

As I've said before, unless I get this report out straight away there is a danger that it won't happen until it's nearly time for the next class, so my intention was to write it last night when I got back from class. Well, we are now on Monday morning but that's still within 24 hours of class ... :-)

It was lovely to welcome Adrian Conrad, who had travelled up from Croydon especially for the class, and hopefully he will feel tempted to join us again sometime.

We had a "perfect 16" yesterday - not to be confused with Bo Derek's perfect 10, as I was reminded by someone in the class! - so 4-couple dances were the order of the day. We began, as planned, with **Liquid Assets**, a John Drewry dance from his Stoneywood Collection 2, devised in 2002, and referring to Aberdeen (and Scotland) 's production & export of oil and whisky. The dance is an 8x32 jig, with no setting so ticks all the boxes for a starting dance.

We then tackled the 2020 medley from John Brenchley, **The Darlington Dancer**, which I came across a couple of years ago, really liked it, and we will be seeing much more of it. A longwise set, with 3s & 4s starting on opposite sides, it is twice 40 bars in strathspey and then twice in reel time. The unusual progression means that on the 2nd & 4th repeats, the top 2 couple are on opposite sides and the bottom 2 on "own" sides to begin.

A dance I often get asked for now - and that is so pleasing - is **Lucy Mulholland's Strathspey**, my 4-couple version of **City of Belfast**. I am still awaiting a recording for it but in the meantime, Nicol McLaren's version of The Sleeping Warrior (ignoring the 2nd chord) has my chosen tune of Lament for the Death of the Rev. Archie Beaton, as the 4th tune.

Now that I record my radio show once a week for RadioGH (www.radiogh.co.uk) I am always looking for, and coming across, dances which fit my theme because of their name, but are dances worth trying to broaden our repertoire. One such dance is **Set & Drink** by Malcolm Brown, devised at the "after party" in St Petersburg, February 2011, and probably best suited to that sort of atmosphere. It would be best with live music suitably chosen to fit the dance. :-) I first chose a track by Iain MacPhail, which might have been fine for the final repetition but was waaay too fast for the first two! We then danced to a Gordon Shand track which was better.

June is my birthday month and, back in November 2015, Francis Walduck of Queensland Branch devised me a dance to celebrate my 60th year, 2016. Sadly Francis died just a few days before my birthday, but I am minded every few years to dance it specifically in memory of Francis, who was a wonderful ambassador for SCD, travelling the world following the dancing.

Amanda's Birthday Dance is a 4x40 strathspey in a longwise set. Bars 9-16 are a Rose Progression for 1s & 4s, flowing into LSh reels of 4 on the sides. Apart from the Rose progression, all 4 couples are dancing all the time. Francis originally suggested the track for Silver Threads, on the Leicester Silver Collection CD by David Cunningham & his Band, but I usually use a Marian Anderson track - either Flowers of the West from The Kangaroo Paw (as that is her first Australian CD) or Belfast City Hall from the Belfast Diamond Jubilee CD.

I do like a medley, and as they are usually for 4 couples, I took advantage this week to slip in an extra one.

Gardener's Retreat is a 48 bar, twice strathspey & twice reel, in a square set. The dance was devised by Robert Atkinson, a friend of Ewan Galloway's, included in Ewan's book In Honour Of Vol 3, which comes with an accompanying CD. The dance wasn't difficult and the tunes included In an English Country Garden and Sally Gardens.

Another of my dances is the 4-couple jig which I wrote for Marian & Max called **The Leather Band** which includes the Targe.

We were now down to 7-couples without me so we danced the 3-couple strathspey **The Edradour Whisky Trail** by Ulla Sein, published in Great Dances For Small Groups. It was just a bit different, not difficult, and could be used as an exercise for timing and concentration.

With me dancing we were able to do **Osgood Mackenzie of Inverewe**, another dance where a bit of concentration is needed (which half of the set am I in?) but good fun.

And we finished with one of my new favourites, **Loch Fitty Jig**, by Alison Austin. Some people danced the alternative version from second place while others felt that at the end of a 3 hour class, it was asking a bit too much of their brains. :-)

Our next class is on 13th July - and advance reminder that the August class is not until the 17th. All classes at Oakham Church Hall 4.30 - 7.30 pm.

Look forward to seeing you on a dance floor somewhere soon,