

**CELEBRATION DANCES IN THE RODNEY  
ROOMS TRADITION**

**BY**

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**&**

**Friends**

## **CELEBRATION DANCES IN THE RODNEY ROOMS TRADITION**

What is the Rodney Rooms Tradition? The Rodney Rooms Dances were devised as a result of the difficulties I had in teaching many of the early dances to beginners. Many of the dances available in 1947 and just after left at least one dancer facing the wrong way when moving from one figure to the next. An example is 'Miss Mary Douglas' where the Reel in the first 8 bars finishes with the 1st lady traveling in an outwards direction towards her own place and the 2nd Cpl. traveling up the dance. This means that all three of them have to reverse their motion to start the Grand Chain in the next 8 Bars. In addition, because of their direction of travel, it would be natural for both of the 3rd Cpl. to give left hands when starting the Grand Chain. The Grand Chain finishes with the 1st Man changing place with the left hand and having to do the polite turn to face in to be ready to dance in to collect his partner for down the middle and back. Beginners do not always find the polite turn natural and, hence, the 1st Man often lags his partner when starting to go down the dance when he should be doing the leading. The dance finishes with the 1st Cpl. crossing to their own side in 2nd place. This means the 1st Lady naturally flows out to start her 1st reel in the repeat while the 1st Man has to quickly change direction. It was a result of the difficulties my beginners had to achieve changes in direction that I wrote the Rodney Rooms dances to give myself a repertoire of dances that allowed the dancers to flow from one figure to the next.

The bulk of the dances in the booklet were written by me to celebrate various occasions. However, two of the dances were devised by fellow members of the Reading Saint Andrews demonstration team. The first 'The Reading Strathspey' was written by Peter Luke (Pete the Feet) and was the winning entry in a competition for a dance to mark the 25th Anniversary of Reading Saint Andrews' Scottish Dance Society. The second of the dances 'Glenmore' was devised by Ken Ridgway, another member of the team, and is a simple Highland Demonstration Dance which was regularly danced at demonstrations, even on grass.

It is Reading St. Andrew's Scottish Dancing Society's 60th anniversary this year (2009) and as I was a member of the group for the 40 years, starting in 1954, I thought it appropriate to write a commemorative dance to celebrate my association, Hence the strathspey 'Reading St. Andrew's 60th Anniversary.

In 1955, just after I had come to Reading and had started a group in Tadley, I was asked by one of the group if I would teach at Newbury once a month. It was only when Newbury announced their 50th anniversary that I realised I had been their first teacher. Hence, 'Newbury's 50th Anniversary.

Purley's 30th Anniversary was a couple of years later and Bracknell's 50th is this year along with Reading's 60th. I have deliberately given the Knot in 'Purley's 30th Anniversary an extra 2 bars as it enables a 3 couple Knot to be performed with a similar precision to that afforded to a 2 couple Knot.

I wrote '60 years of Scottish Country Dancing' in 2007 to celebrate my 60 years of dancing. The next year I went to the wedding of the daughter of two ex demonstration team members, Helen, and wrote a dance for her and Murdo.

The final dance, 'Admire the Ladies' is my way of thanking those many lady members of the demonstration team that gave me so much support with my technical writing.

As I stated in both the earlier 'Rodney Rooms' booklets there should be no need for me to state that hands are given where ever possible as this was how all the early dances were danced and as Jean Milligan always taught, for instance as stated in the Scottish Dance Manual **'Won't You Join The Dance? 1st Edition'** Page 67 in a comment at end of the Chapter on Formations, "In all formations it is advisable to give hands freely and **wherever possible**, as not only is it very helpful, but it adds greatly to the social feeling of the dance. It also helps to maintain the shape of the set and to keep the lines straight." My emphasis on 'wherever possible' but Jean Milligan's own words.

Two other points I made in the 2nd of my booklets regarding two other aspects of dance etiquette. When passing with a member of the opposite sex in Rights and Lefts - Hold, Smile and Pass on with a gentle caress, and with the same sex at least look and acknowledge their existence. Don't spend the evening looking for a dropped bawbee you don't stand a chance. I saw it when I came in. If someone pulled a coin out of their pocket during a dance my long hand would have whipped across and caught it before it hit the floor and nobody would have noticed because they would be looking at the floor for other coins. Look at your partner and smile at the rest of the set when you pass.

In the case of reels with your corners, the 1st corners pass through the centers of the reels before the 2nd corners. As the 1st corners' partners are the 2nd corners the partner who is the 2nd corner must lag behind the partner who is 1st corner, hence to attempt to cover ones partner must make the reels jerky. The sensible way to dance these reels is for the corners to ignore their own partner and the 1st corners to look for each other and acknowledge them as they approach the centre of the reel, likewise the 2nd corners. As I hope the dancing couple already do.

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## **READING St. ANDREW'S 60th ANNIVERSARY -**

4 Cpl. Dance in 4 Cpl. Longwise Sets

**32 Bar Strathspey**

### **The 4th Cpl. dance as mirror images of the 1st and the 3rd of the 2nd**

#### **Bars**

- 1 - 4      The 1st & 4th Cpl.s cross giving Rt. hands and cast one Place into the centre. 2nd and 3rd Cpl.s step up and down respectively on bars 3 & 4.
- 5 - 8      The 1st & 4th Cpl.s dance Lt hands across 1/2 Way and cast one Place, 1st Cpl. to the bottom of the set, 4th to the top. 3rd and 2nd Cpl.s step up and down respectively on bars 7 & 8. All finish moving in to partner, (4, 2, 3, 1).
- 9 - 12     4th Cpl. with 2nd and 3rd Cpl. with 1st dance 1/2 Poussette.
- 13 - 16    4th and 1st Cpl.s dance 1/2 Poussette. Finish 2, 1, 4, 3.
- 17 - 24    2nd and 3rd Cpl.s starting by crossing with their partner, all dance snowball Grand Chain, 2 bars each hand. Finish 3, 1, 4, 2 all on the wrong side of the dance.
- 25 - 28    All set on the sides of the dance, then with the 3rd and 2nd Cpl.s dancing in, down and up respectively, they turn the 1st and 4th Cpl.s respectively right round on the sides ready to flow into double figures of 8 at the ends.
- 29 - 32    3rd Cpl. with 1st Cpl. and 4th with 2nd dance a 1/2 Figure of 8, 3rd and 2nd Cpl.s dancing in to begin. Finish 3, 1, 4, 2.

Repeat from new positions

**THE READING STRATHSPEY** - 4 Cpl. Dance in a 4 Cpl. Longwise Set  
**32 Bar Strathspey**

**Bars**

- 1 - 8      1st Cpl. dancing with promenade hold, Lady on Man's left, dance a Lt. shoulder reel of 3 with the 2nd and 3rd Ladies. Meanwhile the 4th Cpl. dancing with promenade hold, Lady on Man's right, dance a Lt. shoulder reel of 3 with the 2nd and 3rd Men. 1st Cpl. finish between 2nd Cpl. facing down and 4th Cpl. between 3rd facing up.
- 9 - 16     1st Cpl. retain Lt. hands and rotate to face up, cross up to the top and cast off one place to dance a half figure of 8 round 2nd Cpl. to finish in 2nd place on own side. Meanwhile 4th Cpl. retain Rt. hands and rotate to face down, cross down to bottom and cast up one place to dance a half figure of 8 round 3rd Cpl. to finish in 3rd place. 2nd & 3rd Cpl.s step up or down on bars 11 to 12.
- 17 - 24    1st, and 4th Cpl.s dance Rt. hands across for 3 bars and back Lt hands for 3 bars and 1st Cpl. then cast one place while 4th Cpl. lead up one place.
- 25 - 28    4th, 1st and 3rd Cpl.s dance half mirror image reels of 3 on the sides, 1st Cpl. dancing in and down to begin.
- 29 - 32    Giving Rt. hand to partner 1st Cpl. turn once and cast to 4th place, 4th Cpl. stepping up on bars 31 to 32.

Finish 2, 3, 4, 1.

Repeat from new positions

## BRACKNELL'S 50th ANNIVERSARY -

3 Cpl. Dance in 4 Cpl. Longwise Sets

32 Bar Reel

### Bars

- 1 - 4      1st Cpl. cross giving Rt. hands and cast off one place. 2nd Cpl. step up on bars  
3 to 4
- 5 - 8      1st Cpl. dance a 1/2 figure of 8 round the couple on their Rt., Lady round the 3rd Cpl., Man round the 2nd Cpl.
- 9 - 16     1st Cpl. dancing through the couple on their Rt., Lady through the 2nd Cpl. Man through the 3rd Cpl., dance a reel of 3 on the sides with their corners. Corners pass Rt. shoulders to begin. 1st Cpl. finish passing diagonally inwards through 2nd place on partners side and heading towards end couples, Lady towards 2nd Cpl. Man towards 3rd Cpl.
- 17 - 24    All flow into reels of three across 1st Lady with the 2nd Cpl. giving Rt. shoulder to 2nd Lady, 1st Man with the 3rd Cpl., giving Rt. shoulder to 3rd Man to begin. 1st Cpl. finish in 2nd Place on the wrong side of the dance.
- 25 - 28    1st Cpl. dance a 1/2 figure of 8 round the couple on their Rt., Lady round the 3rd Cpl., Man round the 2nd Cpl.
- 25 - 32    1st Cpl. dance 3 Rt. hands across with the couple on their Rt., Lady with the 2nd Cpl., Man with the 3rd Cpl, 1st Cpl. finish in 2nd Place on own side of the dance.

Repeat from second place.

**NOTE:** The reels on the sides and across in bars 9 to 24 constitute a continuous movement for the 2nd and 3rd couples flowing from the loops at the ends of the reels on the sides straight into the reels across.

The whole dance is a continuous flowing movement for the 1st couple.

**GLENMORE** - A Simple Highland Demonstration Dance      **Medley 32S/64R**

A Demonstration Dance for 3 Men and 2 Ladies

The Dancers stand in a line all facing the front numbered from the left  
1st Man, 1st Lady, 2nd Man, 2nd Lady and 3rd Man.

**STRATHSPEY**

**Bars**

- 1 - 8      The Men travel forward for 2 bars, back for 4 bars and forward for 2 bars while the Ladies travel back for 2 bars, forward for 4 bars and back for 2 bars.
- 9 - 16     All dance the rocking step.
- 17 - 20    2nd Man, 2nd Lady and 3rd Man dance a 1/2 Reel of 3, 3rd Man and 2nd Lady giving Lt. shoulder to begin.
- 21 - 24    1st Man, 1st Lady and 3rd Man dance a 1/2 Reel of 3, 3rd Man and 1st Lady giving Lt. shoulder to begin.
- 25 - 28    1st Man, 2nd Lady and 2nd Man dance a 1/2 Reel of 3, 1st Man and 2nd Lady giving Lt. shoulder to begin. Finish with 1st and 3rd Men having changed ends
- 29 - 32    All dance highland schottische setting.



## **GLENMORE** (continued)

### **REEL**

- 1 - 8 All repeat Strathspey bars 1 to 8, Ladies finish slightly in front of the men.
- 9 - 16 Men dance a full Reel of 3, 3rd and 2nd Men giving Lt. shoulder to begin. Meanwhile the Ladies set and points turning to face the men on bars 15 to 16.
- 17 - 24 All circle 5 hands round and back, 6 steps round and 10 steps back. Ladies brake at the end to form a straight line, 1st Lady, 3rd Man, 2nd Man, 1st Man and 2nd Lady.
- 17 - 32 2nd Man, 2nd Lady and 1st Man dance a Reel of 3, 1st Man and 2nd Lady giving Lt. shoulder to begin. Meanwhile 1st Lady and 3rd Man change places with a Lt. & Rt. Tullock swing.
- 33 - 40 3rd Man, 1st Lady and 2nd Man dance a Reel of 3, 3rd Man and 1st Lady giving Lt. shoulder to begin. Meanwhile 1st Man and 2nd Lady change places with a Lt. & Rt. Tullock swing. Finish 3rd Man, 1st Lady, 2nd Man, 2nd Lady and 1st Man.
- 41 - 48 1st & 3rd Man cast off and meet in front of 2nd Man, set and pass Lt. hand to follow tracks of other man to original position.
- 49 - 56 Ladies cast out round end Men, 4 bars into double triangles and back into line.
- 57 - 64 2nd Man and the Ladies set and Balance while 1st & 3rd Men 14 high cuts turning right round and finishing with a leap.

## **NEWBURY'S 50th ANNIVERSARY -**

A Progressive Dance in 5 Cpl. Longwise Sets

**32 Bar Strathspey**

5 Cpl.s, 10 Dancers, 5 times 10 equals 50

### **Bars**

- 1 - 4      1st & 3rd Cpl.s cross with own partners giving Rt. hands and cast off one place. Finish 2, 1, 4, 3, 5 with the 1st & 3rd Cpl.s on the wrong side of the dance.
- 5 - 24      All dance a 20 bar 5 Cpl. Rts. & Lts.
- 1 - 2      All cross giving Rt. Hands.
- 3 - 4      All change places giving Lt. Hands:
- Dancer in 1st Man's place with Dancer in 2nd Man's place, Dancer in 4th Lady's place with Dancer in 5th Lady's place, Dancer in 1st lady's place with Dancer in 3rd Man's place, Dancer in 2nd Lady's place with Dancer in 4th Man's place and Dancer in 3rd Lady's place with Dancer in 5th Man's place.
- 5 - 20      Repeat bars 1 to 4 of the 5 Cpl. Rts. & Lts 4 more times.
- 25 - 28      1st & 3rd Cpl.s cross to own sides of the dance giving Rt. hands to their own partners and cast off one place. Finish 2, 4, 1, 5, 3 with all on the correct side of the dance.
- 28 - 32      All turn partner once round with the Rt. Hand.

(Pump Handle turns as if drawing pints:

Cross with a tight turn opening out into a long hand turn on partner's side to return in a similar manner.)

Repeat from new position

Covering is the essence of this dance especially in the 5 Cpl Rts. & Lts. and the Pump Handle turns.

**PURLEY'S 30th ANNIVERSARY** - 4 Cpl. Dance in a 4 Cpl. Longwise Set  
**32 Bar Strathspey**

**Bars**

- 1 - 4      2nd & 3 Cpl.s set and dance Lt. hands across to face corners.
- 5 - 6      2nd and 3rd Cpl.s, giving Rt. hands change places with corners.
- 7 - 8      Corners dance Lt. hands across in the centre to finish ready to dance  
Rt. shoulder reels of 4 on the wrong side of the dance.
- 9 - 16     All 4 Cpl.s dance Rt. shoulder reels of 4 on the sides.  
Finish 3, 4, 1, 2. still on the wrong side of the dance.
- 17 - 20    3rd Cpl. with 4th Cpl. and 1st Cpl. with 3rd Cpl. set and dance Rt.  
hands across 1/2 way to own sides of the dance. Finish 4, 3, 2, 1.
- 20 - 24    4th, 3rd and 2nd Cpl. set and turn Partner into 3 Cpl. Knot position.
- 25 - 32    4th, 3rd and 2nd Cpl. dance a 3 couple Knot. Finish 2, 3, 4, 1.

Repeat from new positions

## 60 YEARS OF SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING -

4 Cpl. dance in 4 Cpl. Longwise Sets

32 Bar Strathspey

### Bar!g

- 1 - 4 All set and turn partners once round with both hands breaking out ready to circle 4 hands round, 1st Cpl with 2nd and 3rd Cpl. with 4th.
- 5 - 8 1st Cpl. with 2nd and 3rd Cpl. with 4th circle 4 hands round to place.
- 9 - 16 1st Cpl. with 2nd and 3rd Cpl. with 4th dance an all round Poussette.
- 17 - 18 1st Man with 2nd Lady, 2nd Man with 3rd Lady and 3rd Man with 4th Lady change places giving Rt. hands.
- 19 - 20 1st Lady with 3rd Lady, 1st Man with 4th Lady and 2nd Man with 4th Man change places giving Lt. hands.
- 21 - 22 2nd Lady with 4th Lady, 1st Lady with 4th Man and 1st Man with 3rd Man change places giving Rt. hands
- 23 - 24 3rd Lady with 4th Man, 2nd Lady with 3rd Man and 1st Lady with 2nd Man change places giving Lt. hands. Finish 4, 3, 2, 1 on the wrong side of the dance.
- 25 - 26 All change places with partner giving Rt. hands, 4th and 3rd Cpl.s retaining Rt. hands ready to dance Rt. hands across.
- 27 - 28 4th and 3rd Cpl.s dance Rt. hands across halfway.
- 29 - 30 4th and 2nd Cpl.s dance Lt. hands across half way.
- 31 - 32 3rd and 2nd Cpl.s dance Rt. hands across half way. Finish 2, 3, 4, 1.

Repeat with a new top Cpl.

**HELEN AND MURDO'S WEDDING** - 3 Cpl.s in 4 Cpl. Longwise Sets  
**32 Bar Reel**

**Bars**

- 1 - 8        1st & 2nd Cpl.s set and dance Rt. hands across right round and 1st Cpl. cast off while 2nd Cpl. lead up to the top.
- 9 - 16       2nd and 3rd Cpl.s, set and turn partners right round with both hands opening out to pick up 1st Cpl. to circle 1/2 way to the left using skip change of step. Finish on the wrong side, in order 3, 1, 2, with the 1st Cpl. still facing clockwise.
- 17 - 20      1st Cpl. dance 1/2 Rt. shoulder reel on the sides with their corners finishing 2, 1, 3 on the wrong side of the dance.
- 21 - 24      All set and turn Partner 1/2 way into Promenade Hold.
- 25 - 32      All Promenade.

Repeat having passed one couple.

## **ADMIRE THE LADIES - 3 Cpl. Dance in 3 Cpl. Longwise Sets**

### **32 Bar Strathspey**

#### **Bars**

- 1 - 4 All advance to partners and half turn them with the Rt. hand to face, then all pull their shoulders back and dance out to the wrong side of the dance. Ladies facing the top of the set and Men their own side.
- 5 - 8 Ladies chase round to own sides finishing 3, 2, 1 while the Men set and cross back to own side 2nd Man remains facing out while the 1st and 3rd Men turn to face in.
- 9 - 10 Passing Rt. Shoulders 1st Cpl. cross diagonally to finish in 2nd place on the wrong side facing diagonally out Man down Lady up. Meanwhile 2nd Cpl. cast to the ends, Man up and Lady down while the 3rd Cpl. set diagonally to each other.
- 11 - 16 All dance a 6 bar reel of 3 on the sides, 1st Man going down gives Rt. shoulder to 2nd Lady and 1st Lady going up gives Rt. shoulder to 2nd Man. 1st Cpl. finish looping into 2nd Place facing out ready to cast to their left.
- 17 - 18 Passing Lt. Shoulders 3rd Cpl. cross diagonally to finish on the wrong side in 2nd place facing diagonally out 3rd Man up Lady down. Meanwhile 1st Cpl. cast to the ends, 1st Man up and Lady down while the 2nd Cpl. set.
- 19 - 24 All dance a 6 bar reel of 3 on the sides, 3rd Man going up gives Lt shoulder to 1st Man and 3rd Lady going down gives Lt. shoulder to 1st Lady.
- 25 - 28 1st and 3rd Cpl.s change places on the sides giving Lt. hands and then change places diagonally giving Rt. hands (a half diagonal lefts and rights starting on the sides with the Lt. hand). Ladies finish 1, 3, 2 while the Men finish 2, 3, 1, all on own side of the dance.
- 29 - 32 Ladies dance half reel of three on own side of the dance 3rd Lady giving Rt. shoulder to 2nd Lady to begin. The Men stand still and admire the Ladies. Finish 2, 3, 1.

Repeat from new positions

The following poem comes from a booklet which contains a collection of 32 very good poems all relating to Scottish Country Dancing. All of the poems are in tune with my belief that Scottish Dancing should be a light hearted and social pursuit.

Following Pat's passing away the booklet, entitled, 'All Pat's Party Pieces' is available in her memory at a cost of £3 from myself on her daughter's behalf.

My address is over the page. All proceeds go to cancer charities and as one of our original members passed away last year Pat's daughter has agreed that the current charity should be the Sue Ryder Home at Nettlebed where 3 of the team spent their last days.

As many past members will be at the 60th reunion I have chosen the following.

### OLD FRIENDS

We're a group of Scottish Dancers  
And our years are showing through  
Our ageing feet don't always  
Do the things we want them to.

We sometimes don't remember  
And we often take short cuts  
And any youngster watching us  
Would no doubt think we're nuts.

Our muscles may be bandaged up,  
Our rheumatism bad,  
But we'll think when we're really old  
Of all the fun we've had.

The crippling agony of cramp  
The drives home through the sleet,  
Assorted ligaments we've pulled,  
The aching of the feet

Ah happy days of jolly fun!  
And when the season ends -  
The main thing we are left with  
Is a lovely lot of friends.

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