

Published and Unpublished Research on Scottish Dance Traditions

Mats Melin, January 2015

I will outline from my own archive and knowledgebase what research has been conducted on Scottish dance traditions and when subsequent material was published or where it can be accessed (if known). With some authors only the most significant publications are listed. List provided is in a loosely chronological order rather than being alphabetical.

Canadian based scholar and dancer Hugh Thurston:

Thurston, H. (1952). "The Development of the Country Dance as Revealed in Printed Sources." Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (J.E.F.D.S.S.) 7(1): 29-35.

Thurston, H. A. (1954). Scotland's Dances. London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd. Reprinted 1984 by TacBooks in Canada.

Thurston, H. (1955). The Hebridean Weaving Lilt. The Folk Dancer, Vol. 2, No. 1, March/April.

Tom and Joan Flett with Frank Rhodes researched in the 1950s, Shetland, Orkney, Highlands and Islands, Angus, Fife, Perthshire, Borders and Wigtownshire mainly. Their archive of some 10000 pages and it has recently been suggested that it should be digitised and made available online. Copies of most of the material are currently held by the family and in Mats Melin and Chris Metherell private archives.

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1953-54). "Some Hebridean Folk Dances." Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (J.E.F.D.S.S.) No. 7: 112-127, 182-184. (1953-1954).

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1956). "Dramatic Jigs in Scotland." Folk-Lore LXVII (67): 84-96.

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1956). "Some Early Highland Dancing Competitions." Aberdeen University Review 36: 345-358.

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1957). "Social Dancing in Scotland, 1700-1914." Scottish Studies 2: 153-164.

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1964). Traditional Dancing in Scotland ... With an appendix 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia' by F. Rhodes. [With maps, musical illustrations and diagrams.]. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul. REPRINTED in paperback 1985.

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1972). "The History of the Scottish Reel as a Dance Form I." Scottish Studies 16(2).

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1973). "The History of the Scottish Reel as a Dance Form II." Scottish Studies 17(2).

Flett, J. F. and T. M. Flett (1996). Traditional step-dancing in Scotland / J.F. and T.M. Flett. With an appendix: Step-dancing in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia / by F. Rhodes. Edinburgh, Scottish Cultural Press.

Scottish scholar based in Canada George Emmerson wrote:

Emmerson, G. S. (1972). A Social History of Scottish Dance. Ane Celestial Recreation. Montreal and London, McGill-Queen's University Press.

Emmerson, G. S. (1981). Scotland through her Country Dances, Galt House, Canada.

Emmerson, G. S. (1995). A Handbook of Traditional Scottish Dance. Oakville, Galt House.

Emmerson, G. S. (1997). Scottish Country Dancing - An Evolutionary Triumph. Oakville, Galt House.

Scottish writer and former chairperson of STDT:

Hood, E. M. (1980). The Story of Scottish Country Dancing. The Darling Diversion. Glasgow, Collins.

Hood, E., J. Henderson, A. MacFadyen and M. Melin (2001). Tak Yer Places. A photographic record of dance and music in Angus over the past 200 years. Stirling, The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust.

New Zealand dancer:

Whitta, K. (1982 (c.)). Scottish Highland Dance — Tradition and Style. MA Thesis, The Queen's University of Belfast.

Canadian dancer and musician based in Scotland:

MacDonald-Reid, J. (1991). The Indigenous Folk Dance of Scotland. A Report, The Scottish Arts Council and the National Gaelic Arts Project.

Former Chair and Archivist of the RSCDS and former Board member of the STDT:

MacFadyen, A. and F. H. Adams (1983). Dance with your soul a biography of Jean Callander Milligan by Alastair MacFadyen and Florence H. Adams. Edinburgh, The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

MacFadyen, A. and R. S. C. D. Society. (1988). An album for Mrs Ysobel Stewart of Fasnaclòich : co-founder of The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society /compiled and annotated by Alastair MacFadyen. Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society,.

MacFadyen, A. and A. MacPherson, Eds. (2009). Frederick Hill's Book of Quadrilles & Country Dances Etc Etc, March 22nd, 1841 : A reproduction of the original manuscript. Stirling, Scotland, Hill Manuscript Group: MacFadyen, Mackenzie and Macpherson.

Scottish scholar and former Board member of the STDT

Henderson, J. (1995). Dance Studies Vol. 19: The Traditional Dances of the Outer Hebrides, Centre for Dance Studies.

Independent Researchers:

Between 1995 – 2005 Mats Melin conducted research (interviewed, filmed etc) and taught and developed dancing in communities and 1st-3rd level educational institutions in Shetland, Orkney, Sutherland, Western Isles, Isle of Skye, Islay, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Perthshire. Some initiatives were individually funded and organised while others were funded by the Scottish Arts Council and run by Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust (STDT) and Local District Councils.

Melin, M. (1994). Hebridean Dancing. Scottish Arts Council's Conference on the Diversity of the Scottish Traditions of Dance. Albert Hall, Stirling, Scotland.

Melin, M. (1995). Hebridean Dances - Dannsa nan Eileanach. Transcribed for the Comhlan Dannsa nan Eileanach. Stornoway, Acair.

- Melin, M.** (1997). A Sutherland Dance / Compiled by Mats Melin. Golspie, The Highland Council in association with the Scottish Arts Council. The Northern Times Ltd. [<https://limerick.academia.edu/MatsMelin/Books>].
- Melin, M.** (2001). Dance! Dance! Dance!: Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust (STDT) Angus Project Report. Stirling, Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust (STDT). **Unpublished.**
- Melin, M.** (2005). "Putting the dirt back in" - an investigation of step dancing in Scotland. Master of Arts in Ethnochoreology Dissertation, University of Limerick. [<https://limerick.academia.edu/MatsMelin/Theses>]
- Melin, M.** (2008). 'Putting the Dirt Back In' - an investigation into step dancing in Scotland. North Atlantic Fiddle Convention. Memorial University, St John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

Other independent researchers:

Leask, Maria (Shetland 1994-) see Melin and STDT.

Moore, M. (1995). Scottish Step Dancing. Scotland Dances - Scottish Arts Council's Conference on the Diversity of the Scottish Traditions of Dance (1994), Stirling, Scotland, The Scottish Arts Council.

Shoupe, C. A. (2001). "Scottish Social Dancing and the Formation of Community." Western Folklore **60**(2/3): 125-148.

Morrison, C. (2003). "Culture at the Core: Invented Traditions and Imagined Communities. Part 1: Identity Formation." International Review of Scottish Studies **28**: 3-21.

Morrison, C. (2004). "Culture at the Core: Invented Traditions and Imagined Communities. Part 2: Community Formation." International Review of Scottish Studies **29**: 49-71.

Scott, C. M. (2005). The Scottish Highland Dancing Tradition. PhD, The University of Edinburgh.

Coupe, R. (2010). "The Evolution of the 'Eightsome Reel'." Folk Music Journal **9**(5): 693-722.

Newton, M. S. (2009). Warriors of the word : the world of the Scottish Highlanders. Edinburgh, Birlinn.

Newton, M. S. (2012). "The Hidden History of Highland Dance." Celtic Life available on [Academia.edu](https://limerick.academia.edu/MatsMelin/Books).

Newton, M. S. (2013). "'Dannsair air ùrlar-déile thu': Gaelic evidence about dance from the mid-17th to late-18th century Highlands.'" International Review of Scottish Studies **38**: 49-78.

Apart from Leask, Moore and Scott all the researchers above are from and based outside of Scotland.

A number of researchers mention Scottish dance in their work, including Dr Margaret Bennett (Scotland) and Dr Heather Sparling (Canada) but their general focus in their output may be on general folklore or song as in these two examples.

Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust (STDT) research projects:

Karin Ingram conducted research in the Borders area 1998-2001 on behalf of the STDT. Do not know of any published findings from this time.

Before 1995 Joyce Anderson ran a STDT project in Fife but I am not aware of any published findings from this or if research took place. The STDT Archive may hold answers to this.

- Fife (ca 1994) – Joyce Anderson
 - Shetland (1995-6) Mats Melin and Maria Leask (**research**)
 - Angus (1998-2001) – Mats Melin (**research**)
 - Borders (1998-2000) – Karin Ingram (**research**)
 - Perth and Kinross (2002-3) Heather Benes-McGadie & Mats Melin (**research**)
- Stirling (2004) from this period onwards the Trust seems to have focused on teaching, workshops and choreography activities while research seems to have taken less prominence. An Archivist was for a period hired to catalogue the STDT archive material. List of items is currently unavailable.
Little, if any material has been published. M Melin is currently working on making some of his own material available.

Reports:

Scottish Arts Council (1992). Report on the Conference on the Scottish Traditions of Dance, 17 July 1992, Eden Court, Inverness. Edinburgh.

Scottish Arts Council (1994). Scotland's Dances. A review of the 1994 Conference on the Diversity of the Scottish Traditions of Dance – 25/26 October, Albert Hall, Stirling.

Melin, M (2001) see above

Francis, D., F. Dalgetty, S. Eydmann, M. A. Kennedy, R. Kirkpatrick and M. Melin (2010). Traditional Arts Working Group Report – January 2010. Edinburgh, The Scottish Government.
[<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/03105348/1>]

Archives:

RSCDS Headquarters, Edinburgh
STDT Archive – I storage in an unknown location.
Melin, Mats (Personal archive in Ireland)
Metherell, Chris (Personal archive in England)