

Reels

(Time 4/4)

News from Scotland, in the year 1591, the first mention of 'Reels' is made thus:
"Some 200 witches (gipsies) landed at north Berwick and danced the Reel or Short Dance. Duncan danced to a small trump, called the Jewes Harp"

Reels were formerly Scottish Country Dances, performed by groups. There is a theory that the figure of eight may have been part of a Thanksgiving Dance based on an entwined serpent like that on Moses Rod of Life. This sign is now associated with healing and medicine.

When Prince Charles Edward was entertained by the nobility of Scotland, exhibitions of Strathspey and Reels were usually one of the features of the evening, also at the Grand Balls at Holyrood Palace. After he had secured possession of the City of Edinburgh in 1745, he is said to have frequently called for these National dances with music by the bagpipes.

Strathspey Reel

The slow movement, the Strathspey, is thought to be a mourning dance, used at funerals. In the past when the churches were cold and draughty with stone seats the congregation became very cold, while waiting the arrival of the minister. As a result they danced up and down the centre aisle of the Kirk and devised this dance.

Reel o' Tulloch

Gaelic - Ruidhie Thulaichean

This is a favourite variation of the Foursome Reel. It was not composed at the same time or as early as the Strathspey Reels. The story most likely to be believed is that a snow storm came on while the church congregation at "Tulloch" was assembling on a Sunday and the Preacher was snowed in. A few people to keep trying to keep warm started swinging each other by the arms and dancing their reel steps - thus a new reel had its foundations.

Hopetoun Reel

This dance was compiled by a group of teachers (from Victoria, Australia) in honour of the first Governor General - Lord Hopetoun - during his term of office.

His Excellency the Right Honourable John Adrian Louis Hope, seventh Earl of Hopetoun, First Marquess of Linlithgow, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Victoria was born at Hopetoun in Scotland on September 25th 1860, and succeeded to the earldom while still a boy.

He was just 29 years of age when he became Governor of Victoria in 1889 and was popular with the Victorian people.

He later became the first Governor-General of Australia and was in Melbourne for the opening of the first Federal Parliament in May 1901.

He died in England in 1908.