

"LA BARATTE" (The Churn)

This figure was danced in the Quadrilles in Canada, but is now falling into disuse. It was shown to me by John Moss, who now lives in New Brunswick, with the suggestion that I should put it into a Scottish dance so that it did not die out completely.

The figure has three parts, so it can be executed with six travelling steps. This means that it can conveniently follow "setting" to form an eight-bar phrase. Although quite different from the figure in "The Jimp Waist" (Book 9 No 2), "La Baratte" reminds me of it because dancers tend to tie themselves in knots during initial attempts to perform the figure.

An extra effort must be made to maintain good footwork while dancing "La Baratte" in a Scottish dance. It is only too easy to forget footwork while thinking of the intricacies of the figure. It is also important for the dancers to keep their heads up, especially during the 5th and 6th bars of the phrase, so that they look at their opposites.

The Figure

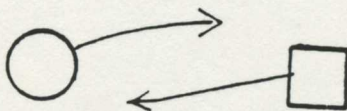
Each man turns the woman opposite to him (not necessarily his partner) half-way round with the right hand. They retain hold of hands, but dance sufficiently far past one another to stretch the arms almost to full length (2 steps).

Each person returns along the line along which he or she has just travelled. During the first step, the woman dances under the man's arm (pulling her right shoulder back) so that she has her back towards him. At this point they join left hands too. The man is now directly behind the woman and they have both hands just above shoulder height. Releasing right hands, the woman dances under the man's left arm (again pulling her right shoulder back) and the dancers retain hold of left hands by forming a "hook" with the fingers close together and curved. The thumbs are not used. (2 steps).

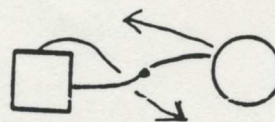
The dancers change places using left "hooked" hands and dance out to opposite places (two steps).

Although the hooked-finger hold is contrary to usual Scottish dancing practice, it seems to be the only one which can conveniently be used when dancing this figure.

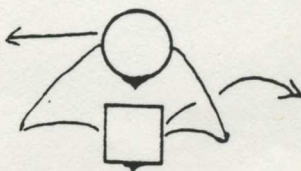
Note that the dancers change places with their opposites when dancing "La Baratte".



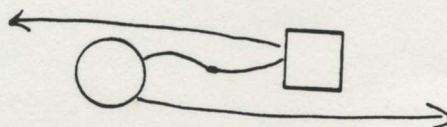
Bars 3-4



Bar 5



Bar 6



Bars 7-8