

I opened the class, as I did my radio show on RadioGH, with the news that my mother died last Tuesday (27th Jan) and so some of the dances would be pertinent to her and me. Thank you to all who expressed their condolences - my mother was 95, had untreated breast cancer (which she admitted to 3 years ago), and had been failing slowly for a long time, so her death was no surprise, rather a relief for her and us - and I appreciate all the care and thoughts passed to me at this time, which is the end of an era, of that older generation of my family, and that will leave a gap.

So, what did we dance? My mother was a Scottish dancer and I started at children's classes and then graduated to the adult class when I went to secondary school, so I felt it was very appropriate to start the class (and my radio show) with **Dance With Mother**, and 8x32 reel by Graham Hamilton for his mother. The dance was straightforward - 1s down below 3s, cast up & 1/2 fig of 8 up, down into reflection reels on the side, 1/2 fig of 8 down & turn left 1 1/4 into LSh reels of 3 across - and we had 7 couples so danced it in a 7-couple set - always good to get that chance to practise! The dance doesn't have its own recording so I used **Homeward Bound** played by Nicol McLaren & the Glenraig Band.

We then went back a week to Robert Burns and the jig, **The Globe Inn**, devised by Jackie Johnstone in Dumfries in 1996. This dance has Dance to Corners & Set up/down & across rather than on the diagonals as originally devised. For this reason we decided it might be too complicated to try in a 7-couple set so resorted to a 3- & a 4-. I included this dance on TSC Recorded Highlights Vol 1 with Jim Lindsay's Band.

My family name is Long, and I always include an 8x strathspey on my radio show, so this week's choice was obvious - **The Long Goodbye** by Sue McKinnell. This was written as a sad dance (the story is on Sue's website about her mother's dementia) but my experience wasn't the same at all so I didn't recount Sue's story. We danced it to her choice of music - **The Gypsy Weaver** from More Memories of Scottish Weekend - and we liked the dance.

It was then time to re-prise **Forty & Counting** from last month. There were only a couple of people, in fact, who were there at both classes, and our visitors from Gloucester/Bristol were particularly keen to have a chance to learn the dance thoroughly. Again we didn't feel that we needed the added complication of a 7-couple set!

Another 3-couple strathspey which I found for the radio show is **Family Ties** by Anne Thorn of Helensburgh, written for David Oswald's family. This dance includes the Figure of Love, which depicts interlocking hearts on the floor, and was first devised by Violaine Eysseric in 2018 (I think - definitely in Paris, anyway!). A simple little dance which we danced to Ewan Galloway's **We'll Meet Again**, though I wouldn't normally use that track for anything other than the dance it was meant for.

As we were now down to two 3-couple sets dancing, I dug out **The Giants of Foudland**, devised by Alison Smith in 2005, inspired by the 22, then newly constructed, Foudland wind turbines. The dance is a 3x48 bar reel in a triangular set which uses Schiehallion reels for the progression.

Although 4-couple sets were not convenient, we did want to try **The Tea Pottery** from Book 54, which "the Bristol contingent" knew very well (so this was a perfect opportunity) and the dance will be included on the Bristol Weekend programme in March which I and Judy Potts will be attending, so, we danced it twice. It isn't difficult but at 96 bars it can be an exercise to remember what comes next.

Then we danced the 5-couple square set reel **Gordon's Cider Press** (to Jim Lindsay's track **All Things Nice**) and a 3-couple set strathspey **Vivre a Saint Quay** by Roland Telle - this begins with an espagnole, and has Corners Pass & 1/2 Turn & Twirl in.

We finished with **The Lass from Stonehaven** by Neil M Grant for Christine Grant (no relation but both teachers in Forres Branch) which I learned last summer at a Dance in Nairn. This dance finishes with the chaperoned chain progression which we had perfected earlier in Forty & Counting, though maybe when structuring a class programme it might be a good idea to do the "basic" version first before attempting it on the diagonal!

Some people have already told me that they can't manage the class in March, but now, neither can I as my mother's funeral is the next day and we will be "gathering" on the Sunday. So, the next class is now Sunday 1st March.

Thank you again everyone for your kindness and I look forward to seeing on a dance floor somewhere soon,