

Serendipidance: The Encore



As you may know, I am a fan of connections and serendipity in both my regular and dancing life ([Serendipidance, Jan. 2021 Set & Link](#)). I find these connections, especially during this overly long pandemic, particularly uplifting and heart-warming. Here is another I hope you enjoy:

On April 27, my virtual program comprised dances honouring "original" Bloorlea dancers – and a few others, myself included – who began dancing about the same time and are still dancing via Zoom. Before each dance, I asked each person to tell their story about starting Scottish country dancing. Here is Norma Lumsden's story in her own words:

"Twenty years ago, a friend had seen flyers advertising Dancing in the Park and suggested meeting at Edwards Gardens on a lovely Tuesday evening in June. Being a dancer whose focus was classical ballet, I was very excited to learn about SCD. When it came time for the *Dashing White Sergeant* audience participation dance, Ron Macnaughton who is, as you may know, an avid amateur astronomer, invited a passing jogger and me to join him in the dance. We had so much fun dancing with all the joy-filled, high-spirited dancers to the incredible live music of Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent."



Lucky for us, Bloorlea was the closest location for her to continue her dance journey.

For Norma, I chose an unpublished dance called *Norma's Fancy*, a 3X32-bar jig written by the late Mike Briggs for his wife Norma that contains rights and lefts for three couples. I had danced it at a Sunday afternoon Shiftn' Bobbins session taught by Keith and Deirdre — stay tuned for more links!

Norma contacted me the next day to say she enjoyed doing the dance, and it brought back a memory that *she* devised a dance years ago containing the same 12-bar formation. That intrigued me. I asked if she remembered the other 20 bars of the dance or if she had a copy of it, and whether it was a jig, reel, or strathspey. It was in fast time. She had devised it for a competition in 2013 for a dance to be submitted to Scotland for possible publication in Book 49. Coincidentally, I was the person responsible for organizing the unidentified dance submissions for the "judging" session. (Side note: the winner of the competition was Deirdre MacCuish Bark for *The Countess of Dunmore's Reel* — another link.)

In any case, after sleeping on it, the rest of the dance came back to Norma. She called me and I copied it down. The first formation in the dance is set and link (I warned you!). I suggested one minor change to improve the flow of the dance for first man: changing it to set and mirror link.

Next, we needed a name for the dance. I suggested *The Jogger, the Astronomer, and the Ballerina* to reflect her introduction to SCD. It also had to be a reel because *Dashing White Sergeant* is a reel. The fact that the dance has rights and lefts for three couples and DWS requires three dancers is just icing on the serendipity cake. Good things happen in threes!

On May 11, the combined Erin Mills and Bloorlea groups danced *The Jogger, the Astronomer, and the Ballerina* after warming up with a modified *Dashing White Sergeant*.

And that's the story of serendipity, the rebirth of a hidden gem of a dance and, as Norma put it, "a reel celebrating a most memorable introduction to SCD."

But what happened to the jogger? She dashed off!

...Arlene Koteff

The Jogger, the Astronomer, and the Ballerina

8x32 Reel for 3 couples in a 4-couple set
by Norma Lumsden, 2013

- 1-4 1s and 2s set and mirror link.
(In bars 3-4, 1s cast off as 2s dance up the middle and curve into place.)
- 5-8 1s, nearer hands joined, dance down between the 3s, divide and cast up to 2nd place.
- 9-20 Rights and lefts for 3 couples. 2 1 3
- 21-24 1s turn person on their right by the right hand for 4 bars; 1st woman turns 2nd woman and 1st man turns 3rd man.
- 25-32 Left shoulder reels of 3 on the side. First woman dances in and down and 1st man dances in and up. Corners dance loops at the end of the reel.

Finish in the order 2, 1, 3, ready to begin again.

ARLENE NOTES: In choosing the music for the dance, I wanted it to suit the flow of the dance, Norma's personality and musicality, and bring joy. I chose Melville Castle from the CD *Dancing Forth Too*, with musicians Doreen McKerron, Pete Clark, Anne Evans, and Wendy Weatherby.

Whisky Galore... in Mongolia

As part of a £3m "design and build" deal, an entire distillery near Moray, Scotland, is being shipped 5,000 miles across the ocean to be reassembled in Inner Mongolia. The distillery in question is a state secret, except to say it's "a long-established firm". So, should your favourite tippie disappear from the market, a 25-hr, \$12,000 flight from Toronto may reward your search. Diligence is all...!

[BBC Scotland travelling distillery](#)



Dear Editor...

RE: *Set & Link* — Just want to say a great big thank you to the *Set & Link* Committee for all the wonderful newsletters received over the past 15 months. These have really helped me feel connected to Scottish country dancing and to my dancing friends in particular. In the last few months, I have been enjoying watching the videos of teachers' favourite dances included in *S&L*, which always makes me anxious to be back on the dance floor although, goodness knows if I'll be fit enough when the time comes!

...Anne Anderson