



The Kissing Dance



I started playing this tune when I played with Kelly Russell, an excellent Newfoundland fiddler, who had earlier played it with Figgy Duff. It comes from the communities of Open Hall and Redcliffe, adjacent villages in Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland, and a man named Larry Barker, who plays it on the button accordion. The dance itself consists of one person with a handkerchief kissing someone else, who then takes the handkerchief, gets in front of the line and kisses someone else, who then takes the handkerchief, gets in front of the line and kisses someone else, and so on, until everyone has been kissed and the whole room is dancing around in a line. Then it gets complicated with steps like “Thread the Needle” and others to end it off. The dance may be unsanitary, but it’s a very pretty tune. Figgy Duff may still play this, in case readers get a chance to hear them on their cross-Canada tour this summer.

Jim Payne