

**Lethbridge Scottish Country Dance Club (LSCDC)  
3 February 2021 email to LSCDC dancers and musicians**

**Happy New Year to everyone**

**Music and Recitations  
Celebrating Robert Burns  
Zoom session 20 January 2021**

In recognition of then upcoming Burns' Day (25 January), our first Zoom session of the New Year was a musical and poetic extravaganza focussed on songs and poems made famous by the Scottish bard Robert Burns (25 January 1759 – 21 July 1796).

**Peter McCormick** opened the session with a summary of Burns' literary contributions, which include over 300 songs created by pairing poems with music. The lyrics were mostly written by Burns himself, though he also collected and adapted traditional texts as well as works written by other lyricists. Burns was not a music composer, relying instead on existing traditional and popular tunes of the time.

**The Spurtles** played three sets of four tunes each, in jig, reel, and strathspey time. Each set used the **tunes** that Burns had matched with **lyrics**. For example, the jig set consisted of:

**The Shepherd's Wife** : **A Rosebud by My Early Walk**

**The Moudiewort** : **O, for Ane an' Twenty, Tam**

**Wandering Willie** : **Wandering Willie**

**Johnny McGill** : **Sweet Tibbie Dunbar**

Burns often used Scottish Country Dancing as a source of tunes. Indeed, all four of the jig tunes The Spurtles selected are simultaneously names of Scottish Country Dances and the lead tune for that dance. For example, the dance "The Moudiewort" was devised by Alexander Bowman in 1758 with the lead tune of the same name composed by James Oswald at about the same time. Peter also described the songs that The Spurtles included in their reel and strathspey sets.

In addition to playing their sets of tunes, **Lorraine McCormick** entertained us with the lyrics for the song "Green Grow the Rashes, O" in which Burns declares:



**The sweetest hours that e'er I spent  
Are spent among the lasses, O**

Burns ends by complimenting the lasses as an improvement over the men.

**Her prentice han' she try'd on man  
An' then she made the lasses, O**

Screen shot by Gail Michener

The Zoom session celebrating Robbie Burns continued with **Fiona Miller** recalling her childhood familiarity with the works of Burns, through learning poems in school and hearing her mother use aphorisms from Burns as comments on daily situations. Fiona then recited two poems, “A Winter Night” and “To a Mouse”, both written by Burns in local dialect.

“To a Mouse” was written by Burns in November 1785 after he inadvertently ploughed through a mouse’s underground chamber, scattering the nest material to the wind and causing the mouse to cower in fear and cold. In the first stanza Burns tells the mouse he does not intend to kill it.

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie, O, what a pannic's in thy breastie! Thou need na start awa sae hasty, Wi' bickering brattle! I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee, Wi' murd'ring pattle!	Little, cunning, cowering, timorous beast, Oh, what a panic is in your breast! You need not start away so hasty With bickering prattle! I would be loath to run and chase you, With murdering paddle!
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Several stanzas later, Burns notes that although the mouse had built its winter shelter that did not ensure its future. That stanza includes some of the best-known lines from Burns’ works.

But, Mousie, thou art no thy-lane, In proving foresight may be vain; <b>The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men                  Gang aft agley,</b> An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain, For promis'd joy!	But Mouse, you are not alone, In proving foresight may be vain: <b>The best-laid schemes of mice and men                  Go oft awry,</b> And leave us nothing but grief and pain, For promised joy!
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*Extracts from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/To\\_a\\_Mouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/To_a_Mouse)*

Burns ends by noting that the mouse simply lives in the present whereas humans can reflect on the past yet cannot accurately foresee the future. That’s something we have all been experiencing with the Covid-19 pandemic; when will we be able to dance again?



Note added by editor **Gail Michener**. Of course I needed to know which of several species of mouse was involved in this sad story. As best as can be determined from location (East Ayrshire) and the type of nest, it was a wood mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*.

At our 20 January LSCDC Zoom session we had 1 Calgary and 17 LSCDC dancers plus our 2 musicians.

The next Zoom music session with The Spurtles will be

**Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 7 pm**

**Mark your calendar now and plan to join us for the next session. A link will be sent out.**

**Match the SCD Terminology QUIZ on next 2 pages**

## SCD Dance Terminology Quiz

*From the following list of 27 terms, find the 21 terms that match a description in the table below.*

advance and retire	allemande	back to back
balance in line	bourrel	bow and curtsy
dance down & up	double triangles	first corner
grand chain	hands across	hands round
hello and goodbye	jig	knot
men's chain	ladies' chain	lead down & up
poussette	promenade	reel
rights and lefts	rondel	set and cast
set and rotate	strathspey	tournée

#	Description	SCD Dance Term
1	acknowledge partner for 2 bars then turn away and dance behind your line	
2	alternating hands every 2 bars, 2 couples dance an 8-bar square formation	
3	using only setting steps, 2 couples dance an 8-bar progression while facing partner and holding partner's hands	
4	with right hand in partner's right hand, dance between standing couples and return to place	
5	honour your partner at the beginning and end of the dance	
6	three dancers moving simultaneously in the shape of an eight	
7	a dance done in a slow 4/4 tempo	
8	as first couple standing in second place on own side, who is diagonally to your right?	

#	Description	SCD Dance Term
9	with hands joined like the spokes of a wheel, dance clockwise for 4 bars then counter-clockwise for 4 bars	
10	using only setting steps and staying back to back with partner in centre of the set, dance an 8-bar formation for 3 couples that represents the Saltire	
11	an 8-bar progression for 2 couples in which the woman turns under her partner's arm on bar 6 to face her partner	
12	8-bar formation for 2 couples in which women alternately give right hand then left hand to another dancer, but men alternately give no hand then left hand to another dancer	
13	facing partner, dance 2 bars towards partner, then 2 bars away from partner	
14	8-bar progression for 2 couples in which the woman turns under her partner's arm on bars 1 and 2 then dances side-by-side for the next 4 bars	
15	dance 1 bar towards partner, then 2 bars passing sideways behind partner, then 1 bar retiring from partner	
16	8-bar progression, danced in a 3-bar, 3-bar, 2-bar count, which begins with couple 1 dancing under an arch made by couple 2	
17	using only setting steps in an 8-bar formation, dancing couple acknowledges their 1st corner, partner, 2nd corner, and partner	
18	with as many dancers as required joining hands, slip step clockwise for 4 bars	
19	a dance done in a 6/8 tempo	
20	alternating hands every 1 or 2 bars for 8 bars, 3 couples dance a rectangular pattern	
21	8-bar progression for 2 couples in which dancers set to partner for first 2 bars then cast off and move one position clockwise on next 2 bars	

Still searching for a term in the Find the SCD Terms puzzle emailed 6 January? Contact Gail ([michener@uleth.ca](mailto:michener@uleth.ca))