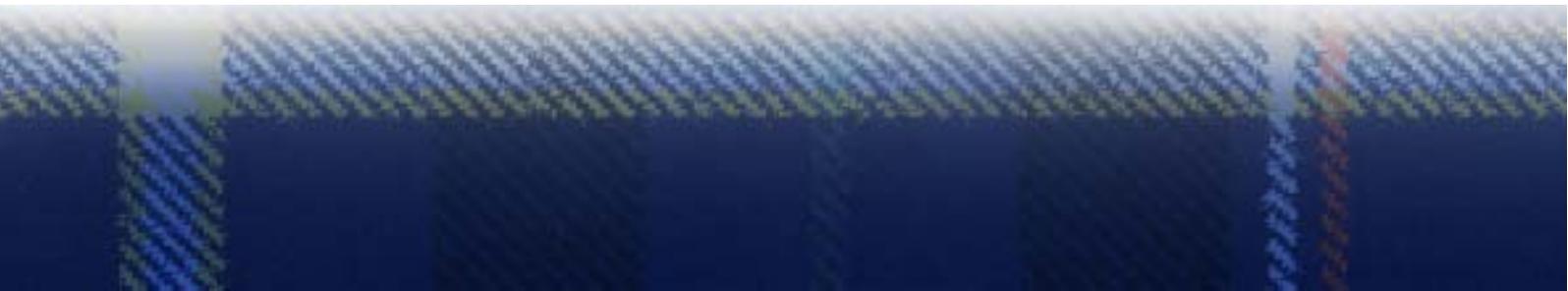


Birlin Roon Tha Flair

AN INTRODUCTION TO SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING



styles of Dance

Dance has existed as long as human beings have. We can read in the Bible about people dancing. We can see on ancient wall paintings drawings of people dancing.

Look at the dance styles below. Have you ever heard of them?:



Jiving



Can Can



Ballet



Line Dancing



The Twist

If you do not know anything about at least one of these types of dances perhaps you could do a little research to find out about it. Older friends or relatives should be able to provide some information about how to jive or twist.

Now, with one or two partners, find some appropriate music for one of these styles and try it out. Then demonstrate your findings to the class.

Dancing: Why DO It?

What kinds of dancing are most popular with people in your age group?

You could carry out a class survey and present your findings visually in the form of a graph or chart.

When you have found the most popular form of dance and the class' favourite piece of music to dance to, you could try it out.

Task 1

Create a diagram to convince a friend of the benefits of taking up dancing as a hobby.

Imagine that the friend believes you need to be graceful and talented in order to dance.

Think about:

- Health benefits
- Social aspects
- Fun
- Your friend's anxieties



National Dances

Task 2

Most countries have national dances which help to develop a sense of identity in their populations.

Dancers usually wear special costumes and perform to traditional music.

Research some national dance styles.

These might include:

- Irish
- German/Austrian
- Morris Dancing
- Square Dancing

But there are many others.



Work with a partner and make a PowerPoint presentation about the dance style you have chosen. Look for information in the Library and on the Internet.

Try to include sound and/or video material as part of your presentation and a live demonstration of your chosen style.



Scottish Country Dancing

Task 3



What helps you to identify this immediately as Scottish dancing and not some other form of dance?

In fact it is taking place in Luxembourg!

Use an Internet Search Engine to help you access the website of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

Find answers to the following:

- **What?** What is Scottish Country Dancing? What are the names of some of the dances?
- **Who?** Who started the Society?
- **When?** When did they begin?
- **Why?** What were their reasons?
- **How?** How did they get others to join them?

Present your findings in a poster for display.

Work with one or two partners.

Scottish Country Dancing

THE STORY OF SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

Scottish Country Dancing is the name given to dances which have evolved from many different dancing traditions in Scotland. They are now danced all over the world so whether you are in Ahoghill or Amsterdam, Newry or New York the chances are you can find a Scottish Dancing class to attend.

In the 16th century the figure dances of the countryside, many set to either Scottish or Irish tunes, became very popular and continued to be so for several centuries. The country dances included elements from older styles of dancing such as reels, strathspeys and jigs and, as the years passed, they continued to include aspects of other dances including the polka.

Eventually their popularity dwindled. But after the First World War, two women—Mrs Ysobel Stewart from Fasnacloch and Miss Jean Milligan, a PE teacher from Glasgow—decided to try to revive them.

On 26th November 1923 the Scottish Country Dance Society was formed. Today it is a worldwide organisation with over 23,000 members.

The Society works to preserve the traditions and make sure valuable manuscripts and music is not lost but it also encourages the creation of new dances.

As you work through this unit you will get the chance to try dancing a couple of traditional dances, the Gay Gordons and the Circle Waltz, but also to construct your own dance using the traditional elements of country dancing.

Scottish Country Dancing

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING IN ULSTER

Scottish dance forms are popular in Ulster for a number of reasons:

- Because many people in the Ulster-Scots community feel dance, along with music and song, is an important part of their heritage.
- Because Ulster and Scotland are very close geographically so it is easy to share in formation and teaching.
- Because it is a fun and very healthy form of exercise.

Listen carefully to an extract from an article about Scottish Country Dancing in Ulster.

How has the writer tried to make it sound like a good way of spending spare time?

How many of the health benefits can you remember and list?



Scottish Country Dancing

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING IN THE USA

Name the traditional instruments being used to provide music for Scottish Country Dancing in Virginia.



Richmond, Virginia is just one place in the United States where Scottish Country Dancing is very popular.

Can you suggest some reasons why so many Americans have an interest in this pastime?

1.
2.
3.

Look up this website and find out what tips are given for beginners at Scottish Dancing -

<http://www.geocities.com/richmondscottishdancers/index.html>

Try one of the following activities, using the tips:

1. Present the tips in poster form, using no more than 5 words for each, or make a cartoon to illustrate each tip.
2. Make up and recite/record a rhyme to make the tips easier to remember.
3. Imagine you have to teach the tips to a person who is deaf and who cannot read. Show how you would do it.

Scottish Country Dancing

LISTENING AND MOVING

RHYTHM

When trying Scottish Country Dancing for the first time, a good way to begin is by listening to the music and responding rhythmically.

You could clap or tap your feet, nod your head or even jump up and down to the rhythm of the music.

Because dance music is usually played in 8 bar phrases it is useful to move for a count of 4 and then listen for a count of four to get used to the pattern of the music which you will be fitting steps to.

MOVING

Now you are going to begin to move. You could skip along or even just walk as long as you are doing it in time with the music.

TAKING HANDS

Scottish Country Dancing is a social activity. It is never danced alone. You will need to get used to cooperating with other dancers so the correct way to hold hands is important.

Hands are held with fingers together rather than palms. Do not link fingers as this could be dangerous during a dance.

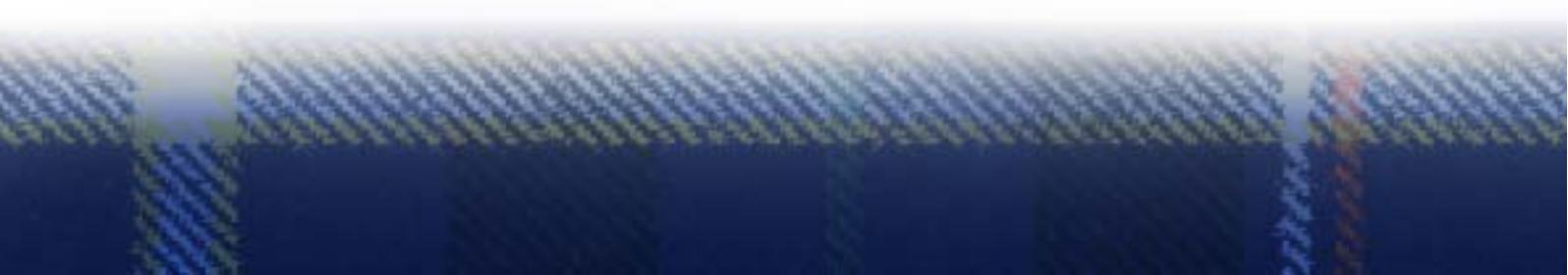
Hands should be held at shoulder height with elbows down at a comfortable angle. Hands should be held lightly together.

TURNING

Often it will be necessary to turn during a dance. Both left hand and right hand turns can be part of a dance.

Start facing your partner without hands joined. Dance in a circle giving the appropriate hand when meeting. Finish back where you started again facing your partner.

When you need to turn using both hands remember to move gently pulling on the right hand.



Scottish Country Dancing

STEPS

There are various steps which occur in most dances. You will need to learn them.

SLIP STEP

When dancing in a circle (known as ‘hands round’) you can use the slip step. Take a small step to the side and then close your feet up with heels together. This is a light sideways movement with heels off the ground. It can also be used with a partner to ‘slip’ down between the other rows of dancers and back to your place.



SKIP CHANGE OF STEP

The main travelling step is the Skip Change of Step. This is a hop, right, close then hop, left, close movement. You will need to start slowly and practise this until you can dance it in any direction—including backwards!

PAS de BASQUE

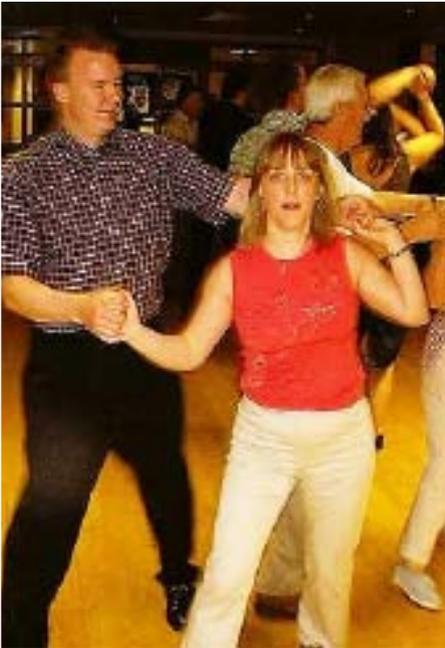
Finally the most difficult step you will need to learn. Make sure you have mastered the Skip Change Step before you try this one.

Begin by marching on the spot raising the knees high. Right, left, right holding left knee up: left, right, left and hold. As you practise this will speed up and become jump unto right foot, onto left, onto right while pointing the left foot.

Scottish Country Dancing

THE GAY GORDONS

This dance originated in the 19th century.



START

Find a partner.

Form a circle with boys on the inside of the circle and girls on the outside, all facing in an anti-clockwise direction.

Each couple holds hands. You are going to use what is called an **ALLEMANDE HOLD**. This means hold right hand with right hand and left hand with left. The boy lifts his right hand behind the girl's right shoulder and holds their left hands about waist height in front.

THE DANCE

Everyone begins on their right foot.

In time with the music everyone takes 4 steps forward turning on the 4th step to face in the opposite direction. The boy's left arm is now behind the girl's shoulder and both right hands are in front.

Then take 4 steps backwards (which will now take you further away from your starting position).

Take 4 steps forward turning on the 4th step as you did before.

Take 4 steps backwards and let go of left hands.

The boy walks forward and the girl turns under his arm.

Four polka steps in an anti-clockwise direction and on the 4th step open out to form your original starting position and repeat all over again.

Scottish Country Dancing

CIRCLE WALTZ

This is a ceilidh dance and is a simple introduction to waltz time.

START

Everyone forms a large circle, facing inwards. Boys have their partners on their right, holding right hands. Everyone starts on their right foot.

Balance forward, balance back. Boys release their partner's hand and with both hands swing the girl on their left across to finish on their right hand side.

Repeat this section 3 more times finishing with your partner holding both hands.

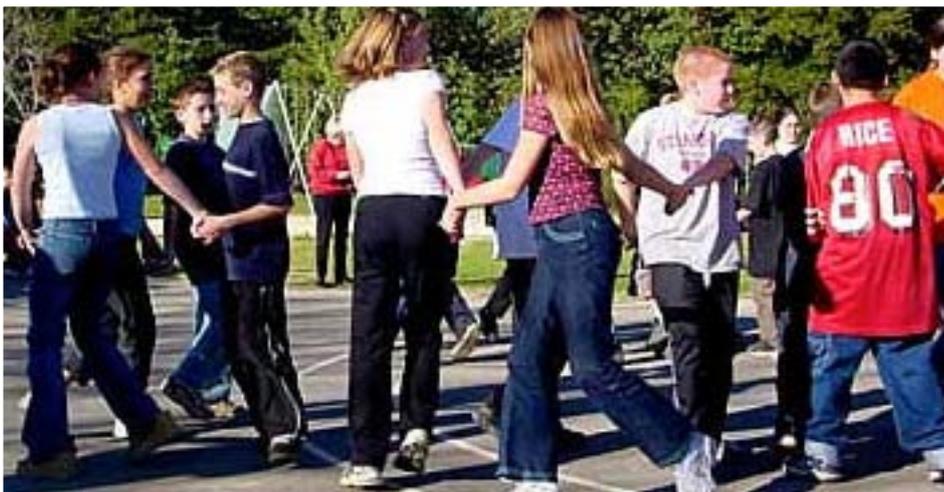
Boys begin with left foot, girls with right.

Move towards the centre step with **CHASSÉ** step —this is step to the side, close feet together, step to the side , close up, then step, close, step, close.

Do the same chassé movement back out from the centre of the circle.

Waltz* around the room turning clockwise but moving anti-clockwise.

Finish in one large circle ready to start again.

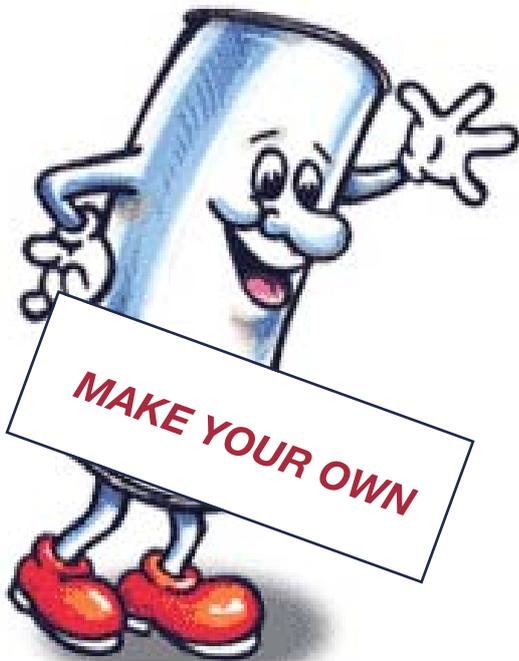


School pupils dancing in California

** As an alternative, the boys simply walk while the girl spins.*

Scottish Country Dancing

PICK N' MIX DANCE



Now it is **YOUR** turn.

You are going to create your own country dance.

It's a bit like baking a cake. You have to add all the different ingredients together.

You are going to select one 'item' each from introductions and formations, and as many different travelling steps and steps on the spot as you want, and put them all together.

You should also add in some gestures.

- When you have created your dance you must make up your own title for it. Traditionally the dancers choose titles which mean something to them, perhaps the name of a local area or character.
- You might call your dance after a place near you e.g. Ballee Breeze, Randalstown Reel or Knocknagoney Roundabout, or perhaps after a person e.g. Grandpa's Jig, Kylie's Trot or Teacher's Tantrum!

IMPORTANT RULE TO REMEMBER

Always count steps in either 8s or 16s.

Scottish Country Dancing

PICK N' MIX DANCE

INTRODUCTIONS

- GIRL CURTSEYS AND BOY BOWS
- BOTH FORM A HANDHOLD
- BOTH WALK IN TO A STARTING POSITION
- BOY STANDS STILL AND GIRL SPINS IN
- BOTH CARTWHEEL IN
- ANY OTHER WAY YOU CAN THINK OF?

BEGINNINGS

- WALK IN TO START
- GIRL CURTSEYS/BOY BOWS
- BOTH TAKE A HAND HOLD
- BOY STANDS STILL/GIRL SPINS IN
- BOTH CARTWHEEL IN

FORMATIONS

- SINGLE CIRCLE
- DOUBLE CIRCLE
- SQUARE
- LONGWAYS SET (2 LINES)
- COUPLE (2 PEOPLE)

STEPS

- GALLOP LEFT
- GALLOP RIGHT
- CHANGING PLACES
- TURNING
- WALK FORWARD
- WALK BACK
- SKIP FORWARD
- SKIP BACK
- STEP SWING
- HEEL/TOE
- PAS DE BASQUE
- TOE POINTS

GESTURES

- HAND/KNEE CLAPS
- STAMPING FEET
- CLICKING FINGERS
- SHAKING FINGER
- BLOWING KISSES
- SHAKING FIST
- CHEEK TO CHEEK EMBRACE
- HANDS ON HIPS
- SHAKING HEAD
- PUTTING FINGER TO LIPS