your
partner.

*Walsh's Compleat Country Dancing-
Master, Vol. I, 1731*

First Man hey on the We. Side, and
the 1st Wo. on the Men's Side at
the same Time (8)

Then 1st Man hey on the Men's Side, and
the Wo. on the We. Side, 'till they
come into their own Places (8)

First Cu. cross over and turn (8)

Second Cu. do the same (8)

First Man go the Figure of 8 on the
Men's Side, his Partner follows him
at the same Time, then she slips into
her own Place (8)

First Wo. cast off on the Outside of
the 3d Wo. and half Figure with ye
3d and 2d We. her Partner follows
her at the same Time, then the Man
slips into his own Place (8)

First Cu. being at the Top, the first
Man change over with the 2d Wo. and
the 1st Wo. with the 2d Man,

then all four Hands half round, 1st
Cu. being at Top, cast off (8)
Right and left quite round, and turn
your Partner (8)

(The instructions for this dance given in Playford's *Dancing Master*, 14th edition, 1709, are almost identical with those in Walsh's collection.)

The identification of the meanings of the various terms used in the Scottish manuscripts enables us to settle the question of whether the dances in these manuscripts possess any characteristic features not present in contemporary English dances. The answer to this question is that the only noticeable difference between the English and Scottish dances of this period lies in the frequency with which the figure 'set to and turn

corners' and the sequence 'set to and turn corners and reels of three (or heys) with corners' occur. And here the difference is indeed remarkable.

In Table I below we list the number of such occurrences in the Scottish manuscripts. Column T gives the total number of dances in the manuscripts, column S the number of dances containing 'set to and turn corners', and column R the number containing 'set to and turn corners and reels of three (or heys) with corners'.

TABLE I

<i>Collection</i>	T	S	R
Holmain MS (c. 1710-1730)	12	5	2
Duke of Perth's MS (1737)	48	27	15
Young MS (1740)	48	32	9
Castle Menzies MS (1749)	18	2	2
Bowman MS (c. 1745-1770)	122	99	77
Totals, allowing for repeated dances	241	159(66%)	102(42%)

In contrast, out of over 2,000 dances published in England between 1651 and 1750, we have found only 72 (less than 4 per cent) containing the figure 'set to and turn corners'. Further, this figure first appears in English collections in three dances which are in both John Walsh's *Compleat Country Dancing-Master*, Vol. I, 1731, and his *Caledonian Country Dances*, Book I, 1733, and in a further five dances in the latter collection. Of these eight dances, two are in the Scottish manuscripts, and all have Scottish tunes. Thus this figure first occurs in England in dances which are connected in some way with Scotland. When we add to this the remarkable difference in the frequency with which 'set to and turn corners' occurs in the Scottish and English dances, it is not too much to conclude that this figure is a Scottish contribution to the Country Dance.

The difference in the frequency with which the sequence 'set to and turn corners and reels of three (or heys) with corners' occurs in the Scottish and English collections is even more striking, for we have found this sequence in only nine of the dances published in England before 1750. Moreover, three of these nine dances are in the Scottish manuscripts, and all but one have Scottish tunes. Here there can be no doubt that we have a Scottish contribution to the Country Dance, and indeed the steadily increasing use in Scotland of this sequence, as shown in the Holmain, Duke of Perth's and Bowman MSS, amounts to the development of a distinctively Scottish type of Country Dance.

From the preceding study of the figures of the dances in the Scottish manuscripts we can draw also some conclusions concerning the Reel as a dance on its own. Prior to 1776, the only specific form of Reel mentioned in the literature is a Threesome Reel, 'where three dance together'. The earliest description of a Reel is dated 1811, at which time the Threesome Reel consisted of 8-bar periods of setting alternated with reels of three. The fact that the Scottish manuscripts use the term 'reel' to mean the figure 'reel of three' clearly indicates that this figure was used in the Threesome Reel from

c. 1710 onwards, and thus brings forward by 100 years our earliest detailed information about the form of the Threesome Reel.

We note too the close similarity between the setting and reeling of the Threesome Reel of 1811 and the Country Dance sequence 'set to and turn corners and reels of three with corners'. Indeed, the Country Dance sequence consists effectively of one round of the Threesome Reel performed simultaneously by two trios on the two sides of the dance, the 8-bar period of setting being broken up by the insertion of turns. This similarity, together with the popularity of the Country Dance sequence in Scottish Country Dances, suggests, firstly, that the Threesome Reel of c. 1710, like that of 1811, consisted simply of alternate setting and reeling, and, secondly, that the Country Dance sequence was derived from this early Threesome Reel.

We consider next the phrasing of the eighteenth-century Scottish Country Dances, *i.e.* the fitting of the figures to the music. This is most easily discussed in terms of the musical lengths of the various basic figures.

We have already mentioned that the Young MS gives precise instructions concerning the phrasing of the dances. The other four Scottish manuscripts give no explicit information on this subject, and unfortunately the Young MS does not provide a reliable guide here, since a number of changes took place in the phrasing of Country Dances during the eighteenth century. To study these changes, it is helpful to look at the contemporary English collection, since these give more complete information on this subject than do the Scottish manuscripts.

In the Walshs' collections of Country Dances and in later English collections, the phrasing is specified by symbols which indicate the figures to be performed to each part of the tune. For example, the Walshs sometimes used a horizontal line with dots above and below it. Where a dance was set to a tune of two parts, each part being repeated, a line with a single dot above it marked the end of a set of instructions to be performed to the first part of the tune played once through. The end of the instructions to be performed to the repeat of the first part was marked with a line with two dots above it, and similarly a line with two dots above and one or two dots below marked the ends of the sets of instructions to be performed to the two repeats of the second part.

The system of phrasing used in the Walshs' *Compleat Country Dancing-Master*, Vol. I, 1731 and *Caledonian Country Dances*, Books I-IV, is as follows. The musical lengths of the basic figures depend on the type of tune to which the dance is set, and in this respect the tunes fall into two classes. One class consists of all Common time tunes that have the character of a reel or strathspey, together with all tunes in 9/8 or 3/2 time, and for tunes of this class the musical lengths of various basic figures are as given in Table II below. The second class consists of all Common time tunes that have the character of a hornpipe or Scotch measure, together with all tunes in 2/4 or 6/8 time, and for tunes of this second class the musical lengths of the various basic figures are double the lengths given in Table II. In the sequel we refer to this system of phrasing as System A.

TABLE II

Musical lengths of figures in the Walsh's Collections, for tunes in 9/8, 3/2, or C (reel) time

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Bars of Music</i>
Set, turn, cast off, cast up, each	2
Three, four, or six hands round (one way round only).	4
Four hands across (one way round only).	4
Lead down the middle between one (or two) couple and cast up one.	4
Lead up the middle between one (or two) couple and cast off one.	4
Lead down the middle between one couple, lead up again and cast off one.	4
Right and left.	4
Cross over two couples.	4
Figures 8.	4
Reel of three (hey).	4
Lead out at both sides (and turn in the middle).	8
Turn corners and partner.	8
Set to and turn corners.	8

The list in Table II is not exhaustive, and minor variations were permissible. For example, '1st and 2nd couples right hands across and then 1st couple cast off while 2nd couple lead up to 1st place' was performed in 4 bars, although 'right hands across' and 'cast off' by themselves required 4 and 2 bars respectively.

During the period from about 1740 to 1770 two changes took place in this system of phrasing. Firstly, the musical length of any given figure in bars became independent of the type of tune to which the dance was set, and, secondly, the musical lengths of a 'reel of three (hey)' and a 'figure 8' became the same as that of 'set to and turn corners'. Thus with this later system of phrasing, which we call System B, the lengths of the basic figures *for tunes of all types* were as given in Table II, except that a 'reel of three' and a 'figure 8' each now occupied 8 bars.

It should be noted that although in this transitional period the musical lengths of a 'reel of three' and a 'figure 8' became the same as that of 'set to and turn corners', the musical length of 'cross over two couples' remained at half that of 'set to and turn corners' (see, *e.g.* Welch, *op. cit.*). The length of 'right and left' also seems to have remained unchanged, but there is some doubt here because of possible alternative meanings of this term.

Between about 1770 and 1800 there was a further change, in which 'cross over two couples' and 'right and left' increased in length to 8 bars each, so that they became of the same length as 'set to and turn corners'. With this final change the phrasing took the form which has remained in use up to the present day.

In the light of this information from the English collections, it is not difficult to elucidate the phrasing of the dances in the Scottish manuscripts. In the Young MS

those dances which are set to tunes of our first class (*i.e.* Common time reels and tunes in 9/8 or 3/2 time) are phrased in accordance with Table II. However, for dances set to tunes of our second class the phrasing given in the Young MS is not consistent. In one such dance the musical lengths of the figures are double those given in Table II, while in other dances the lengths of the figures are equal to those in Table II. Thus the Young MS belongs to the transitional period so far as the division of tunes into two classes is concerned. On the other hand, throughout the Young MS the lengths of a 'reel of three' and a 'figure 8' are half that of 'set to and turn corners'.

In the remaining Scottish manuscripts the phrasing is not given, and only the Duke of Perth's MS gives the actual music for the dances. In these cases we cannot say that any given system of phrasing is necessarily the appropriate one for a particular manuscript, but there are certain criteria which enable us to say that some systems are definitely not appropriate. When a Country Dance is correctly phrased, the tune has to be played a whole number of times for the complete sequence of figures of the dance, and, moreover, no figure occurs in such a position in the sequence of figures that parts of it are performed to two different parts of the tune. For example, if a dance is set to a tune consisting of two parts A, B, each of 4 bars, to be played in the sequence AABB, then the length of a complete sequence of figures of the dance is a multiple of 16 bars, and an 8-bar figure can occur only in bars 1-8, 9-16, 17-24, etc. And clearly any system of phrasing which conflicts with this is not the appropriate one for that dance. Further, such criteria can still be applied even if the music is not given explicitly, for almost all Country Dance tunes of this period consisted of two or more parts of 4 or 8 bars.

Using these criteria, we see easily that for the dances in the Holmain and Duke of Perth's MSS neither System B nor the present-day system of phrasing is appropriate (see *e.g.* the instructions for Athol Braes, Lennox Love to Blantyre, The Old Wife Beyond the Fire, and Dusty Miller given above). On the other hand, using System A we can phrase all but three or four of the dances in these two manuscripts in such a way that the above criteria are satisfied. Since several of the dances in these two manuscripts occur in the Walshs' collections, which use System A, it is almost certain that System A is the appropriate one for these two manuscripts.

The Bowman MS shows clear evidence of belonging to the transitional period, particularly in the length of a 'reel of three'. In the three earlier manuscripts, *i.e.* the Holmain, Duke of Perth's and Young MSS, the most common sequence involving 'reels of three' is the ending 'set to and turn corners (8 bars), reels of three with corners (4 bars), set to and turn partner (4 bars)', the phrasing here being given for Common time reels. By 1800, this ending had evolved to the form which is familiar today in The Duke of Perth, *i.e.* the final 'set to and turn partner' was omitted. This change was necessarily accompanied by the transition from a 4-bar 'reel of three' to an 8-bar 'reel of three', because a 4-bar 'reel of three with corners' at the end of a dance would have meant that the first and second 4 bars of 'set to and turn corners' were sometimes performed to different parts of the tune.

There are obvious signs of this change in the Bowman MS. Only two dances there end with 'set to and turn corners, reels of three with corners, set to and turn partner'. In another 22 dances the final 'set to and turn partner' has become simply 'turn partner', and in another fifty-three dances it has disappeared entirely.

If we assume that 'set to and turn corners' (or, in Bowman's words, 'sett cross partners') occupies 8 bars of music, then the musical lengths of the other basic figures in the Bowman MS appear to be as in Table III below. This system of phrasing is almost certainly correct for tunes in either 9/8 or 3/2 time and for Common time reels, but for tunes in either 6/8 or 2/4 time the lengths in Table III may have to be doubled or may be correct as they stand.

TABLE III
Musical lengths of figures in the Bowman MS

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Bars of Music</i>
Set, turn, cast off, cast up, each	2
Hands round, or hands across (one way round only).	4
Lead down the middle between one (or two) couple and cast up one.	4
Lead down the middle between one couple, lead up again, and cast off one.	4
Right and left.	4
Cross over two couples.	4
Figure 8 (there are two figures of this name).	4 or 8
Reel of three.	4, 6 or 8
Lead out at both sides.	8
Turn corners and partner.	8
Set to and turn corners.	8

The Castle Menzies MS, as usual, stands alone. Here the earlier System A is clearly not correct, and it appears that System B is the appropriate one here. In particular, 'reels of three' are always 8 bars in length.

The tempo of the music for the dances in the Scottish manuscripts is much less certain than either the interpretation of the technical terms or the phrasing, since neither the manuscripts nor the contemporary English collections give any explicit instructions about the tempo. Indeed, the earliest precise information about the tempo of Country Dance tunes is given in 1821 by Thomas Wilson, a London dancing-master (Wilson 1821), his figures being 60 bars per minute for reels, 40 bars per minute for strathspeys, and 52 for 6/8 jigs. In Scotland the traditional tempos before about 1914 were 60-64 bars per minute for reels and jigs, and 40-42 bars per minute for strathspeys.

We can infer a little about the tempo of the dances in the manuscripts from a knowledge of the phrasing, though we cannot obtain very precise information by this method.

We can also glean a little information from a knowledge of the upper class costume of the period, for certainly these manuscript dances belonged to the upper classes rather than to the ordinary people of Scotland. The Duke of Perth, in particular, was a great landowner, educated in France, and he and his friends would have been dressed in the height of fashion.

From 1710 to 1780 the dominating feature of ladies' fashions was the hooped skirt. This attained its greatest popularity about 1740, and at that time a lady of fashion wore a skirt four feet or more across, flattened at the back and front (doorways were negotiated sideways). Such a costume would make for a sedate and consciously mannered style of dancing, at a relatively slow tempo. There would also be a fair distance between the dancers, all the more so because the hoop at the bottom of a skirt was often made of iron. Soame Jenyns, an English poet, wrote in 1729 of the dangers of coming too close to a lady of fashion (Jenyns 1729):

'Dare I in such momentous points advise
I should condemn the hoop's enormous size:
Of ills I speak by long experience found,
Oft have I trod th'immeasurable round,
And mourn'd my shins bruis'd black with many a wound.'

In the dances in the Holmain, Duke of Perth's and Young MSS, one aspect of the phrasing which limits the tempo is the fact that 'set to and turn partner' takes exactly as much music as a 'reel of three'. This indicates that the 'reel' was danced rather quickly, for otherwise both the setting and the turn in 'set to and turn partner' would have been uncomfortably prolonged. The Young MS tends to confirm this deduction, for there we find the instruction to 'run' a 'reel of three'. On the other hand, a 'reel of three' cannot be danced or even run too quickly, particularly when two of the participants are ladies measuring four feet or more across. Taking both factors into account, we surmise that in the dances in these three manuscripts a 'reel of three' was performed at a somewhat slower speed than in a modern Country Dance in quick tempo. Since in the dances in these three manuscripts a 'reel' occupies only 4 bars of a Common time tune with the character of a reel or strathspey or of a tunc in 9/8 or 3/2 time, we estimate that at the time of these three manuscripts such tunes were played for Country Dances at a tempo of about 28–32 bars per minute. In effect, the tempo of the dances in these three manuscripts was less than half that of present-day Country Dances in quick tempo. In particular, where a tune had words set to it (*e.g.* This is Not My Own House, which is nowadays played as a strathspey) the tempo when the tune was played for a Country Dance was essentially the same as when it was sung.

It should be noted that among the many Common time tunes in the Duke of Perth's and Young MSS (including the tunes for the Highland Reel in the former), there is none which can be positively identified as a strathspey, *i.e.* the characteristic 'Scotch

snap' is missing. Our conclusions about the tempo of the dances in these manuscripts tend to confirm that at this period the distinction between reel and strathspey tunes had not yet emerged. This is in accordance with the known history of strathspey tunes, which indicates that these tunes first appeared about 1740 (see Flett 1956). It is indeed possible that the slow tempo of the early Scottish Country Dances encouraged the emergence of the distinctive style in which the strathspey tunes were played.

The tempo of the dances in the Bowman and Castle Menzies MSS was probably faster than that of the dances in the three earlier manuscripts. One indication of this is the increase in the musical length of a 'reel of three' which took place at about the date of these two manuscripts. If there had been no accompanying increase in tempo, this figure would have been slowed down to take twice as long as hitherto, and this seems very unlikely.

There are other signs of such an increase of tempo in English works of this date. For example, there is the change in the method of casting off mentioned by Dukes in 1752, where the method of turning before dancing down was replaced by the quicker method of slipping directly into second place. Again, in the earlier collections there were two turns in 'lead out at the sides and turn your partner in the middle', while in Dukes's version one of these turns has disappeared. On the other hand, the tempo could not have been the same as at present, else it would not have been possible to 'cross over two couples' in 4 bars. The hooped skirt, too, was still in fashion, and this also would have kept the tempo slower than at present. (It should be noted that by Thomas Wilson's day, when the tempo for Country Dances to reel tunes was the same as at present, 'cross over two couples' required 8 bars of music, and that at that time the hooped skirt was used only for great Court occasions.)

It seems therefore that for the dances in the Bowman and Castle Menzies MSS the tempo was intermediate between that of the earlier dances and that of present-day dances in quick tempo—probably about 40–50 bars per minute.

In the Castle Menzies MS we find the first signs of Country Dances set to strathspey tunes, for here two dances, *The Montgomrie's Rant* and *Conteraller's Rant*, are labelled as 'Strathspey Reels'. The manuscript does not indicate whether the music for these two dances was to be played at a slower tempo than that for other dances, but by this date the tempo had increased sufficiently to allow a distinction to be made between reel and strathspey tunes.

There remains the problem of reconstructing the steps which were used in the manuscript dances, and here the available information, in both Scottish and English sources, is so sketchy as to be worthless. The manuscripts give no explicit directions on steps, and all that we can say from the internal evidence of the dances themselves is that the steps used must have been very adaptable to allow figures to be performed with widely varying speed of movement. For those who may wish to reconstruct the manuscript

dances in their original forms, we suggest that an easy walking step is perhaps the best compromise.

We should mention here that the Pas de Basque was almost certainly not used in the manuscript dances, for it first appears in Britain towards the end of the eighteenth century, having probably been brought from France with the Cotillion. A step similar in form to the present-day 'skip-change-of-step' was probably used before 1750 as a step in the Reel (as a dance on its own), but it seems unlikely that this step was used then in Country Dances, since it is not sufficiently flexible.

The preceding discussion of the dances in the Scottish manuscripts enables us to reconstruct these dances with fair accuracy so far as figures, phrasing and tempo are concerned, and it is clear that in phrasing and tempo they differ considerably from present-day Country Dances. Indeed the differences in phrasing are such that if we perform the original figures of the manuscript dances in the modern style, with modern phrasing, then in most cases the figures do not fit the music properly. The figures can, of course, be adapted to fit the music,¹ but such adaptations are essentially new dances, and are often less satisfactory than dances wholly composed in the modern idiom.

From our own point of view, the interest of these eighteenth-century dances lies in the light they throw on the emergence of a distinctively Scottish type of Country Dance, incorporating a particular sequence of figures almost certainly inspired by the native Threesome Reel. We have seen too that they provide information also on the early development of Scottish dance music and on the development of the Reel itself. In their original forms they are period pieces, but they can still be enjoyable to perform with specialist groups.

APPENDIX I

The list below records all the dances in the Scottish manuscripts which occur elsewhere, either in another of the manuscripts or in an English collection. We have included all cases where the dances in the different sources have both the same name and substantially the same figures.

We denote the elder Walsh's *Compleat Country Dancing-Master*, Vol. I, 1731, by the letters CDM, and the Walshs' *Caledonian Country Dances* by the letters CCD followed by the appropriate book number.

Hunt the Squirrel. Holmain MS, Playford's *Dancing Master* (14th edition, 1709, and all subsequent editions), and CDM. The dance of this name in the Bowman MS is vaguely similar.

Dusty Miller. Holmain MS, CDM, and Johnson's *200 Favorite Country Dances*, Book I, c. 1740. Possibly also CCD I, but the instructions of *Dusty Miller* given there are ambiguous.

Argyle's Bowling Green. Holmain and Duke of Perth's MSS.

- Lennox Love to Blantyre.* Holmain and Duke of Perth's MSS.
This Is Not My Own House. Holmain and Duke of Perth's MSS.
My Own Kind Dearie. Duke of Perth's MS, CDM and CCD I.
Hey My Nannie. Duke of Perth's MS and CCD I (in the latter as Hay My Nancie).
Jack Leighton. Duke of Perth's MS and CCD II (in the latter as Jack Latin).
Country Kate. Duke of Perth's MS and CCD II (in the latter as Kate).
Old Age and Young. Duke of Perth's MS and CCD II. This is a doubtful case since the instructions for Old Age and Young in CCD II are ambiguous.
Confederacy. Duke of Perth's MS, Bowman MS and CCD II.
The Old Wife Beyond The Fire. Duke of Perth's MS, Bowman MS and CCD II.
Camstronnan's Rant. Duke of Perth's and Bowman MSS. In the latter collection the title is given as Comstranom's Reel. The tune also occurs in Walsh's annual set of dances for 1745 (with a different set of figures) as Camstroden's Rant.
The Maltman. Duke of Perth's and Bowman MSS.
The Ragged Sailor. Young MS and CCD III.
The Piper. Young MS, Walsh's *Twenty Four Country Dances for the Year 1742*, and CCD IV. In the two English collections the title is The Piper's Maggot.
Ca' Hawkie. Young MS, Walsh's *Twenty Four Country Dances for the Year 1742* and CCD IV.
Lads of Dunse. Bowman MS, CDM and CCD I. The Scottish and English versions differ here more than in the other dances listed.
The Drummer. Bowman MS and CCD III.
Mouldywort. Bowman MS and CCD III (the Mouldywort is the mole; it was lauded by the Jacobites because the death of William of Orange was caused by his horse having stumbled on a molehill).
Welch Fuzileers. Bowman MS and CCD III.

It will be seen from this list that all the manuscripts except the Castle Menzies MS contain dances which occur elsewhere. Further, there is some continuity in the contents of the Holmain, Duke of Perth's and Bowman MSS.

It should be noted that two dances, The Piper and Ca' Hawkie, appear in the Young MS two years before they first appear in the English collections. In all other cases where dances appear in both Scottish and English collections, the date of the English version is prior to that of the Scottish version, though this, of course, does not necessarily mean that the Scottish version was taken from the English one.

APPENDIX II

The Walshs' Caledonian Country Dances

The Walshs' Caledonian collections contain many dances with Scottish titles (*i.e.* set to Scottish tunes), and it is natural to ask whether all these dances originated in Scotland. We confine ourselves here to Books I-V of the Caledonian collections, published between 1733 and 1748. Each book contains about 100 pages and about 80 dances.

In Books I and II certain dances are specifically labelled in the text as 'Scotch Country Dances', but closer examination shows that this labelling is quite fortuitous and occurs only where there is space to insert the necessary words (most of the dances are printed one to a page, but in some cases the music is printed on one page and the instructions for the figures are given on the opposite page. In each of these latter cases there is plenty of space left on the page containing the instructions, and here and only here do we find the label 'Scotch'). It should be noted also that when the Caledonian dances occur in other English collections, they are not then labelled as Scottish.

When we look for Scottish characteristics in the dances in these Caledonian collections, particularly in the use of 'set to and turn corners' and 'set to and turn corners and reels with corners', a small group of dances in Book III springs to notice. These dances, Ragged Sailor, Mowdewort, Berwick Lasses, Welch Fuzileers, Bung Your Eye, Miller of Dron, and Bucket, all show strong signs of Scottish influence in the use of corner figures. Moreover, their instructions are written in a very distinctive style quite different from that used for the other dances in Book III; in particular the Scottish term 'cross partners' is used in place of the English term 'corners'.

Another distinctive group of dances occurs in Book IV, namely, The Piper's Maggot, The Braes of Balquhiddy, The Drunken Elders of Moffat, Perth Inch, Lassie With the Yellow Coatie, The Colonel, (Ca') Hawkie, and De'il Stick the Minister, all of which have been taken from Walsh's *Twenty Four Country Dances for 1742*. These too show strong signs of Scottish influence, and here again the instructions are written in a style not used elsewhere in Book IV (though the style is different from that used in the group in Book III).

Of the first group, Ragged Sailor occurs also in the Young MS, and Mowdewort and Welch Fuzileers are also in the Bowman MS. Of the second group, the figures of The Drunken Elders of Moffat (which are of an uncommon type) are identical with those of Whip Her and Gird Her in the Duke of Perth's MS. Most important of all, (Ca') Hawkie in the group in Book IV occurs in the Young MS, four years before its appearance in Book IV and two years before its appearance in the annual set for 1742. Thus there is very good reason to suppose that the dances in these two groups are of Scottish origin.

In addition to the dances in these two groups, there are some twenty dances scattered through Books I-V which show evidence of Scottish influence in the use of corner figures, but they stand out less clearly than do those listed above.

In the opposite direction there is strong evidence in the books themselves that many of the dances in these collections were 'composed' by the compilers, by the simple process of setting old figures to new tunes.

A close examination reveals that many of the dances have the same figures as other dances occurring either elsewhere in these same books or in other collections, in most cases the two descriptions of the figures being word for word the same. The distribution of such dances in Book II is particularly suggestive. Of the first 52 dances in Book II

we have been able to find only six which have instructions identical to those of earlier dances, but of the last 30 dances, no fewer than 23 have the same figures as dances which occur either earlier in Book II, or in Book I, or in *The Compleat Country Dancing-Master*. The obvious inference is that the compiler of Book II, with 100 pages to fill, had exhausted either his patience or his imagination by the time he had reached page 70. To fill the remaining pages, he selected tunes, and then searched among existing dances until he found tunes similar to those with which he had to deal, and then simply repeated the figures associated with these tunes. And our suspicions that this was indeed his procedure are practically confirmed when we discover that the figures of Nassau and Easter Thursday, on adjoining pages of Book II, are the same as those of Smith's Rant and Sailor's Delight, on adjoining pages of *The Compleat Country Dancing-Master*. It is therefore a reasonable assertion that at least some of the dances in these Caledonian collections were not collected from current tradition.

We have then evidence that a few of the dances in these Caledonian collections originated in Scotland, and equally that some originated in England. However, for the majority of the dances we have no direct evidence in either direction, and here our only guide is the very infrequent use of corner figures, which indicates that these dances are English rather than Scottish.

NOTE

- 1 A number of editors have attempted to adapt the Scottish manuscript dances for performance in the modern style. Thus adaptations of six dances from the Holmain MS, ten from the Castle Menzies MS, and four from the Bowman MS are given in the *Scottish Country Dance Books* (R.S.C.D.S. 1930-54), and adaptations of thirty-six of the dances in the Young MS have been published by J. McConachie (McConachie 1960). In nearly all these adaptations the phrasing and tempo have been altered, and in most cases this has necessitated changes in the figures. Only about seven of these adapted dances preserve the original figures, and in many of the adaptations the alterations go far beyond what is essential. None of these editors indicate the nature of the original dances.

REFERENCES

The following list does not include manuscript or printed collections of Country Dances whose titles are given in full in the text, either in Part I or in Part II. Further information about the printed collections can be found in references listed in Part I.

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WILSON, THOMAS

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