

Isla Side Lasses

Alexander Walker

reel

ISLA SIDE LASSES.

Walker: *A Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, Marches, &c., 1866; No. 59, pg. 21.*

Scottish, Reel. B Minor, AAB.

i. Carl MacKenzie LP, 1980s. ii. David Greenberg & Puirt a Baroque, CD, c.1996.
A favourite of the late Joe Peter MacLean.

There are two main Isla Rivers in Scotland, one in North East Scotland and one in Perthshire. This one is assumed to be about the one in N.E. Scotland.

The River Isla is a tributary of the River Deveron. The area surrounding it is known as Strathisla (not to be confused with Glen Isla, which is around the River Isla in Perthshire)

It rises to the northeast of Milltown of Auchindoun (See Tune 'Auchindoun Castle') and flows north-eastwards for 18 miles (29 km) through Strathisla, separating Keith from Fife-Keith, and then forms the boundary between Moray and Aberdeenshire for a short distance before joining the Deveron near Rothiemay. (See Tune 'The Bonny Lass of Rothiemay')

It was common at the Scottish dances to toast the ladies (Lassies) attending. This tune refers to the ladies attending to the Strathisla Games. The Strathisla games were started in 1853.

Alexander Walker Connection

Strathisla was the place for the Strathisla Games. The newspaper report below recalls the details about the games. In 1853 the games had just been inaugurated and Alexander was obviously in the area at the time and became involved. He seemed to be the representative of Sir Charles Forbes who had been the great initiator of Highland games. Alexander gave a toast to the young ladies attending the dance and also played for the dancing.

Mr Findlater returned thanks. The Fiddich-side Gathering had now, he might say, got into manhood. He hoped soon to see a meeting of both clubs at some place in Botriphnie.

Mr Walker Newe, proposed the Young Ladies, who would grace the ball; the Croupier gave the Chairman; the Croupier also gave the Agents, the worthy Secretary, and the Treasurer of the Gathering, who had done their duty for this year, and he hoped they would have a good Gathering by the 12th of August next year. (All the honours.)

Mr Merson, the treasurer, after acknowledging the last toast, proposed the health of the Strathisla Farmers, coupling with it the name of Mr Riddoch, Grange.

After drinking, among other toasts, to the health of the landlord and landlady, Mr and Mrs Hendry, the party adjourned shortly before eight, P.M.

The dinner was followed by a ball, which was also held in the New inn Hall, and was very numerous, attended by the youth and beauty of the district. At twelve, a pause being made in the dance, Mr Hendry gave the health of Lord Fife, which was most enthusiastically received. Dancing being resumed was continued till a late hour. In the course of the evening there were present Mr and Mrs Whatoun, with Miss Pucok and Mr Mulcaster. The music, which was led by Mr Walker Newe, who happened to be in the neighbourhood, was all that could be desired.—Abridged from the Banffshire Journal.

Friday 21, October 1853