

Dance Etiquette



Why Etiquette?

Dancing is a social activity where we all join together in a common effort to enjoy ourselves and the "rules" of dance etiquette are there to help us to achieve that common enjoyment.

Invitation to Dance

These days it is polite for folk of either gender to invite a partner to join a dance. It is usual in bush dancing to join the sets as couples, rather than to signal for a partner from the set. If you decline an invitation to dance, it is not courteous to accept a later invitation for that same dance. Experienced dancers should always remember that they were novices at one time and be willing to invite and partner less experienced or beginner dancers to make them feel comfortable and welcome. Taking the time to assist others will ensure that social dancing continues.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Eye contact and flirtatious looks and gestures are part of the fun of social dancing, and will not be considered to be harassment unless the attentions continue after the dance is over. Similarly, accidental body contact in the course of a vigorous dance will not be considered harassing, unless it can be shown to be part of a pattern of deliberately planned "accidental" behaviour.

If a person tries to monopolise you on the dance floor, makes inappropriate advances, is unsafe, or behaves in other ways unacceptable to you, let them know immediately that you are not happy with such behaviour. If you are too shy to do so, or if the behaviour continues, speak to the person on the door who will have the issue dealt with.

The Monaro Folk Society does not condone or permit any behaviour at its events which intentionally harms, intimidates, or harasses any participant, either physically, sexually, or emotionally.

The MFS does not permit any criminal activities at its events and organisers will not hesitate to take appropriate action.

Furthermore, sexually suggestive, lewd, or indecent behaviour on or off the dance floor, is not acceptable.

Reporting Problems

If you ever feel uncomfortable or concerned when attending an MFS event you should, in the first instance, approach an event organiser to advise them of the issue. Following an event you can contact event organisers or MFS Committee members through the MFS website.

See <http://www.monarofolk.org.au/about-the-monaro-folk-society/contacts/>

Gender Imbalances

If there is a gender imbalance and you are comfortable dancing as the opposite dancing gender and your dancing partner is comfortable with that, then you are doing everyone a great service by dancing as the opposite gender. It can also be great experience. Please come back even if there is an imbalance as these things can change dramatically from week to week.

Over-energetic Dancing

Dancing is great exercise and lots of fun to throw yourself into, however be aware that if you are too energetic this may pose a danger, or discomfort to others. Dance steps such as a swing can be done too fast, particularly with older persons with mobility and balance problems. Pushing and pulling other dancers around should also be avoided. If you are trying to assist others this should be done with the eyes, body position, hand signals and voice.

Remember dancers should always be aware of their dance partners wishes.

Joining Sets

Unless specifically invited because there is room at the top, in bush dance it is polite to join at the bottom of a set.

What to Wear?

It is a good idea to dress in a similar fashion to others that you see in the particular dance group. Dancers are very tolerant, so it is better to come along in something that you think will be appropriate, then adjust if necessary as you go along, rather than staying away because you don't know what to wear. There is always a diverse range of dress at any event and you will never be made unwelcome because of what you are wearing, even more so on your first night. Follow the crowd. See what others do and follow suit. Check out photos of previous events on the internet (Google is your friend). If it is your first time and you are concerned, email or phone the dance organisers and ask.

Jewellery

Be aware of potential injuries to others – remove or cover sharp rings, bracelets, heavy watches etc.

Shoes

To avoid introducing grit to the dance floor and for the sake of your knees, wear dance shoes. Sneakers or other shoes with rubber soles can stick to the floor during turns and spins and cause ankle and knee injuries. Heavy work boots should be avoided as they are not only difficult to dance in but can injure others. The same is suggested for stilettos - they are also difficult to shear in.

Personal Hygiene

Dancing is an activity where people come in close contact. Personal hygiene is important, but avoid strong perfumes or after-shaves. Be considerate of folk who are sensitive to these fragrances and may have allergic reactions.

Share the Fun

Try to involve everyone in the dance experience, and ask a variety of dance partners during the evening. Be aware of folk needing to be asked for a dance as the night evolves.

The most important person in the room is the newest person for they represent our future. It is polite for good dancers to ask beginners to dance, to help the beginners and keep the better dancer in touch with the world.

Help the Event

Volunteer, help pack up and help keep the venue clean, tidy and safe. It's all run by volunteers just like yourself, to give you the simple pleasure of being able to dance in the company of lots of others.

Enjoy

And most of all, smile! Friendly behaviour is contagious, and can help lift the mood of the whole dance.
