

The Elsworth Chronicle



Issue No: 7

February 1994

In a magazine such as this 'Letters to the Editor' are somewhat of a rarity. The views of villagers, though, can make stimulating reading; an invitation is therefore extended to anyone who has personal views on matters relating to Elsworth to air them briefly on these pages under 'A Personal View'. I Likewise any tale to tell of Elsworth would be most welcome. As a starter, here are some personal observations on the possible development at Fardell's Lane.

A Personal View

Perhaps the strongest reason for launching a village magazine some two and a half years ago was a desire to break down feelings of 'them and us' that seem to boil over from time to time. It was hoped that by sharing news and events all in the village would feel involved, no matter whether in the village all day or only evenings and weekends and all would come to understand the views of others, even if not in full agreement.

To judge from feelings over land behind Roger's Close and now Fardell's Lane, this might not seem to have happened, although hopefully both are matters of the issue rather than action and instant re-action. We all have a view, no doubt, about whether sheltered accommodation should be built off Fardell's Lane. Mine, for what it is worth, is that if there is an identified need for sheltered accommodation for the elderly in the village, every effort should be made for it to be provided. At the same time, the views should not be disregarded of those who wish this parcel of land in particular to remain a natural habitat. The two need not be seen as incompatible.

Reducing this matter to basics, to use a phrase now in vogue, three issues may be identified, a) There is a view that the land in question should remain a natural habitat, b) There is a desire to welcome an opportunity to have sheltered accommodation in the village, c) There is the question of what may legitimately be done. The first two points have evoked strong responses and the matter has become confrontational with contrary petitions being sent to the South Cambridgeshire planners. But need it be so? Could there not be a solution which would satisfy both camps? An answer might well be found through 'c' above, that is what is legitimately possible. Less highly regarded parcels of land in the vicinity of Fardell's lane might well seem suitable to present owners and potential purchaser alike, as

well as to a majority in the village. That such land might lie marginally outside the village framework need not be an insurmountable obstacle as far as sheltered housing is concerned as modification for such a purpose is allowed for in the Structure Plan. On the other hand, the Fardell's Lane scheme as proposed is likely to run into difficulties when examined at the planning stage, for it exceeds the permissible - normally 8 dwellings, but 15 in cases of established exceptional local need.

What is to be done? It is suggested that those who have land to sell which, perhaps with adjacent land, might be suitable for consideration should contact me (voluntary initial co-ordinator) as soon as possible. Nothing might come of it, but the possibility of an alternative site is worth considering. Any offer would not, of course, be binding at this stage and confidentiality would be respected. Perhaps in this way the anxieties of those wishing to preserve Fardell's Land could be made to disappear and those seeking sheltered accommodation made equally delighted. If this failed, another possibility could be to consider a change of status of the existing retirement bungalows so that these with but a few additions would permit numbers sufficient to warrant the employment of a warden.

To return to the beginning, what I, for one, would like to see is that entrenched positions are not taken up at an early stage, but rather where there are seemingly opposing views every effort should be made to explore alternative solutions. A united village - perhaps never; a tolerant village, perhaps so!

Alan Farrow

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Anglia in Bloom, 1993

Elsworth has again distinguished itself by being judged joint runner-up with Little Braxted for the East Anglia Tourist Board Trophy for the best small village in East Anglia. The winning village was Whissonsett.

The judges comments on Elsworth might be of interest. "A good, well maintained village. The public houses were very colourful and do the village credit, as does the well maintained churchyard and the village playing field. The front gardens of the houses were also on the whole well maintained and colourful and reflect the pride taken in them by the residents.

Under the heading 'Constructive Comments for the Future Years', the judges recorded the following notes, "The introduction of a few more trees, shrubs or roses in the open grass areas would certainly be a further asset to the village."

We have every reason to be well pleased. If we heed the words of the judges and are careful over litter, perhaps next summer we might become the holders of the trophy.



Terry Stevens receiving the Runner-up Award on behalf of Elsworth Villagers

K.C. Collett

Ken Collett came to live in Boxworth in 1962 and was employed by the Animal Health Trust as Poultry Manager at their station in the village. This post he held until his retirement in 1979.

In 1974, when the local District Council's name was changed from Chesterton Rural District Council to South Cambridgeshire District Council, he was elected to represent the seven villages on that Council. He retained that office for nineteen years, and during that time built up an excellent liaison with those villages and the District Council.

However, his duties didn't cease at District level, for three years he has been Chairman of Boxworth Parish Meeting and, in another capacity was for many years a School Governor of Elsworth School. About four years ago he helped initiate the Patients' Participation Group at Papworth Surgery.

He has recently moved to Cambridge - our thanks go out to him and we wish him and his wife, Ann, good health and every happiness in their new environment.

J.W.T.

District Council Election 16.9.93

James Bowen McGregor 198

Michael James Orbell 156

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THE DAY TRACEY MET THE QUEEN AND THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

You may have read of the day in November last when the Queen's car was held up in traffic near Elizabeth Bridge. The occasion was when the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were making their way to lunch at the restaurant of the Cambridge Regional College by the river off Newmarket Road, following the official opening of the new college buildings at Kings Hedges Road.



Among those waiting for the royal party, perhaps a little anxiously, in the college restaurant was Tracey Grange of Brockley Road whose allocated role was to serve wine at the top table. She was soon to be put at her ease by Prince Philip who came over to where Tracey and the other waitresses were standing when he entered the reception area and asked about her course and the college.

Once the party was seated, Tracey's main task commenced with a surprise; the Duke declined the proffered wine, asking for a half-a-pint of beer instead. The meal was soon under way. Tracey made a mental note that if the day came when she was invited to sit with the Queen, she would eat fairly quickly, for once the Queen had finished a course, all plates were collected. Some eager talkers were taken unawares, with much left uneaten it seems.

When the time came for the royal party to go, both the Queen and the Duke took their leave of Tracey and the other students who served, as well as their hosts. The occasion and the meal were clearly enjoyed by all, although the Duke admitted to Tracey that he did "Like a good old fry-up" but wasn't allowed to turn his hand to this in the royal kitchen!

The 25th November 1993 was indeed a day to remember. Tracey's account when she returned home must have brought back memories to Granny (Eileen) of when she attended a royal garden party in 1982. Little did she think at that time when she described her day at Buckingham Palace, where she enjoyed cucumber sandwiches etc., that the day would come when her grand-daughter would return the hospitality in person, even to the extent of providing the Queen with petit fours she had herself made.

A.W.F.

Cambridgeshire Local Government Review

At the present time a Local Government Commissioner is examining the future structure of local government in Cambridgeshire. In essence she is considering the case for replacing the present County and the six District Councils (one of which is South Cambs.) with a system which places all services within an area under one authority.

It would seem five options are being considered. Space does not permit a detailed review but further information may be obtained from Shire Hall and South Cambridgeshire Hall. To focus on our future, four of the five proposals link South Cambridgeshire with East Cambridgeshire, three of which also include Cambridge City.

Clive Mines, our local County Councillor writes "After many meetings and deliberations as your County Councillor I support that two unitary authorities be formed to provide local government services in the area of the present Cambridgeshire. The Northern one to be based on the present districts of Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough; the Southern one to be from the present South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City districts."

The present South Cambridgeshire District Council also favours linking South and East Cambridgeshire, but would prefer excluding the City of Cambridge, which itself would become a unitary authority.

Vera Thurley

The unavoidable cancellation of the Autumn magazine prevented a tribute to Vera Thurley on these pages at the appropriate time. Her sudden death in September brought much sadness and our condolences are extended to John and his family, who must have received comfort from the size of the congregation at the funeral.

Vera was a Norfolk girl, coming to Elsworth as John's wife in 1952, since which time she created homes successively for John and the family at Elsworth Lodge, Avenue Farm and Roger's Close. In addition to John, Vera leaves three children, Michael, Nicholas and Diane, and a grandchild, Robert.



Holy Trinity Church

After many years assisting to clean the church, Sheila Shanks and Edna Hall have decided that the time has come to put away the polish and the brush. We are all most grateful for their faithful service over many years. Volunteers to fill their places on the rota would be very much appreciated - please contact Rex Tindall (267377) or the Rector (267226).

In like vein, it is hoped to increase the number of organists the church may call on. Anyone who feels able to play and would be willing to be included on a roster, should contact one of the numbers above. Your interest would be very much appreciated.

Mothering Sunday is not far away - on the 13th March. We should be very pleased to welcome parents and children to an appropriate service at 3.30 on that day.

Elsworth Sports Club

Cricket

The first eleven finished fourth in Division 2 (S) of the Cambridgeshire Junior League, while the second eleven were placed mid-way in their division, 6 (S).

Association Football

Elsworth has played thirteen games this season and is at the time of writing placed in fourth position in Division 5A of the Cambridgeshire League. Thirteen games have been played, of which it has won seven, drawn one and lost five. Lee Draper has taken well to his new role of striker, having scored fourteen goals.

Table Tennis

Two teams compete in the St. Neots League, the A team lying second at the moment and the B team third.

Practice nights are on Mondays at 7.30 in the pavilion. Anyone interested should contact Billy Knibbs (267266). You will be made very welcome.

Youth Club

Sports opportunities for teenagers

For those between the ages of 15 and 20 years an interesting development is planned to commence in April, when on Saturday mornings at the village college in Swavesey facilities and coaching will be provided in badminton, cricket, tennis, netball and possibly swimming. Participants do not have to be members of the village college, they merely have to be within the specified age group and be able to pay the £1 a session fee. Further details may be obtained from Peter Smith, the Community Tutor, at the college.

Resignation

It is with regret that Penny Poole has felt it necessary to resign from the parish council. She has found it increasingly difficult to combine the demands of the council with those of her work and the needs of her family. The Council is most grateful for all she has done for it and for the village.

Regulations regarding the appointment of her successor are reasonably straightforward. It will hopefully have been seen on the parish notice board that a bye-election will be held if 10 parishioners notify South Cambs. District that this is their wish. 60 days are then to be allowed for nominations: if none are received the vacancy will be filled by co-option.

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Road Signs

'SLOW' signs at the three approaches to the village are in the process of being painted and no doubt will be a familiar sight by the time these words are read. Following representations by the parish council, a County Council officer has inspected the positions of the 30 mph. signs at the entrances to the village and stated that the signs on the Rogues Lane end of Smith Street could be moved further towards the limit of the village, the last light post being at present beyond the signs. Residents in this area will be consulted as to the siting of the signs.

Tennis

Following an initiative of the parish council, considerable interest was expressed in the village in the formation of a tennis club. Such response led to discussions with the Sports Club and Michael Davison, who most generously agreed to provide at a peppercorn rent a parcel of land adjacent to the school playing field. Approximate costings were obtained and the possibility of grants explored.

Matters seemed to be progressing well. However, at a public meeting called to outline the developments there was not sufficient support even to enable a steering committee to be formed. The project has therefore been dropped.

Such endeavours to seek out what additional facilities people of Elsworth would like in the village are clearly worthwhile, even if finally abortive. In this case, words of appreciation are clearly due to Sue Warboys for all her endeavours in piloting this venture, and to Michael Davison for his generous offer, without which firm proposals could not have been made.

Elsworth Parish Council

Fardell's Lane

An outline planning application was received in November from the Housing Department of South Cambridgeshire District Council with respect to 20 sheltered homes for the elderly, together with a warden's house and a day room. The proposed site was Fardell's Lane.

Within the village the proposition evoked strong opposing responses. There was an expression of the view that the land in question should be conserved as a natural habitat, while a contrary opinion favouring such a development was also made known. Both groups drew up petitions; the former submitting 57 signatures and the latter 130.

In essence, the stance of the Parish Council was, after much discussion, that we were not opposed to sheltered housing within the village but we needed information from South Cambs. Council as to the size of the local need, and we needed to be satisfied that the scheme was in accordance with planning regulations. It was felt that if there is a pressing need among Elsworth people or close relatives for such sheltered accommodation, the Parish Council should give its active support to see that it was met. However, the role of the parish council is to scrutinise and comment on planning applications and we must try to ensure that when South Cambs. is the applicant its own guidelines still apply. As it stands, the application appears not to meet the requirements of the Structure Plan; questions relating to planning regulations have therefore been put to South Cambs. together with points relating to the site.

Following talks with South Cambs. officers in December, it has been agreed that factual information as to the need should be ascertained. Such a study is to be undertaken, together with objective surveys of the site instigated by South Cambs. with regard to drainage and its importance as a conservation site. Thus all shades of opinion are to be taken into account and decisions made based on fact rather than conjecture.

Flooding in Brook Street

Three cars had to be abandoned in Brook Street during the October flood, one, at least, being an insurance write-off.

In view of the anxiety at such times to residents endeavouring to meet pressing appointments and other commitments and concern over the inaccessibility to ambulances and other vehicles of mercy, an emergency route has been agreed with the Parochial Church Council whereby at times of severe flooding it will be possible for vehicles to use the pathway through the churchyard. It must be emphasised that such use is only permissible in the event of extreme emergency. If damage to the pathway ensues, the matter will have to be reviewed. Apart from such times the path remains for pedestrians only and the hinged-fence exit onto The Drift will remain locked and barred; for vehicular access it will be necessary to obtain a key from one of the keyholders notified to residents, to whom it has to be returned immediately. Vehicles of residents may use the route for outward journeys only: on return to Elsworth, they should be left in the Drift or elsewhere in the village until the flood has subsided. It must be emphasised that this route is for *emergency* use only when flooding of Brook Street is exceptionally severe; in the case of more normal flooding, vehicles should travel along the side of Brook Street as heretofore. It is hoped the need to use the path will not arise more than once in five or ten years, if that. In times when there is a risk of flooding, the most satisfactory procedure would seem to be to park overnight in The Drift if a journey is to be made the following morning.

Waste Recycling

The bottle, can and clothes banks have been re-sited and are now at the front of Gordon Sandercock's barn in Boxworlh Road. We are most grateful to Mr Sandercock for allowing this land to be used.



Scholars and Teachers VI, 1938-1948

The dread of war and the fear of Hitler hung over the nation in 1938. When the school in Elsworth reassembled after harvest in September, air-raid rehearsals began. Arrangements were made for each child to disperse to certain houses on the signal being given. After several practices the time taken for the pupils to reach their safety posts was five minutes. Gas mask instruction came next. In July 1939 everyone in the village was issued with one and the schoolchildren took theirs to school to have their names "printed on the boxes and on the tapes of the respirators in indelible ink". They were taught how to put them on and they wore them for five minutes each day.

On 31 August the Head Teacher and Mrs Addy returned from their holiday in Yorkshire to receive a party of evacuees from Popham Road School, Islington. Unaccompanied by parents, they arrived next day at 2.15 p.m. There were 39 children, chiefly Junior boys, 3 women helpers and 1 male teacher, Mr D. H. Stevenson. On the following day they assembled in school at 10 a.m. but the Elsworth children were still on holiday, many of them working in the harvest field. It was a time of settling in for the evacuees and easing them into their startling new environment. They were taken on walks across the fields to Knapwell and Papworth, and they had informal activities each day in the British Legion Hut. The new term began on 11 September and a shift system was arranged so that the Popham children could have normal school for half the day in the school classroom. Mr Addy gave them a beekeeping demonstration and "a hive was opened and frames taken out to show different stages in hive life and the Queen was found and shown". There is no record of anyone being stung. That same afternoon the Rector, Mr Iggleton, gave them tea in the school and the Knapwell evacuees also attended. Every attempt was made to keep the children happy and interested.

After a fortnight the Popham Road Headmaster, Mr A.W. Dean, visited the school and assessed the needs of his pupils. He returned five days later accompanied by the Chairman of the Islington Education Committee, Captain Cummins. They had with them a load of school material conveyed in ambulance coaches. Mr Dean was back again within three weeks with a load of desks, furniture, cupboards and tables for use in the British Legion Institute, which had already been inspected as a classroom by the HMI, Miss Harrison. The

Popham Road pupils then settled down to a normal school day, using their own familiar equipment under their own master, Mr Stevenson.

Meanwhile, homesick evacuees had begun to beat back home. Parents came up at week-ends to fetch them, and by the end of November twelve had left the village. This drift continued throughout the war, and on one occasion, in March 1941, a boy set out to walk to London. He was billeted with Mr Harper of Rogues Lane, who reported his absence to Mr Addy. He informed the police and they found the wanderer on the road; later he was returned to his family in Islington. Many must have thought it was safer there than in Elsworth. The first air raid warning in the village came on 10 November 1940 during morning school. The work was stopped and "the children dispersed quietly and orderly to the houses they had arranged to go to. The Head Teacher went to the British Legion Institute, but the evacuees had not heard the warning. The children were dispersed immediately and the Head Teacher then went to the Warden's post to keep in touch with developments. The All Clear was not given until 11.50 a.m". However, it was a yellow, not a red, warning and the alert should not have been made public. Far from being put out by a wasted morning Mr Addy welcomed the exercise as being "a useful rehearsal for dispersal of children".

In the second half of 1940 air raid warnings and the sound of bombs were heard on several occasions during the night. On 16 November "at 2.05 a.m. this morning an enemy aeroplane dropped 10 high explosive bombs on this village, the nearest one to the school being about 50 yards away. Some damage was done to house property but there were no casualties. One window in the door of the Infant Room was cracked as a result. The main road near the Rector's drive gate was littered with debris, which was cleared by members of the Home Guard." Mr Addy was the local organiser of the Home Guard for the district, having set it up earlier in the summer under its original name of Local Defence volunteers.

Less alarming than bombs and flares was the installing of electricity in the village in 1940. Electricians started wiring the school at the beginning of the autumn term and they must have disrupted the normal routine. On 5 January 1941 electricity was switched on for the first time, but the improvement in street lighting could not be seen because of the blackout. Another important benefit affecting the school was the provision of hot midday meals for children. The meals

were brought out from the Over Civic Defence Cooking Centre in insulated containers. " 12 September 1942. Meals scheme started today. HM and Mrs Addy served the meals and took their meals with the children. The meal was good and popular and quite warm. Washing of dishes etc. proved quite difficult as there is no water supply laid on at school and all the water required had to be heated on a Primus stove. There is no facility for heating plates so much heat is lost in serving food. Charge: 1 child 5d a day, 2/0 a week; more than 1 from a household, 2/0 a week for the first child. 1/8 a week for second and others." Mr Addy had to wait nearly a year before the County Canteen Organiser delivered an electric copper "for use for heating water and for washing up after mid-day meals" (1 July 1943). Some months before then, however, he was complaining about the food. "14 December 1942. School meal today was much below the standard with which the scheme started. Peas cooked with very little meat and potatoes insipid, unattractive and not sufficiently cooked. Rice not sufficiently cooked and was hard. Reported to Education Secretary."

By this time so many of the Popham Road schoolchildren had returned home that the British Legion Institute was no longer required as a classroom. The remaining pupils were integrated with Elsworth School and Mr Stevenson, their teacher, was considered to be an Assistant Master there. They all took part in various war-time activities such as collecting money in War Weapons Week; collecting rose hips for making syrup; entertaining the parents at end-of-term concerts; collecting for the Red Cross prisoner-of-war fund; and Digging for Victory in the school allotment.

Victory came and 8 and 9 May 1945 were declared as National Holidays. These dates coincided with the County Youth Festival and there was a whole week of activities starting with a service on Sunday 6 May. A week later the last two of the original party of unaccompanied evacuees of 1 September 1939, Ronald and Derek Hardcastle, returned home. They were followed in June by Frances Ellis who had come up later and had perhaps stayed on for the village victory celebrations in the Grass Close, which were declared a great success.

Now came the dramatic decision by the County Education Committee to close the school. Mr Addy was informed on 2 September 1946 that--"the school premises must not again be used as a school. The County Architect's report indicates that the structure is dangerous." Visits

were made to the British Legion Institute, the Chapel Schoolroom and the Prisoner of War Camp in a search for accommodation, but none was found to be suitable. The Infants were therefore moved into the Practical Subjects room up The Causeway; and the Seniors and Juniors attended the school at Childerley Gateway; and were taken there in Mr Brand's bus. School meals discontinued; Mr and Mrs Addy left the village; the school and the school house were put into the market. It was the end of the one hundred years of education in Brook Street. A sad time for the village, perhaps, but the phoenix arose in September 1954 in Broad End, and is today a very vigorous bird.

Betty Evans

The quotations are from Elsworth School Log Book III



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Elsworth National Womens' Register - (N.W.R.)

We meet approximately every three weeks in members homes and, although our group is thriving, we would love to welcome new members.

This is a very informal group and our programme is planned to include a variety of activities, both serious and light-hearted.

During the past six months our programme has included walking a town trail of Godmanchester (on the hottest evening of the year), a fascinating visit to Lucy Boston's House at Hemingford Grey, a discussion on solvent abuse, a glass-engraving demonstration with the opportunity to "have a go" ourselves, a ten-pin bowling outing, a pub meal, a very interesting and informative talk on homeopathy and a Christmas social event which included our version of "Give Us A Clue".

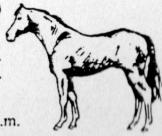
To find out what is planned for the next few months, please consult the "Diary Dates" section.

If you would like to join us, either for a taster or permanently, contact our local organisers - Gillian Barnes (267524) or Carol Sims (267675) and they would be happy to give you more information.

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Over the last year we have had talks on: Spinning, Flower Arranging, The Cambridge Collection, Canals, the Vanishing Hedgerow, The Nile in Style, Elsworth -Past and Present (Mrs Evans), A Get-Together at the Poacher, A Mystery Trip and have entertained a group of Lancashire W.I. Ladies, who came to Elsworth and Cambridge on a two-day visit.

Our programme for the next few months can be found under "Diary Dates".

Always a big welcome for new members.

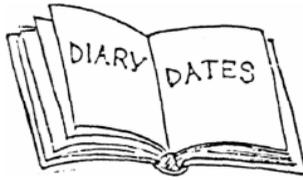
Betty Simcock

Jubilee Club

The Jubilee Club started 1994 with their Annual lunch at the Poacher which was enjoyed by 31 members. In February we have our A.G.M. when David Hollier is going to give an illustrated talk on 'Iceland'; in March Mrs Beryl Andrews is to give an illustrated talk on her trip to Africa; in April the Home sisters and friends will entertain; in May Rita Backhouse is booked for Surprise Cooking; in June we have a Mystery Tour; in July we have a Seaside Outing.

Everyone is very welcome to come along to our meetings which are held during term time in the School Hall on the 1st Thursday of the month at 2.45 p.m. We have excellent speakers, a Bring and Buy stall and a very nice tea each month.

Eileen Grange



- February 19 Football - Littlington Athletics Res. Home.
- March 3 Jubilee Club - Illustrated talk on Africa - Beryl Andrews
- March 3 N.W.R. - 'Donor cards'- discussion.
- March 5 Football - Schering Res. Home.
- March 7 Holy Trinity Church Mothering Sunday. Service at 3.30 p.m.
- March 9 W.I. - Annual Meeting with presentations.
- March 23 N.W.R. - Indian evening. Members to bring food.
- March 26 Football - Melbourne Res. Home.
- April 7 Jubilee Club - Entertainment by Patience & Primrose Home & friends.
- April 13 W.I. - The Hartford Singers.
- April 17 Wildlife Trust - Walk at Overhall Grove. Meet at Knapwell Church at 2.15 p.m.
- April 18 N.W.R.-Talk on Laos.
- April 23 Football - Castle Camp Res. Home.
- April 28 Wildlife Trust - Lady's Wood - bluebell spectacular. Meet at Upwood Meadows car park 7 p.m.
- April 30 Wildlife Trust- Waresley Wood, near St. Neots. Open Day.
- May 1 Wildlife Trust - Waresley Wood, near St. Neots. Open Day.
- May 5 Jubilee Club - 'Surprise Cooking' - Rita Backhouse.
- May 11 W.I. - Chiropody.
- May 22 Wildlife Trust - Brampton Wood Open Day.
- May 25 N.W.R. - Controversial video - discussion.
- June 2 Jubilee Club - Mystery coach tour.
- June 8 W.I. - 'Any Questions'.
- June 12 Wildlife Trust - Grafham Family Watch Wildlife Day. A fun day with games, craft sessions etc.
- June 16 N.W.R. - Town Trail - St. Ives.
- July 2 Holy Trinity Church Fete.
- July 13 W.I. - Scottish Dancing.