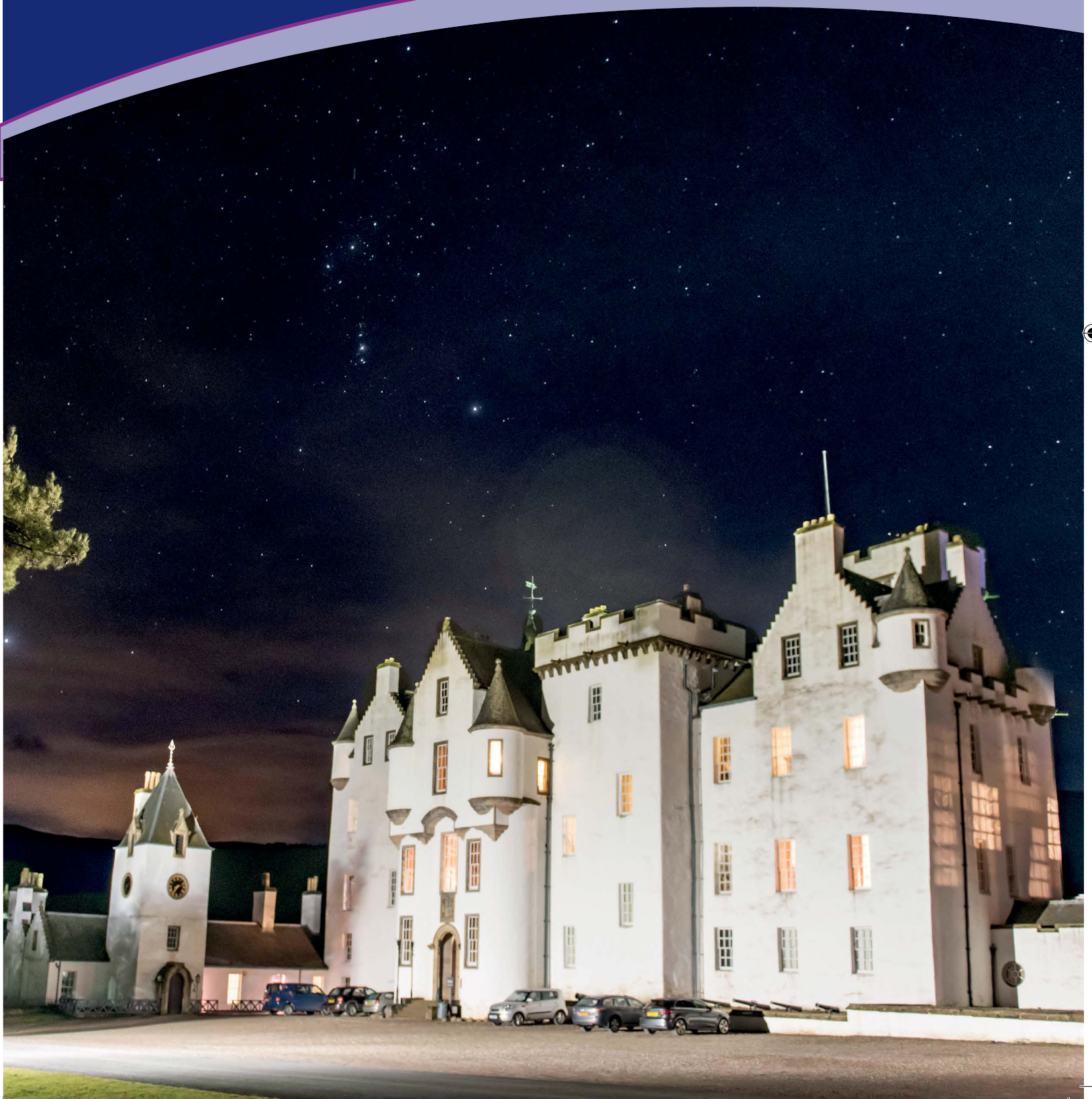


SCOTTISH Country Dancer


rscds
Dance Scottish

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 28 April 2019



RSCDS EVENTS



Summer School

SUMMER SCHOOL 2019

SUNDAY 14 JULY - SUNDAY 11 AUGUST
UNIVERSITY HALL, ST ANDREWS
DIRECTOR: JIM STOTT, ANNE TAYLOR

- Attend as a resident or non-resident for any one or two weeks of the four
- Morning classes at all levels and optional afternoon classes
- Junior Summer School in week 3
- Social dancing in week 4
- Units 2 & 3 will take place in weeks 1 & 2
- Unit 5 will take place in weeks 3 & 4
- The Musicians' Course in week 3
- The Class Musicians' Course in week 4
- DAA Intermediate level in week 2
- DAA Advanced level in week 3
- DAA Very Advanced level in week 4

All classes and courses are subject to demand.

Online booking is now open. For further information go to:

www.rscds.org/events

90th AGM & CONFERENCE WEEKEND 2019

1 - 3 NOVEMBER
BELL'S SPORTS CENTRE, HAY ST, PERTH

- Teaching Conference: Friday, from 2pm to 4:30pm
- Friday Night - Informal Dance: James Coutts and his Scottish Dance Band, 8pm - 11:30pm
- Saturday Class: Deb Lees with musician Angela Young, 10:30am - 12 noon
- Saturday Night - Formal Ball: Nicol McLaren and his Scottish Dance Band,

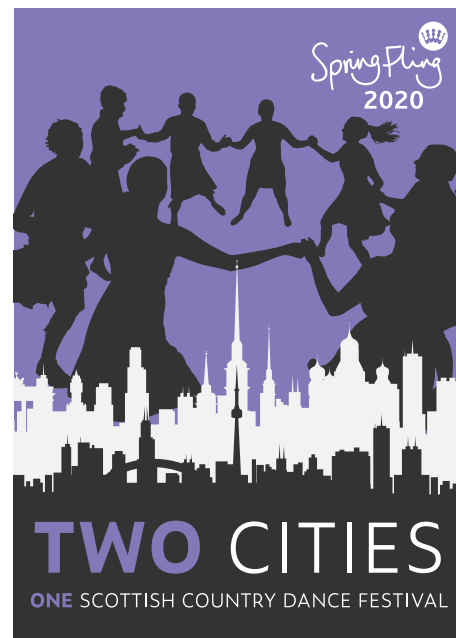
8pm - 11:30pm

- Sunday Class: Janet Johnston with musician Susan Macfadyen, 10:30am - 12 noon

Tickets available from
www.rscds.org/events



AGM & Conference Weekend



WINTER SCHOOL 2020

16 - 21 FEBRUARY
THE ATHOLL PALACE HOTEL,
PITLOCHRY
CO-ORDINATOR: WILLIAM
WILLIAMSON

Contact moira.thomson@rscds.org
for more details or book online at
www.rscds.org/events

SPRING FLING 2020

1 - 3 MAY, SAINT PETERSBURG, RUSSIA
15 - 17 MAY, TORONTO, CANADA

Details of teachers, musicians and classes will be posted on the Spring Fling 2020 website as soon as available:
www.springfling.2020.com

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or from Amazon

*Member's price



Editorial

I hope our magazine reflects the truly diverse nature of the RSCDS worldwide. With every issue I am amazed at the huge amount of energy with which branches and groups organise their activities. From young children of 5 years old to grannies and grandpas in their 80s and 90s, we are all united by country dancing. Please note that in Scotland we just call it 'country dancing' – no need for the Scottish here!

In this issue we profile our new chairman, Andrew Kellett, someone who has danced since he was a boy, and has already contributed so much to the branches he has been a member of. Andrew was one of the people who proposed the changes which eventually led to both our new system of management and to more outward-looking attitudes within the Society. Also new in this issue we welcome Helen McGinley back to the magazine team.

It was a chance encounter in Stornoway which led to the interview with Kenneth Macdonald, also a dancer since childhood. Over coffee one day, he happened to mention that he had had afternoon tea with Miss Milligan in her flat in Glasgow. I grasped the journalistic opportunity immediately! His story starts in Ardrossan, moves to Canada, then back to Glasgow, involving Alastair Aitkenhead, Muriel Johnstone's mother Dodo and Georgina Finlay on the way!

As is usual for the Spring Issue, we have pictures from yet another highly successful Winter School at the Atholl Palace. Unfortunately, we don't have the space to publish the dozens of inspiring photographs from the Days of Dance involving, literally, thousands of primary-age children. Behind all the pictures there are the RSCDS members, teachers and branches, making it all happen.

In the Spring Issue of 2018 we published a breakdown of membership numbers and we do so again in this issue. Total numbers are roughly the same, which in today's world is a real achievement. What is heartening is the 700 new members in the past year. The largest country is now England by a whisker. Perhaps it is time for some serious questions to be asked about why our dancing does not seem to appeal more widely in its home nation, the obvious main market.

For the past 27 issues we have had reports from regional correspondents. This issue sees a change. Any branch or group may send in a report of maximum 200 words. I am pleased to say that we have six pages of reports, reflecting different approaches and attitudes, showing the diversity, inclusivity, the sheer hard work, and the enormous amount of fun we all have in the RSCDS.

One of the great frustrations of editing is that some of the best stuff lands on the cutting-room floor. The Editorial Team does its best to include everything that is sent in, but this does mean that contributions have to be shortened in order to fit them all in. All I can do is apologise, but please keep writing in. It's your magazine!

Jimmie Hill, Edinburgh

Cover: Blair Castle on the night of the Winter School Ball
Iain Struthers Photography

Photographs: Pia Walker for the NAAFC photo on p. 5. Iain Struthers Photography for p. 17. Fotosearch for p. 14. Christopher Figge for the Asilomar pictures on p. 20 and 24.

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The next issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* will be published in October 2019. Please refer to *Notes for Contributors* on the website. Send materials for inclusion to the editor: mag.editor@rscds.org no later than 1 August 2019.

Please send enquiries about advertising to Cécile Hascoët: mag.advertising@rscds.org

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News from Coates Crescent

Branch Anniversaries in 2019

Congratulations to the following branches who celebrate significant anniversaries this year:

Edinburgh	95	Exeter	50
Banffshire	90	Delaware Valley	50
Annan	70	South Wales	50
Inverness & District	70	Ribble Valley	25
Melbourne & District	50	Tucson	25

AGM and Conference Weekend 2018, Perth

Over 500 dancers enjoyed a weekend of dances, classes and discussions at our AGM. Branch delegates voted to keep membership subscriptions at the same level.

Retiring Chairman, Helen Russell, was thanked for her commitment and hard work over the last two years. Incoming Chairman, Andrew Kellett, said he was optimistic about the Society's future and encouraged members everywhere to share their enjoyment of Scottish country dancing. Many thanks to all the volunteers, staff, teachers and musicians who made it such a successful event.

Results of 2018 management elections

Chairman Elect: Lorna Ogilvie
 MB members: Roy Bain, Gary Coull (3 yrs)
 E & T Convenor Elect: Anne Taylor (1 yr + 3 as Convenor)
 E & T Committee: Sue Porter, Deb Lees and Muriel Bone (3 yrs)
 MS Committee members: Alan Ross (3 yrs)
 Youth Services Convenor: Joana Stausberg (3 yrs)
 Youth Services Committee members: Moira Korus and Aymeric Fromherz (3 yrs)

Board and Committee membership for 2018-19

The full list is as follows:

Management Board

Andrew Kellett (Chairman)
 Lorna Ogilvie (Chairman Elect)
 Bill Cant (Treasurer)
 Malcolm Brown (Convenor, E & T)
 Peter Knapman (Convenor, MS)
 Joana Stausberg (Convenor, YS)
 Linda Gaul, Theresa MacVarish-Clark, Sue Ronald,
 Clive Warren-Smith, Trevor Clarke, Roy Bain, Gary Coull

Education and Training Committee

Malcolm Brown (Convenor)
 Anne Taylor (Convenor Elect and Schools Co-Director)
 Jim Stott (Schools Co-Director)
 Ellie Briscoe, Trish Reid, Jane McIntosh, Deborah Leary, Sue Porter,
 Muriel Bone, Deb Lees, Ute Hoppmann-Lacour (appointed for 1 yr)

Membership Services Committee

Peter Knapman (Convenor)
 Ian Muir (Music Director)
 William Williamson, Peter Avery, Angela Young, Lara Friedman-Shedlov, Alan Ross

Youth Services Committee

Joana Stausberg (Convenor)
 Marilyn Watson, Moira Korus, Olga McIntosh, Aymeric Fromherz

Vacancies and appointments in 2019

The list of management positions available this year is below. Nomination forms will be available on the website or at the office from 26 April. In addition to completing the form, members must submit a profile outlining the skills and attributes they have to offer. Guidelines on the reverse of the form give an indication of what should be included, but those considering standing for election are strongly advised to read the role descriptions for Board and Committee members available on the website, in the April Branch mailing, or from Julia Parr julia.parr@rscds.org Nomination forms, profiles and photos must be received by 6 September.

Management Board: 4 (3 for 3 yrs, 1 for 2 yrs)

E & T: 4 (3 for 3 yrs, 1 for 1 yr)

MS: 3 (2 for 3 yrs, 1 for 2 yrs)

YS Committee: 3 (2 for 3 yrs, 1 for 1 yr)

Scrolls of Honour



Congratulations to those who received Scrolls of Honour at the AGM (from left to right): Diane Rooney (Cheshire), Maureen Haynes (North West Craven), Gabor Turi (Vienna), Deirdre MacCuish Bark (Toronto), Sue Porter (Oban & Lorn)

RSCDS Website

We hope you have already had the opportunity to explore our brand new website! Whilst it includes everything from our old website, there are new dedicated sections for 'Resources for Musicians' and 'Young Dancers', as well as an area focused on learning (and teaching) Scottish country dance and music. You will

benefit from a new online retail experience and an easy-to-use events booking system to streamline purchases and make your site visit more enjoyable. The revamped 'Branch and Group Finder' page will allow users to find dance classes in their area more easily, utilising country and keyword search tools and displaying a useful interactive map. There are further improvements we wish to make and the convenor of Membership Services, Peter Knapman is to prioritise them. Peter can be reached at: website@rscds.org

Office staff



Debbie Morris

We are still looking for an office manager. (See page 11.) In the meantime we said good bye to Mike Greenwood and welcomed in his place Debbie Morris. Mike worked at Coates Crescent for four years and then a further six months remotely from his new home in Brisbane. He did a lot to improve electronic communication with branches and members, and helped many branch administrators to master the database. Latterly, he concentrated on getting the new website up and running. Thank you, Mike, for all your efforts on behalf of the Society.

Debbie Morris was appointed Communications and Marketing Officer in March 2019. This is a new role and replaces the Digital Marketing Communications Officer position.

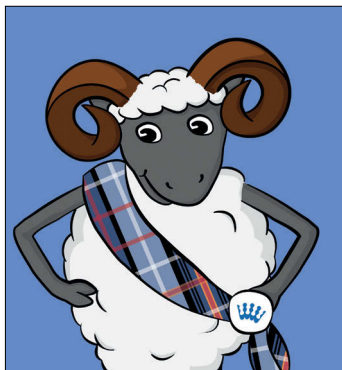
RSCDS Centenary 2023

The Board has set up a Centenary Working Group led by Chairman Elect Lorna Ogilvie. It is a small but balanced team, ensuring representation from the SCD community in the UK, worldwide, and at Coates Crescent. Those involved are tasked with brainstorming suggestions for Centenary activities and events, sharing these regularly with the Board, and bidding in due course for any required funding. Members will be updated regularly as decisions are made, as the group moves towards the detailed planning phase. The Centenary in 2023 aims to celebrate 100 years of the RSCDS in suitable style, engage branches, members and affiliated groups, and impact on the public at large. It must also be part of creating a lasting and positive legacy for Scottish country dancing.

Equally importantly, Centenary events should be fun!

Affiliation and University Clubs

We are pleased to announce that all university clubs may affiliate free as from July 2019. The RSCDS has 306 affiliated groups across 30 different countries.



Rowan the sheep

RSCDS Shop

The Membership Services Committee is busy preparing the new book, *30 Popular Dances*, along with its accompanying CDs which will be available at the AGM. This book is a complement to the original *30 Popular Scottish Country Dances* published in the late 1990s. This new book will include a mix of traditional and non-traditional dances,

all selected by branches in their area for their popularity by branches in their area. The Youth Services Committee is delighted to present the new range of Rowan (the sheep) branded accessories aimed at younger dancers. Notebooks, drawstring bags, stickers and badges will be available from April.

We will also be introducing a new scarf, made from the finest lambswool and manufactured in Scotland by the House of Edgar. It will of course sport the Society's own distinctive tartan design.

RSCDS-sponsored Awards

In December the RSCDS sponsored the 'Instrumentalist of the Year' award at the Scots Trad Music Awards, held in Perth. MS Convenor, Peter Knapman, presented the trophy to accomplished Uilleann Piper, Calum Stewart. In January we sponsored the Ceilidh at Celtic Connections with John Carswell as MC. In March we were delighted to sponsor once again an award at the NAAFC Festival which was



Shona MacFadyen, winner in the RSCDS category at the NAAFC Festival, receiving the trophy from Peter Knapman.

open to solo accordionists and fiddlers of all ages. The Inter-Varsity Folk Dance Festival (IVFDF) took place in Edinburgh in March, organized by Edinburgh University's New Scotland Country Dance Society, one of our affiliated groups. The RSCDS helped to pay for the Matthew MacLennan Scottish Dance Band to provide music for the evening dance.

New Zealand Summer School 2019 - 2020

Cambridge, New Zealand

28 December 2019 - 5 January 2020

Make your plans now to escape the northern winter for a summer of dancing and holidays!



For further information on classes, teachers, accommodation, and on holiday destinations and activities in the area, see:

ss2019.dancescottish.org.nz

Organiser - Antanas Procuta

ss2019@dancescottish.org.nz



From the Chairman



Andrew Kellett

My first task in this, my first Chairman's column, is to thank you, the members of the RSCDS, for all that you do on behalf of the Society. Whether you are a teacher, dancer or musician with many years' experience or you have joined very recently; whether you are in the dem team or the beginners' class; whether you dance regularly or you just pay an annual subscription, your contribution is important and it is appreciated. Thank you. My second task is to thank all the Chairmen before me for what they have achieved. Each approached the role in a different way, but they all took the Society forward. So where do I want to take the RSCDS?

“ I want us to be more outward-facing. ”

At the beginning of the year the Management Board held an Awayday (in Coates Crescent in case you are worried about what we do with your money). I posed three questions. Is the RSCDS a charity or a club? Are we a centralised or an empowered organisation? Do we preserve a tradition or do we embrace change? The answer to each question, of course, is both. The real question is: have we got the balance right?

Charity v. club. Constitutionally we are a charity, but often we behave like a club. That is understandable. Most of us joined the Society to further our personal enjoyment of Scottish country dancing and some of us to benefit from financial offers. Yet the role of a charity is to benefit the general public. We must do more of that if we are to prosper. By all means let's enjoy our dancing through the RSCDS, but also let's look outwards more often and take dancing to others, so more people can benefit from this wonderful pastime.

Centralised v. empowered. The Board, the Management Committees and the staff at Coates Crescent all work hard on behalf of the Society. They do a good job and have an important role to play. Yet Scottish country dancing is predominantly a local activity. It is with you in your branches and groups where we meet the public, where we teach people to dance and where we most frequently enjoy our dancing. I believe the Society should be doing more to support you on the ground, and that you should feel empowered to take initiatives on behalf of the RSCDS.

Tradition v. change. If we don't change we will cease to be relevant, but if we follow every fashion we will lose touch with our roots. Dancing would become dull if creative people were not pushing back boundaries and coming up with new dances and tunes. For us as a Society, though, it is important that we continue to teach the traditional dances of Scotland alongside the new. Otherwise, each generation of dancers will have its own repertoire, and we will lose contact with what we set out to preserve.

Where do I want to take the RSCDS? I want us to be more outward-facing; I want to help branches and members do more to promote Scottish country dancing and the Society and I want us to keep hold of our tradition as we move forward.

Education and Training



Malcolm Brown

Work on the new teaching qualification is reaching a very exciting stage, and it now looks increasingly likely that we can launch it either at the Conference Weekend in 2019, or at the beginning of next year. In an effort to clarify what is being developed we have changed the name to Core Training for Instructors (CTI). It has become obvious that we have not explained clearly that people can decide to go through all or only part of the training. Moreover, it needs emphasising that it is only people who want a qualification who will be assessed. One of the problems with the current Unit-based system is the need for people to travel, often both examiners and candidates. Another problem is one of cost, mainly for accommodation. The new system will overcome these drawbacks by using modern video technology. The people receiving training will be videoed in their normal class situation, with access to the video material being restricted to the tutor who is training the instructor (and if requested because they want a qualification, the assessor).

“ Using modern video technology. ”

Instructors will be expected to use video material themselves to teach steps and formations, if they consider their own dancing is not at a sufficiently high standard, unless they have somebody in the class who can demonstrate in their place. This is not a replacement for the current Unit-based process, but just a different approach, producing a different qualification. We plan to develop separate modules as part of the process, which will be available to anyone, both experienced and new teachers and instructors.

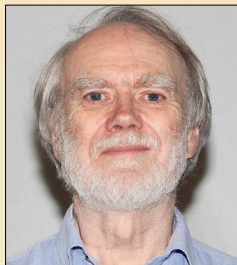
We have been looking at the DAA and hope to have a new syllabus available in the near future, for introduction mid-year. We have also developed a revised marking sheet and guidelines, and expect to run at least two courses for new DAA assessors this year, one before Summer School and the other at TAC. We hope to use video technology in some way, so that people who cannot attend the courses can still receive the assessor training.

We are looking at the Medal Tests with a view to revising the syllabus, and this work has started by sending out a questionnaire to all the medal test teachers and assessors to ask for their views.

At the end of last year one of our examiners, Mary Murray, decided to retire, and we are delighted that she has agreed to become an Examiner Emeritus. Her service to the Society has been outstanding both as a teacher in Canada, at Summer School and elsewhere, and of course working as an examiner.

Finally, can I suggest that you look at the new website – you will be amazed by how different it looks. To find the content that relates to E&T go to the 'Learn' section and have a browse, or if you are looking for something in particular, you can use the 'Search' function. We intend to add much more content, both in the short term and as projects come to fruition, so please look at the 'Notice Board', which we will use to inform people of changes and updates.

Membership Services



Peter Knapman

This is my first report as Convenor of Membership Services and just now I am still feeling my way – hopefully after three years I might know what I am doing!

The committee is busy with a variety of tasks including the video project where we are planning to produce videos of all RSCDS dances for uploading onto the internet. If your branch is interested in taking part, please contact Cecile. Cecile.Hascoet@rscds.org Remember the videos aim to show good relaxed social dancing.

This year's main task is putting together a book of popular dances. I know that many of you like a regular new book of dances, but we also get comments along the lines of 'no more new dances please' – hence, this year's moratorium on new dances and a book of popular dances instead. I hope you enjoy it when it arrives.

The new book is intended to complement the original book of 30 dances that was produced many years ago. As you will be aware, the contents of the book have been determined by branches, which were invited to submit popular dances for consideration. We had an excellent response with a wide range of dances submitted – overall, we had over 1100 proposals representing 283 different dances, from 114 branches. Analysing the dances has proved to be interesting. One dance was nominated by nearly 50% of branches, whilst at the opposite extreme nearly half the dances were only nominated by one branch. After many hours of work and discussion we have finally honed the list down to the final 30. Difficult decisions had to be made as to what to include and what to leave out. Early on it became apparent that some of the dances submitted were from recent RSCDS publications. As the 'new book' is primarily aimed at dances that have retained their popularity over a significant period of time, we have had to leave out a few dances that are undoubtedly popular but are still a bit new. So, what makes a dance popular? Good tune, interesting formations, good back story or maybe how well known it is? Perhaps an article on this in the future! It has also been interesting to see how 'your' list of popular dances compares with the frequent dance lists on the RSCDS website. On the whole there is fairly good agreement but with some very interesting omissions and additions.

“ Difficult decisions had to be made! ”

One final thought is that the frequent dance list clearly shows that *The Montgomeries' Rant* is the most popular dance in Scotland, but is it? Whilst it seems believable that it is the most popular dance within purely Scottish country dance circles in Scotland, is this a rather narrow and exclusive view? I would suspect that if you ask any band who regularly plays for all types of Scottish dance that their most frequent would be the *Dashing White Sergeant* or possibly *Strip the Willow*, both dances published by the RSCDS. Just a rambling and semantic thought, but hopefully of interest and a reminder that we should not spend too much time looking inwards, but also be aware of the wider world of Scottish dance.

Youth Services



Joana Stausberg

Late winter for many young and youngish dancers means Newcastle Festival time. This lively day of Scottish dancing in the north of England includes dance competitions and a super social dance in the evening. The festival

combines a welcoming atmosphere with excellent dancing and has collected loyal followers – I keep seeing the same faces every year, just more of them!

From a YS Convenor's perspective, there was a lot to be very happy about in Newcastle this year: children dancing confidently during the social dances and in the competitions; former, current and future Spring Fling organisers, all young and committed; students (did you know that affiliated group status is now free for university groups worldwide?); a visiting representative of last year's Virtual Festival winners from Buenos Aires.

“ University groups can now affiliate free! ”

However, very clearly, the Newcastle Festival is a British, maybe European event, and seeing all the well-known faces made me realise how very few dancers outside my 'dance bubble' I know. This is probably quite logical, but something worth changing. Shouldn't we, as the YS Committee, have a broad perspective and a rough idea of what is happening in young Scottish dance groups elsewhere (ie where we are not)? Then we can support and contact you – the dance community – to give you some help if you want to network, or if you want to know what works well, to attract new dancers in other places?

We want to collect information for a Young Dancers Database – though I must admit that we are not yet sure what the database will finally look like and how we can best help you to access useful information. We will be happy to learn about your stories of best practice, and maybe about your 'worst practice', too (learn from your mistakes). So, here is my appeal: wherever your 'dance bubble' may be – in a village hall in Aberdeenshire, a city in Australia, or in downtown Tokyo – send your stories on how you 'do' young dancing in your area to ysc@rscds.org – and we'll do our best to organize the info and eventually offer it to you all.

Finally, please let me introduce myself as the new Youth Services Convenor. It is a great pleasure to take over the position from Anne McArthur, whose friendly spirit I am very happy to take up. I'm an enthusiastic Scottish dancer and teacher who joined the committee two years ago when we organised Spring Fling in Bonn. Now I am looking forward to speaking to dancers, teachers and musicians who are dedicated to Scottish dancing now and in the future. I am happy to collect good ideas and, together with the whole committee, support worthwhile initiatives. Our current committee members dance in Canada, England, France, Russia, the US, and Germany. If you would like to get involved in the future, please contact us at ysc@rscds.org. In the meantime, apply for one of our development grants for youth-oriented initiatives, which we will award during Global Youth Week in November - now open to Affiliated Groups, too.

Afternoon Tea with Miss Milligan



Kenneth Macdonald with his cocker spaniel, Milo

Kenneth Macdonald was President of the Glasgow University Scottish Country Dance Club in the early 1970s when he was a student studying dentistry. But his story begins in his home town of Ardrossan. Editor Jimmie Hill caught up with him in Stornoway where he has lived for the past 38 years.

Did you dance in Ardrossan when you were a boy?

My parents went to a local class, and I often used to go with them. Then in 1966 when I was about 15, it was decided that a team of secondary school pupils from Ardrossan Academy would go from north west Ayrshire over to Toronto, along with a school choir. There was a selection process to pick a team of dancers, organised by Alastair Aitkenhead, who put us through our paces. I was one of

Canadian Visit

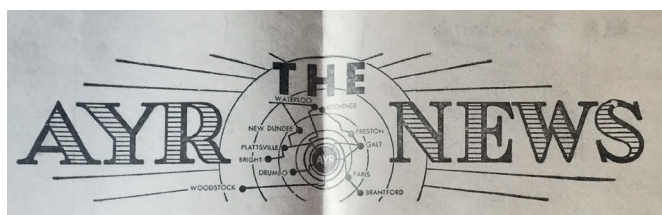


Back Row—Mrs. JOHNSTONE (Pianist), BRYAN GOSSMAN, MICHAEL DAVIDSON, DAVID WARDROPE, KENNETH MACDONALD, MISS HUGHES (Teacher).
Front Row—SHEILA RITCHIE, BETTINE MARSHALL, ALLISON MILLAR, LINDA DAVIS, MARGARET MONTGOMERIE.

the boys he selected and that was really the start of my country dancing. We were a mixed team, all about 15 or 16. The Beresford Girls Choir were all schoolgirls from about 13 to 17. We flew out from Prestwick – 125 in all! I know this is difficult to believe today but, because of a strong tailwind, our plane touched down three hours early at Toronto’s Malton Airport and we had to wait four hours for the buses to turn up. We did three big concerts at the Massey Hall in Toronto. Apart from our team of dancers and the choir, the Toronto Police Pipe Band were there along with soloists. We did a concert in Hamilton, too, but that was a bit of a disaster. A form of food poisoning affected the choir and about 16 girls were rushed to hospital by police cars with wailing sirens. The concert was finally halted when there were too few girls left to sing. There were dramatic reports in all the UK papers. (*The Liverpool Echo reported, ‘Girl singers collapse on stage’. Ed.*)

Who went with you?

Our teacher, Anne Hughes, came with us. Muriel Johnstone’s mother, Dodo, was our pianist and played at all the concerts. By that time Muriel was at university, so she wasn’t with us. Alastair Aitkenhead wasn’t with us either; he had only been involved in the selection. We all stayed with Canadian families. (*One of the hosts was Georgina Finlay of Toronto. Ed.*)



Do you have any special memories of that trip?

Apart from visits to places like the Niagara Falls, we went to the town of Ayr in Ontario where we were given the freedom of the town and a big civic reception. Ayr is a very small town near Kitchener, so you can imagine the Town Hall was packed to welcome all these young visitors from Ayr, Scotland. It was a very memorable trip for a 15-year-old Scottish schoolboy! I missed the civic reception because I had eaten too much pizza the night before. Our hosts had taken us to a ‘Pizza Takeaway’ and bought a 3 foot square pizza, which we had never seen or heard of before in our lives!

Three years later saw you at Glasgow University.

Yes, I arrived in 1969 and joined the Scottish country dance club, which at that time was not very successful. I took it over the following year and started doing all the teaching and organising events. It was never on a par with Edinburgh University’s New Scotland club, but we had some recruits from Strathclyde University because their club had failed in 1969. We did some Scottish events along with Stirling and Edinburgh. We took part in the Interschool Folk Dance Festivals in Nottingham, Reading, and Northumberland. We struggled to get a team of really good dancers, compared with Edinburgh. Most of the university dancers were beginners who started when they got there. And that was the reason I had, what I thought, was a brilliant idea!

What was that?

It was the idea for a Teach Yourself Scottish Country Dance cassette tape. Every week we would get new people and it was so difficult to progress if you had to stop and try to integrate the new beginners.

For them it was very much a case of learn to get from A to B at the right time. And I thought that if they had a cassette tape, they could go off and practise the steps on their own at home. We used to have a warm-up with steps, but I decided there was no point in spending a lot of time teaching the steps when they could do it on their own.

So what is actually on your tape?

You have to understand that in 1973 the cassette tape was cutting-edge technology – before the days of video. The tape teaches the two setting steps and the two travelling steps and it talks you through what to do. I tested it out in the halls of residence with my non-dancing friends, paying them with cans of beer! I got them to stand and listen to my tape and I would check if they could understand what to do. I kept adjusting the instructions until I could take someone who had never danced before: they would listen to the tape and try to do a step.

How did you get it produced?

I approached a small Glasgow recording studio in Berkeley Street – Thistle Records – to see if they were interested in making a cassette tape. They did a lot of country dance recordings – people like Bobby Crowe, Rob Gordon, and Will Starr.

Did it sell?

I don't know! By the time the cassettes were ready I was in my final year at university and was about to go off to join the army and travel, so I was too busy to do any promotion of it. I had to guarantee to buy 50 at about £1 each, so I suppose that financed the initial production.

I used an accordionist and pianist, but they did it for nothing because

they used to play for us a lot. They were Colin MacDonald and George McIntosh who used to play for the demonstration team, City of Glasgow Scottish Dancers, which I was in for two years with Johan Maclean. Thistle sold the cassettes in music shops, but I can't imagine they sold more than a few hundred. I kept some so that later, when I was running a class, I could give them to new people.

How did you come to have afternoon tea with Miss Milligan?

I simply phoned her. I didn't know her. I had never met her. Of course I had heard of her. I told her I had made this tape and before I finalised it, I wanted to make sure that she wouldn't disapprove of it! I wasn't looking for her approval, but I didn't want there to be anything in it which she would think was not right. So, I asked if I could come and play it to her. She asked me to come round one afternoon to her flat. I think it was in the Hyndland/Jordanhill part of town. She was very polite and considerate. I had brought along my small cassette tape recorder to play the tape. While we were listening to it, afternoon tea was brought in by a lady, possibly her sister. This was in 1973. She didn't do anything but sit and listen and I had to follow the instructions on the tape. She watched me do the steps while the tape played. It was one of the hardest performances of my life! I made it clear to her that I wasn't looking for her to endorse it. I just wanted to make sure that it would not be criticised. There were books about country dancing with diagrams of the steps, but I felt it was more realistic to try them in real time

with instructions and music. It was as if your teacher was in the room with you. My script was exactly what I would have said at a class.

Was she happy with your instructions?

If you listen to the tape, you will hear that I use the word 'toes' – 'dancers first walk the step on their toes'. That's what Miss Milligan didn't like. She preferred 'balls of the feet'. She said that was a better description because 'country dancing is not ballet'. I accepted that, but using the word 'toes' was easier than 'balls of the feet' – particularly as I was teaching a lot of overseas students. Going on to the toes is actually impossible for most people.

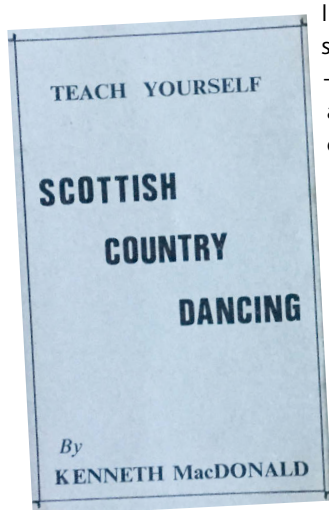
What did afternoon tea actually consist of?

Tea and scones and cakes. And of course in china cups. It was a very pleasant afternoon and she was nice and gracious about my efforts. And she made sure my pas de basque was up to standard! It really was very good of her to take the time to see me.

Did you go on and do your certificates?

I did the Preliminary but I had my own style of teaching. I had taught beginners at university, then I continued to teach when I lived abroad. My main aim was to get people dancing. I always stressed being in the right place at the right time, looking at your partner, and having fun. Perfecting your technique comes much later and only for those interested in it.

Thanks to Georgina Finlay of Toronto, and Muriel Johnstone for supplying photographs and newspaper cuttings of the Canadian visit.



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Chairman Andrew Kellett

Andrew Kellett, born and brought up in Bradford and now retired and living in London, became our chairman at the 2018 AGM.

What has your career involved?

I worked in the Civil Service for almost forty years, doing a range of jobs in different departments. The bureaucracy, the attention to detail and the respect for tradition was good preparation for work in the RSCDS. So too was the sense of doing something worthwhile, the enthusiasm of colleagues and the determination to make things better.

Were your parents involved in country dancing?

They did a little at school, but only started country dancing regularly after I had begun. They did not enjoy sitting on the sidelines.

What was your first experience of country dancing?

I watched The White Heather Club on television. When an advert for a children's Scottish country dance class appeared in the local newspaper I amazed my parents by saying I wanted to go.

Subsequent experience?

That class was fantastic. 30-40 children, including at least a dozen boys. We had an excellent grounding in SCD and several of us went on to dance with Leeds Branch. I went to Summer School a couple of times, and I joined several different groups on dancing trips overseas. After university I moved to London, and a few years later I transferred my membership to London Branch.

What involvement did you have with London Branch?

My wife, Wendy, and I danced with the dem team for twenty wonderful years, making life-long friendships. I joined the Committee and did the usual jobs: making sandwiches, MC-ing dances, writing newsletters, chairing meetings, taking money at classes and persuading dancers to join the RSCDS.

What previous involvement did you have with the Society?

For me the Society has always meant all of us, every member, every branch. Since the age of 16 I have felt it important to be a member of the Society irrespective of where or how I danced. It was another 25 years before I attended the AGM. I served on the first Management Board back in 2002, and I had a five-year stint as editor of *Scottish Country Dancer*.

Why did you stand as Society Chairman?

To make a difference. I owe the Society a lot for all the happy times I have enjoyed through SCD. I want others to benefit too. I hope I can do something to promote SCD and strengthen the RSCDS.

What were your impressions of the job as Chairman Elect?

Helen involved me in the decision-making, so I had a good insight into the Chairman's role. It was an unusual time because we were without an Executive Officer for much of Helen's chairmanship and she worked exceptionally hard.

Do you have a vision of what you would like to achieve in your two years as Chairman?

I have more to say about this in my column on page 6. I want the RSCDS to be more outward-facing; for all branches and members to feel empowered to take forward the work of the Society; and for more people to Dance Scottish.

Are there any changes you would like to see in the RSCDS?

Anything that achieves the above. There are no silver bullets, but there are many small things that each of us can do that collectively will make a real difference to the welcome we give, the image we present and the impact we achieve.

What does the future look like for the RSCDS?

I am optimistic. We know that membership of the Society has decreased significantly over the last 20 years and in some places participation in SCD has also declined, but so many good things are also happening. We have some brilliant teachers and musicians; branches are coming up with innovative ideas for attracting new and younger dancers; the Board, Committees and staff work hard and imaginatively and, above all, SCD continues to create happiness. If more of us do what is best about the Society, our future is secure.

Andrew at the AGM Ball in Perth in November

ARE YOU READY FOR AN INSPIRING WEEKEND?

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Asilomar.rscds-sf.org

England Now Largest Country

The RSCDS counts member numbers in our 159 branches plus headquarters members. The total number as of 15 February this year was 10,910 members. The overall numbers are similar to this time last year, but in the past year 700 new members were recruited worldwide and everyone responsible deserves congratulations. When you read the Annual Accounts, the numbers will be different as the numbers will be as of 1st April.

The United Kingdom	5029	Spain	14
England	2415	Norway	14
Scotland	2388	Switzerland	13
Northern Ireland	165	Ireland	10
Wales	61	Denmark	10
North America	3154	Belgium	9
United States	1772	Portugal	6
Canada	1382	Cyprus	5
Australasia	1990	Luxembourg	5
New Zealand	746	Estonia	4
Australia	662	Belarus	4
Japan	574	Hungary	4
Hong Kong	4	Croatia	2
Singapore	2	Romania	1
Reunion Island	2	Ukraine	1
Europe	685	Rest of the World	52
Germany	179	South Africa	44
France	172	Argentina	4
Sweden	88	Barbados	1
Italy	44	Mexico	1
Netherlands	42	Uruguay	1
Austria	37	Israel	1
Russia	21		

Recruiting Ideas

In each issue we try to report good practice from branches and groups in the area of recruiting. Here are two from Toronto and one from the South West of England.

Two experiences from the Toronto area

1. The South Simcoe SCD group, north of Toronto, tried something different to attract new dancers. Through local businesses and elementary schools (Grades 5 to 8), we promoted an eight-week programme (October to December), offering family-friendly Scottish country dancing to families, including children aged 10 to 16 years of age. From 6.30 to 7.30 pm, participants were introduced to the basic steps and formations of Scottish country dancing, and we did simple dances. Participants were invited to stay for our regular session from 7.30 to 9.30. It was delightful to have most of the new dancers stay for the remaining two hours. Each evening's programme was easily adapted to accommodate our newcomers. Over the course of the eight weeks, we had thirteen newcomers, nine of whom came for the majority of the eight weeks. The final week was our Christmas Dance on Friday, 7 December. The energy of the three twenty-something young people was contagious.
2. At the Toronto Branch Workshop in November 2018, a free Introductory Class was offered in the middle of the day; it was a successful outreach idea. One participant wrote, "How much fun we all had at the intro dance lesson. What a lively and uplifting event it was for all your participants. Everyone, with no exception, was friendly and inclusive and made us feel right at home. We (3 friends) decided that Scottish dancing is more challenging than Bridge! We're all giving the dance lessons for January 'serious' consideration."

Weymouth Scottish Country Dancers

We thought you might like to hear of our endeavour to recruit new dancers, raise money for charity and have a good time. Our beginners' class worked with 'Dorset Mind UK' – a charity that supports people suffering from depression or mental illness – in their quest to start 2019 with an energetic 'Red January', hoping to beat the winter blues suffered by many, by encouraging people to exercise more to lift their spirits. We suggested the class come wearing an item of red in January and to do a new dance each week with a red theme. We advertised this in the local press in the hope of encouraging new dancers. A small forfeit for those not wearing red (10p in the collection box), a small coin collection each week and a raffle (to include a bottle of red wine, red tartan brooch, chocolates with a red bow and a Royal Stewart tea towel) on the last day of January, will be donated to 'Dorset Mind UK' to support the charity. This was a fun start to 2019 – we learned some different dances, and we got seven new recruits!

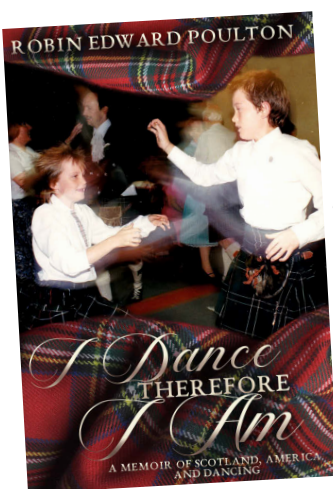
Judie Seymour

Post of Office Manager

Following the sudden departure of our Office Manager in early March, we shall be re-advertising the post in April. There will be information on the RSCDS website and the job description and application pack will be available via

www.brucetaitassociates.net

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Auld Lang Syne at the Glasgow Branch Ball

Branch Anniversaries

Glasgow 95th

Glasgow Branch has reason to be proud. The founding meeting of the Society was held in the city in November 1923 and many of those attending that first meeting were from Glasgow. Over the weekend of 23/25 November Glasgow Branch held a weekend of events to celebrate its foundation. It was an unforgettable weekend, celebrating the past and the future.

Friday Night Ball

Dancers gathered in Carmichael Hall to begin the weekend of celebrations. Dancers from all over Scotland and beyond were piped in by Iain Smith. Branch Chairman, Margaret Sanders, welcomed us and introduced the evening's special guests: Jean Martin, Society President, and Andrew Kellett, Society Chairman, along with Ruth Beattie, Branch President, and John Johnston, Branch Vice-President. We toasted the Branch in the customary way with a cake-cutting ceremony performed by Margaret Sanders and Jean Martin, and short speeches from the special guests. All the speeches were hugely appreciative of Glasgow's furtherance of Scottish country dancing and recalled some of the many ways in which Glasgow Branch members had contributed to the Society's aims with mention of teacher training, adjudication, work in schools, hosting major events as well as providing the Society with chairmen and committee members over the years.

After supper, we danced to the music of Marian Anderson's Scottish Dance Band – a very manageable programme of sixteen dances was appreciated by all. Six dances in the programme had been devised by Glasgow Branch members: *Glasgow*



Dancing Glasgow 95 Strathspey

Anniversary Jig (Pam Gillies), *Snowdrops in the Glen* (Ruth Beattie), *Salute to Glasgow* (John Johnston), *Fingask Castle* (Heather Cowan), *Good Hearted Glasgow* (Peter Knapman) and *Scott Meikle* (Alice McLean). A demonstration was given of *Glasgow 95 Strathspey*, devised by Christopher Sanders to mark the Branch's birthday. Roy Bain of Helensburgh Branch gave a very gracious vote of thanks on behalf of us all. Tired but happy, the dancers were agreed – we had all had a wonderful evening!

Effie Maclellan

95th Anniversary Afternoon Tea

What an enjoyable afternoon tea we had on the top floor of the House for an Art Lover in Bellahouston Park. We had a short welcoming speech from Margaret Sanders, then short speeches from Jean Martin and Ruth Beattie, and from Muriel Bone, daughter of the wonderful pianist, Muriel More. We enjoyed some superbly apt poetry from Graham and Helen Murray and Daphne Davidson. Then to the room

showing all the archive material where we were taken back to pictures of Miss Milligan and Miss Kenyon, Duncan MacLeod, and dancing at the Glasgow Garden Festival. This Afternoon Tea also brought me back to when I first started Scottish country dancing when I left Jordanhill College and Margaret Prentice's class in Shawlands School where I met my husband Archie! The afternoon was superbly organised by the present, efficient committee. Well done!

Elizabeth Mitchell

95th Anniversary Nice and Easy Dance

Appropriately, the final event of the weekend was dominated by young people – a crowded Nice and Easy Dance for everyone. For me and most of my friends from Glasgow University's Scottish Country Dance Club, it was our first ball in Milngavie. Everyone helped each other out, pointing or guiding if one of us forgot where we were off to next. Nobody was short of a partner. Plenty of birthday cake



Ayr Branch's 85th Birthday Cake

New Zealand's 50th

and snacks at the break. Small clusters of people formed around the room, the classes from the Universities of Glasgow and St Andrews doing their group photos, and everyone resting their feet. It felt like a true celebration of ninety-five years when beginners of all ages were welcomed with open arms by those who had been dancing all their lives. In a room diverse in terms of age and experience, everyone was both friendly and enthusiastic.

Shona Holmes

Ayr 85th

Over 150 dancers from many branches celebrated Ayr Branch's 85th Anniversary in November with a dance in Troon Concert Hall dancing to the wonderful music of Colin Dewar. Chairman, Andrew McConnell, welcomed everyone at the wine reception followed by the cutting of a cake by Honorary President, Ethel Carlyle. Everyone then enjoyed the programme of familiar, popular dances – many favourites having a local theme. It was a pleasure to see dancers who have attended previous

events as well as our many loyal friends who support Branch Dances and Summer Dancing every year.

Wilma Brown

Kirkcudbright 70th

We ended 2018 by celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Branch, dancing to George Meikle's music. There was cake with supper and a small glass to toast the Branch's continued success. There was a display of photos and newspaper cuttings collected over the years showing the Branch 'through the ages', prompting many reminiscences and stories. The cake was cut by Sylvia McKinnel and Gill Gibson, the two longest-serving members of the Branch. Our Branch has in the last twelve months celebrated two 90th birthdays, Dianne Christie and Isobel Gardner. Both occasions were very lively and enjoyable.

Moir Stacey

New Zealand 50th

The New Zealand Branch turned 50 in 2018 and to celebrate this auspicious occasion

held a Ball on 20 August at Wellington's Government House, the home of the Governor General of New Zealand. Security was very strict – all attendees had to be vetted and as we arrived we had to show our invitation a few times before arriving at the ballroom. Once there we had a drinks reception. Then we all moved into the ballroom where we were welcomed by the Governor General, Dame Patsy Reddy. The MC was Elaine Laidlaw, our Branch President. She thanked Dame Patsy for the welcome and the use of her home then she read a congratulatory email from Society Chairman, Helen Russell. The programme consisted of dances devised in New Zealand and popular dances covering 50 years. We finished with *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh* which has great significance for New Zealand as it was co-devised by Florence Lesslie, our first New Zealand examiner. The musicians were Ian and Judith Muir from the Craigellachie Scottish Dance Band.

Sue Lindsay

In my Opinion

David Hall, Vienna



David Hall

Vienna's Schönbrunn Palace

In the last few months, I have seen a batch of public literature from BUPA to the *The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* once again pronouncing on the link between dancing and health. Bronwyn Tarr, studying at the University of Oxford has produced some recent articles on happiness and dance which

reminded me of the work explicitly linking happiness with Scottish country dancing by Michael Argyle a few decades ago. Having enjoyed our dancing for virtually all of my 50 years, none of this comes as a great surprise. But, what has become increasingly apparent to me as I have danced in several different parts of the world is the important linkage between strong social interaction in Scottish country dance groups and the success of those groups.

In my opinion, paying closer attention to the inclusivity, accessibility and social benefits of our dancing could dramatically improve its appeal and our ability to retain members. And, based on the evidence of my experience, none of this comes at a cost to raising standards of dance, focusing on the importance of music and, of course, the enjoyment of those organising the activities. So what does this mean or look like in practice?

In Vienna where I dance currently, there is a thread throughout the whole Branch that links the beginners' class, more advanced classes (and some focused solely on technique) and the monthly social dances; this thread is the relationship between the people involved. There is no stratification of friendships and interest that persists across age groups, dancing ability groups and those who are new and old to the Branch. I recall something similar when I danced in Brussels. There are practical things that promote this: more advanced dancers regularly participating in beginners' classes; less advanced dancers being accepted in technique classes; social dances being interesting to advanced dancers but choreographed to be welcoming to newer dancers; and, related social activity (parties, trips, the pub etc) being very clearly linked to the dancing occasion and indisputably open to all.

As a musician, I remain consistently cheered to know how much live music adds to the social occasion, as impetus to the dance and also to reinforce the warm atmosphere of the occasion. Excellent music is always appreciated but I remain grateful to this day for those who gave me the opportunity many years ago (the Manchester Branch, Manchester and Salford Caledonian Association and others) to learn the skills to make me proficient in playing for dancing. We should afford interested musicians the chance to learn and practise, and include them as part of the wider social mix of our Scottish dance groups.

As a teacher, in my current Branch more than anywhere before, I see very clearly each time the benefits of accommodating the wide array of people with different motivations in my classes. What is interesting is that they all, at different levels and in varying ways, want to be better dancers. And that is because they all appreciate how that can make the dancing more fun. But, how they want to improve is NOT uniform: some want neater footwork and very precise phrasing of figures because that interests them; some better handing because they want to fit into social sets better; for others, just understanding the patterns and language of SCD is their target; and finally, for a few it's just enough to feel that they can come and take part. This requires offering a wide range of ideas, using a diverse and sometimes subtle array of class management techniques to keep things running with momentum without appearing to exclude anyone. Once a month, I teach a technique class that accommodates a spectrum from demonstration dancers to some who find fairly basic figures a challenge, and for the class and most definitely for me, we ALL retire next door to the pub to reflect on a happy night's dancing and to share as we see fit whatever else is interesting or worrying us at that time.

Of course, none of this is rocket science, and so much of it happens week in week out at clubs across the world. But, there are clubs and branches who struggle. And, I've witnessed a few occasions when applying at least some of the above might have freed the thinking of the organisers and inspired some of those who might not have stayed the course to persevere just that bit longer. Let's make our Society even more welcoming to everyone and allow ever more people to 'get happy on Scottish country dancing'.

The Matched Funding Initiative



Cecile Hascoet, RSCDS Retail and Membership Officer, reports on the Matched Funding Initiative to encourage new and young people.

Last year all branches were invited to apply for Matched Funding. Half the cost, up to £250, of a local initiative to teach newcomers or encourage young dancers or raise the profile of SCD would be met from the Development Fund. Seventeen branches applied and were given grants to support some fantastic local projects.

North West Craven Branch has been introducing Scottish dancing to Hest Bank Primary School children, just north of Lancaster, England. The branch project was to run a ceilidh dance at the school hall inviting the children and their parents. Trevor Clarke, chair of his branch, writes that the event attracted about 30 people, which included 12 children (6 to 10 years old). It was such a successful event that the school wants to continue with the classes and repeat the event.



The children from Hest Bank Primary School

Montreal Branch decided to make their afternoon social an 'intro to Scottish country dance'. Their class sponsored a lunch to draw people in and they devised an easy programme of dances to get beginners dancing. They used their Meetup site for advertising. Montreal ended up with 20 regular dancers who had attended the workshop and approximately 40 people who were new to SCD. Holly Boyd wrote, "At the end of the day we still had four sets on the floor. Everyone had a really good

time. The energy and enthusiasm of the band, dancers, teachers and onlookers made for a delightful afternoon. Several of the new dancers are now attending our Tuesday night class and are enthusiastic".

Sydney Branch ran a Community Ceilidh as a way to reach out to newcomers. Advertising was a challenge for Sydney. They made a public event on Facebook, put up posters in the local area and sent out a press release to the local free paper. The ticket sales suddenly shot up in the few days before the event. The ceilidh was well supported by Scottish country dancers from the Northern Beaches region who were delighted to find a live music event practically on their doorstep. Plenty of non-SCD locals, including five children, came along and had a great time dancing to Iain McKenzie's music, with Diana Hastie calling a fun-filled programme of simple dances. Diana Hastie and Anna Underhill reported that there were over 60 dancers.



Sydney's Community Ceilidh

In March Banffshire Branch started a Children's Festival. The local Music Festival had folded so the Branch stepped in to run its own festival, thus giving the primary schools in the area something to work towards. Belfast Branch ran a family ceilidh. Birmingham Branch ran a series of workshops. Edinburgh Branch advertised for a children's class. San Diego Branch ran a DAA course aimed at intermediate dancers. Exeter Branch ran a Burns Night Ceilidh at a school. The Youth Branch used the grant to run an event for young dancers in Budapest.



The Youth Weekend Away in Budapest

Other branches who took part in the Matched Funding Initiative were South Argyll, Somerset, Queensland, Melbourne, Exeter, Toronto and Forres. Well done to all! It will be good to report the results of all those initiatives in a future issue, especially if they resulted in new recruits.

If your branch needs financial support to promote a SCD event in your community, you can apply to the Development Fund by emailing: info@rscds.org.

No Wind on Loch Fyne!

Location Dancing is dancing a dance in a place associated with it. Helen Draper from Queensland, Australia, spent three weeks last August with a group of eleven Australians and three Germans travelling round Scotland, visiting places associated with dances.



The group outside Appin Village Hall

After dancing for many years together in Queensland, the Aussie dancers, aged in their 60s to 80s, decided an adventure to St Andrews, combined with a three-week journey around Scotland was a quest not to be missed, despite the 24-hour flight! "It wasn't always easy to find a suitable place to dance but we always managed something," said tour organiser and teacher Cathy McLeod.

"Finding the sign for Maggieknockater was exciting, only to realise it was on the side of a narrow road, making dancing there a bit difficult, not to mention dangerous!" It was exciting for us to visit Appin in Argyll and dance *Autumn in Appin*; and *Mrs Stewart's Jig* near Fasnaclloch, both dances in honour of Mrs Stewart. The trip included five ferries, three train journeys and many hours in our coach through spectacular scenery. The highlights were:

- Dancing *The Rothesay Rant* on thick grass and in glorious sunshine on the Isle of Bute.



Dancing The Rothesay Rant looking out on Rothesay Bay

- A day trip to Benbecula in the Hebrides to dance on the sand at Culla Bay
- Dancing on the Isle of Raasay to the haunting tune *Calum's Road* on a sloping, gravel track beside the sea and the romantic ruins of Brochel Castle.



Dancing Culla Bay on the sands at Culla Bay in the Outer Hebrides

- Climbing up the *Lammermuir Hills* to perform that dance, before dancing *Neidpath Castle* in front of the castle on the banks of the Tweed.
- Having an audience peering through the glass windows of the ferry terminal at Ardrrossan, while performing *Miss Johnstone of Ardrrossan*, after meeting Muriel Johnstone at Summer School.
- Dancing *The Wind on Loch Fyne*, near Loch Fyne, and without wind after the rain stopped!
- Joining a class on the Isle of Arran with Marion Devine who visits her family in Brisbane each year and joins in at our local class.
- Entertaining other guests with *The Goat Fell Gallop* on the front lawn of The Douglas Hotel in Arran, within view of Goat Fell, the highest mountain on Arran. You can watch our encore of the Blooms of Bon Accord on their Facebook page.
- Taking advantage of the dining room in our student accommodation in Glasgow, we delighted in our own 'mini-socials' where we twirled and skipped our way through such dances as *Good Hearted Glasgow*, *Clutha* and *The Glasgow Highlanders*.
- Scottish country dancing has the power to unite people from all over the globe thanks to the worldwide standardization of the dances. As we encountered new people and reunited with others we knew this to be true. As we left Scotland, our hearts were full of the joy that only Scottish music and dancing can evoke. Such is the power of this fabulous pursuit.



Dancing at Brodick with Goat Fell in the background



20th Winter School

As usual Winter School at the Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry was another outstanding success.

Under the direction this year of Pat Houghton, the school was full with 146 dancers, five non-dancers and eight staff. Teaching along with Pat were Graham Donald, Sue Porter and William Williamson. The musical line-up was equally stellar with Muriel Johnstone, Marian Anderson, Jim Lindsay and Ian Robertson. Pat reported that the music was particularly outstanding. The two highlights of the week for Pat were the Wednesday evening concert with virtuoso performances from the musicians and the unforgettable Ball at Blair Castle with all the musicians on stage.



Scottish Schools

Ayr Branch

Over 500 South Ayrshire schoolchildren from Ballantrae in the south to St Patrick's and Troon Primaries, a stone's throw from the hall, danced over two mornings in November to the music of Karyn McCulloch and Stuart Thomson in Troon Concert Hall.



Ayr Day of Dance

Past Chairman, Mary Burney, guided the children through the programme of dances: *The Gay Gordons*, *A Reel for Jeannie*, *The Britannia Two Step*, *A Highland Welcome*, *The Virginia Reel*, *The Canadian Barn Dance*, *Copycat*, *The Waratah Weaver*, *The Dashing White Sergeant* and finishing with the ever popular *Flying Scotsman*. Our Days of Dance are open to children from Primaries 4 – 7 and branch teachers go into schools for several weeks beforehand to teach the dances. There are always a few reluctant students, but it is always encouraging to see how much they enjoy the actual day itself, although some would never admit to that!

Wilma Brown

Isle of Arran

Whiting Bay Village Hall was packed to the gills with over 100 children in November at the 20th Day of Dance. There is a long tradition of country dancing on the island. The Days of Dance were started by former Society Chairman, Alastair Aitkenhead. There is also a competitive festival in the Spring with every primary school taking part. Both events are supported by volunteers from the local country dance club.

Marion Devine



Arran Day of Dance, Picture courtesy of The Arran Banner

Bearsden and Milngavie

Around 400 children flooded into Milngavie Town Hall on 5 October with a tartan tsunami of dancing feet, excited anticipation, and joyous laughter. They had been building up to this over a number of weeks with the help of members of the New Kilpatrick Dance Club. Depute Provost Gary Pews opened proceedings saying that he hadn't done much dancing himself in the past, but being inspired by the spectacle confronting him, he hoped, with the kids' help, to remedy that. John Carmichael and the band then struck up with *The Virginia Reel*, *The Dashing White Sergeant*, *Flying Scotsman* etc. Each school gave a performance of two specialist dances. Margaret Sanders, Chairman of Glasgow Branch, said that the RSCDS is "keen on encouraging young dancers and this type of event epitomises our efforts". They counted them all in, and they counted them all out, some to their buses, some to the train, some just walked back, all with the sound of the music still ringing in their ears, and lasting memories of a truly cultural occasion that would last throughout their lives.

Patrick Murray



Smiling faces at the Bearsden event

Kilmarnock and District Branch

On 14 November in the Grand Hall, Kilmarnock, almost 600 children from 22 East Ayrshire Primary Schools took part in Kilmarnock and District Branch's Annual Children's Day of Dance. In the weeks prior to the event, several branch members had attended some of the schools to help the children practise the various dances. The children at both the morning and afternoon sessions of the event enthusiastically danced a mixture of Scottish country and ceilidh dances to the lively music of George Meikle. As well as learning how to participate in some of the dances that form an important part of Scotland's dance culture and heritage, the children also showed off their creative and artistic skills with a parade of banners at the start of the event. Each school had created a banner with the school's name on it and these were paraded around the hall to loud cheering from all the children. As one of our aims is to promote the enjoyment and appreciation of Scottish country dancing and music by any suitable means, this event not only helps to achieve that objective, but it also provides a day of social interaction and physical exercise for the participating children.

David Pinkerton

Young Dancers

News of young dancers is edited by Olga McIntosh. Please send her news of your youth events to ol.mcintosh@gmail.com

Cape Town Virtual Festival

If you watched the Virtual Festival, you will remember the Elgin Scottish Dancers with impressive African movements.



The Elgin Dancers

The group was organized by Campbell Tyler who wanted to provide after-school activity for the young people. He started a group that was attended by around 40 pupils (age 13 – 16) from the three high schools of Elgin – a small town 70 km from Cape Town. Some have been dancing for about two years, but none had done Scottish dancing before. Most are from poor backgrounds; one of the dancers in the video had never been to Cape Town when they came to film their entry at the foot of Table Mountain. *The Flying Scotsman* was chosen with the African flavour added by using moves from Kwaito (South African form of music and dance). The movements are called 'Water Lily', 'Pharra Walk', 'Coffee Grinder' and 'Zulu Stamp with Gwarra Gwarra'. The new version of the dance was called *Shosholoza Meyl* after the train that runs between Cape Town and Pretoria.

Campbell Tyler and Olga McIntosh

Summer School New Zealand Style

We were lucky enough to go to Summer School in Nelson this year as our Dad was asked to teach. We were in the Junior JAMS class in the mornings, taught by Hazel Fish. Hazel made things really fun and our dancing definitely improved. There were only four children in the class, but it was helpful that local dancers came along to make up the set. At the ceilidh we performed a dance devised by Hazel. It was nerve-wracking, but enjoyable!



The Junior JAMS

There were always things going on, with optional classes, such as Highland and ladies' step and trips out. There was dancing every evening to live music. We had to get into our best dresses for the Hogmanay and the President's Ball, which made us feel magical. We loved doing the 32-some at Hogmanay, it was so exhilarating! The fancy dress evening was really fun too. Everyone at Summer School was super friendly and it felt like one big Scottish dancing family. We would love to go again!

Catriona and Susie Brown

Duns and District Branch Children's Class

17 children from Duns and District Children's class recently took Medal Tests at four levels. Everyone was delighted with the results and the feedback from the examiner.

Introductory: 3 passes, 3 credits and 1 distinction

Grade 1: 2 credits and 2 distinctions

Grade 2: 2 passes

Grade 3: 1 pass, 1 credit and 2 distinctions

Some children danced nine dances on the test day to make up sets! On 31 December, the children danced at the Knoll Hospital in Duns entertaining patients and visitors. At the monthly branch dance, the beginners performed *The Cumberland Reel*, with the older children performing 32 bars each of four different jigs: *Ladies' Fancy*, *The Waratah Weaver*, *Kendall's Hornpipe* and *The Dhoon*.

Everyone enjoyed the performances and dancing in a set with the children, sometimes with the children leading the set! Scottish country dancing is definitely thriving for both children and adults in Duns and District!

Julie Grainger

Glasgow Branch

Well done to all the 4 teams of dancers from the JVA class, who recently took part in the 94th Inverclyde Music and Dance Festival in January.



The Glasgow JVA teams

The mixed team retained the Edinburgh Renfrewshire Association Shield. The ladies' team won and retained the RSCDS West Renfrewshire Trophy. In the square dance section the team came second. Another ladies' team won the Jean Milligan Memorial Trophy. This is an amazing result especially as some of the dancers had never competed before, with some of them only starting within the last year. Their teacher was Carol Ann Knox. The JVA class is a joint venture between Glasgow Branch, Alba Scottish Country Dancers and Glasgow University SCD club.

Debbie McAlees



Dancing Around The World

Young San Franciscans at the Asilomar Ball

All branches and affiliated groups are invited to send in their news (maximum 200 words) to Caroline Brockbank caroline@ceilidhkids.com

Aberdeen Branch

Although not organised by the Branch, the country dance section of the annual Aberdeen Music Festival is heavily reliant on Branch members, teachers and volunteers. This year saw competitions spread over two days, schoolchildren and teenagers on the Friday morning, afternoon and evening, then adults on the Saturday morning and afternoon. It is the largest festival in the country with 79 entries in total, ranging from 9-year-olds to pensioners. The most entertaining competition is the last – The Butchart Challenge, where teams danced any John Drewry jig or reel, the winner being the set showing the best team work and the true social spirit of Scottish country dancing. The trophy was won by the Aberdeen Branch Ceilidh Class, dancing *Newhall*. The grand finale was *The Dashing White Sergeant* with all the competitors and audience dancing together.

Lynn Wood

Adelaide Branch

The Branch has realised for some time that we need to become pro-active if we are to sustain classes. In 2018 we elected a small group to produce a Business Plan for 2018-2023 which included a detailed Action Plan. It covered the promotion of SCD, the continued high standard of teaching, the need to increase membership of the RSCDS, and to strengthen and improve the Branch's governance and long term financial viability. In November we had a very successful St Andrew's Night and a special night to commemorate the 90th birthday of one of our long-term members, Pat Oakshot. We have planned a Unit Zero course run by Helen Russell and a 10-week beginners' course starting in February. The Branch has elected a Public Events Committee which will, beside smaller events, focus on one major event, such as the Adelaide Fringe Festival. An emphasis we are promoting is personal communication rather than announcements in *Reel Spiel* or email.

Rev Dr Anna Grant-Henderson

Ayr – Burns Hame Toun Celebrations!

As part of a week-long programme of events to celebrate the 260th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, South Ayrshire Council organised a street party in Ayr High Street on 27 January.

With country dancing being a big part of Robert Burns' life, we were invited to participate, which several members did on a very windy but sunny, cold afternoon! Wrapped up in jackets, hats and scarves, the dancers entertained the crowd with the popular *Welcome to Ayr* and *The Montgomeries' Rant* among others and spectators joined in for the *Gay Gordons*. Ian Muir of Prestwick braved the cold to play for us, wishing he could wear gloves! One venue was the Wallace Tower where the Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra, the MacDonald Brothers and Clanadonia also performed. The afternoon's event closed with a Burning Burns Finale on the historic Auld Brig.

Wilma Brown



Dancing in Ayr High Street

Budapest Scottish Dance Club

In 2018 we celebrated our 20th anniversary. Our accompanying band Dagda became 25 years old. Two of our members obtained the RSCDS Teaching Certificate, Zsófia József and Zsolt Molnár, so together with Gábor Turi, we have three teachers. We are very proud of Gábor Turi, who received the Scroll of Honour at the RSCDS AGM. We organized a children's ceilidh, and started a beginners' course in September with 12 new dancers. We re-designed our website and launched our YouTube channel. In the autumn, we organized a Regional SCD Weekend with our Czech and Austrian friends. We intend issuing the booklet *Reel Goulash 2.0*, featuring dances devised by our members, preparing a video guide of steps, as well as making efforts to approach zero waste in our clubs and ceilidhs.

Laura Krecz-Macsek

Buenos Aires Scottish Country Dancers

A busy second semester! The Virtual Festival implied tango lessons to create the medley *A Touch of Tango* – a fusion of SCD and tango. Receiving the Glitterballs from International Branch visitors was the icing on the cake. At our Halloween Party, with special make-up, we had visitors from Uruguay and the USA. In November we organised our seventh 'Workshop and Rowing Day' in the Delta del Paraná – workshop in the morning, a typical Argentine barbecue at midday and in the afternoon rowing through the labyrinth of rivers and islands of the Delta. In December we danced to Christmas carol tunes with visitors from England.

Marcela Galve

Calgary Branch

Calgary Branch continues to have a strong membership with 110 members in seven classes with six teachers and two more working on their Part 2. Our Hogmanay Celebration was attended by 90 people with a full one third being non-dancers and some of those totally new to SCD! We made sure they were all included and guided through the ceilidh and set dances. This summer TAC will hold their annual Summer School here in Calgary. If you are coming, we can also offer four giant pandas, a Dinosaur Museum and many other attractions!

Karen McKenzie

Charlotte Scottish Country Dance Society

Our annual Scottish Weekend on the last weekend of October was again another tremendous success. This year the music was provided by two of Scotland's great musicians, Wayne Robertson and Robert Black. The workshop teachers were Atsuko Clement and Jim Stott who gave absolutely great classes. This weekend always includes musicians and teachers from Scotland.

Jack Pressley



Jack Pressley with the Charlotte Weekend teachers and musicians

Cheddar Valley, Somerset

Cheddar Valley U3A (University of the Third Age) Beginners Group formed four years ago, to increase the activities our U3A was offering. Four of us thought we might get a handful of takers from our 450-strong U3A. The response was amazing with 16 at the first session. Four years on we regularly have over 20 at our weekly morning sessions. We have attracted back to dancing a couple who gave up leading a local group 15 years ago feeling they

were too old. We have three members who joined as beginners and are now able to lead sessions themselves. This is the ethos of U3A, helping each other to learn together. Our average age is around 70 and some have failing physical and mental abilities. We welcome complete beginners, some of whom won't progress beyond a basic level. Other groups might consider their local U3A useful for recruitment.

John Morgan

Desertcreat Country Dance Class, Cookstown, Northern Ireland

Our class started in 1962. We demonstrate at every opportunity and recently did so at the Women's Institute. Following that, three WI members joined us. Our teacher, Ruth Clarke, along with the Alistair Scott Ceilidh Band, regularly runs ceilidhs for various organisations. The band won the Wedding Entertainer of the year in 2018 and 2019! We do find that often people express an interest but unfortunately do not turn up. We take every opportunity to invite new members.

Brenda Maben

Duns and District Branch

The U3A Scottish Dancing Group started meeting in October 2018, fortnightly, to learn some easy ceilidh and country dances, to make new friends, to keep or get fit, and to have fun. Nearly 20 people enrolled, with an average turnout of 14. After warming up we dance for over an hour, and then finish in a circle with a cup of coffee and a biscuit. Since before Christmas I have been encouraging the class to come to our monthly dances, and on Burns Night ten did! We had practised the first half of the programme beforehand, and they all took eagerly to the floor and thoroughly enjoyed themselves to the Luke Brady Band. They stayed watching after supper, right to the end, and one member said to me afterwards, 'I wish I had started doing this years ago – there are people older than me here dancing every dance!'

Rhona Burchick

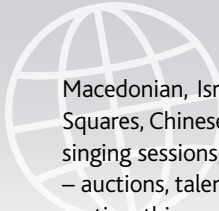
Glasgow Branch

In June we received a very different request – an inquiry about getting some input for an Opera! We were intrigued so agreed to meet the composer and the writer, who were putting an opera together for production by a company called Noise Opera. We found out that it would be about two people meeting at a ceilidh, which the audience would take part in! For the rehearsals we enlisted a variety of volunteers from Branch classes and set out to teach the singers *Strip the Willow*, *The Gay Gordons* and *The Canadian Barn Dance*. The performances were at Sloan's Bar from 6 – 12 August. Sloan's is renowned for its ceilidhs. Apparently, this opera event takes place annually on all floors of the bar. This was a great opportunity for a lot of our members as stand-ins at each production to ensure the dancing ran smoothly – great fun as you can see from Noise Opera's website. We even got a mention in the programme!

Glasgow Branch

Kingston, Ontario

In July and August each year a large group of dancers assemble from across the world at The University of the Pacific, to dance for one or two weeks. In 2018, daily classes were offered in



Macedonian, Israeli, Romanian, Scandinavian, Balkan, Contras and Squares, Chinese and Scottish country dance, along with music and singing sessions, and all the traditional camp fun through the week – auctions, talent show, culture corners, evening reviews and dance parties, this year including a Scottish Gala night. Many came to appreciate the joys and challenges of SCD. Some had some Scottish dance experience, and some none at all, beyond *Mairi's Wedding*, a favourite in the folk dance community. At the end of camp, the dancers are asked to rate the dances they learned through the week, across the whole spectrum, and the information is collected by the Folk Dance Federation of California. Here's the triumph! Of the 56 dances taught that week, Scottish country dances were rated 1, 3, 5 and 7. They were: *Broadway*, *The Cranberry Tart*, *The Countess of Dunmore's Reel*, *Makin' the Tartan*. Hurrah for SCD!

Kay Munn

London Ontario Branch

Attendance at our annual workshops has been declining in recent years, in part due to our ageing membership. Many dancers have issues with backs, hips, knees and feet, and the days when they could put a spring in their step or improve their footwork have passed. With that in mind, we wanted to ensure this year's workshop was inclusive, regardless of experience or age. We structured the workshop to be low impact by focusing on learning new formations and the finer skills of dancing like handing, covering, phrasing, transitioning and teamwork. This not only allows older members to participate without the aches and pains that come with step drills, but it teaches our beginners how important these aspects of dancing are right from the start. When people notice how elegant you and your set look on the dance floor, they may not even notice if your footwork could use a polish. We are adapting to appeal to both new and long-standing members and, therefore, the future of the RSCDS in London, Ontario.

Margaret Campbell

Melbourne and District Branch

We had a busy 2018, with a seven-week Beginners' Course ending with a well-attended Social for newer dancers in June; a weekend school at Amberley in August with teachers Audrey Emmett and Cairistiona Tait; branch classes for differing levels of dancers and a twilight class in November for all but beginners. A teaching course, Units 2 and 3, culminated with examinations in September. This provided an opportunity for the visiting examiner, Helen Russell, to teach a general class to members. Our Branch is busy planning for the 44th Australian Winter School which will be held in July in Melbourne. Our Winter School will coincide with our 50th Anniversary so the final event of the school will be a Grand Ball.

Leanne Smith

Moscow Branch

Moscow celebrated 25 years by hosting a Ball on 6 October. The joy of meeting fellow dancers was multiplied by a beautiful venue, nice programme and great music provided by the Clann McCeol Band. Before the Ball a class in interesting dances was taught. Our branch now has two books available for purchase on our website. January marked the 10th anniversary of the Cheboksary Scottish Festival with events dedicated to Robert Burns and Scottish culture.

Cheboksary, along with other cities, took part in a virtual flash mob by dancing *Burns' Hornpipe* and posting it online. The event was fabulous, a haggis addressed and the anniversary cake delicious.

Maria Tsvetoukhina



The Dancers and Musicians in Cheboksary

Musicians' Convention in New Zealand

There are not many country dance musicians in New Zealand. We find ourselves fairly well spread out. Social contact can be hard, so when we are in the same room, it's usually because some of us are on stage! A rare dance-free weekend was the right time for a Musicians' Convention. Conference-style sessions were planned, led by experienced individuals, but with opportunity for discussion and sharing. A Tea Dance was arranged for the Sunday. About 15 musicians attended. Sessions covered using different instruments effectively; expanding pianists' repertoire; sound checking; getting that 'Scottish accent'; managing music libraries; Dance Database; gig management; and promoting live music in NZ.

The Sunday Tea Dance was well attended. Some of our top bands played, and Wild Heather, Rose and Thistle, Bourach Mor and Kiwi Kilties provided great variety. Then the big band played – enormous fun and dancers went home well satisfied. And so did the musicians, after a collegial and social weekend, exploring common interests and expanding horizons in unexpected ways.

Lynne Scott, NZ Branch Music Adviser

Nova Scotia Branch

We have seen a small increase in numbers, due in part to greater effort at having a public profile. There is now weekly dancing at five different locations in this province with special monthly classes in two. A demonstration team practises every two weeks. We are pleased with the success of our annual Fall workshops. The last had teachers Christine Basnett and Colleen Putt, with music by Fred Moyes.

Ron Richards

Queensland Branch

Our final event of 2018 was the St Andrew's Social, a well-attended event with great music by the fabulous Black Bear Duo, Iain McKenzie and Emma Nixon. We are most fortunate to have such talented musicians. We were successful in obtaining funding through the Matched Funding Initiative and are putting this towards setting up a 'Brisbane Reelers' group in 2019, aiming to encourage more younger dancers into Scottish country dancing. We are devoting a lot of effort to attracting and teaching beginners, through 6-week courses in central Brisbane, and also providing financial support to clubs prepared to put on classes throughout Queensland. This is entailing development of Facebook and other social media options. Queensland is one fifth the area of Europe, so maintaining contact with clubs can

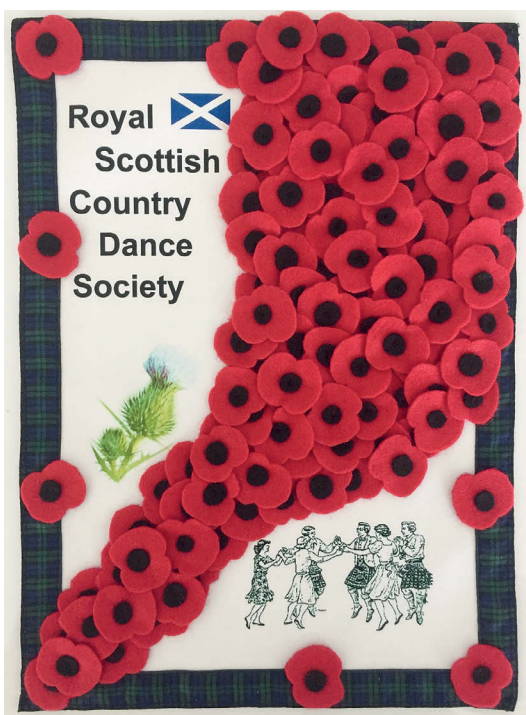
be challenging. Plans are well-advanced for a weekend of dance at Kingscliff in northern New South Wales, aiming to attract dancers from the Gold Coast and the local district.

Bryan Hacker

Reading St Andrew's Scottish Dancing Society

On 22 January, a snowy Tuesday evening, around 40 of our members gathered for our annual Burns Supper. The dancing was interrupted to pipe in the haggis and to address it in the proper manner. The haggis was of course served with neeps and tatties and two sorts of 'gravy'. There was some more dancing after the supper to shake it down! Tuesday evenings are our Elementary/Improvers Class, but the event was attended by General Class members too. We had our ball on 2 February when we welcomed dancers from other clubs, and our Ceilidh on 30 March when we encouraged members to bring their friends and non-dancing partners.

Duncan Barnett



Retford's impressive contribution to the WW1 memorial

Retford and District Branch

The Retford Branch of the Royal British Legion wished to create a permanent memory to celebrate the end of World War 1, and invited local clubs, societies, churches and schools to produce an image on a piece of calico, of their own design. These would be collated into a wall hanging which would be on display in the local museum. Our Branch was keen to take part, and Eunice Dobson volunteered to produce a piece of embroidery. Her inspiration came from the incredible art installation at the Tower of London to all those British and Commonwealth soldiers who lost their lives in WW1: *The Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* made up of ceramic poppies – something that will be forever remembered. All told, there were 50 images sewn together to create a stunning finished article. The unveiling took place on 11 October by the Deputy Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire and was attended by Eunice and Chalmers Dobson, representing the Branch. In addition, a commemorative book was produced for contributors to provide a historical record.

Bill Barratt

Richmond Branch, entertaining ghosts!

How do we find new ways to promote Scottish country dance? An ever-present challenge but one which members of Richmond Branch felt they could meet in a new way last August by taking part in GeorgeFest, a week-long festival, celebrating the 18th century Georgian heritage of Richmond, a market town in North Yorkshire. Since the formation of Richmond Branch in 1952 members have danced Branch Socials in the elegant first floor room of the Town Hall, rebuilt in 1756 as a focal point for Assemblies and Balls. Now, in the 21st century we felt we could invite GeorgeFest visitors to come and join us to dance in a Summer Assembly of our own. The festival offered a perfect opportunity to demonstrate Scottish country dancing links to the eighteenth century through the origins of so many of our well-known dances. We composed a programme which featured popular Scottish country dances of the Georgian period, all of which have come down to us preserved in manuscripts and subsequently published by the Society. To complement these we felt it important to show that Scottish country dance is a living tradition, evolving through newly devised dances of today. Our event added a unique experience to the festival, gave visitors a chance to watch and join in, and echoed past Assemblies of people coming together in Richmond to enjoy a dance. The ghosts must have been very entertained!

Joy Bradshaw

St Andrews Branch

On 16 October, St Andrews Branch entertained a group of French teenagers from Lyon in the Boys' Brigade Hall. The visit was organized by Corrine Hilpert from Lyon Branch. This evening was well supported and the French youngsters enjoyed themselves. On 2 December the Branch held an afternoon dance session in the Boys Brigade Hall with members of the Girl Guides. There was a good turn-out of Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, and also of branch members. Irene Bennett taught dances from the 'Jigs and Reels' pack for schools, a copy of which the Guide leader accepted at the end of the afternoon. Luke Brady was the accordionist.

Jonathan Wilson

St Catharines Branch, Ontario

The St Catharines Branch has recently moved to a new location at St Columba Church with excellent facilities, including a great hardwood floor, providing three rooms for our beginner, intermediate and social classes. We have been a branch since 1964 and have approximately 75 members. We meet for classes once a week from September to May. Our annual events include a Christmas dance and a Spring Ball in May, each event with a band.

Kathy Ko

Saitama Branch

On 6 January, Saitama Branch held its New Year Party at Shinsyuukan Hall in Miyashiro – a very cold afternoon with around 120 dancers. For half of the programme we danced to live music – Yoko Ichikawa on piano and Masanori Sato on the harmonica. The programme was made up of popular and new dances from *Books 51 and 52*. According to our custom, the teachers performed one of the new dances, *Ruby Wilkinson's Farewell to Cranshaws*. Dancers were looking forward to seeing the demonstration. The hall was filled with happy smiles!

Mayumi Ayabe



San Francisco Branch

San Francisco Branch welcomed dancers from around the world to its 60th Anniversary of Scottish country dancing at Asilomar in October. Dancers enjoyed classes by David Hall, Linda Henderson, Cecily Selling, Elinor Vandergrift and Craig Williams. All were thrilled to dance to the phenomenal music of local favorites, Fiddlesticks and Ivory, and to the outstanding musical performances of Australia's Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt for classes and evening dances.

Prior to the weekend, some branch members had an up-close and personal musical experience, attending a private house concert in Oakland with Chris and Catherine. 29 musicians, all San Francisco Branch members, also attended a day-long workshop in Arlington led by Chris and Catherine that culminated in playing on stage at the Branch's monthly dance party the same day.

The Asilomar Weekend was a wonderful commemoration of the relationship Scottish country dancers have had with the Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove. In recognition, a special exhibit, 'Celebrating 60!' was displayed, illuminating the early years of SCD at Asilomar, along with themes tracing the evolution of the Weekend since December 1958. 2018 and the Asilomar Weekend were truly memorable and special.

Trina Merriman and Charlotte Greig



The Kim McGarrity Ball at Asilomar

Scottish Universities

On 1 December, the University of St Andrews Celtic Society had the privilege of hosting this year's Scottish Universities Scottish Country Dance Festival (SUSCDF). Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen,

and St Andrews brought along dancers, both new beginners and some of their most advanced, and showed off all of their hard work in demonstrations. Each demonstration was expertly choreographed working to the strengths of their dancers, while having their own creative spin (Edinburgh and Aberdeen sticking to traditional music; Glasgow and St Andrews using modern). Each demonstration incorporated Highland steps. This was the very first ball for many of the members of our club. A very motivating experience!

Jessica Linde, St Andrews Celtic Society

Shifftin' Bobbins, Toronto

Although we read that numbers are decreasing, our affiliated group held its annual St Andrew's Dance on 24 November with a capacity crowd not only local but from across Southern Ontario and Western New York State, dancing to the live music of Laird Brown and Scotch Mist. A spokesman for the group says that there is evidently a place for our experienced dancer group while the less experienced are well provided for by branch lessons and workshops. This was apparent when some newer dancers came along for the first time well prepped beforehand, and ready to dance the programme without walk throughs. In addition, affiliation with the RSCDS has given the group a wider profile, receiving enquires from across the world.

Jon Allen-Friend

Sidcup Caledonians

Things are looking up with increased membership, largely due to the unfortunate demise of other local organisations. We are maintaining growth with returning as well as inexperienced dancers. The new members are settling in and helping to keep numbers up. Some older members now only attend social events. We continue to meet weekly. Our dances on the last Saturday of every month attract dancers from other local clubs. Newer members are contributing to activities and are enjoying learning Scottish country dancing, often for the first time. Hogmanay and Burns Night parties have continued to be popular with their blend of ceilidh and country dancing.

Hugh Gavin

Tokyo Branch

Tokyo Branch holds a social dance for beginners once or twice a year when there is a fifth Saturday in the month. Beginners always hesitate to join big events. The programme for the Social Dance is created using dances with basic formations. The beginners really enjoy dancing with walk-throughs. We will have our 30th Anniversary Weekend on 17-19 May at the city of Lake Kawaguchi, near Mount Fuji.

Yumiko Kosugi

Toronto Branch

Toronto Branch held its 56th Annual Tartan Ball on 16 February. This year we had to find a new venue, as the Royal York Hotel is under renovation. Our committee found us a wonderful new home, The Old Mill in the west end. Deirdre MacCuish Bark devised a very danceable programme, which was particularly attractive to some of our newer dancers, who were able to experience their first Tartan Ball. At the Ball we also celebrated Deirdre's recent Scroll of Honour award, given for all of her dedication over a period of 37 years, not only to the Society but also to the Toronto Association.

Andrew Henderson



Piping in the Haggis in Japan

Urawa Scottish Country Dance Group

It was one year ago, in January 2018, that Urawa Scottish Country Dance Group, an affiliated group of the Saitama Branch, held their 30th Burns' Night.

The group started in 1977, with one of the group's members, teacher Junko Matsushashi, going to Summer School in 1980. She met Mr Toshio Nanba, President of the International Burns Association. The group invited him to the annual dance and studied Robert Burns, Scottish music, history and culture. That set the stage for the annual Burns' Night. A group member bought tinned haggis in Scotland. At the haggis ceremony, pipers from the Japan Piping Society led the haggis into the hall. 'To a Haggis' was read over by Charles Kennedy, an RSCDS teacher and member of the Burns Association. The poem had been recorded on tape and it has been used at the Haggis ceremony since then. There were dances concerned with Burns and group members gave short lectures about his life, works, and haggis. There was also bagpipe music. All the participants enjoyed Scottish culture very much that night!

Momoyo Suzuki

Vernon Scottish Country Dancers, British Columbia

We have been reeling and jigging for just over 25 years, the last 23 years with the same instructor! The indomitable Ruth Hurst has been turning unsure beginners into confident dancers able to perform at various events. A former Math teacher, nothing goes by her and we swear she has eyes in the back of her head! This year our group is hosting our 23rd Annual Workshop and Ceilidh in April, and we expect dancers from all over British Columbia including Vancouver Island, (400 miles away) and Medicine Hat, Alberta (over 500 miles away) for another wonderful reunion of old friends and the opportunity to make new friends in this marvellous community of Scottish country dance.

Kathy Drew

Western Australia Branch

A Dinner Dance was held in September at the picturesque South of Perth Yacht Club with live music by fiddle player Catherine Fraser and pianist Kylie Wait. This was followed by a Sunday class with music by Catherine and Kylie, and one of our Branch teachers taught dances from *Book 52*. At the end of September past Chairman, Helen Russell, visiting Australia on an

examination tour, made a stopover in Perth. A day school was organised and Helen took us through our paces and reminded us along the way of those important dancing techniques we sometimes forget. After lunch we all gathered around for an HQ update and an opportunity to ask questions. At our 2018 AGM one of our members suggested holding a couple of 'Keep-In-Touch' social dances over the long summer break from December to the end of February. This proved a very popular idea and everyone enjoyed the evenings and a chance to catch up with each other.

Helen Douglas

Windsor Branch, Ontario

We have been doing some outreach by holding monthly ceilidhs at the Friday 'Fish and Chips' night at the Windsor Scottish Club. After the meal, Windsor Branch members invite people in the audience to try ceilidh dances like *The Dashing White Sergeant* and *The Canadian Barn Dance*. A band consisting of fiddle, concertina, mandolin, and guitar, led by Frank Edgely, accompanies the dancers, and plays a few tunes between dances. The Branch teachers, Isobel Hunter, Pat Dupuis, and Griff Evans, organize and lead the ceilidhs which have been very popular with the Scottish Club patrons. It's a good time for families, and children have been particularly enthusiastic to learn the ceilidh dances. Besides introducing the public to ceilidh dancing, branch members also use the evenings to advertise our weekly classes.

Miriam Wright

Scottish

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Letters to the Editor

Any opinions expressed in the letters below are personal to the writers and do not reflect the views of the RSCDS or the Management Board.

Dear Editor

Is the price right?

Our 46th Annual Ball was at the end of February. After we had printed the tickets and sold 100, the Council raised the hall rental. This meant we had to dig into our reserves. We are, for once, ahead of ourselves but facing extinction.

What do we do next year? Scottish country dancers are notoriously thrifty, so hiking the price is out. We could have a raffle. We could trim the sit-down supper in the elegant Banquet Suite and just provide self service tea and biscuits in the Ballroom with its wonderful sprung floor and elegant Victorian décor that many will have driven up to two hours to get to. The last thing we want is them passing out from hunger during *Angus McLeod*. The question for you, dear reader, is how much can a dancer be asked to pay for what is recognised as the premier event in the region? £20, £25, £30 or more? Are we selling ourselves too cheaply?

Roger Brooks, Loyne SCD Affiliated Group

Dear Editor

Scottish Dancing and Autism

I have been a Scottish dancer for many years and it has been a source of enjoyment, a way to get fit and a help in times of stress. In 2008 my grandson, Cosmo John, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). He was a healthy and happy little boy; at the age of two he had no verbal language and few social skills, but he loved music. He responded very positively to sung nursery rhymes, and as his language developed he continued to love singing and dancing. He is fascinated with anything that turns or spins; wheels, wind turbines, washing machines, microwave ovens, spinning tops.

In 2016 I held a fundraiser for the National Autistic Society, a dance afternoon with tea and cakes. For the event I devised a dance called *A Reel for Cosmo John*, which my friends from Newark SCDS demonstrated. The dance has lots of circular movements; watchers may even see a wind turbine in there. The afternoon was a huge success; we raised over £800 and my grandson joined in with some of the simpler dances. In 2017 I contacted local groups at Nottingham, Lincoln, Sleaford and Waltham to ask if I could visit them in April, during Autism Awareness week, and teach them *A Reel for Cosmo John*. I was welcomed warmly at every group and able to talk a little about the impact getting an autism diagnosis can have on a family, and the ways in which people can be supportive in public places. The groups very kindly gave donations to the National Autistic Society. In 2018 Leicester Branch performed the dance as part of their Charity Ball, held to support autism Awareness. I would love the dance to be known more widely, so that every time it is danced, people are made aware of the fact that autism can be a hidden disability, often mistaken for 'bad' behaviour in children. If you contact me on areelforcosmojohn@gmail.com I will send you the dance instructions.

Pat Harland, Bingham, Nottinghamshire

Dear Editor

The Red Poppy

Thank you to William Morris and the dancers of South Western Scottish for sharing their inspiration through 'The Red Poppy Project' letter in the last issue. Reading the account of their re-creation of this unusual 128-bar medley I was intrigued. A dance for eight ladies and four men in a square set sounded challenging and, as suggested, I turned to YouTube to seek further information. I found the videos of both teams – Taw and Tamar – to be excellent, illustrating the dance very clearly with the figures appearing interesting but not overwhelming. The magazine had arrived with the anniversary of Armistice Day fast approaching and I felt that members of Richmond Branch would appreciate the opportunity to try the dance for themselves. I hoped we would experience a connection with other Scottish country dancers at this historic and poignant time, allowing us to mark the anniversary in a unique way. We were not prepared for an additional element which came as both a surprise and an appropriate complement to our efforts. Our classes are held in The Booth Hall, Catterick Village, North Yorkshire, and in November other users of the hall had decorated the inside with hand-crafted poppies. The hall had poppies surrounding the two Rolls of Honour along the walls, around door frames, windows and other features. This set the scene for several commemorative Armistice events and the decoration provided our members with a colourful and touching background against which to dance *The Red Poppy Medley*. The article by SWS included the promise of a 2019 recording of the music by Chris Dewhurst and his band. We look forward to having this available later this year and to retaining Stanley Wilkie's imaginative medley in our repertoire.

Joy Bradshaw, Richmond Branch

Dear Editor

Country Dancing in Barbados

Having moved to Barbados in 1984, I gathered some friends interested in Scottish country dancing and our group got underway. During the winter months we welcomed visitors to join us. A few of our dancers have been coming to Barbados annually and being members of Scottish country dance groups in their home countries, they contribute greatly to sessions.

A few years ago, a multi-cultural International Fair which raised funds for various charities was started and our group was always invited to entertain the large crowds by putting on a suite of dances. Around that time I also ran children's classes at one of the schools and the children were always eager to join us at the Fair.

Sadly, our St Andrew's Society which hosted the annual St Andrew's Night Ball and the Burns Supper has faded into oblivion. Nonetheless, our Scottish Country Dance Society of Barbados has struggled on with the support of annual visitors from overseas. Recently, we have taken part in the annual, week-long Barbados Celtic Festival held during May and both last year's and this year's

events were featured on Scottish television. The 2019 Celtic Festival is being planned and once again we are hopeful of putting together a dance team to participate in this event. Any dancers visiting Barbados during May who would like to join us in a dance performance would be most welcome. kenfgt@gmail.com

Ken Thomson, Barbados

Dear Editor

Miss Milligan and the Reelers

In some parts of the world, Scottish country dancing is facing a crisis of declining numbers and an ageing membership. Our history may suggest some ways in which we might constructively approach this challenge. Jean Milligan and Ysobel Stewart did not, as George Emmerson wrote, 'restore' Scottish country dancing but 're-created it'.¹ There was great variety in footwork and technique and they had a number of choices, ranging from the elegance of the 18th century assembly room, refined by French dancing masters, to the lively, if more chaotic, style of the village hall. They chose the style of the assembly room, modified by Miss Milligan's own preferences, thus creating what we now know as Scottish country dancing in the RSCDS style. To do this, they created standardized descriptions, limiting the number of steps. This grew into what we now know as the *Manual*, which is the basis for teacher certification. The standards are taught, and enforced, through summer schools and workshops. One of the unforeseen consequences of standardization is that it made possible the 'export' of Scottish country dancing. In my view, this has been entirely beneficial. Scotland has always been an outward-looking and open society and dancing is but one of its many gifts to the world. The Scots and their descendants should be both gratified and flattered to see Scottish country dancing danced – and danced well – on every continent.

A second consequence of standardization is that it made it easy to devise new dances, extending the repertoire far beyond the traditional dances which the Society collected in the first quarter century or so of its existence. Given a standardized set of steps and formations, the only barrier to the creation of a new dance is the ingenuity of the creator. Because each dance is a sequence of formations in a particular order, the creation of new formations gives rise to a potentially exponential growth in the number of dances; current estimates of the number of dances range from 5,000 to 10,000 (*18,878 on 3 March 19! Ed.*) and the number grows daily. Emmerson, writing in 1972, at the beginning of this period of growth, referred to 'scores' of new dances and the 'countless possible configurations' and commented that 'originality is difficult to achieve and none of the new dances can really claim superiority over the best of the old'. He also cautioned that complexity of new formations should be 'avoided in the interests of the utility of the Country Dance in its social role'.² Which brings me to the Reelers.

Reeling is in many respects the country dance tradition rejected by Miss Milligan in the 1920s – the lively but unstructured and unsophisticated descendant of the village halls and the Highland Balls³. Their dances may be found in the Society's books – *The Duke of Perth* or *Hamilton House*, for example – but of technique or footwork, there is little. What reeling lacks in style or elegance, however, it makes up in enthusiasm. Reeling groups appear to be much larger than the corresponding Society branches; the London Reelers claim more than 1,000 members, predominantly young. They are evidently having a great deal of fun. Reeling Balls have the colour and the sound of an RSCDS Ball, if not the grace and elegance. Reeling does not appear to have come to Canada

yet, though events such as Toronto's St Andrews Ball have some of the characteristics of a reeling event.

While we may find it difficult to accept, young people today have less time, or perhaps interest, in the fairly structured experience of teaching and dancing we have inherited. Older people may have the time but in some cases are incapable physically of ever mastering what Miss Milligan taught. Reeling is one answer to this. It is not the one I would advocate but it cannot be ignored.

What do we have to learn from reeling? Certainly not technique. And I doubt that any experienced country dancer would want to emulate the reelers' style. But what about enthusiasm and youth, with which the country dance world, certainly in Canada, is less well endowed? One of the secrets of the reelers' success, and one which the Society would do well to ponder, is their focus on a small number of dances, in some reeling groups, as few as 11 or 12, in others up to about 50, almost all of which are also Society dances. Consequently, it is easy to learn the full repertoire and dancers require no preparation, practices, cribs, videos or repeated walk-throughs.

This, I believe, warrants serious consideration. When I began country dancing in the 1960s, there were no videos, few if any cribs, and little anxiety about preparing for a monthly dance or a ball. The dances on a programme were familiar for the most part and had been danced repeatedly over the years, to the point where it was feasible to dispense with briefing, let alone walk-throughs. The relentless proliferation of dances has moved us further and further from the social tradition which gave rise to country dancing and is a real obstacle to participation. It threatens the 'social role', as Emmerson put it, of the dance and turns it into something more like a competitive sport or activity like Highland dancing, practised by a shrinking group of enthusiasts. Lorn Macintyre, in the October issue of *Scottish Country Dancer*, put it well: "There are too many dances, too many books. People don't do these modern dances for the sheer enjoyment of dancing – they do them for something like sport."

What do I suggest?

1. The Society place a moratorium on publishing books of new dances or approving new formations – there are, simply, far too many dances.
2. The Society revise the 2008 listing, *A Selection of Core Dances*, and encourage branches to rely largely on those dances for their programmes.
3. Branches be encouraged to significantly limit the number of dances on programmes with emphasis on a core group of dances to be danced regularly. These should include the dances being taught in beginner classes to allow them to participate in branch activities as soon as possible, eg, two or three months after beginning classes. By using a smaller group of core dances, time spent on walk-throughs and practice should be reduced to increase the amount of dance time.
4. Emphasize that Scottish country dancing is primarily a social, not a competitive activity, the principal object of which is enjoyment and fun. Those who wish to spend more time and effort to perfect technique should have the opportunity through advanced classes, but that should be the exception rather than the rule.

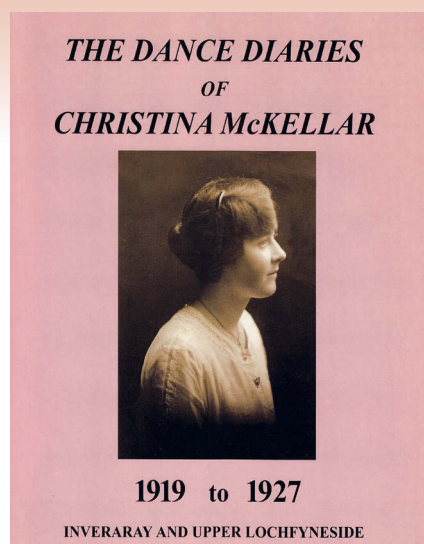
Colin Campbell, Toronto Branch

¹ George S. Emmerson, *A Social History of Scottish Dance*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1972, p.299

² *Ibid*, p.299

³ For an introduction, look at the website of the London Reelers – www.londonreels.co.uk.

Reviews



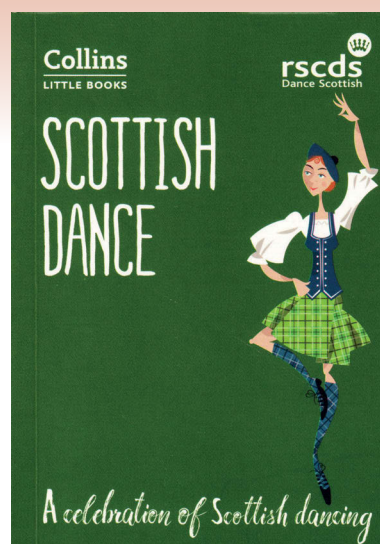
The Dance Diaries of Christina McKellar 1919 to 1927 Inveraray and Upper Lochfyneside ISBN 978-1-911357-49-0

With a foreword by Society Archivist, Alan Macpherson, this book gives a unique insight into Scottish social dancing in 1920s Argyll, right in the heart of Ysobel Stewart country. Apart from the introduction by Christina's son, Gordon Simpson, the book consists entirely of a list of dances she attended from April 1919 until February 1927, roughly one per month, along with the dance programmes and her partners for each dance – cousins, friends, hotel workers, ploughmen, and a group she describes as 'the Castle lot' – very much a cross-section of society. The events ranged from New Year Dances, Silver Wedding Dances, dances in the local Shinty Club or Gun Club to dances in the local castle.

For us, the repertoire is the most interesting aspect. It is a combination of country dances, couple dances and quadrilles. The book gives us a vignette of the dance culture which was thriving in rural Scotland in the early days of the SCDS. The country dances were the *Scotch Reel*, *Triumph*, *Queen's Welcome*, *Caledonian Country Dance*, *Circassian Circle*, *Petronella*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Strip the Willow*, *Haymakers* and *The Eightsome* – most of which appear in our early books. The couple dances were *Waltzes*, *Polkas*, *Foxtrots*, *Tangos*, *The Highland Schottische*, *The Military Two-Step*, *The Boston Two-Step*, *The Veleta*, *The Eva 3-Step* and *La Va* – no mention of *The Gay Gordons* or *Canadian Barn Dance*. Dominating almost every programme are *The Quadrilles*, *The Lancers* and *The Eightsome Reel*. On 10 February 1927 at the Drill Hall in Inveraray, there were three *Eightosomes*, and six sets of *Quadrilles* (including *The Lancers*). Remember that a quadrille set consists of five short dances. This would induce coronaries in most dancers today, when even one *Eightsome* has been known to clear the floor of all but the fittest. When the *Haymakers Jig* appears, it is usually the last dance of the evening, continuing a tradition going back to the early 1800s.

What is fascinating about this book is that the repertoire remained more or less the same for the eight years covered. By 1927 the Society had published Books 1 – 4. These seem to have had no impact in this part of the country. Villages such as Strachur, Lochgoilhead and Cairndow, at the most 20 miles from the nearest railway station, were remote, but not isolated. Above all, this book proves once and for all that country dancing was alive and well in Scotland around the time of our foundation. A myth dispelled?

Jimmie Hill, Ed.



Scottish Dance – The new edition of the Collins book ISBN 978-0-00- 821056-4

I was given the new version of the Collins book *Scottish Dance* as a present last year and have used it on a regular basis since then at the Aberdeen Branch Ceilidh class. I didn't really use the old version as it was split into three sections – RSCDS dances; other popular Scottish country dances; then a few ceilidh dances at the end. The new edition has many more suitable dances for ceilidh teaching. In fact, the bulk of the book is simple dances. How many of you have wondered how to do *The Bluebell Polka*? In *The Dashing White Sergeant*, sensibly for non-dancers, the turns are with the right hand – the way it is mostly danced in Scotland. *The Sausage Machine*, *The Packhorse Rant* and *The Marmalade Sandwich* are all there! The layout and the instructions are clear and very easy to follow. The book is a helpful asset in my 'ceilidh box of tricks'. The book is well organised with formations and definitions at the beginning, followed by easy dances in alphabetical order, then moving on to more tricky dances – mainly Scottish country but again in alphabetical order so very simple to find: dances such as *The Duke of Perth*, *The Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Hamilton House*, and *Mairi's Wedding*. There is an appendix listing the sources of the dances, and a very good index at the back with all the formations, devisers and dances. If I decide that I want a dance with do-si-do I can go to the index and find how to do that formation and also the dances it appears in.

I would certainly recommend the book as a very good addition to a new teacher's file for simple warm-up dances and also for anyone teaching ceilidh dancing like me. If you are asked to arrange dancing at a St Andrew's Night, a Burns supper, a Hogmanay Dance, a wedding or even a simple birthday party with guests who are not all Scottish country dancers, you will find this new edition very useful.

Available from the RSCDS shop and well worth the money! £6.99 in the UK.

Sheila Bain, Aberdeen Branch

Please note there is a serious mistake in the instructions for *The Virginia Reel* on page 139. It appears as if it is a 32-bar dance rather than a 40-bar dance.

Bars 25-32 should read: eight slip steps down the middle and eight slip steps back again.

Bars 33-40: First couple followed by 2nd, 3rd and 4th couples cast off to the bottom for eight walking steps. 1st couple join both hands to make an arch and the 2nd, 3rd and 4th couples meet partner and dance under the arch for eight walking steps to re-form the set with a new top couple.

Sadly Missed

We would appreciate it if all obituaries for inclusion come from Branch or Club Secretaries. As this issue was going to press, we learned of the sad passing of Examiner and distinguished teacher, Christine Mair. Christine's obituary will appear in the Autumn Issue.

Jerónimo Maeso Castrillon

Jerónimo was from Madrid, but came to live in England in 1960. On going back in 1989 he joined the Madrid club. He organised the first Iberian Weekend in Madrid in 1994. The Iberian weekends are thriving today – a great tribute to Jerónimo. He and his wife Mary returned to Ross-on-Wye in 2000, joining The Ross Reel Club. A member of Herefordshire Branch, he served on the committee. He taught beginners and tried to involve the local school. Jerónimo is very much missed for his input and enthusiasm.

Susan Dick, Ross Reel Club

Dianne Christie, Kirkcudbright

Dianne Christie was a very supportive member of Kirkcudbright Branch. She was on the Executive Council and served as Branch Chairman and Secretary. Dianne was secretary of the Three Branch Charity Dance held biannually to raise money for local charities. She held the Branch Award and was also an Honorary Member of the Branch. Last year she celebrated her 90th birthday. Dianne will be greatly missed.

Moir Stacey, Kirkcudbright Branch

Åke Franzon, Stockholm

Åke Franzon became a Scottish country dancer through his acquaintance with Don Gillam. He was one of the first members of the Stockholm Branch. He spread a spirit of joy in every set he danced in. Åke was granted honorary branch membership in 2015.

Agne Hanson, Stockholm Branch

Don Gillam, Stockholm

Don Gillam was born in Australia, coming to Stockholm in the early 1950s. Very involved with the British community in Stockholm, he taught Scottish country dancing. Don organized demonstration teams throughout the 60s and 70s. In 1976 he and his partner Elsa Stockman took their Teacher's Certificates in St Andrews and founded Stockholm Branch.

Agne Hanson, Stockholm Branch

Ian Hall, Helensburgh

Ian Hall started dancing at the University of Manchester as a student in the late 1940s. It was, along with the music, to become a lifelong passion. It also began a long association with the RSCDS and Manchester Branch. He taught its demonstration class from 1962 to 1997, and also a Highland class. He was Branch Treasurer and later its President. Ian lived in London between 1955 and 1959. He was very active in the Teddington Caledonian Society, and spent all four years in the London Branch Demonstration Team, taught by Bill Ireland, with whom he would organise ceilidhs and demonstrations at St Andrews for over 30 years.

Ian served on the Executive Council for many years and later on the Management Board. He was also a prominent member of various sub-committees and an Examiner. He was Winter School Director in 2003, and taught and played at both Summer and Winter Schools. Until quite recently he taught a class in his new home branch of Helensburgh, and was always keen to help with events and demonstrations there – notably entertaining tourists at West Coast hotels in summer. Ian's influence and reach,

however, went far beyond positions and events. He was someone who warmly welcomed newcomers, encouraged beginners and brightened every event with his smile and good nature.

David Hall, Vienna

Owen Meyer, London

Owen Meyer was a very distinguished London Branch teacher. He was deeply committed to the RSCDS and its teaching style. Owen was a mainstay of the branch demonstration team. Although he taught both the demonstration and advanced classes, it was with beginners that he excelled. Watching him manage a 40-strong beginners' class was a master class for any aspiring teacher. Apart from teaching, Owen contributed greatly to the administration of the branch as Membership Secretary, Vice Chairman, Chairman, and Treasurer. Following his term as Branch Chairman, he was immediately elected Hon. Vice President. Owen was a gentleman, greatly missed by all.

Simon Wales, London Branch

Wilson and Jean Nicol, London

Wilson and Jean Nicol passed away in the autumn within two weeks of each other. Wilson grew up in the village of Friockheim in Angus. From the many bands who played in the village Wilson developed his passion for music. As a teenager he played in bands with local musicians, including his school friend, Lindsay Ross. At St Andrews University he was President of the Celtic Society. He took his Full Certificate at Summer School in 1956. While there he met his wife-to-be, Jean, a PE teacher who was taking her Preliminary Certificate. They were to share a passion for dancing, Jean teaching while Wilson played. Both were in the London Branch demonstration team, Wilson for 30 years. Wilson's contribution to London Branch was considerable: Membership Secretary, Vice Chairman, Chairman, and Editor of *The Reel*. London honoured him with a Branch Award and as Honorary Vice President. Wilson served on the General Purposes Committee and the Management Board. Jean was a founding member of Croydon Branch. She started a class for children which ran for many years. Wilson and Jean were always welcoming faces to any newcomer at London Branch events.

Andy Nicol, Hednesford, Staffordshire

Anne Sheach, Isle of Skye

Anne was a life-long country dancer and taught until her retirement in 2006. She was instrumental in establishing the Isle of Skye Branch in 1988 and the May Weekend, which she organised for many years. Anne was also one of the first recipients of the Branch Award. A friend to many dancers throughout Scotland and beyond, she is very much missed.

Alison Smit, Isle of Skye

Rita Waddell, Forfar

With the passing of Rita Waddell at the age of 95, Forfar has lost a teacher who inspired many hundreds of youngsters in her 30 years of teaching the Branch Junior Class. Rita managed classes of 60 with patience, skill, and perseverance. She was rewarded by the number of trophies which her various teams brought home from the annual Arbroath Festival.

Mary Craib, Edna Glennie, and Patricia Sturrock

Day School Diary

The Day School Diary is compiled by Ian Brockbank. Please send details to ian@scottishdance.net. Issue 29 will cover events from October 2019 to April 2020.

April 2019

- 6 Geneva Spring Dance and Workshop
- 6 Belfast Branch Day School
- 6 Vancouver Island SCDers Workshop and Dance
- 13 Swilcan Dance Workshop, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 13 Sacramento Branch Spring Workshop
- 18-22 Central Germany Weekend, Kuckucksnest
- 19-21 RSCDS Spring Fling and Spring Fringe, Paris
- 26-28 Winnipeg Annual Workshop
- 27 Cheltenham Branch Day School
- 27 Leeds Branch Highland Day School

May 2019

- 3-6 IB Weekend, Utrecht, the Netherlands
- 10-12 Boston Branch Weekend, USA
- 10-11 Isle of Cumbrae SCDA Weekend, Millport
- 17-19 Duns and District Branch Weekend
- 17-19 New York Branch Pawling Weekend
- 18 Frankfurt SCD Club Workshop
- 18 Luxembourg SCD Club Day School and Dance
- 24-26 ISCD Méaudre SCD Weekend, Vercors
- 25 Swilcan Workshop and Ball, Utrecht

June 2019

- 1-3 Katikati SCD Club Weekend School, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand

- 7-9 Midwest Scottish Weekend, Beaver Dam, WI
- 7-10 Vienna Branch 30th Anniversary Weekend
- 14-16 Stornoway Weekend, Isle of Lewis
- 26-30 Central Germany Summer Course, Kuckucksnest
- 28-30 New Mexico Branch Workshop, Las Vegas

July 2019

- 1-13 Boston Branch, Pinewoods Camp
- 7-13 Australian Winter School, Melbourne
- 13 Leeds Branch, White Rose Festival
- 18-20 Western Australia Branch Weekend School
- 26-28 TAC Teachers Conference Weekend, Calgary
- 28-4.8 TAC Summer School, Calgary
- 14-11.8 RSCDS Summer School, St Andrews

August 2019

- 30-1.9 Central Germany Weekend, Bartholomä
- 31 TAS Workshop and AGM, Broxburn

September 2019

- 6-8 Seattle Branch, Fort Worden Weekend
- 6-7 Jersey SCD Weekend, St Helier
- 7 Thistle Club Day School and Musicians' Workshop
- 13-16 A Dublin Jig, Green Isle Hotel, Dublin

- 21 Leeds Branch Day School
- 21 Ayr Branch Half Day School, Troon

October 2019

- 4-6 Hamilton and Clydesdale Weekend, Pitlochry
- 4-6 Youth Branch and Central Germany Branch Youth Oktober Fling, Munich, Germany
- 5 Leeds Branch Highland Day School
- 5 York and North Humberside Workshop, York
- 17-20 Central Germany Autumn Course, Kuckucksnest
- 19 London Branch Day School and Musicians' Workshop
- 19-20 Nova Scotia Branch Fall Workshop, Dartmouth
- 26 Sheffield Branch Day School

November 2019

- 1-3 RSCDS AGM and Conference Weekend, Perth
- 1-3 Asilomar Weekend, San Francisco Branch
- 9 Toronto Annual Workshop, Toronto
- 9 Bristol Branch Day School
- 16 Norwich Branch Day School
- 20-24 Central Germany Weekend, Kuckucksnest
- 29-1.12 Leeds Branch Malhamdale Weekend

December 2019

- 6-8 SCD Weekend, Curia, Portugal
- 28-5.1 New Zealand Branch Summer School, Cambridge

More News

Gender Neutrality

The Edinburgh Contra Dancers have made the decision that their contra dance series will move forward using gender-neutral terms. In order to continue to make their dance as inclusive and welcoming as possible they will use the term 'Lark' for the person who stands on the Left and 'Raven' for the person who stands on the Right. Many dance events in North America and in the UK have switched to using these terms with great success. Their callers are experienced in teaching with these terms and they are excited about this change.

Free Book from Gothenburg Branch

Gunnar Numeus, Gothenburg Branch, and Christian Petersen, Dancetide, Copenhagen, decided to fulfil a dream they both had: to collect and publish dances devised by Scandinavians or people who live or had lived in Scandinavia. The dances date back to the 1980's, which means that some of the dances were written with old-fashioned typewriters and the figures and diagrams were hand-drawn. They decided to keep it that way and just copied the dances. The book is in that respect somewhat unique. They also decided that the book would be a download.

Go to: <http://dancetide.dk> and click on English then click on the Scandinavian Book link.

Peterborough and District Branch

On 26 January 2019, Maimie Clarkson was appointed Honorary President of Peterborough & District RSCDS in recognition of her outstanding dedication and service to the Branch. Maimie expertly addressed the haggis at the Branch's Burns' Supper Dance – just one of the many roles which she has taken on over the years. Maimie's input to the Branch, from its beginnings in 1981 to the present day, has been invaluable and it was with great pleasure that the Branch Chairman, Amanda Peart, also presented Maimie with Life Membership of the Branch.

Sheila Lewins

RSCDS at Japanese Reception

Roy and Helen Bain of Helensburgh Branch represented the Society on 5 December at a reception in The Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh to celebrate the Birthday of His Majesty The Emperor of Japan, hosted by The Consul General of Japan and Mrs. Yumi Takaoka. Fiona Hyslop, Scottish Culture Secretary, addressed the gathering. Roy and Helen networked and sampled Japanese food and drink, including Scottish smoked salmon marinated in sake! They met Mio Shudo, Director of Japanese Arts and Culture International. She had grown up in Shirotori in Gifu Prefecture and was taught SCD in the local primary school. Fellow guests included local authority officials, going by the number of gold chains in evidence, as well as business people and youth leaders.

Roy Bain

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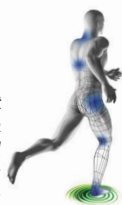
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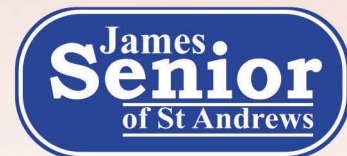


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