

Survey of Pat Shaw Dances.

Introduction.

Patrick Noel Shuldham-Shaw (1917-77) was well known within the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS). He was generally known as Pat Shaw.

Pat Shaw was known as the composer of dances, but he was much more than this. From the late 1940s through to the 1970s he regularly appeared on BBC Radio in folk dance programmes where he would call dances or sing songs. He researched into the Playford and related style dances, he also collected tunes from Shetland, and worked on the Greig-Duncan collection of Scottish songs. For many years he visited Holland, firstly as a musician and thereafter as a teacher. In 1971, the EFDSS awarded him their Gold Badge, in recognition of his service (Godrich, 2010, pp. 102-122, 190-193, 241).

As Gloucestershire folk dance caller Robert Moir (2018) said:

The centenary year reiterated the reminder of how much Pat contributed to the English Folk world of music, dance and song. It reminded us of his unique contribution and continuing significance.

Pat Shaw was born in 1917, and as part of his centenary celebrations, the Pat Shaw Legacy Group asked callers to submit returns of Shaw's composed dances that they called during the year, to gain an idea of the popularity of Shaw's dances.

Australian caller George Ansell (2018) suggests:

My Pat Shaw learning last year was considerable – many dances I did not know and 20 were added to my repertoire, a greater knowledge of Pat Shaw's life (a 30% increase in my books of Pat Shaw), and of course an awareness of what others are doing around the world by direct analysis of the excellent Pat Shaw Legacy website.

Wherever possible in this article, contributions have been used from callers who called dances in his centenary year, as well as dancers and musicians. This approach has been used to include as many viewpoints and comments as possible.

Background.

The EFDSS had held a competition in 1922 for new dances and three were subsequently published in 1923 (English Folk Dance News, 1922, p. 93; 1923, pp.156-161). Published in 1932, *Maggot Pie* (Heffer and Porter, 1932) was the first book of published composed dances in the modern folk dance era. This book contained newly composed dances in the Playford mode but set to old tunes. Pat Shaw composed his first dance in 1931, *Monica's Delight* (Fenessey, 2011, p 56).

From 1949, newly composed dances started to infiltrate the EFDSS repertoire fully and they have formed an increasing part of the repertoire of Anglo-American folk dancing. Pat Shaw composed his first post-war dance, *Freda's Fancy* in 1949 and subsequently composed 150

further dances. His last composition was *The Phoenix Rejuvenated* for the 21st anniversary of the Phoenix Club in October 1975 (Fennessey, 2011, pp. 22-23, 64).

Collections of composed dances became widespread. Hugh Stewart's book (2008), *The Country Dance Club Book* is designed to be used in EFDSS clubs and of the 102 dances included, 52 are composed. Others are either traditional or interpreted from historical dance sources.

Shaw's Dances.

It is recorded that during his life Pat Shaw composed 150 dances in the Anglo-American dance style (Godrich, 2010, pp 190-193). Pat Shaw composed dances in various styles: some followed the 'Playford style' and had many parts, others suggest Contra dance influences while others had unusual formations. Pat Shaw composed dances for a number of different circumstances, he would compose for special events and celebrations, and often composed the accompanying tunes.

No complete collection of Pat Shaw's dances was published during his life time, many were published in *English Dance and Song*, or circulated on leaflets. Pat Shaw's dances are available in the following publications and on the Pat Shaw Legacy Group website:

- *New Wine in Old Bottles*. Originally published in 1974 and reprinted in 1996 (Shaw, 1974, 1996).
- *The Pat Shaw Collection*. Originally published in 3 parts in 1986, with two subsequently parts containing music in 1987 (Fennessey, 1986-1987). A one volume second revised edition was published in 2011 containing books 1-3 only.
- *Between two Ponds*. Originally published in 1976 and contains dances composed by him following a trip to America in 1974.
- *Among the Pines* published in 1983 is in many ways a companion to *Between two Ponds*.
 - *Between two Ponds and Among the Pines* were published together in 1985 (Shaw, 1985).
- Full list of dances and instructions are available on the Pat Shaw Legacy Group's website: <http://www.patshaw.info>

Pat Shaw composed two apocryphal dances, *My Boy Willy* and *Lord Thomas of Winchbury*. These dances are considered by Marjorie Fennessey that Pat Shaw did not wish these to be published as they were either not completed or forgotten about. However, the Assembly Players included the tunes and dance notation on their cd, *Long Live London* (Assembly Players, 2002), and *My Boy Willy* was called by three callers during the year. These returns have been included in the survey results.

Methodology.

Antony Heywood led on this project and put a notice on the ECD email discussion list that has worldwide membership, and he also emailed the callers list on the Set and Turn Single

website which is based in England. Callers were asked to inform other callers who may not have received any email to inform other callers who might contribute.

Callers were asked to email Antony Heywood regularly with details of any Shaw dances they called, providing details of date, dance called, location and caller. The Pat Shaw Legacy Group's web-site had a page which was devoted to the survey and updated regularly.

Results.

In the calendar year 2017, 241 callers submitted returns that they had called a total of 2520 dances: an average of 10 each. Pat Shaw composed a total of 150 dances and during this year, 126 were called at least once.

In addition, 25 people identified that they had demonstrated 25 Shaw dances and one person had played a tune composed by Shaw. These items have not been included in these results.

Dances.

Where were the dances performed?

Ten countries were identified where Shaw dances had been recorded as called in 2017. Unsurprisingly, 55% of the dances were performed in the UK followed by the USA with Australia third. The distribution of all countries can be seen in Figure 1, while Figure 2 shows the top three and others.

Australia	369
Belgium	23
Canada	33
Denmark	8
France	15
Germany	7
The Netherlands	114
Russia	8
UK	1382
USA	561

Figure 1. All countries

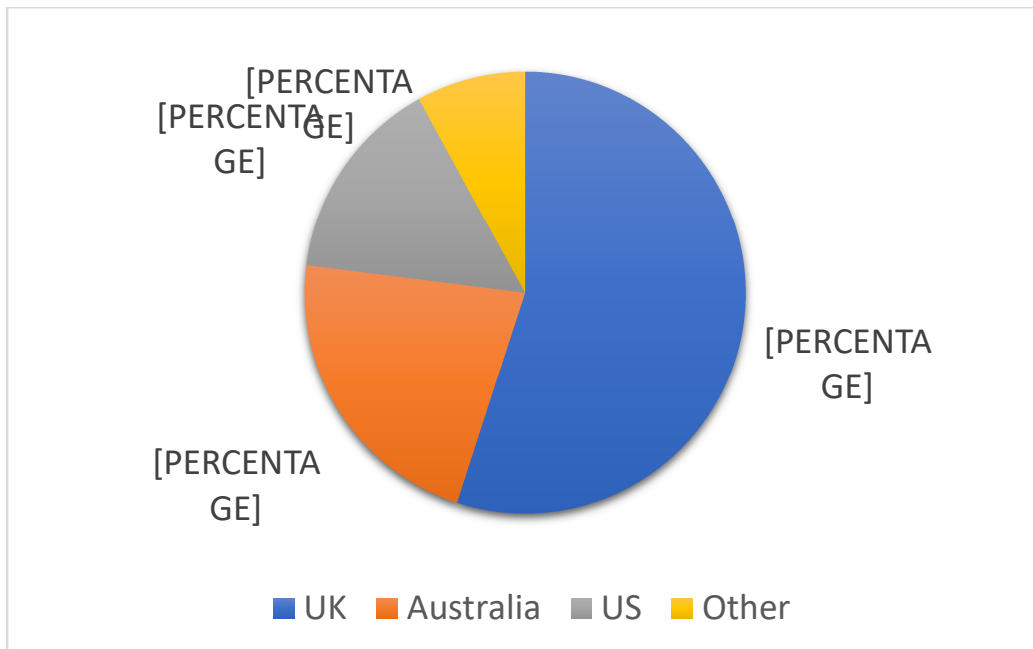


Figure 2. Top three countries and others.

When were dances called.

August is the best month to dance Shaw dances! As this is the month of Festivals in the UK and Camps in the USA, and it is likely that many such events had 'Shaw sessions'. Shaw sessions also took place at other times of the year, for example at Halsway Manor during September. Figure 3 shows the monthly distribution.

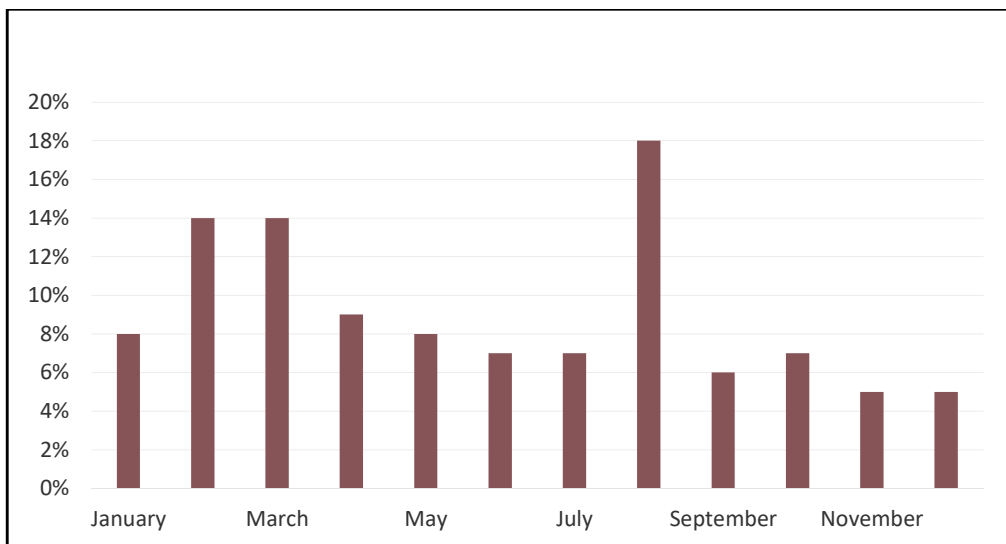


Figure 3. Monthly distribution

Warwick based caller Keith Orchard (2018) says:

In 40 years of folk dancing I have always enjoyed dancing and calling Pat's dances. As a caller, I almost always include one of his dances in a session.

During the Centenary Year I enjoyed learning more of his dances and ran five workshops. After buying the green book (Godrich, 2010) about his life, I realised what a wonderful person he was.

Whereas Kent caller, John Sweeney (2018) said:

In 2016 Gareth Kiddier asked me if I could call a series of Pat Shaw workshops at Sidmouth 2017 as part of the centenary celebrations...as I had been dancing some of his well-known dances for over forty years, but Gareth's request made me learn a lot more. I already had Pat's three volume of dances...but I then had to look at Pat's full collection of dances and started to realise what a great range of dances he composed. So, I needed to start picking dances and practising calling them. I ran a series of Sunday afternoon workshops locally so that I could practise and am very grateful to all the dancers who came along and let me experiment on them! After much deliberation I ran these sessions at Sidmouth: Pat Shaw Taster; Pat Shaw Ball; Focus on Canons; Brainteaser; Focus on Waltz and The Pat Shaw Ceilidh. There was more than enough great material to fill these workshops and a dozen more.

[What were the popular formations.](#)

Three couple sets are the most popular with 609 (24%) recorded, followed by Duple minor longways dances with 485 (19%) and Sicilian circles following up third with 346 (14%). This is shown in Figure 4. Not all formations were danced.

In total 22 different formations were recorded during the year, however this would be reduced if longways of different lengths were combined. Australian caller, Keith Wood (2018) said:

I was surprised by the number of dances that Pat had written. I'm an aspiring dance composer and was impressed by the variety of formations that he used, and the unusual movements incorporated into the dances. Also, that he wrote the music for many of his dances – a man of many talents. I love the puns in the dance titles.

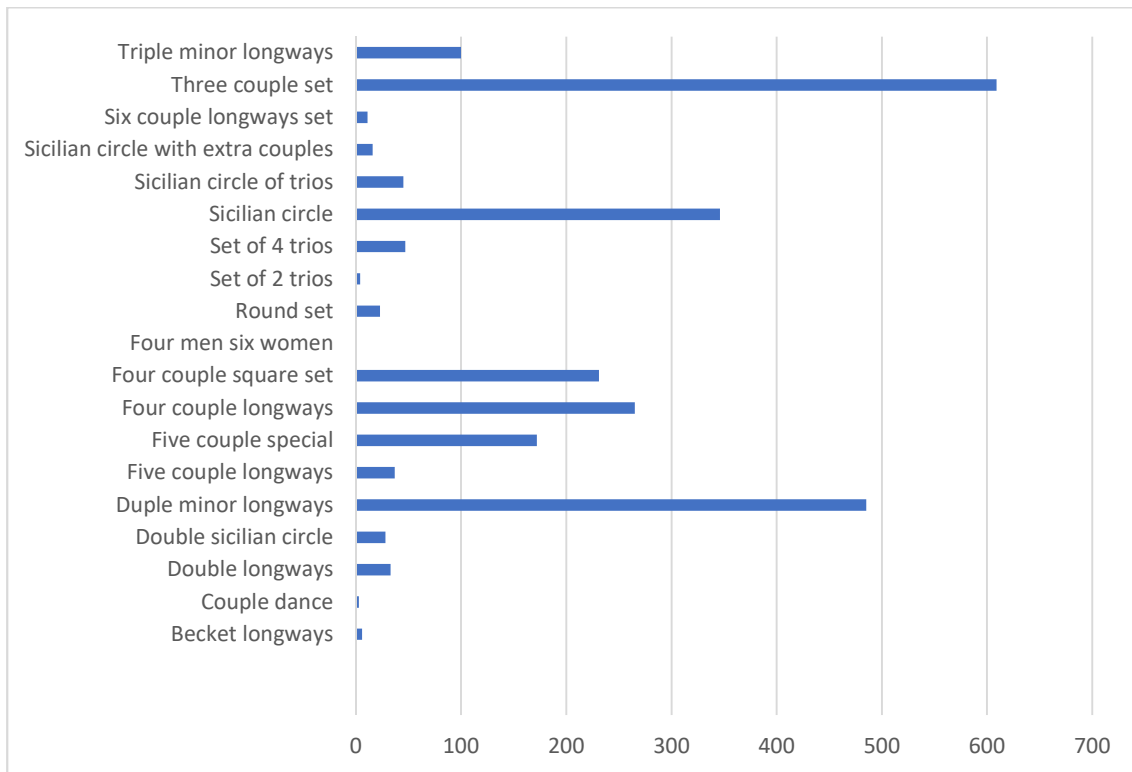


Figure 4. Types of dances danced

What were the top dances.

By far the most popular dance called was Levi Jackson Rag with 172 (7%) instances. Nine dances had recorded instances of between 64 and 100. The top ten dances accounted for 884 dances (35%) of all dances called. Five of the top ten dances were in waltz time: Heidenröslein, Waterfall Waltz, Bare Necessities, Miss de Jersey's Memorial and Margaret's Waltz. Figure 5 shows the top ten dances.

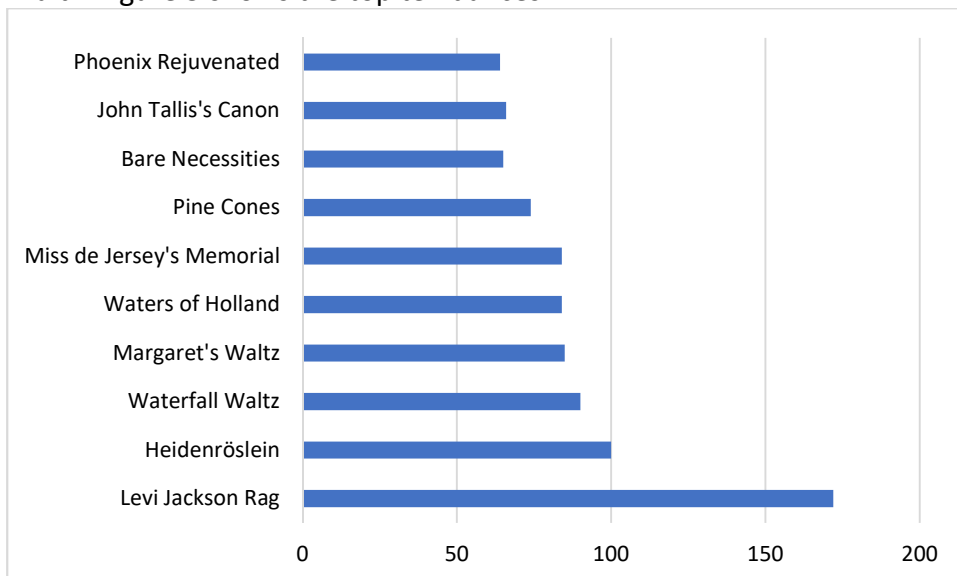


Figure 5. Top ten dances.

Lancashire based caller, Hilary Herbert (2018) suggests:

Of course, I tried to do more [dances] in the centenary year. I called some dances I had not called before but they were not unfamiliar as we used to dance them regularly. Reactions from dancers ranged from nostalgia “I haven’t done that for ages” to enjoyment in discovering a “new” dance. Heswall and West Kirby Jubilee was surprisingly popular. Sometimes, I’m afraid, the reaction was “Not that one again” as callers tended to do the same dances.

Australian caller George Ansell (2018) suggests that Shaw’s dances are popular because:

...they are well thought out, often a challenge, but always fit the music since both dance and music were created by a consummate dancer!

Moreover, Sussex caller and dancer June Axon (2018) considered that:

Shaw was a very clever dance composer, even his easy dances have a unique move. The more complicated dances such as Shy Merchant and Four Winds provide a challenge to learn and to call are real master pieces.

Who called the most dances.

The top ten callers called 36% of the total dances, the top 20 callers called 55% and the top 30 called 64%.

The top 36 callers who each called over 20 dances during the year, along with the number of dances called and these can be seen in Figures 6 and 7. It could be argued that popular callers who call frequently at club dances, at festivals or where they have been invited to call or lead a specific ‘Shaw Session’ may have had an unfair advantage. Of course, callers needed to have submitted their returns to get recorded!

Of the top 10 callers, 7 are based in the UK and 3 in Australia. The top US caller was Mady Newfield who came in at number 16.

Australian caller George Ansell (2018) was asked why there were three Australian callers in the top ten, quite unashamedly said:

The Australian contribution to the worldwide callings on the Pat Shaw website rose to almost 17% then with other late entries dropped back to 14.57%. I must say this surprised me as I would have expected a larger American contribution. I am not surprised that some Australian callers have shown a great interest as there is an active English dance scene here. I suspect part of the reason for the Australian contribution is that some of us (myself most certainly) have been active in sending updates to Antony Heywood.

Number	Name	Number of dances called	Home country
1	Robert Moir	168	UK
2	George Ansell	129	Australia
3	John Sweeney	119	UK
4	Hilary Herbert	117	UK

5	Madeleine Smith	90	UK
6	Sean Goddard	87	UK
7	Keith Orchard	57	UK
8	Keith Wood	45	Australia
9	Sheree Greenhill	44	Australia
10	Trevor Monson	42	UK
11	Victoria Yeomans	41	UK
12	Carol Hewson	39	UK
13	Colin Hume	39	UK
14	Kathryn Wright	35	UK
15	Nicolas Broadbridge	37	UK
16	Mady Newfield	33	USA
17	Ian Jones	32	UK
18	Ian Kendall	32	Australia
19	Simone Verheyen	29	Belgium
20	Neil Stuart	28	UK
21	Phia Jongstra	28	The Netherlands
22	Bernie Culkin	27	UK
23	David Wright	26	UK
24	Hugh Stewart	26	UK
25	Barbara Finney	25	USA
26	Jonathan Sivier	24	USA
27	Paul Ross	24	USA
28	Catie Condran Geist	23	USA
29	Val and Ian McFarlane	23	UK
30	Brooke Friendly	22	USA
31	Colin Towns	22	Australia
32	Robert Messer	21	USA
33	Andrew Shaw	20	UK
34	Marieke van Leersum	20	The Netherlands
35	Nigel Close	20	UK
36	Paul Andrews	20	UK

Figure 6. Top 36 callers

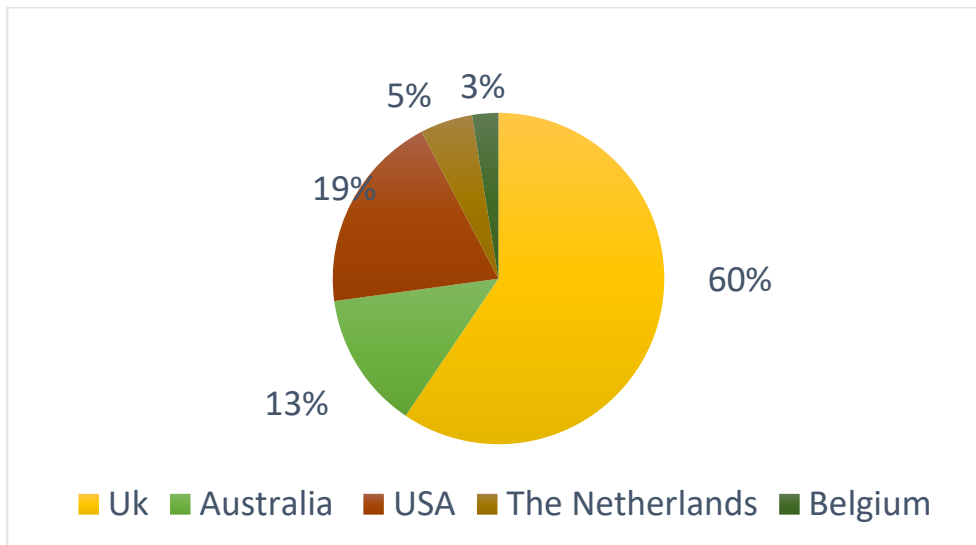


Figure 7. Top 36 callers by country of residence

The Music.

The survey did not ask any questions regarding what type of music was used: recorded or live band. Pat Shaw composed tunes for many of his dances, and I asked a couple of musicians to reflect upon them.

Chris Jewell who has been a long time Folk Camp musician, multi-instrumentalist and caller from Devon suggests:

Levi Jackson is probably the tune of Pat Shaw’s I have played the most, but there are others like Walpole Cottage and The Three Sea Captains that I suspect some people forget were his, that I have also been playing for longer than I can remember.

Pat Shaw was an accordionist, and although not easy on the accordion, Levi Jackson is a lot more possible than on the fiddle. It is not a melodeon tune! So not only did he write wonderful dances, but lots of good and interesting tunes too. A lot had strong chord progressions (Levi Jackson, The American Husband) but some like Halsway Sicilian were just nice tunes.

Margaret’s Waltz is an example of a tune that has crossed over into the music session world and can be heard in pubs all over the country. I never mind playing his tunes.

He crafted the dances, and it seems to me that the majority of his tunes were well crafted too.

David Fleming-Williams, a past member of The Ranchers, leader of the band that played at the Remembering Pat Shaw Day at Cecil Sharp House in September 2017, and currently the leader of the Pemberley Players says:

Pat seemed to spend as much time in our family house in Kentish Town as he did in his own at Holly Mount. My mother [Nan Fleming Williams] did not have the ability to hear ‘chords’ when playing a tune – she just heard the true melody. Pat used to chord most of the tunes she played for the various bands in which she performed; eventually a task that I took over. So, it is no surprise that his style of arrangement has rubbed off.

As I progressed into more complex arranging, Pat visited me and helped me arranging some of his most famous tunes into Concert form. He was insistent that we all use the tunes and chords exactly as he had written them; however he did allow me one chord change in 'Nan's Waltz' for the big orchestral version which I had arranged.

His music and dances continue to surprise the unwary and delight the expert. I was lucky enough, earlier this year, to be able to play his 'Earl of Zetland', tune and variation, along with Nan's Waltz, tunes forever associated with him and my mum, at the funeral of master 'Morris' musician, Denis Smith, in Thaxted; special because my co-performer was his daughter, Jenny. Good do!

My wife reminds me that my 'tag' of 'Quando in dubio est, ex scripto canit', the Ranchers motto, translates as, most appropriately, 'When in doubt, play what's written'!

International aspects.

Shaw composed dances mainly in the Anglo-American style, some dances were based on historical style of English dances that followed the Playford style of verse/chorus concept. Others were much more modern in style such as Walpole Cottage, the very popular Levi Jackson Rag and many others in differing formations. However, he also composed dances using Welsh tunes and figures and also composed dances to old Dutch tunes. Then, he composed dances after his visits to Pinewoods. Shaw composed dances that not only appealed to international callers and dancers, he wrote them on many levels from the easy to the difficult. As Mady Newfield (2018) from Chicago says:

In 2004 our international dance group was asked to put together a performance of Welsh folk dances, and my research took me to all the work that Pat Shaw did to reconstruct old dances, as well as to create new ones to wonderful Welsh tunes. Since we were looking for performance material, my group started at the "high end" with dances like Ty Coch Caerdydd (The Red House of Cardiff) and Sawdl Y Fwch (The Cowslip), and were amazed (and challenged!) by the complexity of the patterns. I am also a long-time Scottish country dancer, so the focus on intricate figures, especially playing with all sorts of heys (reels to the Scots), and symmetries, was familiar and fun. Since I was starting to call English country dance at that time as well, I was intrigued with these Welsh dances that combined the traditional English Playford verses (Up a Double or Circle, Siding, Arming) with complex "chorus" figures, each different.

Australia had three callers in the top ten and it is important to understand what is going on "down under" and why Pat Shaw's dances appear so popular. Sheree Greenhill (2018) suggested that many groups were started by English dancers. Sheree wrote:

I believe that Pat Shaw's dances are popular in Australia as many groups here over the years have been started by English Dancers who passed on their love of Pat Shaw's dances to Aussies. In general, I find that the repertoire of dances here quite different to that done in the US. Americans dance lots of dances written by local composers. The dance community in Australia is quite small so we all tend to know each other and share the dances we love so when we are able to meet up we have dances in common we can enjoy.

Colin Towns (2018) suggests that the folk dance community in Australia is a small community where everybody knows each other. It is also an amorphous grouping of English, Irish, Scottish, Bush (Barn dance), Contra, Square, Scandinavian, International dances as well as World and Aboriginal. The diversions known elsewhere are less defined in Australia and at folk festivals and similar events you are likely to find a wide variety of dance styles. Colin Towns emigrated to Australia in 1985, however he was involved in the folk dance scene in England and fondly remembers helping Marjorie Fennessey, Brenda Godrich, Colin Hume and others to perfect the dance notes for the Pat Shaw dance books.

Colin Towns gave another comment:

One last memory was an annual workshop I held at the Australian National Folk Festival called "The Hardest Dances I know" at which I presented Pat's Quartet. These were dances I danced at the EFDSS Royal Albert Hall Festival in 1982. The dances were Miss Avril's Delight, Miss Bedlington's Fancy, Miss de Jersey's Memorial and Mr Ganiford's Maggot. Generally, a workshop length of 90 minutes or two hours was enough time to teach these dances. However, recently less time has been given and other dances have been used (Towns, 2018).

Conclusion.

Shaw was a prolific composer of dances, and he set the standard high. As various contributors have identified, on one hand Shaw wrote a number of challenging and difficult dances, but also a number of simpler ones. Many of Shaw's dances have been accepted as standard in the club-callers repertoire and can provide a challenge to them as well as the dancers.

The acceptance of Shaw's composed dances within the Anglo-American folk dance community has helped the development of folk dance. Newly composed dances, often with intriguing figures or tunes are now readily accepted, unlike 50 or 60 years ago and callers and dancers alike often welcome these challenges. Although Shaw's composed dances are all over 40 years old, they are still able to stimulate dancers, callers and musicians.

Acknowledgements

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