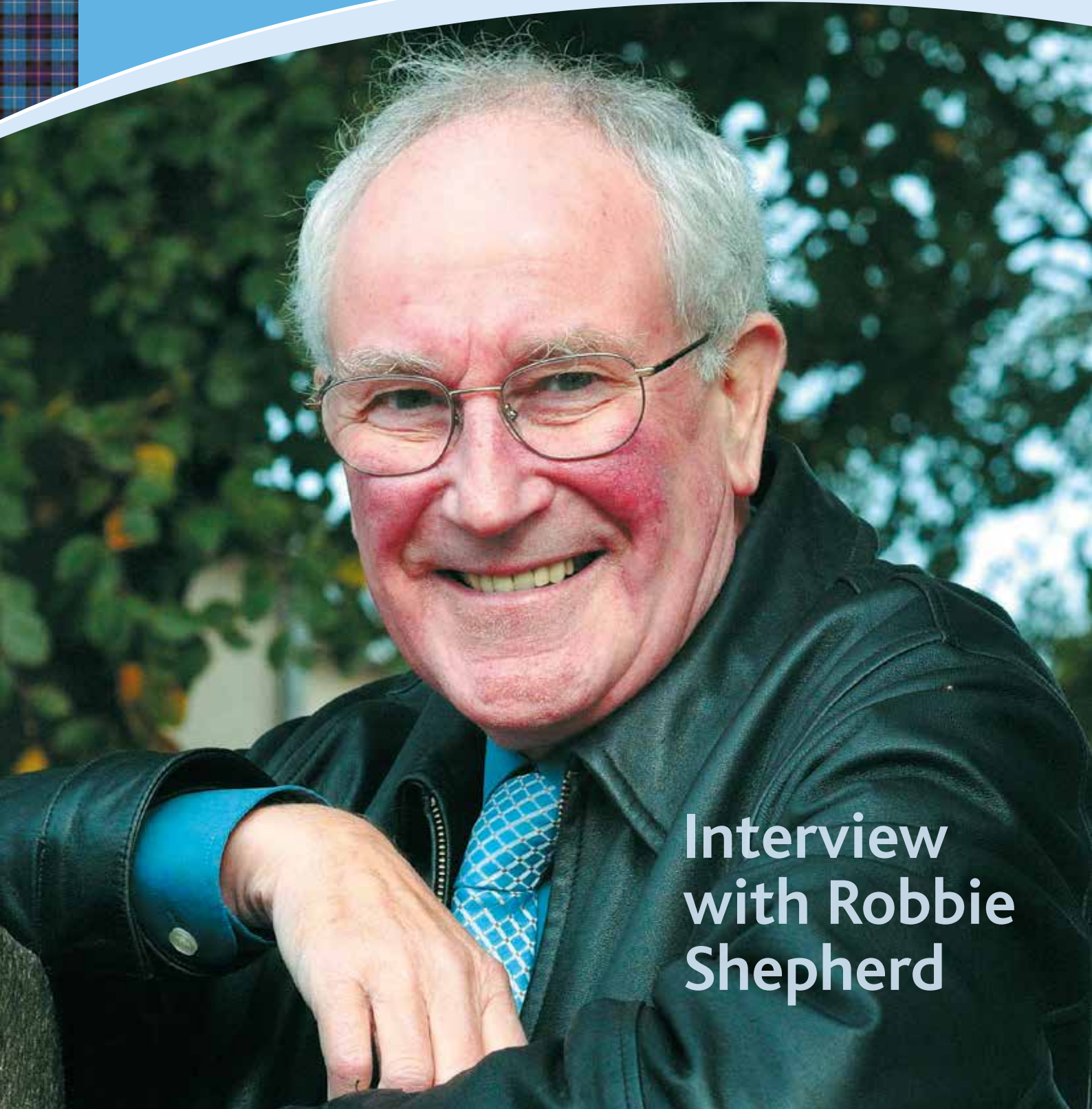


SCOTTISH Country Dancer


rscds
Dance Scottish

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 23 October 2016



Interview
with Robbie
Shepherd

RSCDS EVENTS

TEACHERS' CONFERENCE 2016

4 November 2016, 10.30am – 16.30 pm
Bell's Sports Centre, Hay Street, Perth

Discussions on

- 'Continuing teacher development' for all those teaching classes
- Training for qualified and non-qualified teachers
- Future joint projects between RSCDS and Teachers' Associations
- Teaching Low Impact classes – practical dance session

Full programme and online booking is available on our website.

87th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & CONFERENCE WEEKEND 2016

4-6 November 2016

Bells Sports Centre, Hay Street, Perth

Friday evening Dance – Marian Anderson's Scottish Dance Band

Saturday class – Heather Cowan with James Gray

Saturday evening Ball – Jim Lindsay and his Scottish Dance Band

Sunday class – Jim Stott with Ian Muir

Full programme and online booking is available on our website.

YOUTH EVENTS 2016/17

Children in Need - Pudsey Bear Dance

See Youth Service report on p.7 for details of how to get involved.

GLOBAL YOUTH WEEK

A week of country dance activities aimed at young people.

20-30 January 2017

See back cover for more details

Full programmes and online booking at www.rscds.org.

WINTER SCHOOL 2017

23-28 February 2017

The Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry

Co-ordinator: Luke Brady

Teachers: Johan Maclean, Mary Murray, Raphaëlle Orgeret, Mervyn Short, William Williamson

Musicians: Adam Brady, Luke Brady, Maureen Rutherford, Peter Shand, Angela Young

Classes are offered at Intermediate, Advanced and Very Advanced levels, subject to demand

Winter School is now full – to be placed on a waiting list, email Moira Thomson, Events Manager, at moira.thomson@rscds.org.

SPRING FLING 2017

28-30 April 2017

Bonn, Germany

Teachers: Fiona Brunk, Raphaëlle Orgeret, Duncan Brown

Musicians: Susan MacFadyen, Aymeric Fromherz, Matthias Rank

Full details and online booking is available on the website at:

www.springfling2017.de.

Cover:

Robbie Shepherd (*photo courtesy of the BBC*). See interview on pages 9-11.

SUMMER SCHOOL 2017

16 July – 13 August 2017

University Hall, St Andrews

Director: Jim Stott

- 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/sessions
- Social dancing every evening, with a ceilidh one evening each week
- Unit 5 course in weeks 1 and 2
- Unit 2 and Unit 3 courses in weeks 3 and 4 respectively
- Social class in weeks 2 and 4
- Musicians' course in week 3
- Course for beginners will be in week 2 only
- Young Dancers' Week and Junior Summer School in week 3, when 8-15 year olds may attend.

All classes and courses are subject to demand.

For further information and online booking go to

www.rscds.org/article/summer-school-2017.

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BY JANET MCCRORIE**

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To find out more about Janet McCrorie and her work, please visit www.janetmccrorieartist.co.uk

This issue marks the retirement of Robbie Shepherd after 35 years as presenter of *Take the Floor*, the flagship BBC Radio Scotland programme featuring Scottish dance music. Jimmie Hill went to Robbie's home in August to interview him for this magazine; he was later interviewed by the producer, Jennifer Cruickshank for the tribute programme to Robbie, broadcast on 17 September.

In the last issue I commented on the Society's new initiatives to promote our hobby and raise awareness of SCD outside the circle of Scottish dancers: the Flash Mob in Aberdeen; the 24-hour ceilidh challenge in partnership with STV; the Society's presence at the Scottish Learning Festival to launch *Dance Trad*; our participation in Celtic Connections; and the introduction of *Jigs & Reels* and *Dance Trad* – teaching material for teachers who are not dancers themselves – leading into the schools' award scheme. This has not gone unnoticed and in this issue Helen Russell writes about being interviewed by BBC Radio Scotland. The following day a sizeable article appeared in *The Scotsman* about the Society's work in schools and the accreditation programme aimed at getting SCD back into schools.

Of course, we are constantly working to interest and inform traditional media (the press, radio and television) and this year during Summer School we had generous coverage in the local press as well as an STV news bulletin. *Scottish Field*, a monthly consumer magazine, is planning a photo feature on SCD and sent a photographer to Summer School. We understand the issue will be out in mid-October. This is all in addition to our website, social media presence and the major project to film our dances for viewing on our YouTube channel.

What has been interesting to me is how the news media feed off each other. An interview is broadcast on the radio, it is picked up by a newspaper, and the following day almost the same information is repeated in other newspapers.

We welcome contributions from our members, many of whom ask for pointers as to how they should prepare them. With this in mind the Editorial Board has prepared a style guide, which we hope will help answer those questions and ensure consistency. *Notes for Contributors* is available and can be downloaded from the website.

A few members have commented that in the last issue some of the detail in the Day School Diary was omitted. We know that Branches, groups and clubs are all doing their best to promote and encourage everybody to *dance Scottish* but space in the Diary is limited and we cannot give full details of all of them. Since the first issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* the number of entries in the Diary has grown and sometimes the name of teachers and musicians has run to five or six lines. Not all our members are in a position to attend day and weekend schools and so for them the information is of no interest. We are trying to find the right balance.

The basic information we need for any event in Day School Diary is: the date; the name of the branch, group or organisation running it; the event (day school, workshop) and place.

Some branches, recognising the limitations of space, place an advertisement in the magazine which gives them space to include as much detail as they wish. Groups that run several events in any six month period could also benefit from a small advertisement.

On page 18 we have a report on our Patron Queen Elizabeth's birthday celebrations in The Mall in London in June and several branches also ran dances and celebrations, described in *From around the World*. The Carnival Parade which followed the Patron's Lunch was filmed by the BBC, shown on the evening news and relayed around the world. Our son told me he had seen the RSCDS on the British Forces Broadcasting Service in Saudi Arabia and said to me "I looked for you and Dad". He didn't see us – how disappointed he must have been!

Marilyn Healy

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The next issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* will be published in April 2017. Please refer to *Notes for Contributors*, available on the website and send material for inclusion to the editor: mag.editor@rscds.org no later than 1 February 2017.

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

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News from Coates Crescent

Mike Greenwood

Elections to management posts

Nominations have closed. Elections will be held for some positions. Details of the candidates are available on the website.

Teacher Training - Unit 1 Examination date change

In February 2017, the Unit 1 examination date will change from the second Saturday in February and October to the first Saturday in February and October.

The new dates are as follows: 4 February 2017 and 7 October 2017; 3 February 2018 and 6 October 2018. For more information please email Julia Parr at: julia.parr@rscds.org

Branch and Member feedback into the Business Planning Strategy

Earlier this year branches were invited to provide feedback on the proposed Business Plan strategy for 2017-2020. Over 60 branches (nearly 40%) from around the world and eighty individual members have commented and made suggestions which have been built into a draft work plan to be considered by the Management Board in October. The business plan will then be presented to the members at the Open Forum during the AGM weekend in November for discussion and clarification. Thank you to everybody who has taken part in this exercise.

Funding

We would like to remind members that funds are available from the Jean Milligan Memorial Fund to support new initiatives that promote Scottish country dancing or the Society in a positive manner. Submissions are accepted throughout the year and application forms can be found on the RSCDS website under 'JMMF'. There are three deadlines for applications to be considered: 15 November, 31 May, 30 September.

Awards from the Fund have been made this year to:

- The SCD Section of the Aberdeen Music Festival (as support for moving to a new venue)
- SCD Weekend in Hungary (bringing groups together from a wider area)
- North Shore Tartan Day Tattoo, New Zealand support for a video of the North Shore Tartan Day for promotional purposes for the use of the whole SCD community in New Zealand and the wider RSCDS
- Australian Winter School 2017 (to support the introduction of a Youth class)
- The Fund is also used to provide scholarships, support branch teaching events and the International Teacher Development Fund.

Information about the Fund and what else it is used for, as well as application forms, can be found on the RSCDS website.

Beijing Dance Academy delegation visit to Coates Crescent

A delegation from the Beijing Dance Academy met with the Convenors of E&T and YS Committees to share experiences of teaching traditional forms of dance. We described our teacher training programmes, Dance Achievement Awards, medal tests and school accreditation system. In turn, the Beijing delegation explained some of the challenges they face in encouraging young people to take up a traditional dance form. It was a useful exchange. Edinburgh Branch also made a presentation on the work they do with schoolteachers, pupils and other young people.

Headquarters staff

Eleanor Walker joined the Coates Crescent team in July as a Receptionist/Administrator on a six-month contract.

Dance revisions

Hamilton House

There is an error on page 11 of the Combined A5 Volume of Books 7-12:

Bars 9-12: 1st, 2nd and 3rd couples set to partners twice.

At this point in the dance the dancers are not all facing their own partners and the Technique Advisory Panel has agreed that 'to partners' should be deleted from the text. There is no need for further explanation as the positions of all dancers is stated in Bars 5-8.

Miss Milligan's Miscellany CD Part Five

The running time for *The Marquis of Lorne* should be 8:26 and not 4:35 as shown on the liner notes and back cover.

In addition *La Russe* is given as an 8x32 reel when it should be listed as a 4x64 reel.

Photo database – we are looking for a volunteer please!

We are aiming to build an effective photo database of images of SCD from around the world and at HQ. We have several thousand photographs and video footage which need to be sorted, categorised and inputted into our database to enable us to access the images more easily. We also encourage branches, affiliated groups and individual members to send in good quality images of their activities and achievements. To help develop the database we would like to recruit a volunteer who could give us possibly a day or so a week for 4-6 months. This would be easiest for somebody based in Scotland. If you feel you have the skills and time please look at the details on our website and email mike.greenwood@rscds.org if you would like to discuss this further. The deadline to apply is 1 December.

Branch Awards update

The RSCDS presents Branch Awards to members who make a contribution in support of their local branch, and once again a number of individuals have been honoured. Listed below are all those members who have received awards since October 2015 – congratulations to you all!

| BRANCH | NAME |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Adelaide | Jean Lumsden |
| Adelaide | Rena Whibley |
| Bournemouth | Ann Pattison |
| Cambridge | Ron Nedderman |
| Canberra and District | Jack Arthur |
| Dumfries | Margaret Davidson |
| East Lothian | Sheila Chambers |
| Edinburgh | Elizabeth & Brian Harry |
| Glasgow | Cathie McNeil |
| Glasgow/Monklands | Vina Barr |
| London | Wilson Nicol |
| Los Angeles | Rosemary Abend |
| Los Angeles | Ann McBride |
| Lyon Branch | Patrick Chamoin |
| New York | Ann Smith |

| BRANCH | NAME |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| North West Craven | Maureen Haynes |
| Nova Scotia | Glen Leduc |
| Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles | Connie Irvine |
| San Diego | Enid Fowler |
| San Francisco | Ron Wallace |
| San Francisco | Greg Reznick |
| Seattle | Rosemary Read |
| Sheffield | Joyce Porteous |
| St Andrews | John Monro Sturrock |
| Sydney | Lindsay Benaud |
| Tokyo | Atsuko Clement |
| Toronto Association | Jean Noble |
| Tunbridge Wells | George Daly |
| Vancouver | Tom Read |
| Washington | Stewart MacLeod |

GIFTS FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON FROM THE RSCDS SHOP



10% OFF
FOR
MEMBERS

Looking for cards for the festive season or gifts for family and friends? The RSCDS shop has lots to offer - our dance-themed cards, showcasing Janet McCrorie's designs, were a definite favourite at this year's Summer School. Also new for 2016: Silk ties, brooches, badges, T-Shirts, tartan bags, Book and CD 50, and much more to suit a wide variety of tastes. And don't forget, we also have a sale on... Visit our shop online or contact the office at info@rscds.org

WWW.RSCDS.ORG/SHOP

From the Chairman



Jim Healy

Here in the Northern Hemisphere, we find ourselves at that point in the year when we look back at a summer of dancing and look forward to a new season of classes and weekend events.

Looking back, the period since the previous magazine has had its challenges but has been largely positive. Spring Fling in Edinburgh was a great success, Summer School has gone well and reports from the Australian Winter School are positive. On a personal note, I was delighted to attend TAC's Conference weekend and Summer School in Quebec to meet old friends, make new ones and hopefully dispel some myths. A more unusual invitation was to attend the International Music Eisteddfod in Llangollen. The international dance competition was fascinating and I was glad not to be on the panel judging such completely different styles of dance!

Looking forward, I continue to be positive about the future of the Society. I am particularly delighted that, at a number of events over the last six months, I have met quite a number of dancers attending their first big dance and, even better, looking forward to their next one. It is up to all of us to ensure that these dancers continue to be enthusiastic and help encourage other people to join us.

The future has also been a significant factor in the last six months and the Working Group led by Gillian Wilson has increased the

tempo in our Business Planning process and taken part in extensive consultations with branches, other interested groups and individual dancers. There is more about this process in this edition and I am looking forward to the Conference weekend in November when we will be discussing this further with a view to having a comprehensive Strategic Plan in place for the three years 2017 - 2020.

Mention of the Conference Weekend inevitably leads me to reflect on the fact that, at the AGM, I will be handing over the reins to Helen Russell. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the help and support she has given me over the last couple of years. I also must thank Gillian and the current Headquarters staff whose contribution to the Society is immense and not always understood or acknowledged by the members. We are very fortunate to have them all. Among the many things I said over ten days at Bishop's University in Canada was my answer to the question: "What do we get for our subscription?" The answer was: "you get the RSCDS". The Society provides a standard of teaching and dancing that allows our members to join a dance event anywhere in the world, whether 20 miles down the road or the other side of the ocean. When I first joined the RSCDS, the then Secretary of my local Branch used to refer to the 'greater work' of the RSCDS. I still consider the phrase overblown but I am now much more sympathetic to what she meant!

Happy dancing

Education & Training Committee



Sue Porter, Convenor

Time has flown by since my last report. Many dancers attended summer or winter schools in Canada, Australia and St Andrews. At St Andrews we welcomed 8-11 year olds for the first time during Family Week (week 3), although New Zealand Summer School has held classes for junior dancers for many years.

The young dancers were kept busy with both dancing and Scottish-related craft activities. Thank you Anne McArthur and Marilyn Watson for running this new venture so successfully – see them dance at the Friday ceilidh on the Society's YouTube channel. It was a delight to dance with so many dancers frae a' the airts during the two weeks I was at St Andrews. So many up and coming young dancers ensure the future of SCD.

The recordings of *Book 50* will be available on the Society's YouTube channel by now. Thanks to everybody who contributed to this production. I look forward to previous books as well as steps and formations being available as part of a long-term joint project with Membership Services.

Book 51 is another joint project with MS to provide dances that are suitable for young and less experienced dancers, while being appropriate for inclusion as test pieces for festivals.

The Medal Test Assessor training course in May resulted in four new Assessors in the UK and one in Canada. Thank you to Anne Smyth and Ruby Wilkinson for leading this course. Medal Tests go from strength to strength with nearly 190 dancers taking the tests between April and July.

The biennial Teachers' Conference at the AGM and Conference Weekend in Perth will take place on Friday 4th November 2016 with a varied programme of discussions, (see page 2 for details). If you haven't already applied, contact Moira Thomson, at HQ.

More branches are running courses for the Dancing Achievement Award (DAA). Branches considering DAA or Teaching Certificate examination courses should contact Julia Parr (Examinations Officer) as early as possible to make sure the information gets out to interested dancers who cannot access a course in their own area.

Finally, where have the last 3 years gone? During that time I have worked with and been supported by many committee members, examiners, Medal Test and DAA assessors as well as Society members who have given their time to help in many ways. Many thanks to them all. And special thanks to the staff at HQ, without whom progress would be impossible.

As I pass my E&T hat on to my successor it only remains for me to wish you all many years of happy dancing.

Youth Services Committee



Anne McArthur, Convenor

As I write this report I have just returned from Week 3 at Summer School in St Andrews where Marilyn Watson and I taught the first Junior Summer School. Nine children between the ages of 8 and 11 attended the class: some had previous dance experience and some were complete

beginners. The class was from 9.00am – 12.30pm. We danced, we had craft sessions and we danced some more. A highlight of the week was our performance of the *Tartan Ribbon Bridge Ruin* at the Friday night ceilidh; another was enjoying two scoops of ice cream at Nardini's!

At the end of the week the children took the Introductory Medal Test, assessed by the Schools' Director, Jim Stott. They all passed, five with distinction, and certificates and medals were awarded before they left.

What's next? Do you have plans for a 'Children in Need' fundraising event in November 2016? If not, then we can help you plan one. If you are not in the UK you might consider raising funds for a local children's charity using the same materials.

- Download the dance *Pudsey Bear* from our website, along with the music for the dance and stickers for participants.
- Remember to send in any pictures or videos of your activities.

Global Youth Week will run from 20 – 30 January 2017 and is an

opportunity for all branches and groups to focus on attracting new younger dancers or extending the scope of activities for younger people in your group. Join in with a youth-focused activity during this period. The event will be launched with a youth workshop and ceilidh in London on 14 January. There will be a competition on Facebook for pictures or videos of your youth activities in branches around the world. The winner will be the picture or video with the most likes. There are more ideas for activities on the website. In addition, this year, branches developing youth programmes have the opportunity to bid for one of three Youth Development Grants of up to £500 each to assist their project. Details of the grant terms and application forms are available on the website.

Last but not least, let me remind you that Spring Fling 2017 will take place in Bonn, Germany, from 28–30 April. Details are available on the website at www.springfling2017.de. After an excellent Spring Fling in Edinburgh in 2016, Bonn promises to be equally good. There will also be a parallel event for those over 35 years old in Bonn at the same time run by Central Germany Branch.

JUNIOR SUMMER SCHOOL 2017

Would you like to bring your child to RSCDS Summer School? After a successful launch this year, classes next year will be available for ages 8-11 and 12-15 during week 3!

Booking form and further info on www.rscds.org.

Membership Services Committee



Anselm Lingnau, Convenor

I am writing this report after an exciting time at Summer School, where this year's new publication, *Book 50*, was very well-received. It features dances written by 'young devisers' – the Spring Fling crowd – and while some of the dances are somewhat off the beaten track as RSCDS dances go, they are

certainly all worth trying! The accompanying CD, recorded by Scott Band and his band, complements this very well and adds a bonus dance from *Miss Milligan's Miscellany* as well as three 'band tracks' for listening or warmups. The Society gratefully acknowledges the generous financial support provided towards this book and CD by Helensburgh & District Branch in memory of the late Mrs Norah Dunn. If you didn't buy a copy of either (or both) from the Summer School shop, you can still order the book, on paper or as PDF, and CD on the RSCDS web site; the music is also available from iTunes, Amazon etc. This also applies to Dances from *Miss Milligan's Miscellany, Part 5*, recorded by Luke Brady and his band, which closes some of the last remaining gaps in our library of dance recordings.

We are now making the final selection of dances for *Book 51* – dances for children's festivals and less experienced dancers. Over 80 RSCDS branches and dance groups worldwide have participated in 'road testing' the dances, and many thanks go to all of them! The book will be available at Summer School 2017.

Thank you also to all the creative folk who send their dances in to the Society for publication. Our policy is not to accept new dances except when we explicitly call for them. Mostly because, having received a dance it can be some time before we plan a

suitable publication and we don't want to have dances lying around for a long time, which is unfair to the deviser!

Having said that, next year we will be accepting submissions of locally popular dances to be considered for *Book 52*, to be published in the Summer, 2018. Submissions will be accepted online between 1 November 2016 and 15 January 2017 at <http://eval.rscds.net/p/book-52/> and full details will be on that web site. We would also ask RSCDS branches and affiliated groups to volunteer to help us with the evaluations. Dances will be sent out in early February 2017, with results due by the end of August that year. Again, please use the web site above to register your interest.

During Summer School this year we filmed the dances in *Book 50* and by the time you read this they should be on the Society's YouTube channel. Our long-term strategic project is to film all the RSCDS dances and we will once again ask for the help of RSCDS branches everywhere. You will be able to volunteer to record raw footage of the dances in one or more RSCDS dance books, with professional post-production provided by the Society. Currently, we are producing guidelines explaining what we are looking for in terms of dancing standards, location, equipment etc., and these will be made available in due course. We are counting on you!

Other behind-the-scenes work that we are doing includes moving more RSCDS publications to our web-based management system, which will make it easier for us to produce digital 'reprints' of earlier out-of-print books, as well as more 'combined A5 editions' – the next of these will be *Books 31–38*, to be published in November 2017. Another popular publication, the *Index to Formations and Movements*, will be reissued next year.

As always, if you have any comments or suggestions, then please get in touch at info@rscds.org or convenor@msc.rscds.net.

Who's Who in the RSCDS

Finance and Governance Advisory Panel (FGAP)



Members of FGAP with the Chairman and Chairman Elect, l-r: Colin McEwen, Jim Healy, Neil Copland, Valerie Strachan, Richard Austin and Helen Russell. Bill Cant was not available for the photograph.

FGAP combines the particular skills and experience of some of the Society's members to support the Management Board. The Management Board, by its very nature, comprises enthusiastic dancers and musicians, who cannot always be expected to have all the necessary skills and experience to run a significant charity with an international dimension. Equally, the Management Board, when it meets, is not able to devote the time to studying the Finances and Accounts of the Society, as FGAP can and does.

The RSCDS is not the first voluntary organisation to discover that enthusiasm, knowledge of the topic and dedication are not enough - good financial skills are now essential in the charity sector, especially in the current climate.

The Panel's remit is to meet at least twice a year to support and monitor the processes for business planning, financial budgeting and reporting, to scrutinise organisational plans and arrangements for good corporate governance (in particular risk management). This involves review of the quarterly and annual accounts. The Society's annual published report and accounts now stretches to 35 detailed pages, indicative of the current legal reporting requirements and responsibilities of charities.

The Panel currently comprises the Treasurer (Management Board member)

who chairs the meetings, and four members approved by the Board. The Society's Chairman, Chairman Elect and Executive Officer may also attend the meetings.

Bill Cant (Chairman) – Bill is our comparatively new Treasurer. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant and subsequently worked with a multinational pharmaceutical company and the insurance company, General Accident.

Bill recently retired as an investment manager with Thorntons Investments in Dundee, Scotland. His job involved managing portfolios of investments such as shares for private individuals and charitable trusts.

[A longer résumé of Bill appeared in Issue No 21, October 2015.](#)

Richard Austin – Richard was born and educated in Edinburgh and studied Law and Art History, before embarking on a career as a solicitor. For the final 16 years of his professional career he acted as Secretary to a major Scottish grant-making Trust.

Richard played for dance classes in Edinburgh for the best part of 35 years and has also, on a few occasions, played at Summer School in St Andrews. He has been a member of the Society's Finance and Governance Group/Panel since 2011.

Neil Copland – has been a continuous member of FGAP since 2011 when he was nominated as a Management Board representative. His professional background is as a Senior Local Government Finance Manager in Scotland.

Neil has led his own Scottish country dance band for more than 30 years. He has also served on the National Association of Accordion & Fiddle Clubs Executive Committee for 20 years until 2013, including terms as Chairman/Treasurer of the Festival Sub Committee.

During his terms as a Trustee of the RSCDS Neil was actively involved in all Board matters and in his first term as a Trustee was part of the working group that reviewed the role and remit of the former General Purposes & Finance Committee from which evolved the current FGAP.

Colin McEwen – Colin's introduction to SCD was as a pupil at Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh. He joined London branch in 1977 and joined the Branch committee, organised an Annual Ball, MC'd social dancing, and was Treasurer to the Branch and Demonstration team.

Now retired, in his professional career Colin was responsible for financial analysis of multi-million pound projects. He also served for 6 years as Secretary of another registered charity and has a good working knowledge of charity law.

Dame Valerie Strachan is a Governance rather than Finance specialist. Her career was in the Civil Service, including seven years as Chairman of HM Customs and Excise. Since retiring she has taken on governance roles in the Big Lottery Fund, the University of Southampton and James Allen's Girls' School. She is currently a Judicial Appointments Commissioner, and chairs the Commission's Audit and Risk Committee.

Valerie started Scottish country dancing in 1981. She went with friends to St Columba's Church in Pont Street, London, knowing nothing (not even, literally, which way was up). There were no walk-throughs and no recaps. That first evening was deeply humiliating, but she reckoned that if she kept at it she would probably enjoy it. She did, and found that Scottish dancing has all the ingredients for perfect relaxation - music, rhythm, teamwork, sociability, and above all it required total concentration. In addition, Valerie has recently taken over as the Convenor of St Columba's Dancers which still meets there on Monday evenings from October to May, and welcomes all.

Interview with Robbie Shepherd

Hello and Welcome to Take the Floor!



Live from the Quay

As soon as we hear the opening bars of *Kate Dalrymple*, we think of *Take the Floor*. For the past 35 years Robbie Shepherd has presented BBC Radio Scotland's Saturday evening programme of Scottish dance music. He describes himself as "a rural lad with his heart in Aberdeenshire", hailing from the village of Dunecht. Robbie is undoubtedly one of the most important figures in Scottish culture today. The Society awarded him the Scroll of Honour in 1998. He was awarded an M.B.E. in 2001 for services to Scottish Dance Music and to Scottish Culture. Also in 2001 he received the honorary degree of M.Univ. from the University of Aberdeen for his work in promoting the culture of the North East. In 2006 he received the Hamish Henderson Award for services to traditional music in the Hands Up For Trad Awards. Nobody has done more than Robbie to promote Scottish country dance music both in Scotland and around the world.

Jimmie Hill met him in his home this summer and interviewed him for *Scottish Country Dancer*.

Dunecht must have been a very wee place to grow up.

Yes, and after primary school I was lucky to be awarded a bursary to attend Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen. These bursaries were set up by prominent business people, mainly from the farming community, to help children from rural schools whose parents could not afford to send them to college. I was a lucky boy indeed! I was there for 3 years and was destined for university, but my dad took ill and my roots came first, so I left school at 15 and got a job in an accountant's office, went to night school and qualified in accountancy. That was my day-job.

How did you get into radio presenting?

I was doing a lot of local entertaining, and at the time there was a craze for stock car racing. I was asked to commentate. Through that I was approached by Fred Green who was the Secretary of the Old Meldrum Sports and Highland Games to see if I would commentate for them. That was how I began compering at the Highland Games. At the same time I had my own band, The Garlogie Four, playing traditional Scottish music. At one time I was doing four radio programmes a week, including two for BBC Radio Aberdeen. It was when that station ceased that I was given the chance to transfer permanently to BBC Radio Scotland.

When did Take the Floor start?

Way back in 1936. At that time it was called *Scottish Dance Music*. The very first programme featured the Aberdeen Strathspey and Reel Society. In 1978 it was given the name of *Take the Floor* by Chris Worrall of the BBC. I took over 3 years later on the death of its presenter, David Findlay. It's the longest-running radio programme in Scotland. I remember Craig Brown, the Scotland football manager, telling me he wouldn't miss a programme on his way home from a match on a Saturday evening, irrespective of who was in the car with him! He had been taught by Jean Milligan.

You have always been a great fan of new young bands.

Yes and the thing that really does amaze me is the number of new bands that are always popping up. Before my time Scottish dance music was on the radio three times a week, but it was nearly always the same bands. The growth of the new bands has been great. It affects both the ceilidh scene and the Scottish country dance scene. I would never decry anything the young people are doing today. If you do, you lose them.

Is it complicated setting up an outside broadcast?

Not for me as that is the work of my excellent producer, Jennifer Cruickshank – and the various producers before her. They strive to keep a balance of different styles of bands in different parts of the country. This used to mean once a month on the

road for an outside broadcast. People think there are lots of us in the team, but when we record away from home, there's Jennifer and myself, plus two engineers and our PA. If we record here in the studio in Aberdeen there's just one engineer.

How do you feel about your new international internet audience?

It's grand. In the current series we are getting so many e-mails from abroad from ex-pat Scots. I have a cousin in Ontario, born in Canada – I have only met her once in my life – but recently I got an e-mail from her saying, "This is your long-lost cousin, Robbie, and we listen in every Saturday."

How do you decide which bands to feature?

Thankfully, that is not my decision. Over the years my producers have been very good: Freeland Barbour, Kenny Mutch, and now Jennifer Cruickshank. They decide the bands. They try to have a mixture of the established bands and giving the young lads a chance. If it's a studio recording, Jennifer will do the session, and then I work on it in my own time to turn it into a programme.

What's the most important thing about your work?

No doubt about it – it's the listeners. I'm in the office every day because I believe in replying to them – and I only type with one finger! I would hate to let them down. There is one very keen fan in Holland and he gives me a straightforward view of every programme – good or bad! When I broadcast I always think I'm equally in the kitchen of someone at the top of a tenement and someone out on a croft in the islands. It's their night in front of the radio. And it seems to work for all the folk abroad too. The listeners abroad are either Scots or country dancers, whereas in Scotland it's everyone, dancer and non-dancer alike. One of my biggest regrets is I have never been to Australia. But I'm a home bird really. As they say up here in the north-east, "I'm a hame-drachtit loon."¹

I'm sure a lot of your overseas listeners are not aware of this other side to you – the Doric² and the way you have promoted it.

If I was to be honest when people say to me – are you still broadcasting – I reply, "they hinna fun me oot yet!"³ I'm representing this area speech-wise and there's nobody else doing it. There's the Central Belt, the Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland, but I seem to be the one identified with the North-East. I remember when I was first at Robert Gordon's College, we were learning about Cecil Rhodes in Africa and we all had to stand up and read a chapter from the book, so up I get and pronounce it 'Ceecil'. The master tapped his desk, "Ceecil, my dear boy." I couldn't



Robbie and his wife Esma at the Trad Awards earlier this year

understand because the butcher next door to my Dad's was called "Ceecil" and why had it changed in 12 miles! I've always said I wish I had had the time to learn the Gaelic – especially for some of the songs.

One of your great strengths is the detailed research you do before each programme. Where do you keep all that information?

All my files are up in the BBC office. I have all my original scripts going back to 1981, handwritten, plus files with all the details of the bands, the tunes, and the stories behind them. A few years ago a manager at the BBC told me all this information belonged to them. I was quite happy to let them have it all! Some folk say I go overboard with all the details, but I am a great believer in giving the listeners the background to the tunes. That's why I meticulously research every programme. I have no idea of the number of hours I put in before each broadcast. I can assure you it's not just me ad-libbing on air for an hour! The BBC in Glasgow understands just how important all my files are so they are all going to the library in London. It's the whole history of the programme from 1981.

I sometimes wonder what happens to all the music when a band-leader gives up or passes on.

Exactly, it should all be preserved somewhere. There's a lot in private hands, but it's part of our culture and it should be available.



Robbie with producer Jennifer Cruickshank

Would you agree that our dance music splits into ceilidh, old-tyme and country?

Ay, yes. We try to keep a balance in the programme. We try to show a band's strengths. If you take one of the modern bands like Robert Nairn's, for example, he has great exuberance and true ceilidh spirit; if you think of the late Kenny Thomson, he was a master of the strathspey. What amazes me today is when people tell me that such and such a band played too fast. If you listen to the historic recordings, the old bands played just as fast.

When you were growing up in Dunecht, what kind of dancing was going on?

In the 50s a typical dance would start with a *Grand March*, then a *Circassian Circle*, a quick step, then a waltz, then a foxtrot. It was a real mix. You might have a *Strip the Willow*, but very seldom would you get a strictly Scottish country dance from the RSCDS books. They were still dancing *The Quadrilles* and *The Lancers*, one of my favourite dances. What appealed to me about *The Lancers* was the different figures and the variety in them. You couldn't help have a smile on your face. It took me a wee while to appreciate the RSCDS and all they were doing. That was a learning curve for me – and seeing how popular it was all over. My dad listened to the radio a lot, but if a strictly country dance band like Tim Wright⁴ came on, he would switch it off. But now I appreciate the sound of bands playing in the country dance tradition.

What kind of shoes were people wearing for the dancing in the 50s?

I would say in the village halls they were just dancing with their ordinary shoes. The attitude was like a ceilidh – let it rip – there was no finesse like you get with the RSCDS. I soon began to appreciate the RSCDS style and I can see that you need the soft shoes to dance a strathspey gracefully. I remember the first TV programme we got with its style of dancing was *The Kilt is my Delight*⁵.

Did you learn dancing at school?

No, I don't remember that I did. I learned my dancing in the village hall. Once a month Bert 'Bapper' Ewen came from Inverurie to teach dancing to the teenagers in the village. Bapper was his nickname because he was a baker. The folks abroad probably won't know that a 'bap' is a bread roll. He used to arrive with his record player and taught us both modern and old tyme dancing – boys at one side of the hall and girls on the other. What a rush for the bonniest lass when we were first invited to take partners! He used Jimmy Shand and Jim Cameron records for the Scottish and Victor Sylvester for the modern. How proud I was on mastering a 'fish-tail'⁶ when in a corner of the room! These were the heydays of Scottish dance music on radio.

It was Bobby Macleod who summed it all up with a selection he called 'After the Games' – when you walked through the village street on a Saturday evening with the windows open you never missed a note as you could hear the sound of the dance programme coming out of every home.

When you listen to the old recordings you know what the band is from the first chord.

Ay. I mostly agree for I'm nae that much of an expert. If you heard a recording by John Ellis, you knew it was his band right from the first note. Alastair McCuish is very distinctive today. Nowadays you do get the same musicians playing in different bands, but I don't agree with people who say that they all sound the same.

What about the east versus west coast styles?

I think there is too much made of this east versus west difference. Musicians are travelling all over the country. They play together at festivals. You go to the National Association of Accordion and Fiddle Clubs – they all muck in and play together. There's a ceilidh sound which is predominantly west coast and the button box sound is very distinctive. You hear it if you compare Robert Nairn and Fergie Macdonald. If you're looking for someone who is spot-on for tempo, look no further than Colin Dewar – he's east, but playing all over. If he's playing in Singapore, it doesn't make sense to say he sounds east coast!

Have you got a favourite line-up for a band?

It would be the two accordions, fiddle, bass, drums and keyboard – the classic six-piece band, but nobody can afford that nowadays. But then you can have a band-leader like Frank Thomson who sometimes plays on his own and still makes a great sound – ay, Frank's a busy busy lad.

What would be two or three of your favourite tracks?

Well, Angus Fitchett playing *Sunset on the St Lawrence* must be one, and Willie Hunter playing *Leaving Lerwick Harbour* must be another, but these are soloists. For dancing it would be Jimmy Blue, or maybe Macphail.

Notes

- 1 A loon is the Scots word for a boy or lad. Hame-drachit means 'drawn to home'.
- 2 The Doric is the name given to the Lowland Scots dialect of the North East of Scotland.
- 3 They hinna = they haven't fun me oot = found me out
- 4 Lothians based Tim Wright's, Scottish Dance Band enjoyed great popularity in the immediate post-war years. The band was a six-piece led by 2 fiddles and with probably a saxophone - helping to produce a very distinctive and different sound from other bands of the time.
- 5 *The Kilt is my Delight* and *The White Heather Club* were Scottish television programmes which started in the late 1950s.
- 6 The 'fish-tail' is a technique in ballroom dancing.
- 7 The Hamefarers was a Shetland band from the 1960s.
- 8 Kinlochard is a village of around 300 people on Loch Ard in the Trossachs.



Robbie Shepherd presenter

I can't say I have a particular favourite in the Scottish country dance circle, but it would be a band with a perfect tempo for jigs, strathspeys and reels. I would have to choose the late Kenny Thomson for a strathspey; the Hamefarers⁷ for a reel – that's Willie Hunter and Ronnie Cooper. For a march it would be Bill Black perhaps.

What about the characters you have met? Do any of them stand out?

There was Billy Connolly up at Lonach. He was standing with all his film star friends and he came out and said, "Where's this little b***** that's on the radio? How can you dance on the radio?" Typical Billy! I count on the fingers of one hand the people who were 'uppity' or who thought they were something special. One of the best things about what I have done is meeting with all those great guys – people like Bobbie Macleod, a lovely man; Ian Powrie and of course, Jimmy Shand. Jimmy wasn't the shy man that people make him out to be. My wife and I have been in his

house and I can tell you he could tell some rare stories. He was a kindly kindly man.

Is there a particular high point in your broadcasting career?

There have been a lot of high points: the first time going to Toronto; crossing the Atlantic playing in the ballroom on the Queen Mary. I couldn't believe they had a mantelpiece and a coal fire in it! A great highlight was being part of the festival in Shetland, going round the village halls. There have been so many high points, but no matter where I was, I still felt I was the village loon! I did a programme recently from Kinlochard⁸. The atmosphere you get in a wee village hall is unique. Everybody is the same – laird and worker are alike. The music and the dance link everyone – everyone having a whale of a time.

Robbie was 80 years old this Spring. We all wish him "a' the best".

(all photographs courtesy of the BBC)

"Dance is music made visible"

George Balanchine, 1904-1983

From around the World

Our regular correspondents and occasional reporters keep us up to date with SCD activities. We like to hear from all corners of the SCD world and so please send your reports to the correspondent for your area (email addresses below). If your area does not have a correspondent, you can write directly to Jean Martin at jean.m.martin@googlemail.com and volunteer to become one of our correspondent team.

Australia

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In Canberra, the Scottish Country Dance tradition of devising a dance and composing a tune to mark a special occasion continues with the emerging talent of a young Canberra dancer and musician, Kira Dowling. *Ein Tanz Mit Susanne* was Kira's farewell gift for Susanne Reichhardt who has danced with the Branch since 2013. The original tune, 'A Strathspey for Susanne', was composed by Kira and inspired the dance.

Kira on flute, accompanied by Dan Bennett on piano, played a strathspey set which featured the exciting original tune, as well as Scott Skinner's 'Music O'Spey' and 'The Cradle Song', and the traditional tune, 'The Singing Bird'.



Kira on flute. Photo by Janette Wardrobe

Melbourne Branch experimented with two new themes for branch classes: *Building on the Basics* for the lower intermediate dancers and *Moving Forward with Finesse* for higher intermediate and advanced dancers. We also organised an annual *Reels Clinic* to introduce dancers to different forms of reels.

Melbourne celebrated 60 years of Scottish country dancing classes and socials. In April the Deepdene group celebrated its 60th Anniversary Ball at the Hawthorn Arts centre. The 7-piece band assembled by Matthew Robertson made it a memorable

occasion. In July, Box Hill and District Scottish Society celebrated 60 years of dancing at a Gala Social with Matthew Robertson and David South leading a 6-piece dance band.

In the Northern Territory, the ARAFURA Scottish Dancers, in Darwin, NT, will be holding their very popular, annual St Andrews ceilidh on Saturday, November 26th, 2016 at the air-conditioned Masonic Hall in Parap. As well as Scottish country dancing to music by local musicians, there will be pipers and drummers, the Address to the Haggis and a Scottish supper.

Western Australia Branch are organising events to celebrate our 40th anniversary. We look forward to welcoming visitors from interstate and overseas who are heading to WA to help us celebrate! For the first time in the last few years our membership has increased this year and we hope that this will continue. It's always good to see more people coming along to our monthly socials, including our members, other local club members and visitors from overseas.



Iain McKenzie and Emma Nixon. Photo by Jill Pope

The Tasmanians have arranged a weeklong trip (25 March to 1 April 2017) for Iain McKenzie and Emma Nixon. Their gigs will include dance nights hosted by local SCD clubs in Hobart and Burnie; concerts, workshops and a ceilidh; and finally the

Ross Day of Dance on Saturday 1 April when all the state's Scottish country dancers come together for a morning and afternoon programme in one of Tasmania's oldest villages, dating back to the 1830s. For further details of the musicians' events, email Mel Roome mel@hitsend.com.au

Sydney Branch hosted the 41st Australian Winter School in the seaside town of Kiama, south of Sydney. Thanks to the organisation of Ruth Pike and her team the week was a great success. The highlight of the week was the final Ball where the music lifted and energised a tired but happy group of dancers. (For a fuller report of the school see page 25)

Canada East

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Oakville Scottish Country Dance Group celebrated 60 years of dancing in that city with an Anniversary Tea Dance on 28 May. Twelve past Chairmen took part in the festivities including Oakville's very first Chairman, Dorothy Campbell, wife of respected Canadian dance teacher and deviser Bob Campbell. The program included two of the late Bob Campbell's most popular dances: *Davy Nick Nack* and *Bonnie Stronshiray*.

On 11 June, concurrent with celebrations in London, the Toronto Association's St. Clement's Social Group hosted a Happy and Glorious Tea Dance in honour of the Society's Patron, Queen Elizabeth. In keeping with the royal spirit, many female participants wore hats or fascinators to dance a programme royal that included favourites such as *The Jubilee Jig*, *The Royal Patron* and *Reel of the 51st Division*. Each dance was preceded by a short story highlighting its connection to the Queen and her decades of service through war, transitions, traditions, and wonders. At the end of the afternoon, in best British form, dancers enjoyed tea and homemade scones topped off with lemon curd and jam. Participants signed a large



St Clement's Social Group and friends at their 'Happy and Glorious Tea Dance' with hats and fascinators give a royal wave to honour our patron, Queen Elizabeth

congratulatory birthday card which was sent to Buckingham Palace along with a group photograph.

Also on 11 June, the Kitchener-Waterloo Branch held their 40th Anniversary Ball to the music of Laird Brown and Scotch Mist, welcoming guests from as far away as New York and Wellington, New Zealand. Over two weekends in June, the Windsor (Ontario.) Branch demonstration team participated in *Carrousel of Nations*, the longest-running cultural festival in Ontario. Held in Windsor for 41 consecutive years, Carrousel of Nations features food, music and dance from countries as diverse as the Philippines, China, Macedonia, and, of course, Scotland! After each demonstration, audience members were invited to participate in a few simple Scottish country dances.

Europe

Margaret Lambourne

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There have been a number of well attended events in the Benelux countries in the last few months beginning with a social dance in Geldermalsen, The Netherlands, followed by a day school and dance in Brussels in April. In May an afternoon workshop was held with Margaret Lambourne, music by Edwin Werner and Ilona Stitz, a Summer Ball in Utrecht, ending in June with Luxembourg's Weekend School and Ball when we danced on Friday and Saturday evening. Scottish country dancing in this part of Europe is very active with many day schools and social dances and balls throughout the dancing season. Details of events can usually be found in *Scottish Country Dancer* and *The Celtic Circle*.

Matthias Rank reports that this year the Munich Scottish Association resumed its long tradition of hosting a Scottish country dance course every second year over the Whitsun weekend. We had an overwhelming number of applications for the weekend due to having as teacher Jim Stott and pianist Rodger McAndrew and in the evening Jim Lindsay's Band.

A programme of simpler dances on the Friday evening gave relatively new dancers from our group a chance to experience the joy of dancing in an enthusiastic crowd of experienced dancers.

The first morning Jim taught us a great mixture of challenging and fun dances, accompanied by Rodger's fabulous music. After a free afternoon, which many used for sightseeing, we had another great evening of dancing. One of the highlights was *Trip to Bavaria*, a dance which is actually not particularly popular with German groups, but which was made special because of the ingenious Scottish-Bavarian medley by Jim Lindsay and his band.

Sunday had a class in the morning, an afternoon sightseeing tour and then in the evening a big ball with a buffet. On

Monday, Jim was considerate of our feet and taught some more gentle dances. As a farewell present, everybody was given a gingerbread heart with *Trip to Bavaria 2016* written on it.



An edible souvenir from Munich

Judging by the enthusiastic reactions of the participants all thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. Thank you to Jim and all the musicians for making the course such a success. We already look forward to the next weekend in May 2018 at the same location.

Martin McWilliam reports on the Dance Weekend in Northern Germany.

This was the tenth annual ball and workshop weekend organised by the 'Potters Pairs'. This year it was held in a new centre in Wardenburg, a beautiful setting with sprung floors, organic cuisine and with accommodation for most of the 127 dancers and musicians.

Muriel Johnstone and Bill Zobel helped to make it a great weekend. We received positive comments about the music, the teaching and the location. The catering arrangements were a little less formal than we are used to but they worked extremely well.

Japan

Correspondent: Kaoru Oyama

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On 5 March, Atsuko Clement was presented with a Tokyo Branch Award at a general class. She has contributed greatly to Scottish country dancing in Japan and to Tokyo Branch in particular.

Tokai Branch organized a Dancing Achievement Award (DAA) course at a weekend school in Numazu in March. Sixteen dancers participated at intermediate level. They were very satisfied with an opportunity to concentrate on personal dancing critique and learned a lot about teamwork. They are looking forward to the next level and would like to encourage other dancers to join them.



Examination candidates from the Japanese branches.

One of the DAA assessors, Elma McCausland, came from the UK and we were grateful that she also held an assessor training course for Tokyo, Tokai and Saitama Branches. Ten experienced teachers attended the course.

The examinations for the RSCDS teaching certificate were held under the joint sponsorship of the Japanese Branches in May 2016. The Japan Examination Committee (JEC) organised the training course and made the arrangements for the exams. The Branch committees and members gave the candidates strong support. We are grateful for the excellent tutoring of Yoshiki Oyama, and Hiroko Kokai as the class musician. The results were very good. Congratulations to five candidates who took Part 1 and six candidates who took Part 2. After the exams, the two examiners taught a class enjoyed by more than 130 dancers.

Tokyo Branch held a three-day Weekend on 27-29 May at Nikko. Nearly 100 participants enjoyed the classes taught by William Williamson, a dance-devising competition and a social gathering.

Tokai Branch is making plans for its 20th Anniversary. There will be a weekend school on 18-20 March 2017, with Graham Donald teaching.



Dancers who took part in the DAA in Tokai

New Zealand

Correspondent: Sue Lindsay

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Like many branches, New Zealand is struggling to maintain numbers joining or renewing their membership to the RSCDS and getting new dancers to come along to the local club night and so the Branch decided to hold a Dance Scottish month in June 2016. All the clubs in New Zealand were invited to participate in this initiative and the Branch offered a monetary incentive to host an event. Some clubs took up the offer, some decided against running an event while others joined together to hold combined events. We are still evaluating whether it has been a successful initiative but we do appear to have encouraged some new dancers to give Scottish country dancing a go (and that was the main aim!)

The 2016 Queens Birthday Weekend School was held in the picturesque town of Cambridge in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty



Dancers from New Zealand and Cambridge celebrating Queen Elizabeth's birthday

Region over the weekend of the 4 - 6 June. Dancers came from all parts of New Zealand and Australia and enjoyed the tutoring of Doug Mills, Mary Thomas, Andrea Wells and Nicole Trewavas in their respective classes and on Monday morning all dancers were treated to a lesson from each of the teachers.

The next weekend school to look forward to is the Labour Weekend School in Whangarei from 21 – 23 October which I am sure will be well worth attending in warm Northland. After that is the Diamond Anniversary Summer School to be held in Christchurch from 28 December – 5 January. If you are in this part of the world do come and see what a New Zealand Summer School is like.

North America West Coast

Correspondent: Roberta Gotfried
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Completing the trio of 50-year celebrations on the West Coast, the Los Angeles Branch held its celebratory Ball on 30 April, and published a book of dances devised by Branch members. Music for the Ball was provided by *Scotch Mist* – the number of dancers on the floor for the final dance was not diminished from the first – attesting to the quality and spirit of the music and the event. The LA Demonstration Team, directed by Roberta Gotfried, performed dances from the Los Angeles Suite devised by Mary Brandon in commemoration of the founding of the Branch.

Youth Weekend West never fails to attract an enthusiastic and energetic group of participants. This year, thirty-one young dancers attended the event in Seattle. The workshop included a Welcome Ceilidh on Friday night, a full day of classes on Saturday, a ball Saturday night, and more classes on Sunday morning.

The musicians and teachers represented the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia and California. Guinevere Saenger and Margaret Hannahs provided the music for the Ceilidh, and Ryan McKasson and Cali McKasson played to an enthusiastic audience at the Saturday Ball. The teachers were Rachel Pusey and Katherine Shearman. In addition, elective classes were offered on the Saturday that included Balkan and English country dancing, and Dance Games. As evidenced by other youth events, it is beneficial having events aimed at young dancers.

Vancouver Branch's Ladies Step Class sponsored a very successful workshop, with 24 dancers, on 30 April with Elizabeth Miller from Seattle as the guest teacher.

The high energy afternoon was followed by an old-fashioned Kitchen Party with musicians squeezed in between the stove and the fridge. The rug was rolled back and the step dancing continued. A fun and lively day confirming Ladies Step Dance is alive and thriving in the Pacific North West.

On the weekend of 11-12 June the Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers performed for the 38th Annual Ethnic Dance Festival at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco. Along with dance groups representing dance and music of India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa and Spain, the Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers represented the traditional dances of Scotland. Under the artistic direction of Ron Wallace, they performed five dances highlighting Highland, step, and country dancing. Accompanied by live music (fiddle, piano, drums and flute), the dancers presented a tribute to Muriel Johnstone in gratitude for her hundreds of tunes that touch on the traditional and stir the hearts of dancers and musicians. Muriel was invited to attend the Sunday performance, which she enthusiastically accepted, flying from Scotland to attend the event.

Russia

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May began in a traditional way with Scottish dance workshops. This time the venue of the events was the ancient and beautiful Russian city of Yaroslavl. Those five days were very intense but also very joyful.

Classes, dances, more classes, ceilidh, festival, competitions, city tours and yet more classes. We enjoyed eleven Scottish country dance classes taught by Jamie Berg and Andrew Nolan, four Highland classes with Jan-Louise Doherty, five Ladies' step classes taught by Sergey Alferov and three Cape Breton classes with Jamie Berg and Anton Klinkov. Many thanks to the organizers, teachers and participants. The number of the dancers this year was 145 people from all parts of Russia - a new record!

A competition on solo dancing and the UKA exams were organized, as well as the traditional display team festival of Scottish country dancing. The number of the teams participating in the festival increased again. This year teams from Saratov and Saint Petersburg were added to the usual ones from Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary, Krasnodar and Perm. For the first time, too, there was a joint team (Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod) for the Display.

All the participants had a good time and enjoyed the live music at social dancing on 6 May with Andrew Nolan (piano), a ball on 8 May with the White Heather Band (Anna Kovaleva - piano and Vladimir Volkov



Ceilidh in Yaroslavl (photo by Olga Zharova)



Ceilidh in Saint Petersburg (photo by Pavel Dvornikov)

- violin) in addition to the ceilidh on 7 May with the Wallace Band from Moscow.

In June Saint Petersburg hosted the Folk Dance Festival 2016. The programme included workshops and evening dances of different folk traditions, namely Scottish, Breton, Hebrew, Georgian, Balkan and Polish. Malcolm Brown (RSCDS York Branch) taught Scottish country dancing and was a caller at the ceilidh with Saint Petersburg band Celtic City (Traditional).

South Africa

Correspondent: Heather Hodgson
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The main focus of the Cape Town Branch since March has been preparation for our first foray into the Dancing Achievement Award (DAA). We have 16 dancers preparing for the Intermediate Assessment, and a further 12 interested in attempting the Advanced Assessment. We have been meeting every second week, brushing up on our footwork (our hips attempting angles they have never been aware of before), doing formations as they really should be, and taking a first look at the set dances. The assessment is due to take place in October. This project has been supported by an award from the Susi Mayr Fund of the International Branch.

Recently, there have been quite a few dancing events in Cape Town to fill our dancing diaries. These included a social organised by Bergvliet Club in celebration of our Royal Patron, Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday and our annual Tartan Day Dance and Mandela Day Dance in Fish Hoek.

Branch Members got an opportunity to learn a bit more about Afrikaans culture when we joined a local Volkspele group for a shared evening of dancing in May. As the dancers sing while they are dancing, we did think it would have been great to demo *Brochan Lom* as *puirt à beul* would have knocked both their socks and gloves off.

The regular 'No Walk No Talk' evenings offered by the branch are gaining in popularity, giving dancers the opportunity of dancing favourite dances without the necessity of walking them through or having them recapped beforehand. The dancing lasts for two hours after which we adjourn for socialising over supper at a local restaurant.

We recently hosted crew members from the Logos Hope Ship's Scottish Country Dance Group for a combined class. The young, energetic dancers' home countries included Norway, Switzerland, Singapore, England and the USA. We taught them some fun dances to extend their repertoire, including, *The Piper and the Penguin*, *On the Quarterdeck* and *Dan: the dancing Rhino*. This joyful occasion proved, once again, that Scottish country dancing gives us a common language which, in turn, becomes a way to forge global friendships through the medium of dance.

Pretoria Branch have been holding month-end socials and are also preparing dancers for the DAA with seven dancers working towards taking the exam at the intermediate level in October.

We'd be pleased if you follow our branches' activities on Twitter @RSCDSCapeTown and @RSCDSPretoria or like our new Facebook page - Dance Scottish Cape Town.

United Kingdom

Earlier this year Bournemouth Branch celebrated its 50th anniversary with a Celebration Ball. The evening began with a glass of bubbly followed by a sit down meal. We had informed Her Majesty the Queen that we were planning an anniversary event and we were delighted and honoured to receive a congratulatory letter from her.

The Ball was attended by over 100 dancers coming from as far away as Jersey and Brittany.

The atmosphere was electric, with music provided by Marian Anderson's Band. The programme covered dances from across the 50 books and with a brief recap all dancers were able to take part without having to worry. We feel very proud to have achieved 50 years as a branch and hope to continue for many years to come.

Marilyn Watson, Chairman, Bournemouth Branch



Betty Lee and Duard Barnes celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary with dancers at the Thistle School

On 1st May the Cheltenham Branch demonstration team were invited to give a demonstration and provide ceilidh dancing for Cirencester Parish Church youth group as a fundraising event for their summer camp.



Fundraising for a youth club in Cirencester.

The youth group invited their parents and friends to the event and they also participated in the social dancing. They all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and have invited the team to visit them again.

We give a number of demonstrations throughout the year at private functions, nursing homes and village fetes, etc.

In addition to the weekly classes Cheltenham Branch hold social dances each month during the winter. Our two most recent events, which were both very successful, were the Day School in April when we welcomed Helen Russell (teacher) and Keith Anderson (fiddle), and our May social dance, for which Luke and Adam Brady played. Next year we look forward to welcoming Craigellachie to play for our Annual Ball on 14th January and at our day School on 22 April, Jane Rose (teacher) and Keith Anderson (musician). Further details may be obtained from the branch website: www.cheltenhamrscds.btck.co.uk.

Hilary Foulkes, Cheltenham Branch

USA East Coast

Correspondent: Eilean Yates
edyates@gmail.com

2016 seems to be a year of special anniversaries. At Thistle School held at Banner Elk in the North Carolina mountains leading up to the 61st Grandfather Mountain Highland Games Betty Lee and Duard Barnes were celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. This is a special time that few are fortunate enough to reach and to celebrate the occasion Pam Stephens wrote a beautiful strathspey

called *A Platinum Pair*. Luke Brady wrote two wonderful tunes for the dance and everyone loved the dance and the music. It was taught to all classes and will no doubt become a popular addition to dance programs. There was some special excitement when a huge storm knocked out all the electricity just prior to the Gala and so the Ball began with the first three dances in semi-darkness (with Mary Ross playing with flashlights) before it was discovered that a gym about four miles away had power. Scottish dancers are known to be totally flexible and within 30 minutes the whole sound system, the food, the participants, spectators and everything else were transported to the new location where the Ball continued. Not many people can say they went to one dance in two locations in one evening!

The Boston Branch's summer program at Pinewoods Camp was a great success with 200 plus attendees, including several from Europe. The theme *Under the Big Top* brought out juggling acts and great costumes. The teachers were Ellie Briscoe, Antoine Rousseau, Jen Schoonover and Tim Wilson ably assisted by a talented music staff led by Barbara McOwen. The evening dance parties featured old favourites and challenging newer dances such as *1314*, Tim Wilson's *The Chased Lovers* and *The Zytglogge*.

Stone Mountain Highland Games in October is another big event for dancers. This year the Atlanta Branch is celebrating its 40th anniversary with a Welcome Dance and a Gala. Jimmie Hill has written a dance for the occasion called *The Peachtree Reel*. The musicians for the weekend will be Luke and Adam Brady. Luke has also been invited to write the music for Jimmie's dance and it will be played for the first time at the weekend.

Luke Brady and Martainn Skene came over in April to play for the Loch Norman weekend and Marian Anderson will be playing at A Reel Scottish weekend in Charlotte in October. We are fortunate that even living so far away we are still able to enjoy musicians from the home country. They bring such life to our dancing.

The Midwest Scottish Weekend always has an element of surprise to it, and in 2015 it was Tom Senior producing giant soap bubbles as we all gathered for afternoon class! The music was just as bubbly, supplied by Katie McNally on fiddle and Neil Pearlman on piano. Teacher Linda Henderson inspired and improved our dancing in great RSCDS style, while Neil had us step dancing á la Cape Breton in no time at all. The Chicago, Madison & Milwaukee organizers are looking forward to another great weekend in 2016 with teacher Sandy Gallamore and musicians Dave Wiesler and Mara Shea. Join us June 24-26 at picturesque Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin: <http://tinyurl.com/msw2016>

The World of Scottish



Young dancers at the Méaudre weekend at Vercors, France (report p.23)



Some of the dancers at the Munich Easter weekend



Malcolm Brown teaching at the Folk Dance Festival in St Petersburg



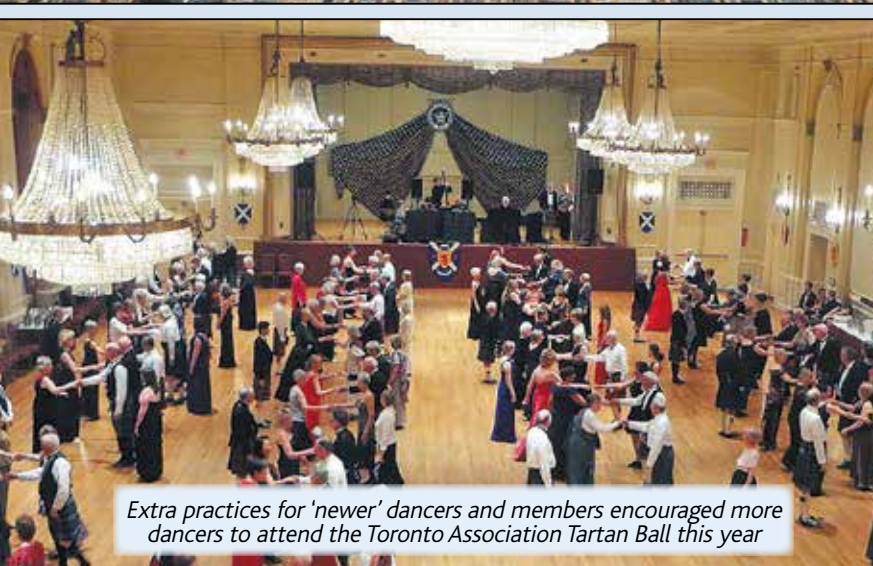
Enjoying the Kiama Ceilidh (photo: Michael Darby & Jill Pope, report p.25)



Dancing the Laird of Milton's Daughter at the Ottawa 50th Anniversary Ball



Events for young dancers included a Youth Workshop and Youth Ball in Toronto



Extra practices for 'newer' dancers and members encouraged more dancers to attend the Toronto Association Tartan Ball this year



'Culture days' in Toronto attracted dancers of all ages.

Country Dancing



Fiona Mackie and Faye Mather enjoy the Spring Fling opening dance



Christine Cant and Antoine Rousseau dance up during the Friday evening opening dance at Spring Fling



Practice makes perfect in the Highland class at Spring Fling



Enthusiastic dancers at Junior Summer School in St Andrews in week 3



Cindy Clarke, Gabbi Bennetti, Barbara Taylor and Jane Atkins practice for the filming of Book 50 (MS report, p.7)



Chiswick Scottish held its flagship picnic dance Midsummer Magic in the grounds of Chiswick House in June



Keiko Noguchi taken during a photo shoot at Summer School in week 3 (photo: Jon Davey)

(all Spring Fling and Summer School photos, unless otherwise stated: Mike Greenwood)



Happiness is Scottish Country Dancing in Aberdeen (photo: Mandy Miller, report p.24)



More Midsummer Magic at Chiswick

The Patron's lunch – a party in the rain!



*Our Patron with Prince Philip.
(photo: Fiona Duncan)*

Our Patron, Queen Elizabeth II, celebrated her 90th birthday earlier this year. As head of the Commonwealth and Patron of over 600 charities and organisations, the Queen has a very high profile and significant birthday celebrations are held on a grand scale. This was no exception.

On Sunday 12 June three days of church services, pageantry and celebrations culminated with The Patron's Lunch with a separate carnival parade. With 10,000 people celebrating in The Mall it was the largest-ever street party. Most of the tickets for the lunch were made available to the charities and organisations of which the Queen is Patron.

In total, twelve members of the RSCDS attended the Lunch and twenty-six took part in the parade. Initially there were no plans for SCD to be featured in the parade but our London representative, Elaine Davies was able to persuade those in charge to allow six of the younger dancers to dance at the front of the yellow group during the procession.

On the day it rained. It rained as the guests arrived. It rained as they had their lunch and it rained during the first part of the carnival parade but stopped around 2pm. Sitting in the pouring rain may not be everybody's idea of fun but we are nothing if not stoical, particularly in the face of adversity, and the stalwarts of the RSCDS who enjoyed the lunch and took part in the parade did not allow it to dampen their spirits! Ponchos and cups of tea and coffee were distributed by the organisers.

Participants in the parade were all issued with t-shirts and the volunteers were grouped according to their t-shirt colour. RSCDS members were in the Pink and Yellow groups with the six younger members, who danced The Gay Gordons for the entire length of the parade - more than a mile - at the front. It was a test of endurance but it was much more than that. The music was arranged by the organisers but the dancers had not heard what they were to dance to beforehand. It will come

as no surprise to our members that the Mambo beat is not really compatible with Scottish country dancing. Mambo No.5, Wannabe and Tubthumping, all hits in the 1990s, are not traditional tunes but the dancers quickly adapted to the unusual music - and made it look easy!

As the parade started the rain stopped and the celebratory atmosphere reached a crescendo. As RSCDS members danced past the Queen they were rewarded with a smile (she may not have recognised the music) and cheered by the crowds lining the route.

Part of the parade was screened live on BBC television in the evening news and

around the world. Regrettably it was not possible for the organisations taking part to feature their own logo and as the RSCDS team came into view of the television cameras somebody from the BBC ran up to them to ask which organisation they represented and Clare Balding, the presenter, duly let viewers know The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society was taking part.

Everybody who took part agreed it was a memorable day out and an apt celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday and her patronage of over 600 charities.

Marilyn Healy from reports by Elaine Davies and Jane Rose with thanks.



*RSCDS stalwarts who celebrated who celebrated our Patron's birthday lunch.
(photo: Margaret Catchick)*



Dancers in the yellow group danced in the rain (photo: gettyimages, Stuart C Wilson)



Jane Rose did not let the rain dampen her spirits. (photo: Margaret Catchick)

Edinburgh Scottish Dancers



Edinburgh Scottish Dancers enjoyed supporting the Princes Street Gardens dancers on a sunny afternoon in July. (photo: Garry Robertson)

Edinburgh Scottish Dancers (ESD) is probably the newest club in Auld Reekie, yet despite its youth, it is on course to deliver a varied, dynamic and inclusive inaugural year of events.

Formed in 2015, the high point of this year has been the three Summer Sessions held in June, July and August. Supporting emerging and inspiring talent is a key priority for ESD so we were delighted to invite Rachel Shankland, Fiona Mackie and Emma

Allsop to put us through our paces at the Sunday afternoon workshops. Robert Mackay, Andrew Nolan and Màrtainn Skene provided excellent accompaniment and continue the long tradition of live music for SCD in Edinburgh. A small grant from an external funder allowed us to trial this previously untested series at low risk. If you have a specific project planned, why not see if there is a fund that could help support it - local councils and funds specific to local areas are good places to start.

Working with other groups, both dancing and non-dancing, is important to the success of any small club and we were proud to work with LOOPS Edinburgh to be part of a short video encouraging older people to #GetOotTheHoose. Although predominantly aimed at the over 60s, it was great to be able to show that SCD is a cross-generational activity and that it can be enjoyed by people of any age.

Other highlights from our first year include a successful Inaugural Workshop with Margie Stevenson and Muriel Johnstone, an informative Voluntary Arts funded workshop on the evolution of formations with Ian Brockbank and Adam Brady and a team of ESDers who scooped four trophies at the Dumfries Music Festival. We were also delighted to support the Princes Street Gardens Dancers by providing a team for a glorious sunny July evening of dancing in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle.

ESD is grateful for a huge amount of support and encouragement it has received from dancers, musicians, teachers, supporters and funders. We'd love to hear of any events that you would like us to organise. Get in touch with us at info@edinburghscottishdancers.co.uk. In the meantime, how much do you think quadrilles have affected SCD? Find out more at our next event on 20 October, 7.45 pm in Murrayfield, Edinburgh (EH12 6EQ) with Jimmie Hill!



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The Countess of Dunmore

Catherine Murray, Countess of Dunmore was born in London in 1814 as Lady Catherine Herbert, a daughter of George Herbert, 11th Earl of Pembroke. She married Alexander Murray, 6th Earl of Dunmore in 1836 and after her marriage was styled Countess of Dunmore. Following her husband's death in 1845 Lady Dunmore inherited the Dunmore estate and made several improvements to the estate village. The Countess died in February 1886 at Inveresk, East Lothian, and is buried at Dunmore, Falkirk.

Deirdre MacCuish Bark is the deviser of *The Countess of Dumore's Reel* published in *Book 49*. She writes about her family's connection with the legacy of the Countess.

Harris is in the Outer Hebrides about 50 miles west of the Scottish mainland. The land is bleak but beautiful.

In 1834 it was bought by the 5th Earl of Dunmore as a hunting estate, and remained in the Dunmore family until the early 1900s. The family had several shooting lodges for the pursuit of stag hunting and salmon fishing. The ladies of the family would visit, including the Countess Dowager, Catherine, who was involved in helping the people of the community, especially through promotion of the Harris Tweed industry.

After the passing of the Education Act, Scotland in 1872, the Countess gave land in Harris to build schools. One such was Finsbay School in South Harris, which was the local school attended by my grandfather, my father and his siblings. The Feu Charter, signed by Catherine Dunmore, is dated 1879, and the school opened that August.

It is interesting to look at the school logbooks for that time. The main information recorded was the attendance record of the scholars and the weather! If you wish to research the weather patterns of the Western Isles for the last century, look at the school logs! It also recorded visits by inspectors, managers (my grandfather Angus MacCuish being one of these), and various ladies who would have been guests of the Dunmores. There were prizes given to the scholars for attendance rather than for academic achievement and other items were donated by wealthy visitors. The logbook notes the school was closed for one day in 1900 to celebrate the Relief of Mafeking and again in 1917 because two young boys had died by drowning whilst ice-skating.

My son Alasdair did a genealogy project at his Canadian school in the 1980s, which involved asking his grandparents to write about their school days. My father replied that his was a two-teacher school of about 40 children. Each brought a lump of



TWEED VISIONARY ·
Catherine Murray, Countess of Dunmore (b.1814-1886)

peat to school each day to fuel the fire. The children arrived at school speaking Gaelic, but the Government of the day had a policy of placing monolingual English-speaking teachers in the schools in order to force all Gaelic speakers to learn English. They learned Latin and Navigation as well as the more usual school subjects. Their sports were fishing and shinty (akin to hockey).

Finsbay School was important to my family. They received an education that enabled them to progress to secondary school and eventually to university. My aunt was head teacher for 38 years. The school, which my sister and I attended for a short while in the 1950s, closed in 1966 when it had only 6 scholars.

Deirdre MacCuish Bark.



Finsbay Old School, now a private house (taken 2002)

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Spotlight on ...

York & North Humberside Branch – the first forty years

For the fortieth anniversary of our branch in 2015, we decided to produce an anniversary booklet. It finished up as almost forty pages encompassing photos, a record of members who have received Branch awards as well as those who danced in displays at Summer School or served the Society in any way. It also included members' reminiscences and a 12-page historical summary. Highlights from the booklet are given here.

The branch was formed to provide an umbrella group for the several dancing groups in the area rather than the traditional area branch. We organised courses, Day Schools and events that required the support of the various groups but which was not practical for them to run individually. Within the first two years fourteen members had passed the Preliminary examination and thereafter all of the groups were being taught by fully qualified teachers. In addition, most of the groups had at least one other member with the Preliminary qualification. The initial committee was made up of all the current branch teachers but there was enthusiastic support for writing a 'three year maximum' into the constitution. This has resulted in a significant number of members serving on the committee, as both officers and committee members.

We started by holding monthly dances to recorded music, with the occasional large dance to a band. They moved around different locations in the area so that catering was not always the responsibility of the same people. We later changed to 'faith suppers', which resolved the problem, and this pattern continues. As well as varying the location we tried to use as many different bands as we could, so that our members could experience differing styles and sounds.

As this was in the days before the internet communication was a major concern, partly solved by the introduction of *Broun's Reel*, a quarterly newsletter which continues to this day. It is also a record of the Branch's activities, venues, day school teachers and bands that have played for us at dances. Looking back, it was surprising how rapidly we adopted digital technology, from using it to produce cribs and posters to setting up a branch website.

Not all our activities were devoted to Scottish dancing – we organised an annual ceilidh, with the usual range of items from tap dancing to people playing musical instruments. We also tried to get to know non-dancing spouses by holding an annual dinner. When support for this

declined we changed to having a morning walk through the countryside, followed by lunch at a suitable hostelry. The event has not always been blessed with good weather, although a few hardy souls do finish the route. Some people just turn up for the lunch!

From the first year of the branch we have organised an annual Day School with teachers from all over the UK, both ones who were well known and those who we believed were going to make a name for themselves! As a development of this idea the branch has organised an annual weekend school in Harrogate for the last twenty years.

As a branch we have never been slow to incorporate good ideas that we have encountered at other events or that members have suggested. In 2013 we took a fairly radical decision to pay the travel expenses to St Andrews of a young Russian dancer who had been awarded a scholarship to attend St Andrews to study for Units 2 and 3. While this covered his living expenses he would still have had



Children dance in Triumph at the White Rose Festival

major problems financing his travel – York & NH Branch stepped in and not only provided his travel expenses but also ran a dance in Dunnington so that he could meet our dancers on his way up to Scotland (by the way, he passed)!

We hope that our approach will enable the branch to continue for another forty years!

Malcolm Brown



The Riley Smith Hall, Tadcaster, one of the venues used for dances by the Branch and where the fortieth anniversary was held last December



Assembly for a Branch walk

The RSCDS and the media

Helen Russell

It began in April when *The Scotsman* newspaper contacted HQ to ask if we could give them a quote to be included in a piece about the work the RSCDS was doing in schools in Scotland. Working with Liz Fraser, the RSCDS external marketing consultant, Anne McArthur and I provided some text for the article.

The following day I received a phone call from Radio Scotland asking if I would be available for a live interview on the Kaye Adams show later that morning. I felt it was valuable to have the opportunity to talk about the work of the RSCDS with children and young people. The other initiative we have introduced that interests the media has been the Schools' Accreditation Scheme which rewards pupils and their schools for participation in SCD. The success of this scheme in the north east of Scotland has undoubtedly been due to the hard work of Anne McArthur and Jim Stott, who have given hours of their time to supporting this initiative in schools.

My input to the Radio Scotland interview was greatly supported by a young lady called Caitlin, who put a very good and enthusiastic case for the involvement of young people in SCD.

Of course the interviewer wanted to know about the image of the RSCDS and SCD in general. Was it difficult to engage young people in an activity that was perceived to be 'uncool' I was asked? Wouldn't teenage boys feel self-conscious having to wear a kilt? With growing interest in traditional Scottish music amongst young people, I would strongly suggest that SCD should try to link into that and also encourage as much ceilidh dancing

as possible, as this is also part of our cultural heritage. Young people often say that they need to dance with other young people, but there is also a case for dancing with people of all ages within one's community. That is, after all, how many of us learned to dance. As for young men wearing kilts. It looks great... many rugby fans do it, but I would rather see young men on the floor dancing wearing whatever they choose! Perhaps we need to remind young men that young women will always appreciate a young man who knows how to dance!

The Edinburgh Evening News picked up on *The Scotsman's* article and ran its own piece that night.

The next day the Scottish edition of *The Times* also ran an article by Gabriella Bennett headlined Scottish dancing lessons 'could help pupils stay fit'.

We have in SCD an ideal activity which encourages physical, mental and social well-being. It also encourages teamwork, self-discipline and of course is energised by our wonderful heritage of traditional music. We need to take every opportunity to tell people about it through the media.

Although the Scottish media were primarily interested in the work we do within Scotland, I should point out that the teaching packs 'Jig & Reels' and 'Dance Trad', produced for primary and secondary teachers are being used far and wide... from New York to New Zealand. We have sold almost nine hundred copies of these packs so far.

Milestone for Robert Mackay



Robert with weel 'kent faces'. Front row L R: Lorna Walker, formerly Warden of University Hall, Robert, Anna Ross, formerly Bursar of University Hall'.

Summer school 2016 saw a significant milestone for Robert Mackay. For forty consecutive years Robert has played at St. Andrews. During that time all levels of classes have benefited from dancing to his music and many certificate classes have learned a great deal from Robert's expertise. A small gathering was held during the second week of summer school to celebrate this milestone with Robert and he was pleased to have dancing friends from across the years join him on the day.

Fiona Mackie

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Young Dancers' Page

Spring Fling Edinburgh 2016

Spring Fling 2016 was a fantastic weekend with a lot of good dancing, great teachers and lots of new friendships. We were four young dancers from the Oslo Scottish Country Dance Group attending our first Spring Fling and RSCDS youth event. It's a great way to meet other young dancers.

On Friday and Saturday evenings we enjoyed the social dances. We had a beginner with us, so there were some nerves about as it was his first ever dance event. We all soon relaxed and had great fun dancing to lovely live music with a lot of energetic dancers.

During the day on Saturday we attended dance classes and we Norwegians were spread over all the different levels. We learned a lot and especially liked that each class got to experience two teachers during the morning. Our group in Oslo was also pleased that we all came home with better dancing skills.

On Sunday morning we had a lot of laughs at the Spring Fling challenge. In groups we designed dance costumes from newspapers and rubbish bags to be shown on the Spring Fling catwalk. Our music skills were brushed up with the "guess the dance" competition. Our inner compass was tested in a blindfolded version of *Postie's Jig* before the weekend ended with some ceilidh dances and a nice lunch.

Definitely see you in Bonn in 2017

Lynetta Taylor Hansen, Malcolm Taylor Hansen, Sigrunn Aa and Martin Duncan Hjelmsstad.



Young dancers after passing their Medal Tests. (photo: Anne McArthur)

Junior Summer School 2016

Junior Summer School was great! The classes with Anne and Marilyn Watson in the mornings were fun: we learned lots of new dances and prepared for our medal tests which we took on Saturday morning. Jim Stott was our assessor and gave us lots more advice about how to improve our steps.

We really enjoyed the mixture of dancing and other activities each morning. Some of us liked the word searches best, while others enjoyed showing off their skill at sewing to produce beautiful shoe bags made from RSCDS tartan and lovely plaid rosettes for our demonstration dance. We loved performing our circle dance, *'The Tartan Bridge Ruin'*, at the Friday Ceilidh. We also laughed a lot at some of the other performances.

It was lovely to meet so many interesting people from different countries and to make new friends. We were made to feel very welcome at the evening dances and the adults did not hesitate

to help steer us through the more complicated formations. It was also fun to watch expert dancers perform Country and Highland dances. We had a super week and want to return next year. To anyone who likes Scottish dancing or wants to try it, we say, 'Come along'.

William, Felicity and Edward Thomson (ages 10, 9 and 9).



Some of the younger dancers at the Méaudre weekend

Méaudre Reel Weekend 2016

The Méaudre Reel annual dancing weekend took place in May in our lovely little village of Méaudre, with bright sunshine enabling the 80 dancers from all around France to admire the Vercors mountains. Ken Martlew and Mathias Ferber enjoyed teaching dancers aged from 6 to over 80, to the excellent music of Roddy Johnston and friends. There was Scottish country dancing together as a group, then separate workshops of either Scottish country or Highland dancing, as well as a music class.

Ken taught us *Crossing the Line*, half in English, half in French incorporating delightful English expressions. He almost lost his French though when we couldn't remember in which hemisphere we were dancing.

Mathias was impressed by the level of the Highland dancing of the Méaudre Reel teenagers. He taught the *Perth Assembly* to a mixed group of adults and teenagers: all were dancing over their swords, trying to keep the rhythm and not to dance on their neighbour's feet. They managed it very well and in the end nobody was injured.

The highlight of the weekend was the Méaudre Reel show with the dancers from each of our three classes (children, teenagers, adults) dancing beautifully for 30 minutes. They danced easier dances for the children (*Teddy Bears' Picnic*) with more difficult dances for the teenagers (*The Library of Birmingham*). For the first time, there was a full set of Méaudre Reel adult dancers! They were rather intimidated at first dancing before so many people but managed very well. The show ended with the teenagers and adults dancing *The Méaudre Reel*, a dance created for the group in 2015 by Diana Sarran, with music written for the dance by Roddy and friends.

The weekend was again a very pleasant and successful one. We hope to see you all in May 2017 (more information on our website: www.meaudre-reel.org).

Sophie Marchand.



'RSCDS Young Dancers' or visit www.rscds.org/article/young-dancers for the latest news and information.

To include an article about your youth event, please email: ysc@rscds.org

Dancing in a French nursery school



Pupils of Aimé Césaire Nursery School during their annual concert

When I was asked, in May 2015, if I would teach Scottish dances in a nursery school I thought, oh dear, they don't know their right hand from their left, how could it work? The proposal was to prepare four classes of the school for the annual performance for families – I talked to some of my colleagues but nobody had ever taught, nor heard of anybody teaching Scottish dances in a nursery school. The idea of using colours for right and left, however, came quickly, and at that point I felt confident that there would always be a way of making things understandable to very young children so I decided to go for the challenge.

The timing worked well. I took the exams for units 2 and 3 of the Teaching Certificate organized by Lyon Branch in February, and started teaching in Aimé Césaire nursery school at the beginning of March. The

performance was to be in April 2016 at the opening show of a Celtic festival, organized by the town of Rives, near Grenoble, in the French Alps.

The dances taught were simplified ceilidh dances. Hands were given names and I chose the colours of the Scottish flag: the right hand became the 'white hand' and the left hand became the 'blue hand', identified with strips of material tied around the children's wrists. We did not use the term 'set', as in a set of dancers, which sound like 'seven' in French (sept) and could have been confusing for children just learning to count, but 'castles', a more familiar concept for them. 1st couple was referred to as 'knight and princess', and last couple (usually the 4th one) as the 'keepers', the other couples were 'friends' of the knight and the princess. I did not use 'up' and 'down' the dance, but we had the door 'side'

and the curtains 'side' (which unsurprisingly were the same in the school sport room and on the stage). We had stickers on the floor, so that they could all find their places easily, especially to start the dance and after each progression. The children were shown videos of the dances taught. The tempo of the music was reduced for some of the dances and I coached over the music for the dances.

All these teaching tools were the result of a very fruitful collaboration with the teachers (what a pleasure!). Everybody worked very hard, teachers as well as children. The performance was successful and there was a great response from the families. The whole atmosphere was joyful and enthusiastic.

Anne Dejean

anne.dejean@wanadoo.fr



A new class in Aberdeen

A SCD class for pupils of secondary school age was set up at Bridge of Don in Aberdeen in August 2015.

Many of the children in the area learn Scottish country dancing in primary schools but there was no class for them to go to when they moved on to secondary school. I wanted to do something about that and so I contacted Aberdeen Branch who were encouraging. They found a hall, supplied a CD player and the class was born. It was very exciting to start a new class in an area I know and to build on what has been achieved at primary school. Most of the girls who attend were taught by me and it is a privilege to continue to see them enjoy Scottish country dancing. The twelve girls currently attending the class are aged 12 and 13 and tell me how much they enjoy the class, to the extent that they are encouraging their friends to join us. At that age they like to do activities together with their friends.

The class is full of fun and energy and you can

see how much the girls enjoy their dancing. Some of their favourite dances include *Domino 5*, *Joie de Vivre*, *Craven Twelvesome* and the *Virginia Reel*. The girls were very keen to enter the Aberdeen Festival, the annual Scottish country dancing competition in the North East of Scotland. The competition attracts dancers from all over Scotland and has a range of sections appropriate to age and experience of dancers. The standard of dancing of the other teams was high and although the girls were nervous they had practised thoroughly, knew their dances and danced very well in their age category. They also wanted to dance in the final 'fun section' which is open to any team to demonstrate the Joy of Dance. The girls came joint first in this section, dancing *Inverneill House* with enthusiasm, teamwork and elegance. They were all ecstatic and showed what dancing is really all about - fun, friendship and great dancing!

Heather Blair, Aberdeen Branch

Ecstasy is Scottish Country Dancing (photo: Mandy Miller)

Kiama Ceilidh and Australian Winter School 2016

Following the success of the RSCDS and *Get Scotland Dancing* initiative at the Commonwealth Ceilidh in 2014 Sydney Branch Winter School committee decided to hold a 'Kiama Ceilidh' the evening before the Australian Winter School. It was a night of Scottish music and dancing open to the local community and an opportunity to show them the enjoyment of Scottish country dancing and encourage them to join in. Through local newspaper articles, flyers and support from the local Visitors Centre the event was widely promoted in the lead-up to the start of Winter School. Around 60 people enjoyed an evening of dancing and friendship with a mix of locals and the dancers and musicians who arrived early for Winter School.

The music was provided by Australian musicians Chris Duncan on fiddle and Catherine Strutt on piano and the ceilidh introduced participants to traditional favourites such as *The Gay Gordons* and *The Dashing White Sergeant*. Other dances such as *The Dhoon* and *Rabbie's Reel* were called and danced enthusiastically, with *The St Bernard's Waltz* thrown in to conserve stamina. Surprisingly, introducing *Petronella* and *Flowers of Edinburgh* highlighted that the older dances in *Book 1* are still instantly popular and enjoyable.

The ceilidh also gave the Winter School teachers and musicians an opportunity to relax, get over jet lag and enjoy themselves before the start of Australian Winter School.

This event would not have been possible without generous support from the Jean Milligan Memorial Fund.

The following day a collaboration of international and local teachers and musicians saw around 150 dancers from the four corners of the globe enjoy a week of dancing and social fun. Aptly, the theme for the Winter School was "Where the Nations come to Dance" which reflects the worldwide popularity of Scottish country dancing as well as the friendly welcome dancers receive around the world at events like Winter School.

Striking a balance between dancing and social activities the week alternated evening socials with non-dancing events including an evening of "*Kiama Kapers*" filled with trivia, games and prizes testing not only SCD but worldwide knowledge, as well as the resoundingly enjoyable "*Musical Travels*" concert featuring the splendid musicians showing how Scottish music has travelled the world. The performances were interspersed with amusing anecdotes from the musicians

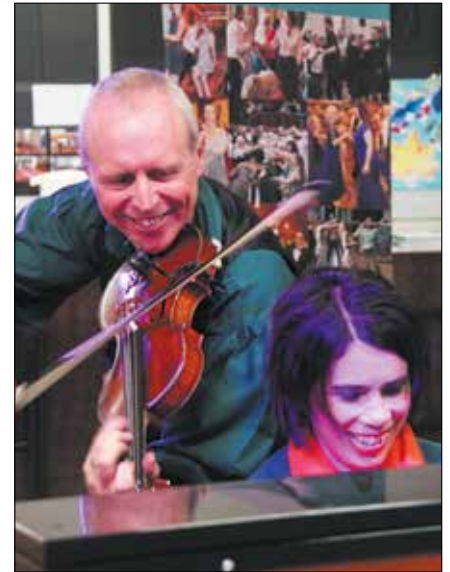
of the background and their experiences with some of the tunes. The concert was also open to the general public to give the locals an opportunity to come along to meet dancers and enjoy the music; as always taking any opportunity to promote Scottish country dancing and Scottish music to a new audience, as well as potential new dancers/musicians.

If not exploring the quaint seaside offerings of Kiama after morning classes, participants enjoyed a varied afternoon program of classes through the week including Visiting Teacher (class of local dances from their area), Stretch and Relax (to keep those muscles and feet in good working order), Technique & Critique (for dancers wanting personal attention), Tonight's Tricky Dances (class on that night's tricky dances to give newer dancers more confidence) and Scottish Afternoon Delights (showcasing a range of craft and cooking skills possessed by Scottish country dancers).

The formula ensured that at the Ball people had enough stamina and energy to complete the full programme at the picturesque seaside Kiama Pavilion where the champagne on arrival was matched with the pre-Ball entertainment of football match at the oval next door. All the musicians combined to provide a rousing night of lively and stirring music which lifted the spirits of the dancers.

As with any event it would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of a small army of volunteers and the convener, Ms Ruth Pike, would like to thank them all for their efforts and contribution for a successful Australian Winter School.

Michael Darby, Sydney Branch



Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt introduced visitors to traditional music for dancing (photo: Michael Darby and Jill Pope)

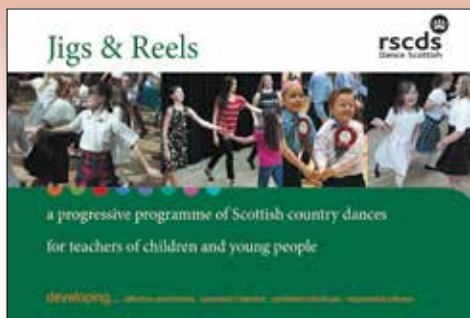


Proving age is no barrier' (Photo Michael Darby and Jill Pope)



Margaret Warry at the Australian Winter School Ball (photo Jill Pope)

Reviews



Jigs & Reels

Rebecca Gorrara is a primary school teacher who does not dance but she was keen to introduce her pupils to SCD. She used the Society's publication Jigs & Reels and found pupils throughout the school benefitted from learning to dance. These are her comments:

As a primary teacher I have relied heavily on the Jigs & Reels package from the RSCDS for many years now. With this book as my guide I have developed my own knowledge, understanding and skills of Scottish traditional dance. This has allowed me to encourage and lead others in promoting Scottish dance. The book has clear instructions for a wide range of traditional Scottish country dances, reels and jigs, with corresponding music on CDs and DVDs. Each of the dance steps is explained in writing and diagrams make it very easy to understand, follow and teach. It is fun to use and makes learning and teaching in this area accessible.

The book has allowed our school to teach a progression of skills successfully from nursery to P7. We have managed to put on shows incorporating Scottish dances of varying complexity to a high standard. It has also allowed us to enter competitions such as the Moray Music Festival and celebrate our Scottish culture of dance, ensuring the next generation of children develop a love for it as they leave primary school. I would highly recommend this as a valuable resource for offering opportunities to develop skills in Scottish dancing for children, adults and the community.

Rebecca Gorrara, (Teacher at Aberchirder Primary School)



(photo Jon Davey)

Diamond Jubilee 1955-2015 Sheffield Branch

Neil Barron and his Scottish Dance Band

The dances in this collection were devised by members of the Sheffield Branch of the RSCDS to celebrate their Diamond Jubilee. The book consists of twelve dances, a mixture of reels and strathspeys and two medleys. Neil Barron has arranged the music which is printed in the book and the CD recorded by Neil and his Scottish Dance Band will be published in November. The inclusion of explanatory diagrams and notes in the book along with the dances is a good idea.

Having taught this collection to dancers of mixed ability, I found there was something to appeal to dancers of all levels. The dances are fairly straightforward to teach, and provide the opportunity to emphasise many teaching points. The majority of formations have been included but repetition is rare which makes each dance unique. There are variations in basic formations which I liked. For example, in *The Damflask Strathspey*, in corner *pass and turn* corners use both hands for the turn. A similar variation is used in *The Winter Garden*, an 8x32 strathspey in which both hands are used for the *turn and twirl*. In *Toddle with Joy* an 8x40 reel, *La Baratte* is danced with a variation. This particular formation caused some confusion initially but once grasped it became a favourite.

It would take too long to mention all the dances in detail and discuss their respective merits. A few, however, deserve comment. *The Potter's Wheel* is suitable for newer dancers. It uses basic formations, flows well and by only having pas de basque for bars 31-32 would be a suitable first dance on any programme. *Failte gu Alba (Welcome to Scotland)*, a nice Gaelic touch, uses double triangles as the music changes to *Scotland the Brave* for the last eight bars signifying crossing from England to Scotland. The jig *Swirling and Twirling Leaves* conjures up a pleasant picture and is an easy dance that requires good phrasing by the 1st couple. The chasing and circular movements certainly fit the title and the class enjoyed it. *Cream Tea*, a 3x32 strathspey is an enjoyable dance. It is unusual to use a two-handed turn to lead into *dance to each corner and set* but it flowed well. The two medleys, *Sheffield Castle* and *Swings and Roundabouts* are good dances and very different. *Swings and Roundabouts* was the more popular of the two, while both the medleys could be used for demonstration dances and were also popular with the dancers.

I recommend the book and consider it is a worthwhile addition to any collection. My class thoroughly enjoyed learning and dancing the dances and they were a pleasure to teach. This could prove to be a popular book.

Kathy Lawmon (Southsea Reel Club)



90th Anniversary Book and CD - Aberdeen Branch

Frank Thomson
and his Scottish
Dance Band

This CD, which accompanies Aberdeen Branch's *90th Anniversary Book* (published in August 2015), comprises ten tracks, made up of five strathspeys, alternating equally with three jigs and two reels. The first nine dances, all devised by members of Aberdeen Branch, are danced three or four times through and the sixth track, a square dance for five couples, is danced five times. Only the last track (a John Drewry reel, *The Sunnyside*) has eight tunes. Four of the Strathspeys are 32-bars in length, the fifth being 40-bars; the two reels are 32-bars and 40-bars each; two of the jigs are 32 bars and the third 48-bars long.

Frank Thomson and his Scottish Dance Band provide a very pleasant sound, with no instrument dominating, except the fiddle being clearly in the business of providing the melody. Frank, on accordion of course, is joined by Sarah Beattie (fiddle), Dennis Morrison (piano and bass) and Nicky McMichan on drums.

The music has been drawn from over two dozen composers, with three tunes from Ian Muir and Angus Fitchet, and two each from Jim Johnstone, Fred Moyes and Ian Powrie. Eileen Watson composed the lead music for the dances she devised and Frank himself provided the lead tunes for the two dances devised by Betty MacKenzie.

The two reels, at a good steady pace, include some lovely tunes, lively enough to keep dancers on their toes and set the toes of non-dancers a-tapping. The jigs have great momentum and provide a great accompaniment to these three dances. In the five Strathspeys, the rhythm is steady throughout, with many tuneful and varied tunes, some of them wistful, making each track interesting both to listener and dancer alike.

The CD cover complements the handsome lavishly-produced *90th Anniversary Book* (containing Keith Rose diagrams for all ten dances), with a thistle framed by Celtic knotwork on the front and a picture of the band members on the back, both set on an attractive background of Aberdeen grey granite. Don't be misled by the covers of both CD and book, each of which says '9 for 90': there are indeed nine new dances, but the Drewry reel provides a tenth dance.

Overall, a very nice CD, pleasant to listen to, enjoyable to dance to, and a worthy addition to any collection, particularly as many new dances being published these days are for three and four couples only, danced just once through.

Chris Sanders (Glasgow Branch)

Letters to the editor



Footwork

Dear Editor

I am disappointed with RSCDS teachers' emphasis on foot work.

While teaching correct positions and proper footwork certainly has a place in beginners' classes, I believe it is

overemphasized in classes where the dancers believe they are beyond the beginner stage.

In my experience the "beyond beginner" classes in Canada have few if any dancers that are younger than 30 and most are well over 60. Many dancers have arthritis or other injuries to feet, ankle, knee or hip. So when it comes to following the teacher's demonstration of the ideal footwork they have four options: not attend the class or workshop, sit out the step practice portion, do the step in a fashion that will minimize the injury or try to please the teacher and attempt their best to achieve ideal footwork and aggravate the injury. None of these options to me are very good.

There are also groups of dancers who have no injury and don't have ideal footwork, for whatever reason. Again, my experience with this group is that in the dances and classes following the workshop, their footwork has not changed. I have also observed that quite a few of the teachers' own footwork by the end of the day is often far from ideal.

I don't think this non-ideal footwork matters unless the dancer is part of a demonstration team and even then, if trying to recruit new dancers it can be helpful to have dancers with poor footwork as the audience member is less likely to think "I could never do that."

My suggestion is that in "non-beginner" classes and workshops a very brief review of the ideal footwork is given and that teachers instruct dances and concentrate on other niceties, such as looking at the other dancers and not at the floor, as these often have some lasting impact, whereas there is seldom any lasting impact on the pupils' footwork for those over 30 and especially for those of us over 60.

There are also groups with small numbers of dancers of mixed ability. In these cases I much prefer the first twenty minutes or so devoted to step practice and then dancers have the option of coming for this portion or joining in later.

Patrick Capper, Ontario, Canada

Lady Dancers' Dress

Dear Editor

With reference to Gerry Jones's and Patricia Anderson's letters in *Scottish Country Dancer* No. 21, many ladies do wear tartan skirts at informal events. The reason few wear tartan when evening dress is called for may well be a practical one. Formal dresses suitable for dancing, especially white ones, can be difficult to obtain in the shops. This means that they have to be made for the purpose. Nowadays few ladies make their own clothes and dressmakers can be difficult to find. White marks easily and is not a particularly flattering colour for older women, and tartan sashes are difficult to arrange, especially if worn with both ends hanging down the back, so there is little incentive to look for a solution.

Nevertheless, some ladies do wish to wear a sash, either to match their husband's kilt or because they like the traditional look. To overcome the problem of fixing mine I folded it length ways, put it over my shoulder and crossed the ends on the opposite hip. Having determined the best position for the crossing I then stitched the layers together. This means that when it is worn it only needs a brooch on the shoulder to prevent it slipping, doing away with the need for safety pins to hold the folds in place. It is also possible to leave a gap in the stitching in order to form a small pocket.

The question then is 'What sort of dress should a sash be worn over?' White is traditional in order to show the tartan to best advantage. A plain coloured one is possible if carefully chosen to tone with the tartan. A black dress or a dark skirt with a white or cream blouse contrasts well with most tartans. A firm called Claire Charles Designs, which runs a mail order service and a shop at St Andrews Summer School, sells a variety of ladies' formal dancing outfits including some tartan ones. A velvet waistcoat with a tartan skirt and dressy blouse is a good alternative on semi-formal occasions.

We like to see our men wear Highland dress. When a man has been dancing for a while ladies often tell him it is time he got a kilt. We ought, therefore, to return the compliment.

Elizabeth Bennett, Croydon and London Branches

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Obituaries



Gordon Simpson -
October 1936 - May 2016

A native of Dundee, Gordon followed in his father's foot-steps, beginning to play the fiddle when he was about 7 years old. As a Chartered Accountant, his work took him to Glasgow where he met his wife Rona. Following retirement, Gordon and Rona settled back in Clackmannanshire.

Over many years, Gordon was involved with different Scottish dance bands and his distinctive sound and style of fiddle playing always added an extra dimension to the music. Gordon also produced a solo CD (aptly titled 'Fiddle') with a lovely mix of music in different genres.

I was delighted when the opportunity arose to meet and work with Gordon when we were invited to tutor a musicians' course at the RSCDS Summer School in St Andrews. It was an absolute privilege to work and form a friendship with Gordon over the next 15 years.

Gordon was held in awe by the course musicians and was always willing to spend time with any pupil interested in improving their playing. Gordon also played for classes at both the RSCDS Summer and Winter Schools as well as SCD events in the UK and further afield.

Gordon's funeral service took place in Tayport United Free Church and it was a fitting tribute that one of his beloved fiddles lay on his coffin whilst another was beautifully played by Alison Smith whom Gordon had encouraged and mentored over many years. A fitting tribute to a great musician..... and a true gentleman.

George Meikle

Paul Bond (1928 –2016)

Paul started dancing in Carlisle, moving to Sheffield in 1966. He obtained his Teaching Certificate at St Andrews in 1967 and taught the Branch Advanced Class and ran the Demonstration Team until he retired from teaching in 1996. With encouragement from Derek Haynes, he designed and

developed *crib cards* used by dancers worldwide. He was the first Life President of Sheffield Branch continuing his support of the Branch. He and his wife Dulcie were given a Joint Branch Award in 2006. He is remembered with grateful thanks and affection.

Norma Hutchinson, Secretary, Sheffield Branch

Sue Staples (1926 - 2015)

Olive Suzanne Priscilla Stevenson, known to all as Sue Staples, had a deep love of music and dance from an early age. Sue started to learn Scottish Country Dancing in Bournemouth and not long afterwards attended Summer School where she met Tony, who shared her love of dance. She took her teaching certificate at St Andrews and she and Tony taught dancing in Tunbridge Wells.

Jill Andrews (daughter)

Bill Forbes (1921- 2016)

William Middleton Grey Forbes was born into a musical household. His parents regularly hosted dances at their farm, Maryhill, near Buckie in Banffshire.

In the mid-1950s he moved to London and very quickly found Scottish dancing taking place at Fetter Lane, the then hub for SCD in the London area.

In 1973 he became teacher at the recently formed St John's Scottish Country Dance Club and continued to teach there until very recently. Bill also taught at Maidenhead SCD Club as well as the students at Reading University.

Bill gained his teaching certificate at Summer School in St Andrew's in 1977; he believed that the RSCDS should continue to set the 'standard' for Scottish Country Dancing around the world. In 1978 Bill formed a ladies' team, the Craigievar Dancers, to compete at the Slough Arts Festival as well as The Festival of Scotland in London. Their success in the Festivals was the result of Bill's meticulous attention to detail.

Bill devised dances and published around 60 dances in a series of books named 'The Craigievar Dances'. He continued to devise new dances, and many of these will be published in the near future. A CD was produced for some of his dances. Amongst his most well-known dances are *Findlater Castle*, (for the Jubilee book of Banffshire Branch), *Queen's View*, *Ship in Full Sail* and *Kilkenny Castle*.

Bill's expertise as a dance teacher included assisting with the choreography of the Scottish wedding in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. In 2014, he was presented with a Branch award.

John Fletcher, Chairman of St John's SCD Club

Peter Adams

Peter Adams was one of the outstanding teachers of the Hunter Valley Branch. This was not only because of his dynamic style of teaching, his ability to enthuse dancers about the older traditional dances but also due to his love and knowledge of music,

which came to the fore in all his teaching. Peter played the piano and violin, composed dance tunes and teamed up with Chris Duncan and Ruth Riley to form 'Harp and Claymore' which became the foremost SCD band in Australia in the 70s and 80s.

Peter himself danced with vigour and enthusiasm, preferring those 'great little dances' which offered a challenge, always accompanied by appropriate music he had found. He was passionate about all things Scottish and supported all the regional Scottish festivals.

The Hunter Valley Scots Club, where he held many committee positions, is a lasting legacy to his ability to enthuse members to create a vibrant and progressive club. He leaves a large gap in the dancing scene of the Hunter Valley. For a full appreciation visit our website: www.rscds.org.au/mgxroot/page_10790.html

Allyn Douglass, Secretary Hunter Valley Branch RSCDS

Francis Charles Walduck (1949-2016)

Francis began Scottish Country Dancing in 2001 when he attended his first Winter School in Brisbane. He was hooked and, in 2005, gained his Preliminary Certificate in New Zealand, returning two years later to take his Full Certificate.

Francis was a past Chairman of Queensland Branch and taught different classes several times a week. He travelled around the world attending winter and summer schools and other dance events. Francis made many friends in his travels and his laughter and zest for dancing will be sorely missed.

By the time his illness was diagnosed Francis had planned to go to Vichy, France, for the Paris Branch Easter weekend and on to Japan for the Tokyo branch dance workshop. A dream that did not come true.

Francis devised many dances and published them in the *Dancing Broilga Collections 1 & 2*. He also produced a collection of dances titled *The Clan MacKenzie*, but he is particularly noted for the dance, *The Ruby Rant*, which was published in *Book 49*.

In earlier life Francis was a Franciscan Friar, a Queensland State Government Official and lately a passionate Croquet player. As one friend put it, "Francis was a larger than life character", and his sometimes sarcastic wit brought a smile and laugh to his many friends.

Joan Flett, renowned for her research into traditional dancing in Scotland, along with her late husband Tom Flett, has died aged 92. Joan and Tom published many articles on Scottish and English traditional dance and their definitive work *Traditional Dancing in Scotland* was published in 1964 (republished in 1985). Joan went on to publish, *Traditional Step-dancing in Scotland* in 1996.

Jane Harrison (daughter)

Editor's note: An article detailing the meticulous research Tom and Joan did was featured in Scottish Country Dancer, Issue No. 10 in 2010. Copies of back issues of the magazine are available on the web-site.

A weekend in Vichy

When we heard that the Paris Branch weekend was to be in Vichy my first thought was - surely not! Paris weekends are well known for the quality of dance halls, accommodation, good music and programmes and essentially, I was told, for good food and wine. This year the venue was Vichy, a town well known for its spring waters. Were we to have water with our meals? We were, however, reassured by Tom McKinlay that there were excellent local wines. Planning for our journey was then underway and we arranged to meet up in London with friends from Helensburgh and St. Andrews Branch. We took the Eurostar to Paris and a quick trip across Paris to catch the train to Vichy. Fortunately the Aletti Palace Hotel was very close to the Palais de Congres, where all the weekend events were held, and so it was just a short jig to go to the events and perhaps a more sedate strathspey home.

The first afternoon class was followed by dinner and an excellent evening's dancing. As always after a night's dancing there were those who chose to sleep (not very many) and those who chose to party. Bright sunshine greeted us on Sunday morning and after another class we gathered for a group photograph which caused

the photographer some problems. Eventually he was happy and after lunch we were free to stroll around Vichy a beautiful and interesting city. As we wandered we found the original watering hole where locals still collected the natural Vichy water in their own bottles. Soon it was time to return to the Salon de l'Horloge for an aperitif then into the Salon Napoleon 111 for a Gala dinner. We were piped in ceremoniously to the Palais by Colin Smith, immediately causing a stir with the locals. After dinner the formal ball was a splendid occasion in this beautiful and elaborate *belle epoch* building. Large mirrors in each corner of the ballroom gave the impression of a huge venue with multiple images beyond the confines of the room, somewhat akin to the Assembly rooms in Edinburgh. As the weekend progressed the beautiful parquet flooring was gradually covered in black tape to protect the tiling as it loosened under the pounding feet of some 160 dancers. After the dance was over it was time for bed or another party! The last class on Monday was followed by another delicious lunch and the end of a superb weekend. Thank you Paris Branch.

Roy Bain, Helensburgh Branch

Tribute and Dance in Memory of Dr Alastair MacFadyen

On Friday 4 March more than 170 dancers gathered for a dance in Glasgow to pay tribute to and remember Alastair MacFadyen. The guests were greeted by the sound of Alasdair Brown's pipes and once inside they were welcomed by Ruth Beattie and Fiona McDonald. Jim Healy gave a short introductory speech and Fiona McDonald welcomed everybody present. The first of many tributes to Alastair was presented by Stuart and Anita Mackenzie, followed by a demonstration by the RSCDS Youth Team dancing to the excellent music of Muriel Johnstone. They danced two dances; *Loch Linnhe*, a strathspey by Roy Goldring and *The President's Quadrille* which was devised by Alan Macpherson to mark Alastair's appointment as President of the Society in November 2007. Dancers from Glasgow Branch then danced the *Hebridean Weaving Lilt* to mouth music from Johan Maclean. This was one of Alastair's favourite demonstration dances. Memories and tributes from around the world were read out, some in person, others by guest readers. The readers were: Dorothy Paterson from Argyll; Les Lambert read those from Geoffrey Selling and Ellie Briscoe (USA), Jerry and Danielle Reinstein (Paris) and Gill Loubser (South Africa); Rachel Wilton from London; John Wilkinson read those from Yoshiki and Kaoru Oyama (Japan), Dorothy Wilson (New Zealand) and Alison Jones (Dawson) (Tasmania); Alan Munro read those from Georgina Finlay (Canada), Elinor Vandegrift (USA) and Morag Napier together with Anne Kennedy and Margaret Sim (Australia) and Jean Martin from Aberdeen.

Muriel Johnstone played two selections of her choice of music and the very expressive way it was performed was quite exceptional and a joy to hear.

Jean Martin proposed a vote of thanks and supper was served. During the interval many people took the opportunity to visit a display of memorabilia created by Alan Macpherson. The evening continued with dancing to the excellent music of Nicol McLaren and the Glenraig Band with MC John Johnston.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the evening a great success and a fitting tribute to Alastair.

Fiona McDonald
Chairman of Glasgow Branch



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Day School Diary - October 2016 to July 2017

Day School Diary is compiled by John Sturrock. Please send details to john.m.sturrock@btinternet.com. Issue 24 will cover day and residential schools or workshops from mid-October 2016 to May 2017, SCD festivals to July 2017. For more information about these events, please refer to branch or club websites.

October 2016

- 15 Cornwall Branch, Autumn Workshop, Tresillian, Cornwall, England
- 15 Thistle Club, Day School, Eindhoven, Netherlands
- 15 London Branch, Day & Musicians' School, London, England
- 15/16 Paris Branch, Advanced Weekend School & Musicians' Workshop, Paris, France
- 16 Exeter Branch, Afternoon School, Broadclyst, Exeter, Devon, England
- 20 – 23 Kuckucksnest, Autumn Intermediate Course, Schlüchtern, Germany
- 22 Nova Scotia Branch, Fall Workshop, NS, Canada
- 22 Roxburgh / Selkirk / Peebles Branch, Day School, Melrose, Scotland
- 22 Exeter Branch, ½ Day School & Dance, Broadclyst, Devon, England
- 23 New Haven Branch, Music Workshop, Bristol, CT, USA
- 28 – 30 'Rechberg' International Weekend, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany
- 28 – 30 San Francisco Weekend Workshop, Asilomar, Pacific Grove, CA, USA
See details on p.31
- 28 – 29 Houston Branch, Weekend, Houston, TX, USA
- 28 – 30 Charlotte SCD Soc, Weekend, Charlotte, NC, USA
- 29 Sheffield Branch, Day School, Hope, Derbyshire, England
- 29 Cornwall Branch, Day School, Tresillian, Cornwall, England

November 2016

- 04 – 06 RSCDS AGM Weekend, Bell's Centre, Perth, Scotland
See page 2 for details
- 04 – 06 Kingston Branch, 50th Weekend, Kingston, ON, Canada
- 11 – 13 Cote d'Azur Weekend, Mougins, Cannes, France
- 11 – 13 Northern Virginia Branch, Argyle Weekend, Alexandria, VA, USA
- 11 – 13 Croydon Branch, Weekend School, Eastbourne, Sussex, England
- 11 – 13 Winnipeg Branch, Tutor Course, Winnipeg, MB, Canada
- 12 Toronto Branch, Workshop, Toronto, ON, Canada
- 12 Bristol Branch, Day School, Bristol, England
- 12 Swilcan SCD Group, Drewry Workshop, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 16 – 20 Kuckucksnest, Very Advanced November Course, Schlüchtern, Germany
- 19 – 20 Basel, SCD Weekend, Basel, Switzerland
- 20 Berkhamsted, Day School, Hemel Hempsted, Herts, England
- 25 – 27 Lyon Branch, Weekend & Musicians' Course, Lyon, France

December 2016

- 02 – 04 Leeds Branch, Weekend School, Malhamdale, Yorkshire, England
- 02 – 04 December Weekend, Curia, Portugal
- 28 – 05/01 60th New Zealand Branch, Summer School, Christchurch, New Zealand

January 2017

- 14 RSCDS Youth Workshop & Ceilidh, London, England
See page 2 for details
- 20 – 22 Falkirk Branch, Weekend, Crieff Hydro, Crieff, Scotland
- 20 Lyon Branch, Day School, Lyon, France
- 21 Freiburg, Day and Musicians' School, Freiburg, Germany

February 2017

- 03 – 05 York Branch, Weekend School, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, England
- 04 Inverness Branch, Day School, Inverness, Scotland
- 04 Clivis SCD Society, Workshop and Dance, Turin, Italy
- 04 – 05 Swilcan SCD Group, Nunspeet Weekend School, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 10 – 12 Edmonton Branch, 47th Weekend Workshop, Edmonton, AB, Canada
- 17 – 19 Isle of Wight, Weekend School, Isle of Wight, England
- 18 Oxfordshire Branch, Day School, Oxford, England
- 18 Leeds Branch, Musicians' Workshop, Leeds, England
- 23 – 28 RSCDS Winter School, Atholl Palace, Pitlochry, Scotland
See page 2 for details.

March 2017

- 04 Birmingham Branch, Half Day School, Birmingham, England
- 10 – 11 Lorn (Argyll) Branch, Weekend School, Oban, Argyll, Scotland
- 10 – 11 St Giles SCD Club, Workshop & Ball, Calgary, AB, Canada
- 11 BHS Border Branch, Day & Musicians' School, Fleet, Hampshire, England
- 11 Swilcan SCD Group, Day School, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 18 Lyon Branch, Day Workshop, Lyon, France
- 20 – 27 Beginners' School, Sorrento, Italy
- 25 Vancouver Island SC Dancers, Workshop & Ball, Victoria, BC, Canada
- 25 Tunbridge Wells Branch, Day School, Tonbridge, Kent
- 31 – 02/04 Brussels Dance Scottish, Weekend, Spa, Ardennes, Belgium
- 31 – 02/04 Helensburgh Branch, Weekend, Helensburgh, Scotland

April 2017

- 01 Geneva SCD Club, Spring Workshop and Dance, Dardagny, France
- 07 – 09 Lyon Branch, Weekend & Music School, Lyon, France
- 08 Swilcan SCD Group, Day School, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 21 – 23 East Lothian Branch, Dance Weekend, Atholl Palace, Pitlochry, Scotland
- 22 Cheltenham Branch, Day School & Dance, Cheltenham, England
- 28 – 30 RSCDS Spring Fling, Bonn, Germany
See page 2 for details
- 28 – 30 Leeds Branch, Weekend School, Scarborough, England
- 28 – RSCDS Spring Fringe, Bonn, Germany
See Central Germany website for details

May 2017

- 28 International Branch, Dance Weekend, Pafos, Cyprus

Scottish Country Dance Festivals

February 2017

- 11 Newcastle Festival, Gateshead, England

March 2017

- 18 Leeds Branch, Children's Festival, Leeds, England
- 24–25 March Aberdeen Festival, Aberdeen, Scotland
- 25 Dundee Branch, Festival, Dundee, Angus, Scotland

June 2017

- 24 South Wales Branch, Festival, Brecon, South Wales

July 2017

- 08 63rd White Rose Festival, Harewood, Leeds, Yorkshire, England

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info@thistleshoes.com | www.thistleshoes.com

Factory visits welcome

Our shoes are made with the skills and crafts of old. We use the finest leathers that we can find for flexibility and durability.

- Over 30 years manufacturing experience
- Hand made in Scotland
- Quality from a brand you can trust
- Shock absorber / Anti-Stress insole
- Authentic & Original

NOENE is the ultimate shock absorption and dispersant system, absorbing about 98% of the shock which in turn helps to relieve and rule out back pain, tendonitis and repetitive strain injuries. It has also passed the strictest tests to become a Class 1 medical device, the only shock dispersing insole to do so, which means it has proven medical benefits.

Bill Zobel:
“Thistle Shoes with the impact sole are exactly what I have been looking for. The quality is excellent. In all these years I have never had such superb service and attention to detail as I have from Thistle Shoes.”

GLOBAL YOUTH WEEK



20th - 30th
JANUARY 2017



Does your Branch want:

- ▶ To get ideas about how to get more young people involved in Scottish Country Dance and Music locally?
- ▶ To link with others worldwide to celebrate young people's involvement?
- ▶ To share ideas between young people?

Welcome to RSCDS's annual Global Youth Week – whether you are younger or older!

GLOBAL YOUTH WEEK WILL BE LAUNCHED IN LONDON, AT A SPECIAL YOUTH WORKSHOP & BURNS NIGHT CEILIDH ON 14TH JANUARY 2017



Your branch can do any activity linked to encouraging young people to take part – for ideas see www.rscds.org.

This year we are running two competitions during GYW:

- ▶ Facebook based photo/video submissions
- ▶ Bids for NEW Branch Youth Development Awards (3 x £500 grants for the best ideas!)

We look forward to your branch taking part – please contact mike.greenwood@rscds.org for more info and to register.

