

Social dancing tips

Dancing at a social can sometimes seem overwhelming particularly to newer Scottish country dancers. This information will help new dancers understand a little of the etiquette of social dancing. It should also remind more experienced dancers how everyone's enjoyment (including that of the MC and dance recappers) can be enhanced.

Preparation

Social dance programmes are usually distributed well ahead of an event. Familiarising yourself with the dances beforehand will contribute to a more enjoyable event.

Finding a partner

Newer dancers shouldn't be afraid to ask more experienced dancers to dance. You can attempt more with a partner whom you know is a good dancer and good at helping.

Don't be afraid to politely decline to dance if you are not confident that you can manage the dance

Forming sets

Couples should wait until a dance is announced before walking on to the floor to form sets.

When forming sets, try to do so quickly and remember to join at the end of the lines that are forming.

It is customary for couples at the head of the lines to count off the sets. Pay attention to your number as this will be the position in your set that you will be dancing from when the dance starts.

The people counting down the sets will indicate to the MC if more couples are needed to fill the last set. If you have chosen to sit out the dance, do not feel pressured by the MC or other dancers to complete the set. If a set can't be completed, the dancers in that set should leave the floor quickly.

Show your respect for the MC and recappers by being quiet, listening and paying attention to what they have to say. This will help the MC and recappers to keep the social moving and ensure that the programme of dances is completed.

Dancing

There is generally only one walk-through of a dance. If you are not in first position in a set and would like to walk-through the dance, let the other members of your set know. Also let them know if you would then prefer to return to your original position, the first couple will need to pay attention to the walk-through instructions!

Be aware of the boundaries of your set before the dance starts.

During a dance, helpful use of hands, thoughtful stepping up or down, anticipation and, awareness of other dancers, will help the dance flow smoothly.

Use traditional holds and turns unless other dancers in your set are happy for you to burl or add other flourishes and it is safe to do so.

After a dance has finished, thank your partner and the other dancers in your set for their participation, thank the band if there is one, and then leave the floor.
