



SCOTTISH STEP DANCE GLOSSARY

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A SCOT IN TIME
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Scottish Step Dance Glossary

Scottish step dancing has been around for centuries. Its form developed gradually with contemporary dance masters devising dances to suit particular dancers. Step dancing encompasses a great variety of forms or styles, most of which have developed their own jargon. The modern step dance tradition, with its roots in St. Andrews Summer School, uses a mixture of ballet and Scottish country dance terms. Highland Dance uses language developed predominantly to express the dancers' needs, also including several ballet terms. Hard shoe/Cape Breton step dance utilizes some of the same movements, sometimes with different rhythms with their own names. Some terms have the potential for confusion such as balance (coupé) and balancé (pas de basque derrière) with completely different meanings.

This is an attempt to help members of the broader Scottish step dance community understand one another.

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My apologies for any mistakes. Please contact me at: a-scot-in-time.org with additions or corrections.

My deepest gratitude goes to Arlis Evelyn Wallace for the inspiration to become a dancer and teacher. She was my mother and first dance teacher.

This glossary is separated into three sections: **I – Abbreviations, foot and arm positions and basic terminology**, **II – Movements** and **III – Setting steps**

I – Abbreviations, foot and arm positions and basic terminology:

Abbreviations:

RF - right foot

LF - left foot

RH – right heel

LH – left heel

RS - right shoulder

LS - left shoulder

RDF -right diagonal forward/front or towards 4th intermediate

LDF - left diagonal forward/front or towards 4th intermediate

RDB - right diagonal back or towards 4th intermediate **rear**

LDB - left diagonal back or towards 4th intermediate **rear**

PDB – pas de basque

SCD – Scottish country dance

Positions of the feet - described from the perspective of the line of direction, an invisible line running between the heels of both feet from front to back where the heels are touching with each foot turned out at a 45 degree angle to the line of direction or 90 degrees, i.e., 1st position

1st – as described above, may be aerial as in a slip step

2nd – working foot extended to the side 90 degrees from the line of direction, may be used slightly in front of or behind that position for lateral travel or weight may be evenly distributed on the balls of both feet

2nd forward (semi 2nd, 2nd intermediate or forward 2nd) - half way between 2nd and 4th intermediate positions

3rd – working foot is placed at the instep of the supporting foot on the toe, half point, ball, heel or flat

3rd rear- working foot is placed behind or under the heel of the supporting foot

3rd crossed – toe of working foot is placed outside the supporting foot in contact with it

4th or 4th in front of 1st – working foot is in an open position forward with heels of both feet on the line of direction

4th in front of 3rd – working foot is in an open position forward of 3rd

4th rear – working foot is in an open position behind the supporting leg with heels of both feet on the line of direction

4th intermediate – working foot is in an open position 45 degrees from the line of direction

4th intermediate rear – working foot is in an open position 45 degrees from the line of direction to the back, diagonally behind the dancer

mid-4th – midway between 4th and 4th intermediate

4th opposite 5th – working foot is in an open position in front of 5th

5th – working foot is in contact with the supporting foot at the big toe joint

5th rear – position of the supporting foot when the working foot is in 5th

Aerial positions – positions where the working foot is off the ground in an open, closed or rear position, the height of the working (raised) foot is sometimes specified as:

high – heel under supporting knee height

normal/medium – foot midway between knee and ankle height

low – toe at ankle height

very low – toe supporting heel height

When a level is not specified, assume normal/medium.

Closed positions – working foot in contact with supporting leg or foot i.e., 1st, all 3rd and 5th positions

Ground positions - working foot in contact with the ground in an open or closed position

Inverted positions – most positions have a complementary position where one or both of the feet are turned in. Inverted 1st, inverted 2nd and inverted 3rd are the most common, inverted 4th is used in the flicker movement

Neutral position– often used in hard shoe step dance to refer to the position when the feet are parallel, approximately 4-5 inches apart, without turn out and with weight on one or both feet

Open positions - feet apart i.e., all 2nd and 4th positions

Positions of the arms –

1st – fists or hands on waist with elbows directly to the sides

2nd – one arm, with fingers lightly gathered with the thumb in contact with the 1st joint of the middle finger, is raised above, forward, and away from the shoulder on the same side and is well rounded while the other arm is in 1st position

3rd – both arms raised as for 2nd position and well rounded

4th – both arms as for 3rd position and almost touching and well rounded

5th – as for 4th but below the waist and well rounded

Many others unique to the specific dance occur, especially in Hebridean dances, Sailor's Hornpipe and Irish Jig.

Ball – the entire ball of the foot is in contact with the ground

Contra – using opposite foot, leg or arm

Extend – moving the working foot to an open aerial position fully stretched

Flex – having a joint bent. i.e., heel placed in 3rd should be fully flexed (toes pointing upward) The knee of that leg will also be flexed. Opposite of stretch(ed).

Half point –the bottom of the toes on the ground with the ball of the foot off the ground

Heel – foot is fully flexed with the heel in contact with the ground in any open or closed position

Metronome settings – a number representing the number of beats per minute

Opposing arm/foot – using the opposite arm as foot or leg, e.g., RF 2nd L arm in 2nd

Point – the working foot is fully stretched and in contact with the ground

Rhythm – the strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound

Setting steps – a commonly used group of movements often executed facing another dancer

Stretch – the working foot or leg is fully extended producing a straight line either from knee to toe or hip to toe.

Supporting foot/working foot – the foot bearing weight is the supporting foot, the other is the working foot

Syncopated – characterized by displaced beats or accents so that the strong beats are weak and vice versa

Tempo/tempi (singular and plural) – the speed at which music is played. (metronome settings)

Time signature – the 2 numbers at the beginning of a piece of music, one above the other that indicate the relationship between notes and their relative time value. The top number indicates how many beats there are in a bar or measure, the bottom number indicates what kind of note receives one beat, e.g., $\frac{6}{8}$ indicates 6 beats per bar and 1 eighth note receives 1 beat

Working foot/supporting foot – the working foot is predominately not weight bearing while the supporting foot is the one bearing weight.

II - Movements:

- A movement is a combination of positions.
- 5th position is interchangeable with 3rd position in the descriptions below.
- All movements can be danced with the opposite foot or contra.
- Coaching suggestions are in *red italics*

Agworm crawl – from 1st position, for example, pivot on the ball of LF and close the RF to inverted first (1) pivot on ball of RF to turn it out and ball dig LF in 3rd rear (2) pivot on RH to inverted 1st to repeat. (see Miss Gayton's Hornpipe Step 5)

Assemble (assemblé) – from an aerial position, a movement of elevation landing with the weight distributed equally on the balls of both feet in 3rd.

Assemblé soutenu - circle RF from 2nd aerial through 4th intermediate aerial into 3rd crossed or from 4th rear aerial through 2nd aerial, a pivot turn often follows. (see pivot turn)

Attitude – raise the RF with a bent knee in front of the left leg into open 3rd aerial with or without a hop, sometimes with a light brush on the ground (see Swish)

Back step – begin with RF in 3rd aerial, push off the ground with LF and quickly pass working foot to 3rd rear aerial and spring onto it ending with LF in 3rd aerial in 1 count or beat (1) Sometimes begins with the working foot in 3rd rear aerial omitting the quick pass of the working foot to 3rd rear aerial.

Back step, Shetland – (retiré) with RF in 3rd, hop LF lifting RF toward 3rd aerial (&), pass RF to 3rd rear and step in 3rd rear (1) The working foot is kept close to the supporting leg, but not necessarily in contact with it.

Balancé – [pas de basque/waltz forward and back or side to side (see pas de derrière/pas de basque) - travel forward to 4th or 4th intermediate, take weight on RF (1), close LF to RF in 3rd rear (2), beat RF in 3rd (3) step LF backward to 4th rear or 4th intermediate rear (1), close RF to LF (2), beat LF in 3rd rear (3). 3 even beats in waltz time (1 2 3), in reel time (1 & 2) in jig time (1_&2) where there is a pause after (1). *“step beat beat”, “step ball change” or “spring beat beat” in the rhythm required.*

Balance (coupé over and under) – with RF extended to 4th intermediate aerial, spring onto RF displacing the LF through 3rd, making contact, to 4th intermediate rear aerial (1), spring onto LF through 3rd to displace the RF to 4th intermediate aerial (2) or from 2nd to 2nd displacing through 3rd rear.

Ball change – beat RF 3rd (1) beat LF 3rd rear (2). (most often front foot then back foot)
Sometimes used to travel.

Ball dig – place working foot in a specified position with force or accent. A series of ball digs alternating feet is a “grind”. (see Agworn crawl or Crab walk – forward or grind)

Ballonné composé – (hop and travel, cut and travel, syncopated hop, up down beat) a circular movement, begin with the RF in an open aerial position moving toward 3rd aerial (1), lowering to end in a closed or open position (&) beat LF in 3rd rear (2)

Without travel (syncopated hop/up down beat): with RF extended to 4th intermediate aerial, hop LF while the working foot moves toward 3rd aerial (1) lower working foot to 3rd or with a bent knee toward 4th intermediate (&) beat supporting foot in 3rd or 4th intermediate rear (2)

With travel (hop and travel, hop step close or hop beat beat): hop on LF while the RF moves mid-way **or** closer toward 3rd aerial (1) lower the working foot and step toward an open position (&) close LF to 3rd rear (2)

With travel (cut and travel): as for hop and travel above taking RF into 3rd aerial (1) **or** high-cut in 3rd (1&).

Mazurka step: above with an exaggerated circular movement coming in toward 3rd and continuing the circular movement to an open position

There are three even beats in waltz (1 2 3) or reel (1 & 2) or 3 uneven beats in jig time (1_&2) where there is a pause after (1) *“up down beat”, “up ball change”, “hop down beat”, “hop ball change”, “hop and travel”, “up step close”, “hop step close”, “up beat beat” . . .*

Beat - 1) lowering working foot to the ground (step), usually in place (without travel), in 3rd or 3rd rear. Two beats in 3rd, e.g., front then back, is a ball change.

2) the pulse in music. Numbers are used to represent the specific beat in a bar of music, whereas “and”, “a” or “&” are used to identify movements between beats. The

numbers provide a rigid or even framework (1 2 3 4 . . .) whereas the “and a &” are used to subdivide the pulse beats in the appropriate rhythm (1 & 2 or 1 & a 2 etc.). There are many variations of what can occur between beats

Bourrée – There are many different types of bourrée. The common thread is 3 steps R, L, R, in place, travelling from side to side, diagonally or turning. Some publications use “pas de” in front of each type of bourrée.

Bourrée derrière – 3 steps travelling to the side, or on a diagonal (Travelling balance), or turning in place: begin with the RF off the ground in an open or closed position, close RF to 3rd rear (1) step the LF to a specified direction (&) close RF in 3rd rear (2). The rhythm will match the music used whether even (waltz, reel, march, air) or uneven (jig) *“behind side behind” or “close step close”*

Bourrée devant- as for bourrée derrière closing in 3rd then 3rd rear. *“front side behind” or “close step close”*

Bourrée, open – any bourrée with no closed positions

Bourrée over - as for bourrée derrière closing in 3rd both times most often on a diagonal travelling backward (travelling balance) *“front step front” or “close step close”*

Bourrée, Russian – fondu and pivot on LF to face RDF extending RF to 4th aerial (&) step RF 4th (1) close LF to RF in 3rd rear (&) step RF 4th (2) *“pivot step close step”*

Bourrée seven (7 step side travel) – begin with RF in an open or closed position and with or without a hop on LF foot (&), close RF foot in 3rd rear (1) small step LF toward 2nd (2) close RF to 3rd rear (3) step LF toward 2nd (4) close RF to 3rd rear (5) step LF toward 2nd (6) close RF to 3rd rear (7) *“(hop) behind side behind side behind side behind”* or alternating behind (1) side (2) front (3) side (4) behind (5) side (6) front (7) and occur in even or syncopated rhythms. *“(hop) behind side front side behind side front”* (see Side travel if alternating between heel and toe)

Bourrée under – as for bourrée derrière closing in 3rd rear then 3rd. *“behind side front” or “close step close”*

Brush – an inward or outward movement, sliding ball of foot, contacting the ground progressing from an outward aerial position to 3rd or 3rd aerial very low or from 3rd to the open aerial position. Combining an outward and an inward brush or an inward and outward brush is a shuffle. (see Shuffle)

Change (changement) – preceded by an assemble, (or an échappé), a movement of elevation exchanging the front foot and the back foot before landing with the weight distributed equally on the balls of both feet.

Chassé – step onto RF to an open position (1) close LF to 3rd rear (&) taking another small step RF, lilt (see lilt) onto RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial low (2). Rhythm varies depending on music

Circle/circular rond(é), inward rond(é), outward rond(é) – any circling of the working leg from one position to another. Sometimes used to describe a shake shake down.

Common schottische (strathspey setting) - step RF to 2nd (1) close LF to 3rd rear (2) step RF to 2nd (3) lift LF to 3rd rear aerial at the level specified with a hop RF (4)
“step close step lift”

Coupé (balance) – see Balance

Coupé over/coupé under – see Balance

Crab walk – circle or straight line – begin in inverted 1st, toes touching with heels well apart, toes of RF and LH are lifted and pivot to close in 1st (1) lift RH and toes of LF and pivot to inverted 1st (2).

or

forward – begin in inverted 3rd, toes LF in contact in 3rd with the RF with the heels well apart (1), lift the toes of RF and turn out while lifting LF off the ground, ball dig in 3rd rear (2) pivot on the RH taking LF to inverted 3rd (3) pivot on the LF, ball dig RF 3rd rear (4)

Cramp roll – step ball of RF in 2nd (with or without turnout) (1) step ball of LF in 2nd (&), drop RH (a) then LH (2). *“ball ball heel heel” or “right left right left”*

Crossover – the reverse of a back-step: begin with RF in 3rd rear aerial, push off the ground with the LF passing quickly through 3rd aerial on the way to the ground as the LF slides up the back of right leg (1). Occasionally the RF passes to 3rd aerial before leaving the ground changing the rhythm to (&1)

Cut and travel – see Ballonné composé with travel (cut and travel)

Demi-plié – see Plié

Développé – from 3rd aerial or 3rd rear aerial, the working foot is extended to an open aerial position in an “unfolding” manner. Occurs from other positions. This is an exaggerated transition from one position to another.

Disassemble – a movement of elevation beginning with the weight distributed equally on the balls of both feet and landing with weight on one foot

Double balance or Double Pas de Basque (2 bars)– step RF toward 2nd (mid-way between 1st and 2nd) (1) step LF 3rd crossed (2) beat RF 3rd rear (3) beat LF about 3 inches to the left (4) beat RF in place (5) step LF 3rd crossed (6) beat RF 3rd rear (7) pause (8)
“step cross beat out beat cross beat”

Double toe off – hop LF point RF 3rd (1) hop LF extend RF 4th intermediate aerial (2) and repeat (3 4) When a shake movement is used, to count is (1 & 2, 3 & 4)

Drop – (see Spring)

Échappé – (spread) usually is preceded by an assemble, is a movement of elevation landing on the balls of both feet in 2nd with weight equally distributed on the balls of both feet. Styles vary from straight knees to bent knees. This was used as the 1st count in shedding in the late 1800s but by the mid-1900s, pointing the working foot in 2nd was the standard after DG MacLennan had popularized it.

Entrechat – preceded by an assemble or leap, is a movement of elevation that begins in 3rd, elevate passing the foot in front to 3rd rear (&) and back to 3rd before landing (1).

Extend/extension – straighten working leg in an open aerial position

Flicker – short step RF forward (4th) with the toes of both feet turned in and quickly twist heels inwards and out again (2) with the knees relaxed. (as in the Charleston)

Fling turn – shedding (see shedding) with a complete turn in place during counts 2-4. The turn is in the opposite direction from the working foot, i.e., point RF in 2nd and turn left.
“point back front back” or “front corner corner front”

Flora turn – (see Flora step) or hop LF to begin RF 3 syncopated hops turning once round right (1 & 2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6) assemble RF 3rd (7) change LF 3rd (8) **or** the chorus or break from Flora MacDonald’s Fancy: hop LF RF 2nd (1) hop LF commence turn left RF to 3rd rear aerial (2) hop brush beat beat RF (3 & 4) in Flora MacDonald’s Fancy, this may be followed by either 4 spring points or 4 shuffles. *“up down beat, up down beat, up down beat, change, change” or “point to the back hop brush beat beat (points/shuffles)”*

Follow through – with or without hops, take working foot from 3rd rear aerial to 4th intermediate aerial in an “unfolding” movement. (see Développé)

Fondu – exaggerated bending of the supporting knee as in a plié on one leg

Forward skips – hop LF lifting RF from 3rd rear to 3rd rear aerial (&) pass RF to 3rd aerial and step onto it in 3rd (1) (see Retiré)

Glasgow Highlander Step (strathspey) - step RF 4th intermediate (1) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (2) step LF 4th intermediate rear (3) hop LF taking RF toward 3rd aerial (4) bourrée under (behind side front) (5 6 7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (8)
“forward hop back hop behind side front hop”

Glasgow Highlander Step with turn (strathspey) - step RF 4th intermediate (1) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (2) step LF 4th intermediate rear (3) hop LF taking RF toward 3rd aerial (4) bourrée under turning RIGHT in place (behind side front) (5 6 7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (8) *“forward hop back hop turn 2 3 4”*

Glasgow Highlander Step with shake (strathspey) – as for Glasgow Highlander setting but on (3) leave working foot in 4th intermediate aerial and shake (&4) bourrée under (behind side front) (5 6 7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (8) *“forward hop back shake behind side front hop”*

Glasgow Highlander Step with shake and turn (strathspey) - as for Glasgow Highlander setting but on (3) leave working foot in 4th intermediate aerial and shake (&4) bourrée under turning RIGHT in place (behind side front) (5 6 7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (8) *“forward hop back shake turn 2 3 4”*

Glide – RF 3rd, slide RF toward 4th intermediate travelling diagonally forward and ending with the LF in 4th intermediate rear aerial (1).

Grind – (see ball change) a series of accented ball changes beginning with front or back foot in rapid succession.

Heel and toe – hop LF with RH in 2nd (1) hop LF RF pointing right toe in 3rd (2) the RF does not bear weight.

High cut (back or front) – hop or spring onto LF and beat RF in 3rd aerial or 3rd rear aerial (1), without a hop beat RF in the same position (&).

Hop – a hop is movement of elevation that begins and ends on the same foot.

Hop and travel – see Ballonné composé with travel

Hop beat beat – hop LF extending RF 4th intermediate aerial (1) step RF toward 4th intermediate with a bent knee (&) close or beat LF in 3rd rear (2). Rhythms may vary. (see Ballonné composé with travel) *“hop step close”*

Hop brush beat beat/inward brush/toe beat – hop LF extending RF to 4th intermediate aerial (1), brush RF into 3rd aerial very low (&), beat RF in 3rd (a) beat LF in 3rd rear (2). The rhythm varies according to the music and sometimes begins on “&” (& 1 & 2) *“hop brush beat beat” or “hop brush ball change”*

Hop-one-and-two – see Skip change of step

Hop step close – (see Ballonné composé with travel)

Inward brush – see brush or hop brush beat beat. (used in many older publications)

Jeté – used in Scottish Country Dance pas de basque, an extension, either preparatory or concluding, to 4th intermediate aerial.

Leap – a movement of elevation begun with the weight equally distributed on the balls of both feet in 3rd, extend both legs toward 2nd aerial landing with or without change of feet with weight equally distributed on the balls of both feet.

Lilt – relaxing the supporting knee when taking weight, a hybrid between ‘step’ and ‘spring’ or the lightest possible ‘spring’. Often with a relaxed complementary hip movement in the direction of the spring. Not to be confused with the dance by the same name.

Low cutting – begin with RF in 2nd aerial, tap RH to LH (1) quick hop LF (&) tap RH to LH again to displace LF to 2nd aerial (2)

Mazurka step – see Ballonné composé Mazurka step

Minuet step – (pas de valse) step RF forward slightly outside of 4th (1) step LF to 4th (2) close RF to LF 3rd rear (3). Count 1 is sometimes danced to 4th. *“step step close”*

Pas de basque – with or without a preparatory extension to a specified position, spring or lilt onto RF lifting the LF to 3rd aerial low (1), ball change 3rd (& 2). End with or without an extension of the front foot to 4th intermediate aerial (jeté) or other open aerial position. *“spring beat beat” or “spring ball change” or “down up down”*. This movement can be danced in place or with travel. To travel, spring in the specified direction on the extension or jeté. This movement can be performed in place, travelling forward, backward or from side to side or turning. This can be executed in an open position such as in the sword dance over the sword with the working foot in 2nd, 4th, 4th intermediate or 4th opposite 5th with the working knee bent.

Pas de basque sauté – step RF to 2nd (1), pass LF through 1st to step LF to 4th (2) close RF 3rd rear (3). (1 2 3) or (1 & 2)

Pas de bourrée – see Bourrée

Pas de derrière – see Balancé

Pas de valse – waltz (minuet step) – step RF forward to 4th or midway between 4th and 4th intermediate

(mid-4th) (1) step the LF foot to 4th (2) close RF in 3rd rear (3). *“step step close”*

Pas de basque, double – see Double PDB

Pivot turn – RF to 3rd crossed and turn to the left on the balls of both feet untwisting legs ending LF in 3rd often preceded by a step toward 2nd or 4th intermediate and extending the working foot toward 4th intermediate aerial **or** circle working foot from 2nd aerial through 4th intermediate aerial into 3rd crossed into the pivot turn (see Assemblé soutenu) (see Propelled pivot turn)

Plié – an assemble relaxing both knees with both heels off the floor **or** demi-plié keeping both heels on the floor **or** fondu, plié on one leg (see Fondu)

Plié and turn – assemble RF 3rd to plié (1) disassemble onto LF extending RF to 2nd aerial (2) quick hop LF (&) bourrée under (behind side front) , turning to the right in place once round during the bourrée (3 & 4). Sometimes the quick hop is omitted.

Point – place a fully stretched foot in any open or closed ground position

Polka step – similar to a skip change of step with relaxed positions and often begins with a bent knee. (see Skip change of step)

Posé – step onto RF with a straight leg taking the LF to a specified position.

Progressive reel movement – (see Skip change of step) using 3rd aerial on the “&” to begin

Progressive strathspey movement – RF in 3rd aerial to begin, step onto RF in 4th intermediate (1) close LF to RF extending RF to 4th intermediate aerial (2) spring onto RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (3) hop RF in place taking LF to 3rd aerial (4)

Propelled pivot turn – spring onto RF and link right arms with hand behind the elbow of partner (1) using LF push off in 2nd causing forward motion in the turn (&), step onto RF (2). This is repeated as necessary. An 8 bar propelled pivot turn is typically 6 counts of the above, turning 1 ½ times, two high-cuts or assemble LF 3rd rear, change LF 3rd then spring onto LF linking left arms and push off 8 times turning twice round. As this is the only time in highland dance that there is physical contact, the name is often shortened to pivot turn or simply just turn.

Retiré – with (Shetland backstep or skipping retiré) or without (retiré) a hop on LF, lift RF toward 3rd aerial (&) pass RF to 3rd rear and step onto it in 3rd rear (1) danced travelling backward. When used to travel forward, hop LF lifting RF from 3rd rear to 3rd rear aerial (&) pass RF to 3rd aerial and step onto it in 3rd (1) *“hop down”*

Rocking – spring onto RF while pointing the LF in 3rd rear (1), spring onto LF pointing the RF in 3rd (2). They are danced in place or travelling. There are many forms of rocking such as in the Sailors’ Hornpipe and Cape Breton step dance. All rocks transfer weight from one foot to the other and in the case of the hornpipe and Cape Breton, instead of pointing the working foot in back or front, the working foot rests or bears very little weight on the outside edge of the ball of the foot.

Rond de jambe – circle RF, without shake, on the ground or aerial, from 3rd toward 4th, through 2nd, through 4th rear then close in 3rd rear or reverse from back to front.

Rond de jambe (Hebridean style) – hop LF point RF or RH in 2nd in preparation, hop LF lifting right leg and relax right knee (just below horizontal) (1) circle RF back toward 4th intermediate rear aerial (&) assemble RF 3rd rear (2)

Rond(e) – used to describe any circular movement or in some cases a shake shake down (spelled with an “e” in older publications) **or** – hop LF extending RF to 4th intermediate

aerial (1) relaxing the RF knee, bring the RF back a very short distance then straighten in 2nd aerial with a hop LF (&) spring onto RF to displace LF to an open aerial position. This movement may also be done using 2nd aerial for count 1.

Round-the-leg – moving the RF from 3rd aerial to 3rd rear aerial or vice versa keeping the working foot in contact with the left leg with or without a hop on LF. (see Shedding)

Russian Bourrée – see Bourrée, Russian

Sevens (7 step side travel) – see Bourrée 7

Shake – from 3rd, begin to straighten working leg toward 2nd aerial, forward 2nd aerial, or 4th intermediate aerial (&) then bring working foot back slightly toward supporting leg, then straighten leg to an open aerial position (1) with **or** without a hop on straightening the working leg. The working leg may be extended to the same level for both or lower for (&) and higher for (1). A series of small shakes may occur to 2nd ending with a hop on the final shake as in the 2nd step of the Seann Triubhas (& & a 1) or as a continuous flutter to 2nd aerial. (see Toe and off)

Shake shake down/ronde – hop LF extending RF to 4th intermediate aerial (1) relaxing the RF knee, bring the RF back a very short distance then straighten in 2nd aerial with a hop LF (&) assemble RF 3rd rear (2) or displace LF to an open aerial position. This movement is sometimes done using 2nd for count 1 as well. *“shake shake down”*

Shallie – spring RF to displace LF which is sharply taken to 3rd rear aerial low (1) hop RF extend LF to 2nd aerial low (&) hop RF LF to 3rd aerial low (2) hop RF extend LF 2nd aerial low (&) *“back out front out”*

Shedding/round-the-leg movement – hop LF, RF 2nd (1) hop LF RF to 3rd rear aerial (2) hop LF RF to 3rd aerial (3) hop LF RF to 3rd rear aerial (4). This movement can be danced turning on counts 2-4 away from the foot in pointing in 2nd. (see Fling turn and Round-the-leg) *“point back front back” or “point behind in front behind”*

Shetland back step – see Backstep, Shetland

Shuffle – Combined out and in brushes are shuffles (see trebles), with RF in 3rd aerial low or 3rd rear aerial low, brush RF toward 4th intermediate aerial (&) brush RF into 3rd aerial very low (&). Sometimes start in 3rd rear. Feet parallel in Cape Breton step dance. (see Trebles)
Combined in and out brushes are shuffles (as in Seann Triubhas or Flora MacDonald’s Fancy) brush RF from mid-4th aerial into 3rd (1) brush RF to mid-4th aerial (&) the RF foot does not leave the ground in 3rd. The working ankle relaxed in 3rd.

Side travel - RH to 2nd (1) close LF to RF in 3rd rear (&) step RF to 2nd (2) close LF to RF in 3rd rear (&). (1 & 2 &) *“heel close toe close” or* RF to 2nd (1) close LF in 3rd rear (&) step RH to 2nd (2) close LF to RF in 3rd rear (&). *“toe close heel close”*. Sometimes danced in a

series. The step to 2nd is sometimes on the “&” that precedes “1”. (& 1 & 2) (see Bourrée seven if not using heel)

Single balance - prepare RF 4th intermediate aerial position. Spring RF LF to a loose low rear aerial position (2)

Skip change of step – hop LF extend RF to 4th aerial low (&) step RF to 4th (1) close LF to 3rd rear (&) step RF to 4th (2). Slight elevation occurs when closing in 3rd (&) Rhythm will vary based on the music. *“hop step close step”*

Slip step – step RF to 2nd (1) close LF to RF in 1st aerial (&) land on LF to repeat. They are usually performed in a series. The rhythm varies depending on the music, e.g., even rhythm in reel (1 & 2 & 3 & . . .) uneven in jig (1 &2 &3 . . .) time.

Spread – see Échappé

Spring/drop – a spring is movement of elevation that begins on one foot and lands on the other foot

Spring point – spring onto LF and point RF in a specified open position, feet touching the ground simultaneously. Often performed in a series using alternating feet. Occasionally multiple spring points are performed without changing feet.

Step – transfer weight from one foot to the other. This occurs with or without travel to any position. There is no elevation in a ‘step’.

Strathspey setting – (see Common schottische)

Strathspey travelling – stretch RF to 4th taking weight (1) close LF to 3rd rear (2) reach RF to 4th to leave back leg straight (3) draw LF through 1st to 4th aerial low, hop RF (4)
“reach close step hop”

Swish - preceded by a step RF to 4th, LF passes through 1st then brushes lightly to 4th aerial with or without a hop (see Attitude)

Syncopated hop – (see Ballonné without travel)

Tap close beat – hop or disassemble onto LF extending RF 4th intermediate on half point with weight (1), hop LF RF to 3rd half point (&) beat LF 3rd rear (2) *“slow quick quick” or “hop hop beat”*.

Toe and heel – hop on LF, RF in any ground position, hop on LF, RF heel in any ground position.

Toe and off – hop LF, RF in 3rd (1) begin to straighten right leg toward 4th intermediate aerial (&) bring RF back slightly toward left leg (a) hop LF foot and straighten right leg 4th intermediate aerial (2). Some styles straighten the working leg both times or no shake, hop LF while pointing RF 3rd (1) hop LF extend RF 4th intermediate aerial (2)

Toe beat – (see Hop brush beat beat)

Travelling balance – (see bourrée over and bourrée derrière) It is danced on a diagonal with or without a preparatory extension to begin and with or without an extension to end.

Treble, single - the beginning and rhythm depends on the dance and style.

Soft shoe trebles: hop LF extending RF to 4th intermediate aerial, brush RF to 3rd aerial very low, step RF 3rd, shuffle LF to 4th intermediate aerial and back to 3rd (shuffle) ball change. (1 & & a 2 & &)

Hard shoe trebles: begin on the '&a' that precedes the first beat of the next bar or begin on count 1. (& a 1 & & a 2) *“hop brush step shuffle ball change”*

NOTE: both soft and hard shoe single trebles are the same. They begin at different places in the music producing differing emphasis in the music.

Treble, double – the beginning and rhythm depends on the dance and style.

Soft shoe trebles: single treble RF (1 & & a 2 & &) LF ball change 3rd, LF shuffle LF ball change 3rd (a 3 & & a 4) *“hop brush step shuffle ball change ball change shuffle ball change”*

Hard shoe trebles single treble RF (& a 1 & & a 2) LF shuffle LF ball change 3rd rear LF shuffle LF ball change in 3rd (& & a 3 & & a 4) *“hop brush step shuffle ball change shuffle ball change shuffle ball change”*

NOTE: the soft shoe double treble has 2 consecutive ball changes whereas the hard shoe style has an 'extra' shuffle between the 2 ball changes

Treble shuffles – a very small shuffling movement: spring onto RF extending LF 4th intermediate aerial low and brush into 3rd aerial low and out again 3 times. Resembles a quiver (1 & & a)

Treble, single in waltz time – hop (1) brush (&) step (2) shuffle (& 3) ball (&) change (2) pause (2) ball (&) change (3) *“hop brush step shuffle ball change pause ball change”*

Treble, double in waltz time – hop or spring LF extend RF 4th intermediate aerial (1) RF inward brush to 3rd aerial very low (&) step RF 3rd (2) shuffle LF 4th intermediate aerial and back to 3rd aerial very low (& 3) LF 3rd ball change (&2) LF 3rd ball change (& 2) shuffle LF 4th intermediate aerial and back to 3rd aerial very low (&3) LF ball (&) *“hop brush step shuffle ball change ball change shuffle ball”*

Waltz step – 3 steps in waltz step rhythm.

III - Setting steps:

- A step is a combination of movements.

- These are some of the most common setting steps not found in modern publications. For more setting steps, see the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing Text Book.

Baby Fling Step (strathspey) – hop LF point RF 2nd (1) hop LF RF to 3rd rear aerial (2) hop LF RF to 4th intermediate (3) hop LF RF to 3rd aerial (4), repeat LF (5 6 7 8) repeat RF (1 2 3 4) bourrée under turn right (5 6 7 8) Repeat L

Balance and round the leg (reel) – coupé over coupé under (1 2) spring onto RF LF to 3rd rear aerial (3) LF round-the-leg to 3rd aerial (&) hop RF LF 4th intermediate aerial (4) Repeat L R L

Changes and side step (reel) – begin with RF 3rd, 3 changes (1 2 3) step LF 2nd (&) close RF to 3rd rear (4). Repeat R L R

Diagonal Travel (strathspey) – 1 strathspey travelling step RDF RF (1 2 3) LF to 3rd rear aerial (4) 1 strathspey travelling step LDB LF (5 6 7) RF to 3rd aerial (8) bourrée under to the left closing RF in 3rd rear to begin (1) step LF 2nd (2) close RF in 3rd (3) hop RF with LF in 3rd rear aerial (4) step LF 4th intermediate (5) hop LF taking RF to 3rd rear aerial (6) step RF 4th intermediate rear (7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd aerial (8) repeat L (the bourrée maybe danced with or without turn)

Double pas de basque (reel) – PDB RF LF, double balance onto RF; repeat all L

Double toe off and sevens (reel) – double toe off RF (1 2 3 4) quick hop LF, (7) sevens travelling to the left closing LF to 3rd rear each time (5 & 6 & 7 & 8) Repeat L

Fairy step (reel) – hop LF RF 2nd (1) hop LF RF 3rd rear aerial (2) facing RDF walk RF 4th (3) walk LF 4th (4) coupé over and under (5 & 6) pull back LS bourrée derrière to original place (7 & 8) Repeat L

Flora step (reel) – hop LF to begin RF 3 syncopated hops turning once round right (1 & 2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6) assemble RF 3rd (7) change LF 3rd (8). Repeat L.

Glasgow Highlander Step (strathspey) - step RF 4th intermediate (1) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (2) step LF 4th intermediate rear (3) hop LF taking RF toward 3rd aerial (4) bourrée under (behind side front) (5 6 7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (8) Repeat L R L.

Glasgow Highlander Step with shake (strathspey) – as for Glasgow Highlander setting but on (3) leave working foot in 4th intermediate aerial and shake (&4) bourrée under (behind side front) (5 6 7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (8) Repeat L R L.

Glasgow Highlander Step with shake and turn - (strathspey) - as for Glasgow Highlander setting but on (3) leave working foot in 4th intermediate aerial and shake (&4) bourrée under turning RIGHT in place (behind side front) (5 6 7) hop RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (8) Repeat L R L.

Heather step (reel) or Travelling balance (reel) – coupé over coupé under (1 2) spring onto RF follow through LF with a hop RF (3 4) bourrée over travelling RDB (5 & 6) bourrée derrière LDF (7 & 8) Repeat L

Heel and toe (strathspey) - hop LF point RF 2nd (1) hop LF RF to 3rd rear aerial (2) hop LF RH to 4th intermediate (3) hop LF RF to 3rd (4), repeat LF (5 6 7 8) repeat RF (1 2 3 4) bourrée under turn right (5 6 7 8) repeat all LF to begin.

Hesitation Step (not to be confused with the Huntly Hesitation from the Fling) (strathspey) – hop LF RF 2nd (1) hop LF RF 3rd rear aerial (2) two syncopated hops RF i.e., hop LF extend RF 4th intermediate aerial with knee relaxed so that lower leg is vertical (3) half point RF straight down in 4th intermediate (&) beat LF (4) repeat syncopated hop (5 & 6) spring RF LF to 4th intermediate (7) hop RF LF 3rd (8) Repeat L R L

Highland Schottische (strathspey)– hop LF point RF 2nd (1) hop LF taking RF to 3rd rear aerial (2) hop LF point RF 2nd (3) hop LF, RF to 3rd aerial (4) followed by a strathspey setting step to the right (common schottische) (5 6 7 8) Repeat L R L (see strathspey setting) *“point back point front step close step hop”*

Highland Schottische and bourrée (strathspey) – Highland Schottische RF (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8) LF 1 strathspey setting step (9 10 11 12) bourrée under turn R (12 14 15 16) Repeat L

Huntley hesitation step (strathspey) – shed RF (1 2 3 4) (see shedding) hop LF RF to 2nd and hold (5 6) lightly displace LF by tapping with RH ending LF 2nd aerial (7) hop RF LF 3rd (8) Repeat L R L

Inward brush and follow through (reel) – RF hop brush beat (&1&) beat releasing RF to 4th intermediate aerial of (2) spring onto RF taking LF to 3rd rear aerial (3) hop RF extending LF 4th intermediate aerial (4). Repeat L R L

Inward brush step (reel) – pas de basque RF (1 & 2) hop brush beat beat LF (3 & 4) Repeat L R L

Pas de basque and changes (reel) - pas de basque RF LF (1 & 2, 3 & 4) assemble RF 3rd (5) three changes (6 7 8) Repeat L.

Pas de basque and follow through (reel) – pas de basque RF LF turning right about (1 & 2, 3 & 4) coupé over and coupé under (5 6) spring onto RF follow through LF (7 8) Repeat L

Pas de basque and spring points alternative (reel) – pas de basque RF spring point RF LF. Repeat L R L

Pas de basque and inward brush (reel) – RF pas de basque (1 & 2) LF hop brush beat beat (& 3 & 4) Repeat L R L

Pas de basque and Shetland back-step (reel) – PDB RF toward 2nd (1 & 2) 2 Shetland back-steps hopping RF to begin (& 3 & 4) repeat L R L

Pas de basque and spring points (reel) – pas de basque R and L (1 & 2, 3 & 4) spring onto LF to begin 4 spring points to 4th or 4th intermediate (5 6 7 8) Repeat all

Pas de basque turn, balance and round the leg (reel) - pas de basque RF LF making a complete turn right about (1 & 2, 3 & 4) coupé over coupé under (5 6) spring onto RF LF to 3rd rear aerial (7) round-the-leg to 3rd aerial (7) extend LF 4th intermediate aerial (8) Repeat L

Rocking/shake and rock step (strathspey) – hop LF RF to 2nd (1) hop LF RF 3rd rear aerial (2) hop LF RF 3rd (3) hop LF shake RF 4th intermediate aerial (&4) spring onto RF to begin 4 rocks (5 6 7 8) Repeat L R L. See rocking, 1st description.

Scissors (strathspey) – moving RDF step RF 4th (1) brush LF lightly through 1st hop RF extending LF to 4th aerial (2) step onto LF brush RF lightly through 1st (3) and hop LF extending RF to 4th intermediate aerial (4) bourrée over travelling back to place (LDB) (5 6 7) hop RF LF to 3rd rear aerial (8) Repeat L R L

Shake and rock step - see Rocking step (see Toe and off)

Shetland Back Step (reel) – 3 Shetland backsteps (& 1 & 2 & 3) step LF 2nd (&) close RF 3rd rear (4) Repeat L R L

Shetland Back Step (reel) – spring point RF 4th (1) 3 Shetland backsteps (& 2 & 3 & 4) Repeat L R L

Side step (reel) – hop LF RF 3rd (1) hop LF extend RF 2nd aerial (2) hop LF (&) close RF to 3rd rear (3) step LF 2nd (&) close RF 3rd or 3rd rear (4) Repeat L R L. A shake is sometimes used after count 1.

Travelling balance (Heather step) (reel) – coupé over coupé under (1 2) spring onto RF follow through LF with a hop RF (3 4) bourrée over travelling RDB (5 & 6) bourrée derrière LDF (7 & 8) Repeat L

Tulloch (First Tulloch) Step (reel) – travelling forward, pas de basque RF LF (1 & 2, 3 & 4) pas de basque RL LF turning right about (5 & 6, 7 & 8) pas de basque RF LF (1 & 2, 3 & 4) 4 spring points LF RF LF RF (5 6 7 8)

Whipping turn (reel) – 3 syncopated hops as in the Hesitation step making a complete turn right about (1 & 2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6) pas de basque RF (7 & 8) Repeat L

Resources: Barbara Campbell
British Association of Teachers of Dance
Card Cribbs, Derek Haynes
Collection of Lesser Known Highland Dances, Brisbane Scottish Dancing Festival
Committee
Four Step Dances by Isobel Cramb
Hebridean Dances transcribed by Mats Melin
Hebridean Solo Dances collected by Jack McConachie
Highland and Traditional Scottish Dances by D. G. MacLennan
Jocelyn Hamilton
Ladies Step Dances by Irene Fidler
Margaret Zadworny
National Dances of Scotland, The by D. R. MacKenzie
Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Manual
St. Andrews Collections Vol I & II published by the RSCDS
Scottish Dance Archives H1, H2 & H3
Scottish Dance Notes by E. W. Hart
Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance
Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance
Sketches relative to the history and theory, but more especially to the practice
of dancing by Francis Peacock
Some Traditional Scottish Dances by G. Douglas Taylor (Imperial Society of
Teachers of Dancing)
Threave Collection, The and 5 Other Step Dances by Hope Little
Traditional Dancing in Scotland –J.F. (J.P. – on cover) Flett & T. M Flett
Traditional Step-Dancing in Scotland by J.F. and T.M. Flett
United Kingdom Alliance of Professional Teachers of Dance