

SCOTTISH Country Dancer


rscds
Dance Scottish

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 24 April 2017



New Zealand
Summer School

EDITOR OF SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCER

The RSCDS is recruiting a new Editor for the members' magazine, Scottish Country Dancer. The magazine is sent twice a year, in April and October, to all RSCDS members in hard copy through the post – back copies are available on our website. It aims to inform, entertain, and inspire Scottish country dancers; to be the prime means of communication from the RSCDS to all members as well as a forum for members; and to broaden awareness of Scotland's rich heritage of country dance and its music. It also promotes the objects of the Society and the strategic aims of the Management Board. The Editorial Board is responsible to the Management Board.

Remit of the Editor

The Editor would normally be a member of the RSCDS, is the Chairman of the Editorial Board and has the final sign-off on content. It is a voluntary position. Expenses and travel are paid. The Editor's workload is heaviest in Sept/Oct and Feb/March.

The key roles of the Editor are to:

- Ensure the magazine is a platform for the views of members
- Ensure the magazine's look and content fit with RSCDS overall communications strategy
- Ensure the Editorial Board agrees planned content for each issue, including cover photo and imagery
- Ensure timely calls for content are made to members, Board, Committees, staff and others
- Edit the final magazine content and ensure that proofreading is effective
- Liaise with the magazine designer to ensure a good quality final product

The following skills, knowledge and attributes are desirable:

- Experience of editing and producing a newsletter or magazine, preferably one with an international audience and/or a membership magazine
- Confidence with electronic communication
- Flexibility to write in styles that suit different audiences
- Accuracy and attention to detail
- Team leadership and personal communication
- Passion for communicating well with an international readership of different ages
- Awareness of the RSCDS, its membership and structure

All RSCDS members are welcome to apply by 15 May 2017 to chairman@rscds.org Please contact the same address for further information or clarification.



SOCIETY EVENTS

WINTER SCHOOL 2018
18 - 23 FEBRUARY
PITLOCHRY

SUMMER SCHOOL 2017
ST ANDREWS

WEEK 1 16 JUL - 23 JUL
WEEK 2 23 JUL - 30 JUL
WEEK 3 30 JUL - 6 AUG
WEEK 4 6 AUG - 13 AUG

SPRING FLING 2018
20 - 22 APRIL
GLASGOW

AGM 2017
3 - 5 NOVEMBER
PERTH

SPRING FLING 2017
BONN 28 - 30 APRIL

SUMMER SCHOOL 2018
15 JULY - 12 AUGUST

DATES FOR YOUR
SOCIAL CALENDAR

WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US

WWW.RSCDS.ORG

f t y i

AGM 2018
2 - 4 NOVEMBER

The last three issues of *Scottish Country Dancer* were edited by Marilyn Healy. A big thank you must go to Marilyn for all her work before she gave up the task at the end of last year. We are sure you will agree that she put together three excellent magazines. This edition is being co-edited by Jimmie Hill and Jean Martin. An advert for a new editor is on the page opposite.

A large number of significant Branch anniversaries occur this year and congratulations are due to all. Many events are planned and we are sure that they will be memorable occasions with lots of reunions, reminiscing, and all exhibiting the joy of dance.

This issue contains a report of a very significant country dance project outwith the Society – the Nathaniel Gow celebrations in Edinburgh. Muriel Johnstone pays tribute to her good friend and one of our great teachers and personalities, Alastair Aitkenhead.

Two of our teachers were honoured by the Queen in the New Years Honours: Mrs Elma McCausland and Mrs Mary Ross. Congratulations to both.

As usual, this edition covers reports from branches around the globe and we would ask that you assist your correspondents by passing on to them news items which would be of interest to all members. The experience of the correspondents varies. Often, despite sending out reminders, they are left to find things out for themselves or, the opposite situation is the case, when they are given so much detail that it is difficult to summarise.

For this edition quite a lot of other material was submitted. Some items just couldn't wait until the next edition as the events being described would be long gone by that time and some articles had to be reduced in size so that they could be accommodated. We do hope that you will be understanding. Finally and encouragingly, this issue contains quite a lot of reports from different youth initiatives. This must be good news for the future of both country dancing and our Society.

Jimmie Hill and Jean Martin



New Society President

The Members of the RSCDS Management Board are happy to announce that at the AGM on 5 November 2016, Jean Martin became the Honorary President of the RSCDS. She is a past chairman of Aberdeen Branch, but many members will also be familiar with Jean in her capacity as a past Chairman of the Society, an examiner, adjudicator

and much sought-after teacher at many day schools, workshops and residential courses around the world. She has had key roles in many Society projects, including the revision of the 2004 examination syllabus, the production of the combined books in standard terminology and, more recently, in the combined project with TAC to produce teaching notes for the Miscellany dances. She has a sound knowledge of the history and the structure of the Society, and, as such, is a much valued President.

Helen Russell

New Society President	3
News from Coates Crescent	4
From the Chairman	6
Education and Training Committee	6
Youth Services Committee	7
Membership Services Committee	7
From around the World	8
Mrs Elma McCausland MBE	11
Mrs Mary Ross BEM	11
Belfast Branch	11
Kilmarnock and District Branch	12
Birmingham Branch	12
The Stooshie	13
The AGM from a French Perspective	13
Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band	14
The Society in Pictures	16
Tribute to Alastair Aitkenhead	18
Focus on Technique	20
In my Opinion	20
Spotlight on Iberia	21
Young Dancers' Page	22
Global Youth Week	23
Scottish Schools	24
Edinburgh Branch in Barcelona	25
Summer School Social Class	26
Letters to the Editor	27
Reviews	28
Sadly Missed	29
Day School Diary	30

The next issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* will be published in October 2017. Please refer to Notes for Contributors on the website. Send materials for inclusion to the editor: mag.editor@rscds.org no later than 1 August.

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

Editors

Jimmie Hill and Jean Martin

Editorial Board

Ruth Beattie, Mike Greenwood, Jimmie Hill, Jean Martin, Fiona Mackie

Publisher

The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7AF

Website

www.rscds.org

Telephone

0131 225 3854

Email

info@rscds.org

Graphic Designer

Its All Good
The Haughs, Cromdale, Grantown on Spey, PH26 3PQ
info@itsallgood.org.uk t: 01479 870 435

Printer

J Thomson Colour Printers Ltd,
14-16 Carnoustie Place,
Glasgow
G5 8PB



The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society is a Scottish charitable company limited by guarantee. Registered Office: 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 7AF
Charity No. SC 016085 Company No. SC 480530



News from Coates Crescent

Mike Greenwood

Branch anniversaries in 2017

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

- 90 years: Clackmannanshire, Stirling
- 80 years: Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, St Andrews
- 75 years: Lockerbie
- 70 years: Belfast, Dumfries, and Peterhead
- 60 years: Toronto, Roxburgh Selkirk and Peebles
- 50 years: Herefordshire and New Zealand
- 40 years: Queensland, Leicester, New Haven, Berks/Hants/ Surrey Border
- 30 years: Chicago
- 25 years: Northern Territory
- 20 years: Tokai

Board and Committee Membership 2016-17

Management Board

- Chairman: Helen Russell
- Chairman Elect: Andrew Kellett
- Treasurer: Bill Cant
- Convenors: Malcolm Brown, Anselm Lingnau, Anne McArthur
- Members: Bernie Hewitt, Clive Warren-Smith, Isobel McMillan, Paul Plummer, Richard Austin, Tom Halpeny, Trevor Clarke

Education & Training Committee

- Convenor: Malcolm Brown
- Schools Director: Jim Stott
- Committee members: Trish Reid, Elaine Cameron, Sue Ronald, Ellie Briscoe, Patricia Houghton, Alison Robertson, Mervyn Short, Jane McIntosh

Membership Services Committee

- Convenor: Anselm Lingnau
- Music Director: Ian Muir
- Committee members: Keith Rose, Chris Ronald, Cynthia Soohoo, Lara Friedman-Shedlov, Peter Knapman, William Williamson

Youth Services Committee

- Convenor: Anne McArthur
- Committee members: Emma Allsop, Raphaëlle Orgeret, Marilyn Watson, Elizabeth Conder, Joana Stausberg, Florence Burgy

Board and Committee Vacancies in 2017

The following are the positions which need to be filled at the AGM in November.

- Management Board: five members
- Membership Services: Convenor Elect and one member
- Education and Training: two members
- Youth: Convenor Elect and two members.

Nomination forms will be available on the website at julia.parr@rscds.org or from Julia at HQ from 28 April. In addition to

completing the form, members must submit a profile outlining the skills and attributes they have to offer. Guidelines on the reverse of the form give an indication of what should be included, but those considering standing for election are advised to read the role descriptions for Board and Committee members available on the website, at rscds.org/article/legal-administrative. The deadline for all nomination forms, profiles and photo is 8 September.

Winter School Coordinator 2019

Applications are invited for the post of Co-ordinator of Winter School 2019. Please check the website for details and forms. Applications must be received by 31 August.

Scrolls of Honour 2016

At the 2016 AGM Scrolls of Honour were presented to John Johnston (Glasgow Branch), Avril and David Quarrie (International Branch), Duncan MacKenzie (Vancouver Branch), John Sturrock (St. Andrews Branch) and John Wilkinson (Edinburgh Branch). Congratulations to all.



Scroll recipients

Headquarters Staff

The staff at HQ would like to welcome back our in-house graphic designer Sara Hyde from maternity leave.

Youth Development Grants

We are delighted to announce the award of three Development Grants to assist with projects aimed at developing the capacity of young people in the RSCDS. Thank you to all who submitted applications. It was a difficult task selecting the recipients.

- As a follow on from Spring Fling in Bonn the Central Germany Branch will develop a young dancers' event - a weekend school and an evening dance hosted each year by a different group in Germany. The awarding committee of Helen Russell, Andrew Kellett, and Anne McArthur saw this project as one which will build on the RSCDS investment in Spring Fling and one which promises to be sustainable.
- Using RSCDS materials and the Accreditation Scheme, the Roxburgh Selkirk and Peebles project will increase the

involvement of children in Scottish schools and also work in partnership with teachers and parent councils to make Scottish country dancing part of the curriculum.

- Glasgow Branch is working with the University and other young dancer clubs with the aim of bringing them into the RSCDS. The project will help fund a teacher training programme to allow young people (mostly students on limited funds) to complete Units 2 and 3 of the Teachers' Certificate. On completion, the young people will be involved in teaching classes in Glasgow on a shared basis and will be given opportunities to prepare children in Glasgow schools for the annual Glasgow City Primary Schools Festival.

Subscription Fees 2017-18

As agreed at the AGM 2016, the basic full annual subscription for the membership year July 2017 – June 2018 will remain at £20.

Notes on Miss Milligan's Miscellany

Produced by the RSCDS and TAC, these notes clarify some of the ambiguities found in the Miscellany dances. We are indebted to Pat Coyle, Ruth Jappy, Jean Martin, Mervyn Short and Jim Healy. To download the notes please visit the RSCDS website: rscds.org/article/notes-on-miss-milligans-miscellany

Charitable Gift from The Patron's Fund

We are thrilled to announce that we have received a gift of £2,500 from the Patron's Fund. This gift acknowledges the work we do and it was derived from generous donations and from the profits from The Patron's Lunch event on The Mall on the occasion of the Queen's 90th birthday. This gift will be used to purchase improved technology to enable remote access by members, branches and affiliated group representatives to meetings, events, training, and to facilitate regular 'face to face' contact with them, so that our services can be appropriate to the needs of our members globally. We would like to thank those members who attended the Patron's Lunch last year and represented the Society; we are grateful for your efforts and dedication to Scottish country dancing.

Jean Milligan Memorial Fund

The JMMF is used to support the aims of the Society, providing small grants (up to £1,000) to support initiatives, innovation, creativity and outreach activities. Anyone can apply for funding. Applicants should outline the proposed financial structure of the event or project. The guidelines for applying and the application form are available on the website. The deadlines for applications are 31 May, 30 September, and 15 November. For more information please contact Sandra Parish: sandra.p Parish@rscds.org



Rachel with her award

RSCDS sponsors award at The Trads

The RSCDS sponsored the *Instrumentalist of the Year Award* at the 2016 *Scots Trad Music Awards*, held in Dundee in December. RSCDS President Jean Martin presented the trophy to accomplished harpist/singer, Rachel Newton. We look forward to hearing more from her in the future. In 2017 the RSCDS will again be sponsoring Instrumentalist of the Year.

New Products

Here are the forthcoming products coming out in 2017, available for purchase via the RSCDS shop and digital music retailers:

July

Book 51 and accompanying CD

Index to Formations and Movements in Scottish Country Dances

November

Combined Books 31-38

The Annual Review 2016

The Annual Review is produced each year in October to give all members a report on what has been achieved during the year, with statistics on membership and finances. It is presented at the AGM and made available on the website. The website link is circulated in November to all Branches and through the Ezine. The document is available at rscds.org/article/legal-administrative

Here is a brief summary of achievements in 2016:

1. Education and Training

- In the teachers' exams 179 passes were achieved in the following units: 42 Unit 1; 47 Unit 2; 44 Unit 3; 21 Unit 4 and 25 at Unit 5.
- Three new Examiners are in the process of completing their probationary period. Three new Medal Test Assessors have been appointed and another two are on the way to completion of their probationary training.
- 320 young people (age 7 – 16) from the UK, Canada and USA have passed medal tests, 92 at Introductory Grade, 90 at Grade 1, 47 at Grade 2, 45 at Grade 3, 20 at Grade 4, and 26 at Grade 5.
- 73 people have achieved Dancing Achievement Awards at the following levels: 45 Intermediate and 28 Advanced.
- Schools Accreditation is provided to schools which are teaching Scottish country dance: 21 schools have been accredited, with 385 pupils at Bronze, 218 pupils at Silver and 209 pupils at Gold levels.

2. Membership Numbers

	ADULT SINGLE	ADULT JOINT	ADULT HALF YEAR	YOUTH (12-17)	YOUNG ADULT (18-24)	LIFE MEMBERS	TOTAL
2014	13,087 MEMBERS & 323 AFFILIATED GROUP						
MEMBERS	8,366	3,094	178	48	98	1,303	13,087
2015	12,119 MEMBERS & 316 AFFILIATED GROUP						
MEMBERS	7,902	3,074	96	56	95	896	12,119
2016	11,755 MEMBERS & 317 AFFILIATED GROUP						
MEMBERS	7,482	3,206	107	59	86	815	11,755

3. Events

The RSCDS ran four major events this year with over 450 dancers at our Conference Weekend, 140 at Winter School, 94 at Spring Fling and 583 at Summer School. Junior Summer School included 11 children. There were 24 on the Musician's course. We also partnered Scottish Television on their Children's Appeal 24-hour Ceilidh Challenge fundraiser in October 2015 and with Celtic Connections' opening Festival Ceilidh in January 2016.

4. Working with Young People

94 young people took part in Spring Fling 2016 in Edinburgh. Workshops have been held in the UK and France during the year. We also funded workshops at the Scottish and UK Universities' annual dance festivals. Youth Scholarships were awarded to 6 young people to attend Summer School and to support young people to attend workshops. Global Youth Week was piloted in January 2016 and had 15 branches and affiliated groups involved. Promotion of our resources for schools (*Jigs and Reels* for primary level and *Dance Trad* for secondary schools) has been made to all schools in Scotland and to all branches internationally. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for schoolteachers was delivered in five schools.

From the Chairman



Helen Russell

Since the AGM in November 2016 the favourite part of my new role has been to visit branches and affiliated groups in person to help them celebrate their anniversaries and other special events. It is impressive to see the commitment and energy of members as they give time and talent to enable dancers to sustain and enjoy dancing. Over the past year I have really enjoyed talking to and listening to office bearers from many different branches. Branches are so diverse in their range of activities, many of them collaborating with other branches and reaching out into the wider community. Their comments on topics like recruitment of new dancers, communication and ensuring the supply of teachers in the future are currently driving forward the work of the RSCDS committees for the next couple of years as part of the Society's business planning process.

Members are at the heart of our activity and are our most persuasive ambassadors. Have you noticed that Scottish country dancers look happier than other people? It provides everything you could possibly wish for... physical challenge, mental engagement, social contact and an emotional 'high'. Why not do your bit to spread the happiness by encouraging your friends to get their feet on the floor and move to the music? It doesn't have to be complicated or perfect, just simple fun. We have a range of dances from the accessible to the complicated, just as we have a range of enthusiastic dancers from the beginner to the highly experienced. To persuade more people to try our favourite hobby, keeping it simple and traditional has many virtues.

I love dancing in all sorts of circumstances: it can be with children, in a ceilidh, in a display team, but best of all I like to be at a social dance where the music is exciting and the company is welcoming. I love the feeling of community, watching other people in the set, seeing the response to the rhythm and the joy it brings to people's faces as they dance to the great range of fantastic musicians we are so lucky to have. Wherever you are dancing, it would be wonderful to see the RSCDS reaching out to the wider community, to local events, whether traditional music festivals, or other themed events, even food festivals, and engaging people by helping them make that first step on to the dance floor.

Finally, Gillian Wilson, our Executive Officer, and a great driving force behind the business plan, was offered a new job, and left us on 24 March. We wish her well in her new venture and thank her for her contribution to the RSCDS.

Education & Training Committee



Malcolm Brown, Convenor

The times they are a' changing! As most will know, the Board has consulted widely and produced a new business plan for the next three years. Over the coming months we will be looking at the strengths and weaknesses of our current teacher training system. If you have strong views

on the subject, send them in – we are listening! Another working group is looking at a less demanding training programme in terms of dancing technique, to produce teachers more suited to

mixed ability classes. The third group is to look at producing video material, both for training and assessment.

Winter School with Luke Brady as Director was a great success with 160 dancers attending. Mervyn Short will be director for 2018.

Bookings for Summer School have been available since November through the website and the Director Jim Stott has planned another full programme for the four weeks. Week 3 is again going to be a very full week, with both the Young People's class as well as a Musician's class. At the time of writing 19 young people had booked to attend.

Medal tests are still proving popular in Scotland with tests in Dumfries and Edinburgh and they are beginning to take off overseas with tests in Toronto. The Dancing Achievement Award is proving popular with assessments in Exeter, Aberdeen and planned for Toronto, San Francisco and Sydney. Teaching Certificate courses and exams were held at the New Zealand Summer School over New Year and this spring saw one in Russia and five in North America.

One of the more unusual tasks that has come my way since becoming Convenor was to be part of the group allocating Summer School Scholarships. In all, 14 were awarded and the total amount came to £10,000 with most of the money coming from the JMMF. The geographical spread of recipients was wide with younger dancers featuring prominently.

If you would like to attend any of our schools (UK and overseas) and finance is a problem, then why not apply for a scholarship? Unfortunately, it is not always possible to award a grant to everyone who applies and we do wonder if branches might consider using some of their surplus funds to support the scholarship scheme.



**Celebrate
the 50th Anniversary of the
RSCDS New Zealand Branch Inc.
at the annual Summer School
28th December 2017 - 5th January 2018
Masterton, Wairarapa**



Register on line and get more information at
www.dancescottish.org.nz

or contact:

The Organiser, Elaine Laidlaw
24A Fleet Street,
Masterton 5810, NZ

Phone: +64 6 377 0322
Email: ss2017@dancescottish.org.nz



Youth Services Committee

Anne McArthur, Convenor



When I chaired our January meeting remotely, committee members were in HQ, Bonn, London and Aberdeen - hard work to focus on so many screens while making sure everyone had the opportunity to speak. I was exhausted after 3 hours. We are drawing on ideas from different parts of the world, saving money and members' travelling time. We had another internet meeting on 1 April.

Global Youth Week 2017 has come and gone following a great launch in London on 14 January. The winner of the Facebook competition was the German Young Dancer Team. Well done.

We had seven good applications for the three Branch Youth Development Grants (see page 4) – congratulations to the three branches involved. We had no applications from branches in America, Africa or Australasia and we would really welcome your applications later this year for next year's grants. Get in touch if you want more information.

It is certainly Germany's year! By the time you read this, Spring Fling in Bonn will be about to happen. It is now a well established event and goes from strength to strength. This year there are over 100 young people from many different countries. Eight applicants have been awarded full or part scholarships to assist them with their fees and accommodation. The parallel event, Spring Fringe is fully subscribed and there is even a children's class this year. We are delighted to announce that Spring Fling 2018 will be in Glasgow and 2019 is the turn of Paris.

Junior Summer School, to be held during Week 3 at St Andrews, is filling up. There were 19 registrations to date. Our target is 24 so if you fancy joining us, now is the time to get your application in. There are three teachers – Marilyn Watson, Jayne Riddett and myself and we will be all geared up to give the young folk an awesome experience.

At our strategy meeting in January, Youth Services were allocated a number of youth-focused action areas to develop and grow: building and growing our annual youth events such as Spring Fling and Global Youth Week, choreographing and promoting a high energy version of the dance that all branches could use to attract young people, and work with university clubs and other young people's clubs to try to bring them into the RSCDS. We are also looking at how we can have more family-friendly events.

One further action area is enabling as many children as possible in Scottish schools to have the opportunity to do Scottish country dancing as part of their curriculum and to attract external funding to do this. Amazing things are already happening, and we want to know exactly what is going on and where. Please contact me: anne.mcarthur@btinternet.com



Enthusiastic promenaders

Membership Services Committee

Anselm Lingnau, Convenor



We have had a busy (northern hemisphere) winter on the Membership Services Committee! Book 51, which will be published at this year's Summer School, is coming along strong as the dance descriptions are edited into their final form for approval by the dance devisers. The CD will be recorded by Ian Muir, Prestwick, in April, and we will once more produce videos of the dances during Week 3 of Summer School. Right now we're busy compiling the most up-to-date versions of the dances in Books 31 to 38 in preparation for the revised combined A5 edition of these books which will appear in time for the Conference Weekend in November. A reprint of the combined A5 edition of Books 19 to 24 has mushroomed into a full review of the dance instructions, incorporating various errata and clarifications, and the result of this will become available (in both paper and PDF form) as soon as it is ready. Book 52 is looming on the horizon, with nearly 150 submissions of dances from all over the world to consider, and by the time you read this, batches of dances will have been sent to volunteering branches and affiliated groups for anonymous review. If you haven't yet signed up, but are in a definite position to review 5–7 dances between now and the end of August, do get in touch – the more, the merrier! We expect to make a final selection of dances in late September, and the book and accompanying CD will come out next year.

Recently, the production of a new book every year has once more become a matter for debate. Some members lament a profusion of new dances while others welcome the novelty. In addition, sales of the new book and CD make up the bulk of the annual income from the RSCDS shop and contribute considerably to keeping the Society running. We are wondering whether publishing a new book only every two or three years would be a reasonable compromise, and what other publications you would like to see instead – preferably ones of wide interest to members that would help offset the income shortfall! One suggestion might be a compilation of dances from the Society's books that are commonly encountered socially, as a helpful resource for new(ish) dancers. Do let us know where you stand on this.

But of course Membership Services is not only about publications. The Committee is taking on an active role in reshaping the Society's website in order to provide a better experience to members and the general public. This is a huge undertaking but well worth doing. The dance video project is also gathering pace.

Finally, it was good to see and chat to so many of you at the MSC table at last year's AGM weekend in Perth. This is a feature that we plan to keep. We are more than interested in what you have to say! In the meantime, if you have any comments or suggestions, then please do get in touch at info@rscds.org or convenor@msc.rscds.net.

From around the World

It has been a busy six months! Can we remind all branches and groups to be in touch with the correspondent listed at the beginning of their region with news which all dancers everywhere might be interested in. If you are somewhere which is not covered, please be in touch with Jean Martin at jean.m.martin@googlemail.com

Australia

Correspondent: Caroline Donald
tgandcmd@ozemail.com.au

Adelaide is hosting the 2017 Australian Winter School in the historic town of Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills from 9-16 July. The Branch Ball will be held the night before with the Ian Robertson Trio playing.

Melbourne & District Branch ended 2016 with a celebration of the Queen's birthday year where dances with a *royal* theme were taught. The 2017 dancing year began in February and planned events include development classes, days of dance, socials and a teaching weekend.

Queensland Branch has plans in July to repeat last year's successful weekend at Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast.



Australian members at New Zealand Summer School

Sydney Branch's Easy Dance managed by Rosemary Gardner to the great music of Iain McKenzie and Emma Nixon catered for new and inexperienced dancers.

Tasmanians are enjoying dancing to visiting musicians. Iain McKenzie and Emma Nixon toured the state in March, playing for classes, concerts, a ceilidh and a workshop. August sees Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt playing at Hobart's Annual Winter Ball Weekend which includes a concert and Sunday picnic.

Western Australia Branch had their 40th Anniversary last year. The Branch held an Anniversary Ball and a weekend school, with John and Ruby Wilkinson teaching and musicians Marian Anderson and Max Ketchin. It was wonderful to have visitors from the Eastern States and overseas attending both the school and the Ball.

Canada East

Correspondent: Elaine Hoag
elaine.hoag@gmail.com

Ottawa Branch and the **Ardbrae Dancers** participated in a Flash Dance Mob held at an Ottawa Senators National Hockey League game on 22 January. The responsive crowd cheered the dancers on with a gusto generally reserved for the home team, and Ottawa made Scottish country dancing known to a new audience.

Kingston (Ontario) Branch celebrated 50 years of Scottish country dancing in November with a special Workshop Weekend and Ball. Guest teachers were Antoine Rousseau and Marjorie McLaughlin.

Toronto Association member Marjorie Coulter started a dance group at St Andrew's Church in Brampton, Ontario, on 7 November, 1966. The group has been dancing continuously since that day under the name St Andrews of Brampton. Their anniversary celebrations in October featured a Gala Dance, which naturally included *St Andrews of Brampton* from *Book 37*.

Nova Scotia Branch will celebrate 35 years of dancing in 2017 with a Royal Tea Party in May, a Workshop Weekend in the Fall, and the publication of a booklet of dances with accompanying CD.

Europe

Margaret Lambourne
margaret.lambourne@ziggo.nl

Münster Scottish Country Dancers organise their Christmas dance on the last Saturday before Christmas. This event was attended by over 80 dancers from all over Germany and beyond. It has a great atmosphere. To help the many less experienced participants, the more advanced dancers pick a small card with a



Edwin Werner and Ilona Stitz at the Munster Christmas Ball

name on it. Then they find that person and dance with her or him at least once so that beginners aren't too anxious and the group mixes well. After the last dance, the *Reel of the 51st Division*, dancers could take some whisky punch and stay overnight so that there was no need to travel back home directly after the event.

The Vienna-Budapest-Prague Friendship Weekend took place on the last weekend of September, arguably the most important dance event in the life of the Budapest Scottish Dance Club, writes its President, Ágnes Borbély, who has promised herself that there will be another similar event in 2018. The weekend, with a grant from the RSCDS, took place in Győr, Hungary, equidistant between Vienna and Budapest, and was attended by more than 70 dancers who enjoyed the music of Christina Hood on fiddle and David Hall on accordion. The superb teachers, Gabor Turi and David Hall, and the synergy of all the enthusiastic dancers made it a fantastic event. Dancing with friends and sitting at a huge table with 70 people created a very positive atmosphere. All the ingredients of Scottish dancing were there – music, teachers, dancers and dances, but the 70 people together brought about a very special experience.

Japan

Correspondent: Momoyo Suzuki
momo-gon@mbj.nifty.com

Tokyo, Tokai and Saitama Branches each held a class for *Book 50* in early autumn. It is very difficult to learn all the new dances in one day in less than four hours. Some of the experienced dancers were pleased to find several complicated, but good dances.

The Iris Scottish Country Dance Group, one of the groups in **Saitama Branch** celebrated its 30th Anniversary in September with live music. The group arranged a special demonstration of Highland dances and bagpipes. Four members of Tokai Branch performed *The Sword Dance* and members of Tokyo Pipe Band played. About 200 participants were impressed with the excellent performances. Many of the audience saw *The Sword Dance* for the first time.

Tokyo Branch held a class on 29 October for beginners, learning the spirit and social manners in a party atmosphere. Some beginners hesitate and feel nervous joining in with proficient dancers, so the programme was made up of many simple dances with walk-throughs. 68 participants enjoyed the party very much. The Tokyo

Branch is hopeful that those dancers will become members of the Branch.

The Bluebell Society, supported by Tokai Branch held a New Year Party on 7 January and about 150 people enjoyed dancing to music by the Akiko Kasama Scottish Country Dance Band. Following the party, Tokyo Branch held a New Years Party on 8 January with music by Hiroko Kokai (piano) and Hidenori Omori (fiddle). Saitama Branch held a similar event on 13 January, when the pianist was Yoko Ichikawa. About 85 and 100 dancers respectively enjoyed the parties. At the Saitama event, teachers performed *Double Trouble Triangles*, a favourite new dance.

Tokyo Branch is holding a weekend school from 26 – 28 May with Angela Young as teacher in Nikko, a World Heritage Site.

Saitama Branch is holding its weekend school from 20-22 October in the same venue with Sue Porter teaching.

New Zealand

Correspondent: Sue Lindsay
wee-davy@xtra.co.nz

New Zealand Branch held its 60th Summer School in Christchurch from 28 December till 5 January. David Williamson and his small committee, with helpers from the Canterbury Region, provided a school for dancers of all levels. The accommodation along with the meals was at College House in the University of Canterbury.

Dancers came from England, Scotland, Canada, Singapore, Australia as well as from most parts of New Zealand and they were treated to teaching from Scotland, Australia and both the North and South Islands of New Zealand. The New Zealand Branch always has its AGM on the afternoon of the 1 January, as no classes are held that day because of Hogmanay the night before! At this year's AGM a Branch Award was presented to Kathryn Hoskyn from Auckland for her many and varied services to the Branch.



Kathryn Hoskyn

At the President's Ball, where the President introduces the new Management Committee, another Branch Award was presented – this time to Janet Favel from Dunedin and again also for her many and varied services to the Branch. Next year's Summer School will be held in Masterton from 28 December to 5 January. If you haven't been to a New Zealand Summer School, it is an experience that you don't get anywhere else.



Janet Favel

North America West Coast

Correspondent: Roberta Gotfried
rgotfried@alum.vassar.edu

San Francisco Branch reports that nearly 250 dancers attended its Asilomar Weekend in the last weekend of October. Many had travelled from southern California, from outside California and from overseas. Especially pleasing were the numbers of youth and first timers this year. The teachers were Pat Coyle, Graham Donald, Sara Gratiot, Robert McOwen, Lin Pettingill and Andrew Smith. We were thrilled to dance to the fabulous music of Tullochgorum and StringFire! The highlight of the weekend was the Masquerade Ball held on Saturday night.



Duncan Mackenzie of Vancouver receiving his Scroll of Honour at the AGM

The masked ball is only held when the weekend coincides with Halloween, and so is especially memorable when that occurs. Dancers donned masks for the pre-ball social, the Grand March and the first dance. Everyone was treated to stirring musical theatre during the *Grand March*, with not one, but two bagpipers, Campbell Webster of New Hampshire and Stephen Thomforde of California. For those yet to discover the Asilomar experience first hand, and for everyone looking for a spectacular Fall dance weekend, reserve 17-19 November 2017!

San Diego Branch invites dancers to revel in the ocean breeze and breathtaking views of beautiful Del Mar, CA during the Spring Workshop Day School and Dance on 6 May 2017. Music for the classes and evening dance will be provided by the dynamic duo, well-known musicians Judi Nicolson and Andy Imbrie. San Diego is thrilled to welcome David Tague to teach the first class of the workshop as it will be his last west coast Scottish country dance workshop before he moves to Michigan. Then San Diego's own Marjorie McLaughlin will present a workshop on music for Scottish country dancers. With musicians Judi and Andy, the dancers will be able to explore in more depth the relationship between the music and the dance.



Birling in Russia



Russia

Correspondent: Maria Tsvetoukhina
mary_the_flower@mail.ru

Major Scotland-related days in the calendar inspire Scottish dancers throughout Russia to join in celebrations locally as well as to meet for dancing. The St Andrew's Day venue traditionally became St Andrew's Church in Moscow which welcomed dancers from different cities to an annual Ball. Marvellous live music by Clan McCeol Band made the event special, despite the weather outside the hall!

A week-long Scottish Culture Festival dedicated to Robert Burns took place for the seventh time in Cheboksary. A poetry contest, ceilidhs, SCD workshops, *To a Haggis* and the communal singing of *Auld Lang Syne* united the admirers of the poet and of Scottish culture from Cheboksary, Moscow, Perm, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, and Yoshkar-Ola.

South Africa

Correspondent: Heather Hodgson
heather.hodgson@uct.ac.za

The focus for the second part of 2016 for both the **Pretoria** and **Cape Town Branches** was the Dancing Achievement Awards (DAA). Wouter Joubert was the class tutor in Pretoria, while preparatory classes in Cape Town were offered by a team of local teachers before Fiona Grant from Bristol flew out courtesy of a *Susi Mayr Fund* award to tutor candidates. RSCDS examiner Mervyn Short was assisted by local teachers Martyn Nickless (Pretoria) and Barbara Braime (Cape Town). During Mervyn's brief time in the country he was able to take the Pretoria general class as well as offer a day workshop for the Cape Town teachers, whilst Fiona shared in the teaching at three of the Cape Town clubs.



Gill Loubser, Campbell Tyler and Heather Hodgson

Pretoria chairman Ryan Nelson reports that Mervyn's visit was very well received and that they appreciate the support from Headquarters.

Other **Pretoria Branch** activities included a Red Hat Ladies (a charitable society) function in August where after a demo, the ladies were encouraged to take to the floor. Members of **Cape Town Branch** enjoyed evaluating dances for possible inclusion in *Book 51*. Other branch activities included the continuation of the *No Walk No Talk* socials and a repeat of the popular workshop on dance diagrams.

At Cape Town's celebration dance in October, to mark the end of the DAA course, the Branch acknowledged the outstanding service that Campbell Tyler, Gill Loubser and Heather Hodgson have made to SCD in Cape Town and beyond when each received a Branch Award.

USA East Coast

Correspondent: Eilean Yates
edgyates@gmail.com

An exciting event was held in Kensington, Maryland, on 11 March when there was an open invitation to a dance in honour of the birthdays of DC area dancers Ellie and Mel Briscoe, Elizabeth Holtan and Maria Ward at the Snowdrop Ball. Excellent music was provided by Judi Nicolson, Kathy Fraser-Collins and Neil Barron. **New Jersey** hosted their Newhaven Highland Ball Weekend at the beginning of March with Thistle House. A Mt Cardigan Scottish Dance and Winter Sports Weekend was held in the Boston area. Further South the big Spring venue was at Unicoi State Park in the North Georgia mountains when the **Atlanta Branch** held its Spring workshop with Sandy Gallamore teaching and Mara Shea and Julie Gorka playing.

New York Branch have a new location for the 54th annual Pawling weekend in May. It will take place at Berkshire Hills, Copake, New York. The teachers this year are Antoine Rousseau, Arthur McNair, and Rebecca Roman. Scotch Mist with guest Catherine Miller will play for the Saturday night ball. In July there will be two Scottish Sessions again at **Pinewoods** in the woods of Plymouth. The teaching staff will be Fred DeMarse, Kate Neally, Sue Ronald and Jean Martin. **Thistle School** will be held from 2 – 7 July in Banner Elk in the NC mountains. Although summers can be hot in the Carolinas the dancers always enjoy the cool mountain breezes around Grandfather Mountain. It has even been known to be quite chilly! Luke and Adam Brady will be playing for classes, social dancing and for the Friday night gala.

Other News

The wee green book

The 9th edition of *Scottish Country Dances in Diagrams* will be published later this year. New dances are included; some less popular will go, but will still be available on www.theweegreenbook.org

Robbie Shepherd

By now everyone will know that Robbie has retired from presenting *Take the Floor* on BBC Radio Scotland. We are sorry to report that in October he tripped and broke his hip and landed up in hospital. He is recovering well and in his weekly column in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* he thanked everyone at the AGM who signed his 'muckle Get Weel caird fae members o the RSCDS on ma mischanter in braakin a hip jynt."

Exeter DAA

Congratulations to the 13 dancers who passed their DAA with flying colours, taught by Duncan Brown. Dancers came from Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset. The Branch is planning on running Basic Teaching Skills Workshops and more DAA courses.

100th Birthday

In September Mina Corson celebrated her 100th birthday in Edinburgh. Mina was a distinguished teacher, examiner and dance deviser. Members of Edinburgh Branch danced her dance, *Miss Allie Anderson*, with Judith Smith on fiddle. With the help of Bob Grant and Tim Bolton-Maggs, Mina danced 16 bars of strathspey still with a perfect 3rd position! A wonderful lady.

Davina Crowe

Davina Crowe emigrated to Canada in 1974 and has just returned to the UK. She took her Teacher's Certificate and founded the Naramata Scottish country dance group in 2004. Naramata is a small village in the heart of the Okanagan Valley's wine country in British Columbia. The group owes their skill and love of dance to Davina. They wish her well and thank her for what she has given to the people in the Okanagan Valley.

Belfast Branch

Belfast Branch 70 Years Old

2016 marked 70 years of Scottish country dancing in the Belfast area. Branch activities included a weekend school, a children's day school, a teacher training workshop, and events to encourage the public to participate and appreciate the health and social benefits of Scottish country dancing.

The St Andrews Ball on 2 December was enjoyed by dancers from Europe and as far afield as North Carolina and Australia. The programme began with a Grand March and included *Young at Heart* from Belfast's new anniversary book. Superb music was provided by Marian Anderson and her band and a delicious supper was served during the evening.

On 3 December a Gala Evening in the Titanic Suite commenced with a reception, with the Lord Mayor of Belfast welcoming everyone. The RSCDS Chairman, Helen Russell, addressed the company and presented the Branch Chairman with an Anniversary Certificate. Later in the



From left to right: Elizabeth Cameron MBE (Hon President), Helen Russell, Brian Kingston (Lord Mayor of Belfast), Aileen Patterson (Branch Chairman), Joan Madill (Branch Secretary.)

evening a video was played, showing members' reminiscences and memorable moments and people in the Branch's history.

The Lord Mayor was presented with the first copy of the *Platinum Anniversary Book of Dances*, specially devised and published by the Branch, together with a CD of the accompanying music, arranged and recorded by Marian Anderson. Guests

were entertained by MC John Wilkinson and a local singer. Some dances from the new book were performed by local dancers, accompanied by Marian Anderson and her band. There was then an opportunity for all to enjoy dancing in the magnificent surroundings before the evening concluded with *Auld Lang Syne* with the 260 present circling the Titanic suite.

New Years Honours

Elma McCausland MBE

A fitting end to Belfast's year of celebrations was the announcement of the award of MBE 'for services to Scottish country dancing' to Elma McCausland in the Queen's New Year's Honours list.

Elma started Scottish country dancing as a child in Aberdeen, becoming a fully certificated teacher in 1956. Since then she has been teaching at all levels, trained demonstration teams (including starting the Branch team over forty years ago and training it ever since), tutored certificate classes locally, overseas, and at Summer School, taught ladies step, and taught at



day and weekend schools worldwide. A wonderful mentor, she has brought her vast experience and wise counsel to all who seek it and continues to encourage new members and teachers.

A much-respected teacher-tutor and examiner, Elma has contributed greatly to the expansion of country dance teaching internationally, often accompanied by her beloved husband and 'bag carrier' Cecil, until he passed away in 2011. Elma is highly revered for her gentle manner in achieving high standards. Her skill in seeking the best from all with whom she engages is ever present.

Elma served as Convenor of the Examinations Committee, as a member of the Education and Training Committee, and has been Depute Director of Summer School. Belfast Branch is delighted that her commitment and dedication have been acknowledged by this award.

Aileen Patterson and Helen McGinley

Mary Ross BEM

Also honoured by the Queen in the New Year's Honours List was Mrs Mary Ross. Mary was introduced to Scottish country dancing in her native Banffshire at the age of 16. She moved to Inverness and became a member of the Inverness Branch in 1962 and brought her enthusiasm for dancing into the branch. In Nairn she started 3 children's classes and 1 adult class. Always interested in furthering



dancing she started a children's class in the Hilton Area of Inverness. Sometime later she also took on a class at North Kessock. For many years Mary organised Scottish country dances in aid of various charities and is noted for the active part she plays in country dancing throughout the Highlands. John Drewry devised the strathspey, *The Boyndie Knot*, published in *Bankhead Book 3* for Mary and her husband Jonathan's 40th wedding anniversary. They had been married in Boyndie Kirk near Banff.

Irene Whyte, Inverness

Two Big Birthdays



Jim and Marilyn Healy with East Ayrshire Provost Jim Todd and Kilmarnock Branch Chairman David Pinkerton at the Anniversary Ball.

Kilmarnock and District Branch - 80

At a meeting on 19 October 1936, Miss Milligan persuaded over 30 Kilmarnock dancers to form a branch of the SCDS. Fast forward 80 years and on 21 October 2016, Kilmarnock and District Branch, celebrated its 80th Anniversary Ball in The Grand Hall, Kilmarnock.

Following the formation of the branch, membership quickly increased. At one dance in the 50s there were over 300 dancers with Jimmy Shand playing. In 2006 Branch Awards were presented to Annie Parker and to Janie Barr.

Today what the branch lacks in numbers is more than compensated for by the enthusiasm of members. That dedication was very much in evidence on 21 October when branch members were joined by dancers not only from neighbouring branches but also from branches all over the country. Cameron Reece piped the dancers in.

Society chairman Jim Healy and Jim Todd, the Provost of East Ayrshire Council, were the guests of honour. Branch Chairman, David Pinkerton, proposed the Loyal Toast to the Queen. Jim Healy then proposed a toast to the Branch and, in his reply, David

Pinkerton commented that whilst it was right to celebrate events such as the 80th Anniversary, of equal importance was the part played in helping to secure the future of the Society, and that would be evident when the Branch would host its Annual Children's Day of Dance. The Ian Muir Scottish Dance Band provided the music for a varied programme of dances including a new dance, *Kilmarnock 80th Anniversary Reel*, devised by the Branch Chairman. Weeks after the event, Branch members were still talking about how much they had enjoyed the celebrations – a sure sign of a happy branch.

On 16 November the annual Children's Day of Dance took place with 500 children from 20 local primary schools dancing a mixture of Ceilidh and Scottish country dances to music by George Meikle.

Prior to the event members of the Branch had visited schools to help the children prepare. A good turnout of Branch members, assisted by members from neighbouring North Ayrshire Branch ensured that there was plenty of help. The enthusiasm shown by all the children cannot be faulted and even if only a handful of these children go on to participate in Scottish country dancing, Kilmarnock and District Branch can be proud of the fact that it was responsible for showing them just how enjoyable Scottish country dancing can be.

David Pinkerton

Birmingham Branch - 70

Last year Birmingham Branch celebrated its 70th Anniversary. Founded in 1946 and still maintaining a healthy membership, the Branch has helped hundreds of people to learn Scottish country dancing through its classes and day schools. Currently, there are classes for beginners and for intermediate/advanced dancers in Kings Heath while a group of retired people meet in Bournville. The annual Afternoon School

in early March takes place in the Selly Oak area of the city and is followed by an evening Dance.

Celebrations got under way with our Annual Ball at King Edward's School in Edgbaston. Over 100 people attended and enjoyed a great evening of dancing to the music of Strathallan.

Over the years, many Branch members have travelled abroad as part of demonstration teams and many lasting friendships have

been formed. In May, we hosted a return visit from our folk-dancing friends in Neudau, Austria, where our dem team had participated in a festival last year. Here, we entertained audiences in Birmingham City Centre, at the Avoncroft Museum and at Charlecote Park.

One of our main aims this year has been to produce a dance book to commemorate another milestone, just as we did ten years ago with our Diamond Jubilee Book. From a total of 35 entries, 15 dances were eventually selected for the Platinum Book. George Meikle arranged the music. Finally, after further rehearsals to check the dances matched the words, the new book was published in time for the AGM in the autumn.

On 5 November a large contingent from Birmingham arrived in Perth to attend the AGM Ball. The Branch had devised the Ball programme. It was with great pride that we joined over 450 dancers from all over the world on this most illustrious occasion. The music by Jim Lindsay and his Band was superb and the evening provided a fitting finale to a very memorable year.

Roger Cooper



Dancing The Library of Birmingham at the AGM

The AGM from a French Perspective



From left to right: Mathias Ferber, Florence Bury, Asako Tamaki, Avril Quarrie, Raphaëlle Orgeret, Corentin Lefèvre

This year Paris Branch were looking for a delegate to attend the 87th AGM of the RSCDS in Perth. Mathias, the Paris delegate, was able to convince Corentin, Paris Branch Board member, to join the adventure. We landed at Edinburgh Airport on the Friday night and decided to hire a car. Driving for the first time on the left, in the dark, and in the rain, was our first introduction to this most exotic weekend. We arrived just in time for the Friday evening dance, a perfect way to get into the mood for dancing, thanks to Marian Anderson and her Scottish Dance Band. So far, it was the largest social dancing event we had ever attended.

On Saturday morning, the weather was cold and ... beautiful! We met with our many friends from the UK for lunch, all of them young delegates with a lot of experience. They gave us interesting

warnings about the AGM meeting. In a sentence: "it will be long!". The AGM started, and we were separated. Mathias was sitting with all the delegates, while Corentin, free from all duties, was sitting at the side, watching carefully. After a VERY formal opening, which was surprising to our French habits. (It was, after all, the first time ever we were welcomed by the message of an actual Queen), we found the meeting very enlightening. Corentin did not miss any part of the financial report: did you know that the annual budget of the RSCDS is as high as £850,000? Two other highlights were the nomination of the new chairman, Helen Russell, and the award of Scrolls of Honour to distinguished members of the Society. We were very pleased to learn that one was awarded to Avril and David Quarrie, two very dear friends who mean a lot to us.

For the first time this year, the AGM was broadcast on social media, which allowed several of our members from Paris to follow the event live. Corentin was of course texting all the missing details to them. Meanwhile, Mathias, safely installed between Rachel Shankland and Fiona Mackie, was very efficiently encouraged by good advice and a supply of sweets! We spent the rest of the afternoon visiting the city centre, and were delighted to spend some time in Perth Art Gallery.

Finally came the highlight of the weekend, the AGM ball. A fantastic evening with Jim Lindsay and his Scottish Dance Band. The crowd was even larger! We had never seen so many people on the dance floor, and counting the sets to the bottom took quite a long time.

Overall, how did we enjoy our weekend in Perth? It was an overwhelming time spent with so many great friends from everywhere! Dancing here was amazing thanks to the excellent level, beautiful music, and nice atmosphere. You all may enjoy joining the AGM next year, but make sure you tell your friends that you are coming, otherwise you might not see them throughout the whole weekend.

And the AGM itself? Well, it was one of the shortest in history!

Mathias Ferber and Corentin Lefèvre

The Stooshie

In Scotland local newspapers are very good at reporting on Scottish country dance events, particularly if they involve children. In the national press during the AGM weekend in November we had a country dance 'stooshie' – a Scots word meaning a kind of minor row or commotion. *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, echoed by the other Scottish dailies, had the headline 'Scottish country dancing needs to go, so we can stop bullying.' Minor shock waves rippled around our conference weekend.

For those not familiar with Scottish schools, November is the time when 'social dancing' is taught in virtually every school throughout the country in the run-up to St Andrews Night or school Christmas dances. The basic dances taught are usually the *Gay Gordons*, the *Canadian Barn Dance*, *Strip the Willow*, the *Dashing White Sergeant*, the *St Bernard's Waltz* and, if you are lucky, the *Eightsome Reel*. In primary schools, class teachers teach the dances. In secondary schools it is the PE teachers and it is normal to gather several classes together in the school hall. It is not unknown to have over 100 teenagers together, with one teacher, and a CD player. Many of us have fond memories of dancing with a member of the opposite sex for the first time during these classes. Any teacher who has taught children knows that girls dance with boys, wee girls dance with wee girls, wee laddies dance with other wee laddies. As long as they are dancing and having fun!

The Press reported that the Scottish Association of Teachers of Physical Education had claimed that the 'gender specific' nature of social dance could be linked to bullying and homophobia. LEAP Sports Scotland, the organisation committed to breaking down barriers which prevent LGBT people across the country from participating in sport, reported an increase in calls from school pupils seeking help about bullying during the period when social dancing was taught. The Society replied vigorously to refute any connection with dancing and bullying. By the Monday following, the whole stooshie had died down and an excellent article with quotes from Jim Healy, appeared in *The Glasgow Herald*, 'Society rejects country dance bullying claim.'

The whole issue had risen on the Friday and was dead by the Monday. A storm in a teacup. The debate, however, continued on the newspapers' websites. Most people were outraged by the attack on country dancing and were generally supportive. Alasdair Mackenzie was so good at it that he got to stand at the front and wind up the gramophone! Eileen McBride summed it up, 'What complete and utter nonsense.' Several months on, and nobody remembers it. It has been said that all publicity – good or bad – is good publicity. And there's only one thing worse than being talked about – and that is not being talked about!

Jimmie Hill

Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band

One of the original aims of the RSCDS was to 'preserve and practise the traditional country dances of Scotland'. In Scotland today there are music and dance specialists, outwith the Society, going back to original sources. Jimmie Hill reports on three significant events, recently held in Edinburgh.

Concert, workshop and ball

On Friday 20 January in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, a concert took place in the very room and exactly 200 years to the day when Nathaniel Gow introduced quadrilles direct from Paris. The main hall in the recently restored Edinburgh Assembly Rooms is one of the largest and finest 18th century ballrooms in the UK. An ensemble consisting of two fiddlers, a cellist and a player of the small pipes, known as *Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band*, played as dancers from *Les Danses Antiques* danced a quadrille and five 18th century country dances in period costume: *Vertigo*, *The New Town of Edinburgh*, *The Wives of Kilwinnon*, *Kheellum Khallum taa fein* and *Sailor Lassie*. *The New Town of Edinburgh* is the only one in the RSCDS repertoire. The following day the well-known historical dance specialist from London, Stuart Marsden, taught a 3-hour quadrille workshop with 70 dancers. Stuart was responsible for the dance scenes in the recent BBC series, *Poldark*. On 11 March, again 200 years to the day, chandeliers aglow and with everyone in period costume, Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band played for a Regency Ball in the Assembly Rooms. Dancers came from all over the UK and Europe, with Stuart Marsden calling the quadrilles in French. We danced four country dances and *Gow's First, Second and Third Sets of Quadrilles*, all to original unamplified music. Spectacular is the only word to describe it.



Stuart Marsden calling the dances at the Nathaniel Gow Ball.
Photo courtesy of Juliette Lichman

The Quadrille

By 1815 Britain was war-weary. We had been at war on and off for more than 20 years. Many women had suffered badly as their menfolk were away fighting. The well-off had been starved of their luxuries: French wine, brandy, and silks. But news had reached even Edinburgh that during the Revolution a new dance tradition – the quadrille – had developed in Paris. After Waterloo, English, Scottish and Irish dance masters crossed the Channel to experience this first-hand, attending the classes of the best Parisian teachers. They brought back the new steps, formations, dances and dance manuals. Quadrillemania swept the country. It was a new dance for a new era.

So, why should we be interested in quadrilles today? A very brief summary of what we have inherited from the quadrille tradition includes:

- a clear definition using ballet terms of the chassée step, the one we call skip change
- a clear description of the original pas de basque step
- the country dance in a square set
- the ladies' chain clearly defined
- rights and lefts clearly defined
- the grand chain

Dance style

One of the most interesting features in the country dance demonstrations was the dance style. Miss Milligan and her contemporaries decided that we would hold our arms at around shoulder height. Contemporary illustrations of the 18th century show arms down and this was how the dancers danced. Another major difference was the use of skip change in circles. The decision to use slip step dates to 1923. Another difference was that when leading down the middle and back, nearer hands were used. In *Country Dancing Made Plain and Easy*, London, 1764, 'to lead down, the couple so doing must turn their faces towards the bottom of the dance, the man taking the woman's right hand in his left, and so moving forwards.' Our leading with right hand in right hand also dates from 1923. The dance we dance as a strathspey, *The New Town of Edinburgh*, was danced to its original tune as a hornpipe. The dance begins with the 1st and 2nd couples setting and crossing over. Robert Bremner's 1761 instructions say, 'The first and second couple foot it and change sides.' 'Footing' is described in the 1764 manual as an alternative word to 'setting' and means 'moving the foot behind close to the other and hopping, being careful to move yourself as little backwards with it as possible', and this is what the dancers did – as far from our setting as one could imagine! It was fascinating to watch non-RSCDS trained dancers looking afresh at a tradition we think of as our own.

Nathaniel Gow (1766 – 1831)

All three events this year highlight the huge importance of Nathaniel Gow. Born near Dunkeld, the youngest son of Niel Gow, Nathaniel is arguably the most important figure in the history of country dancing in Scotland. In his *Biographical Dictionary of the most Eminent Scotsmen*, published in 1835, Robert Chambers writes that it is 'difficult to describe the influence, success, and reputation of Nathaniel . . . He is considered the most eminent of (Niel's) sons for advancing the cause and popularity of our national music.' He studied the violin under his father Niel, Robert McIntosh and Alexander McGlashan, as well as the cello under Joseph Reneagle, later Professor of Music at Oxford University. For 40 years from 1791 his band was the foremost dance band in Scotland. In 1796 he supplements this by opening a music shop in Edinburgh selling both music and musical instruments. Meanwhile, his brother John moved to London and had his own Scottish band. Between them the Gow brothers played at the most important dance assemblies in both Scotland and England. Nathaniel frequently visited London. George IV would invite him to play for him – the king himself joining the band as cellist. At the height of his popularity it was said that Nathaniel was worth £20,000 – well over a million in today's money. Modern bands – and RSCDS branch treasurers – would be shocked that he was usually paid 100 – 150 guineas to play. That would be in the region of £7000 today. Apart from his many iconic publications, it was said of his playing that 'he had all the fire and spirit of his father in the quick music, with more refined taste, delicacy and cleanness of intonation in the slow and plaintive melodies.' Chambers gives his most popular tunes as: *Callar Herring*, *Sir George Clark*, *Lady Charlotte Durham*, the *Miller of Drone*, *Largo's Fairy Dance*, and *Mrs Wemyss of Castlehill*. Every year he held a ball in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, 'attended by all the fashionable and wealthy of the country'. This was the inspiration for the Ball on March 11.

Scottish or English?

Was this Scottish country dancing? Today the two national traditions have diverged, but in the late 18th and early 19th centuries the country dance was still evolving. Francis Peacock of Aberdeen had 'the advantage of a regular tuition under the best Masters in London', according to his obituary in the *Aberdeen Journal* (8 July 1807). The dances which were danced in London and Bath would be danced in Edinburgh, Dumfries and Inverness and vice versa. John Gow played both Scottish and English music in London as Nathaniel did in Edinburgh. John introduced Scottish tunes into London quadrille dancing. Nathaniel used French and classically-inspired tunes in Edinburgh. Cross-fertilisation between Scotland and London was the norm.

Concerto Caledonia

One of the most exciting elements of this year's Gow events was the playing of *Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band*, drawn from the established ensemble, Concerto Caledonia. The lead fiddler in the band, Aaron McGregor, is a final year PhD student at Glasgow University, studying the early history of the violin in Scotland. Aaron believes the two things people notice about their style of playing are the bass-lines and the lack of harmony instruments. They use period instruments, set up as they would have been around 1770. It's a much simpler sound than we are used to today without anyone vamping chords. They have tried to bring together traditional fiddlers as well as people with an Early Music background – Marie Fielding on fiddle, Alison McGillivray on cello and Callum Armstrong on the small pipes and baroque recorder. Their playing style has grown out of the material from the early collections.



During the 18th century a country dance band would play only the one tune for a dance, whereas we are used to several after the so-called 'original'. At the concert Aaron mentioned that Nathaniel Gow was one of the first to use medleys of different tunes and tempos. He is of the view there is so much more source material in libraries which has not been looked at. The work which the RSCDS has done on the historic repertoire was all done in the pre-digital age when you had to go in person and dig around in different libraries. Today you can use search engines and find manuscripts and cross-reference much more easily. It will be interesting to see whether the work which researchers outwith the RSCDS are now doing may inspire us to curate the heritage and look again at what we have not published. Aaron and his colleagues are currently introducing this historical material to the wider traditional music world both here in Scotland and abroad. He maintains that in order to re-imagine what this 'sound world' was, there is a lot of research still to be done. When asked what

was different when you take a Bremner or Gow fiddle tune and play it on the piano, his view is that it is a very different world and you lose something of the original style as soon as you add chords. When you listen to Aaron and his colleagues, you have to forget your preconceptions about what Scottish dance music sounds like and listen with new ears.

Talitha Mackenzie

The driving force behind the Gow weekend and Ball was the ethnomusicologist, Talitha MacKenzie, originally from New York, but living in Edinburgh for 30 years. She has been interested in historical dance since she was a teenager; she is on the Board of the Historical Dance Society (formerly the Dolmetsch HSDS); and teaches historical dance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow. Along with Stuart Marsden, she has worked on reconstructing the three Gow quadrilles for the Ball; she has recorded the music in advance for all the dancers attending. She rightly deserves to be recognised for organising what has been a unique series of events, celebrating the great Nathaniel Gow, the very important quadrille tradition, and bringing unpublished country dances to everyone's attention, marrying authentic music and dance.

Before writing this article I met Aaron McGregor and David McGuinness of the Music Department of Glasgow University. David made the very valid distinction between history and tradition. History looks at historical documents which cannot change. Tradition, on the other hand, is always changing. Perhaps in the RSCDS we need to think about how we have changed and continue to change tradition.



References:

Biographical Dictionary of the most Eminent Scotsmen, Robert Chambers 1835.

For dance and music sources go to hms.scot

For Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band go to concal.org to hear what Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band sounds like, to see where they are playing next and to buy their CD.

For more information on next year's ball, contact info@sonasmultimedia.co.uk



The RSCDS

Centre picture: New Zealand Summer School. Clockwise from top left: the middle in New Zealand, the Asilomar Masked Ball, President, Chairmen, dancers in Perm, Russia, two proud young Scots from Glasgow, Jim Lindsay





in Pictures

AGM delegates, young dancers in Colorado, leading back up an, and Chairman Elect with the Provost of Perth and Kinross, and the Provost's Band at the AGM in Perth.



Tribute to Alastair Aitkenhead

By Muriel Johnstone



Alastair at the front door of his wee house in the village of Corrie, Isle of Arran. Photo courtesy of Christine Hastie.

With the passing of Alastair Aitkenhead on 27 November 2016, the Society lost one of the last iconic figures of an era in Scottish country dancing that began just after the war. For me, and for countless others, Alastair Aitkenhead was a major influence, an inspiration and a joy to have known. He always promoted the idea 'It has to be fun to dance'. Throughout his long life it was all about the fun of it! He was a huge character, full of ideas, sometimes fairly radical, pushing for the things he believed in: fostering dancing, music and young people. He was one of the most influential people in Scottish country dancing, if not *the* most. As a person he always had a winning smile, a twinkle in the eye, an ear for whatever you might have to say; he was classless, fearless, guileless but *never* humourless or fashionless*!

Alastair was a man of fairly humble beginnings, born into a family that had moved from Glasgow to the port of Ardrossan in 1921, where his father was expecting work in the Dry Dock Shipping Company. Just weeks later the great Depression set in. Alastair's father journeyed to America and worked in New York State for five years as a carpenter. Alastair was born that same year - one of six children. His mother must have been a remarkable woman because all of the Aitkenheads are imbued with fairness, friendliness, a desire for education and to educate, pioneering spirits, an abundance of ideas and certainly in Alastair's case, a huge sense of fun.

Living in Ardrossan from the age of 18 months, I have known Alastair nearly all of my life. My parents moved from Broughty Ferry in Angus to Ayrshire in 1940 in the same year as Alastair was starting his PE

The Isle Of Arran - Alastair's home

course at Jordanhill College before a break in his training of five years when he was called up and did his military service in India, latterly serving as Company Commander in Peshawar near the Afghanistan border. His PE speciality was Swedish gymnastics, but he was also aware of the start of the explosion of other sports such as basketball and swimming. Alastair was always passionate about the importance of physical exercise and believed it was essential for all children to have fun at their



Alastair in Saltcoats Town Hall, 1956, at an evening to entertain some Russian visitors to the area. Alastair danced The Foursome Reel with Dorothy Johnstone, Dr Leslie Currie and his wife Dorothy. Photo courtesy of Muriel Johnstone.

own level of ability. "Dance is important because it gives every kid a chance to do something physically, socially, emotionally and culturally. It breaks down barriers." (*The Arran Voice*). This was his vision which underpinned his abiding passion for dance. He also believed that 'any dance that is not fun is too competitive'.

After completing his studies, Alastair's first job was in Stevenston, Ayrshire, where he taught PE including dancing for both boys and girls and started a very successful boys' gymnastics team. He left college as one of Miss Milligan's 'boys' - that was what she called those young men who had come back from military service and turned up for her Scottish country dance classes! Alongside securing a teaching post, Miss Milligan urged Alastair to go and start a new branch of the Scottish Country Dance Society. He did just that and the North West Ayrshire Branch was formed in 1948. My mother, Dodo (Dorothy) Johnstone, a keen country dancer, joined the class started by Alastair and was often his partner in demonstrations. So started a long association throughout both their dancing lives. Dodo ended up playing piano for Alastair's classes in NW Ayrshire and of particular interest to her, playing for Miss Anne Hughes' children's classes. Anne was a pupil of Alastair's and continued to promote his 'free and easy' style of dancing but with great attention to detail as well, producing fantastic results from a regular attendance of 90 children on a Saturday morning. We LOVED it! This is a part of the legacy that Alastair has left - a style of dancing in which nothing is affected, nothing stylised, all very natural, allowing people to retain their own character.

As a result of his enthusiastic teaching, his forward-looking ideas and his constant encouragement and support of others, North Ayrshire Branch has produced two Society Chairmen: himself and Leslie Currie; an extraordinary teacher of children in Anne Hughes; four Summer School teachers - himself, Jean McKelvie, Eric Finlay and John Johnston and two pianists for Summer School - Dodo Johnstone and myself.



Alastair with the winning North West Ayrshire ladies team from the Ayr Festival in 1957. They danced Miss Clemy Stewart's Reel and Keppoch's Rant, gaining 89 marks! Miss Milligan was the adjudicator. Back row l to r: Ishbel McCarroll, Dorothy Johnstone (Muriel's mother), Dorothy Ferguson, Christine Davidson, Jean McColm, Jean McKelvie, and Alastair. Front row l to r: Anne Hughes, Ms McCann. Photo courtesy of Muriel Johnstone.

His service to the Society was all-encompassing, selfless and untiring. He was a teacher, examiner, committee member, Depute Director of Summer School and Chairman of the Society. I think Alastair was rightly extremely proud of his achievements but none of his ideas and projects were put forward for self-promotion, aggrandisement, power or glory. It was always about the joy of dancing, the benefits to be had, the sharing, the friendship and the fun. This was evident from his Branch work to Society committee work; from Branch Chairman to Society Chairman; from 'ideas man' to organiser of ground-breaking projects such as Dance Around the World, called 'Reel-Aid', which raised a great deal of money for charity; 'Dance Scottish in Schools' fostering the teaching of SCD in schools and establishing children's days of dance and children's festivals. The Day of Dance in the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow had 3,000 children dancing. Alastair also encouraged the formation of the Australian Teachers' Alliance and pushed for overseas examiners. His ideas were not restricted to Scotland. He travelled extensively and I am sure that on these trips abroad he would have been an excellent ambassador for Scotland and for dancing and he would have engaged people in conversation and stirred up their thinking. He also believed that Scotland could learn from other

places and that perhaps we could look at the Australian and New Zealand Schools for ideas to incorporate into St Andrews Summer School.

Alastair said that his command of people in the army was a big help in teaching. More than anything it gave him a social awareness. I think teaching was second nature to him! I will never forget my first experience as a young adult dancer in his regular weekly Branch class marvelling at his ability to move people around the room engendering fun, bonhomie and often general mayhem as we warmed up. Within minutes everyone was smiling or laughing and was glad to be there. I also remember his ABC class - the A being awareness and the C - courtesy. I don't remember what B was - perhaps balance. His other directive was that dancing should consist of fun, flight and formation.

Those of us who knew and spent any time with Alastair will have stories to tell of his antics, particularly at ceilidhs and parties when he was simply hilarious, often dressed up in some crazy outfit and laughing all the while. He had a terrific sense of the ridiculous and a lovely sense of humour. During the 60th Summer School a team of 'golden oldies' took the floor to give us a demonstration which was a sheer delight to watch. Alastair partnered Anna Holden and they chatted and smiled

all the way through. I imagined him saying to Anna, "Keep me right, lass; where do we go next"! "Apparently what he said was, "I hope they've got the oxygen ready for us when we come off"! At Winter School in Pitlochry he will be remembered for leading the evening singing in hearty renditions of *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* and *My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean* and finishing the evening with *Happy We'll be A' Thegither*.

Alastair Aitkenhead has been one of the biggest influences on my life and on my dancing. This, I think, has been said of him by many people. I, personally, can never thank him enough for what he has given me. He encouraged, supported, listened, advised and gave me wings. On occasions when I was steamed up about some issue, Alastair, having listened, would look me in the eye, smile, reach over and pat my hand saying "Aye, lass, but it's only Scottish country dancing"! We could all learn from that.

He will be missed and remembered fondly - as he signed his letters and Christmas cards - As Aye, Alastair.

* If you are 'fashionless', you lack vigour and drive.

There is an interview by Jimmie Hill in *Scottish Country Dancer*, No 11 October 2010, which gives more insight into Alastair's life.

In My Opinion



A small courtesy, with a large impact

Marjorie McLaughlin of San Diego Branch

We enjoy many delightful social customs amongst our Scottish country dance practices. Some are charming anachronisms from earlier times and habits; others wax and wane in practice. Who remembers a bit of post-banquet flurry before the formal ball when we moved from table to table ensuring our dance cards were filled before the first chord was struck? A remarkable story was related to me in the 60s by Joyce Frew, wife of Bobby Frew, the wonderful accordionist who played with Stan Hamilton. After agreeing to book a dance with a gentleman for later in the programme, she was dismayed by his reaction when she presented herself for the said dance. "Where's your husband?" he inquired. "He's on the stage, he's in the band", she responded. To which he replied, "Well, that will never do. Who is my wife to dance with?" And off he walked!

If such practices still occur, it is likely they are rare. But there is one practice that occurs at every class, at every informal and formal event: we bow and curtsy to acknowledge our partners at the start and end of every dance. It seems, however, that we are losing a sense of the value and importance of this small courtesy. In watching the ubiquitous videos of dancing available on YouTube and elsewhere, I am dismayed at the frequent lack of attention to this part of our dancing. Setting aside for the

moment the occasional wonder I feel as to what makes dancers actually *want* to post videos where the quality of dancing is most questionable, it is discouraging to see a curt bob or shrug when a graceful bow and curtsy would set the stage for a lovely dance with one's partner.

The chord by which we offer this courtesy is also important to setting the musical stage. By treating it as inconsequential, we are being discourteous to the musicians, as well as to our partners. The chord sets the tempo and provides the notes which shape our bows and curtses. If you pay attention to recordings, as well as live performances, I think you would find that these chords also have distinctive characteristics. I know I can distinguish a chord played by a band led by Stan Hamilton, Bobby Brown, Muriel Johnstone, Bobby Crowe, or Barbara McOwen, to name just a few. Some are long, some short, but we should frame our bows and curtses to what we are hearing from the musicians just as we phrase the full dance to the tempo being played.

Scottish country dancing is charming, engaging, and most of all sociable. The bow and curtsy is a small but important gesture of courtesy and greeting. Don't toss it aside as insignificant; it is a way of showing respect and kindness to one's partner and a gesture of civility that we can extend to how we interact with others, even outside the dance community.

I taught a children's class at a workshop where I showed the dancers how to bow and curtsy and emphasized what an important part of the dance this was. The mother of one of the pupils wrote to me later to say that, much to her amusement, at every class since, her daughter has demanded proper bows and curtses of everyone in attendance!

Focus on Technique



The Eyes Have It

Elinor M. Vandegrift of Seattle Branch

Recent years have seen contentious elections and referenda around the globe. On most occasions nations have accepted that the 'eyes' have it. Our Scottish country dance scene also recognizes that the 'eyes' have it. One of the strengths of our activity is its social aspect. Our general posture, use of hands and, ah yes, the use of eyes are all part of the enjoyment. Many of us enjoy dancing with various groups in our regions and further afield. Our teacher training program got a solid base from co-founder Jean Milligan. Teaching has evolved over the years, but the solid base allows dancers to pack their ghillies and enjoy dancing in other parts of the world, whatever the language of the class is. Some of the standard SCD phrases such as *rights and lefts*; *poussette*; or *double triangles* will be woven into every lesson. We know there will be a helpful hand, a smile and eye contact to help us enjoy the event.

From the beginning of your own SCD career the leader of the taster session, ceilidh, or basic class will have encouraged you to keep your eyes up and to look at your partner and the other dancers in your set. Any dancer knows that it is more fun to make eye contact and to dance with a social partner. Dancers will help with cues and a smile when they know someone is headed their way.

Have you ever made your best effort to catch the eye of someone dancing *a reel of three across* and nothing social happened? We know that the two men should be covering with each other and likewise the two women. Without eye contact it is not possible to do this successfully. Where's the social feeling in this formation or dance without that eye contact? The first couple passes through the middle of the reel enjoying a 'magic moment' with their eyes.

There is not a formation that does not warrant eye contact. If we do not look for the other person passing through the middle of a *set and link* with us, or when we change places in the first 8 bars of *The Reel of the Royal Scots*, one might consider that 'empty dancing'. The 'controlled abandon' encouraged by Jean Milligan is alive when there is eye contact. She encouraged us to dance with our soul. When the eyes do not have it, we have lost some soul. Let us ensure that the 'eyes have it' whenever we dance.

Be Inspired!

Scots' Gathering
in the Canadian Rockies

SCD teachers: Pat Houghton, Evelyn Nixon & Fiona Carnie

Musicians' Workshop: Judi Nicolson

Classes in dance, music, art,
lectures, whisky tasting and much more!

October 6-9, 2017
Canmore, Alberta, Canada

www.calgaryscots.org

Presented by the St Andrew-Caledonian Society and RSCDS Calgary Branch

Spotlight on Iberia



Lisbon with three country dance groups. Photo courtesy of Sue Willdig and Roger Picken

We have no branches in Spain or Portugal, but there are thriving country dance groups for you to call in on next time you are looking for some sunshine. Portugal has four groups, one in the Algarve and three in the Lisbon area. Spain has at least six groups. For all contact details, see sites.google.com/site/ipscdg/ Every year all the groups come together for the Iberian Weekend. All the groups welcome visitors, so pack your pumps along with your passport!

Spain

Madrid (Schiehallion Club)

This group dates back to 1976. In 1992 Jeronimo Maeso had the idea of holding an annual Iberian Weekend for all the groups. This annual event has proved very popular. The club meets on Tuesdays in a Flamenco Dance School in central Madrid. Since 2001 the teacher has been Fiona Perez Peterkin. The teaching is in English.

Malaga

The group began in 1988. It meets year round on Tuesdays and Fridays at 5pm in the Edificio Agata on the Av Gamonal 2, Arroyo de la Miel in Benalmadena. There is usually a set with a mixture of ex-pats and Spanish. The group contact is Terry Alabaster and the teacher is Martin Sheffield.

Alcossebre (between Valencia and Tarragona)

Moir Black runs this group which meets on Tuesday afternoons from 2.30 between October and the beginning of May. They are in a Spanish holiday resort so are used to welcoming visitors. They use a local council venue and are lucky to get it free of charge, so the class is free!

Torrevieja (south of Alicante)

This small group was formed 25 years ago by Joseph Killeen and has around 12 dancers, often supplemented by people on holiday. They meet in El Paraiso in Torrevieja on Thursdays at 15.00 from October until May. Contact Cate Blair.

Javea (between Valencia and Alicante)

Founded about 27 years ago and originally based in Denia, the group moved to Javea around 18 years ago. It meets at the Tennis Club, Paris 24, in Javea on a Wednesday from 15.30 from mid-September to mid-June. The room has a proper dance floor, and the charge is €3 per session. There is an extra charge for the air conditioning when it gets too hot!

Jerez (near Cádiz)

This group hosted last year's Iberian Weekend, with 140 dancing to Marian Anderson's band. It meets in El Puerto de Santa María, a municipality on the banks of the Guadalete River, right in the middle of sherry country! The group was started in 2012 by Douglas and Carol Bone. Originally mostly ex-pats, they now have Spanish members. The group meets at 8pm on Mondays at Casa de Los Toruños in Valdelagrana, followed by tapas in a local bar, which sounds like the perfect class!

Portugal

Lisbon (Carcavelos)

This group has its origins in the 70s in the St Andrews Church of Scotland in Lisbon with the Faulkners, the Fairleys and the Croft de Moura family. Jane Fernandes and Roger Picken then ran the group. Barbara Gray is now the teacher. With around 30 members, it is a very international group with about half Portuguese. The group meets on Thursday evenings in St Julian's School at 8pm.

Lisbon (Telheiras)

Also known as the Grupo de Dança Escocesa da ART, this group was founded in 2004 by teacher Roger Picken and his wife Sue. There are two classes per week, one of which is for beginners. Roger teaches the beginners in Portuguese while the higher level class is taught mostly in English. With a total of around 25 dancers, there is usually one or two sets. With a venue provided free by the parish council, there is no membership fee and only a 2 euro contribution per class.

Lisbon (Lapa)

The Lapa group was founded in 2012 by Isabel Monteiro and Joana Ferreira, who both qualified at St Andrews. The group meets in the Church of Scotland in Lapa on Sundays from 5.30 till 8. Usually around 20 people, mostly upper intermediate and advanced.

Lagoa (near Portimão in the Algarve)

The Algarve SCD Group has been meeting in the Nobel International School at Lagoa for about 20 years from mid-September through to mid-June on Mondays from 19.30. Mardie Cunningham takes the group. They usually have a couple of sets, mainly ex-pats but also other nationalities.

The Iberian Weekend

This annual event is the highlight of the year for all the Spanish and Portuguese groups. It is hosted by a different group each year. The last four years have been in Barcelona, Jerez, Madrid, Valencia. In 2018 it will be in the Algarve, but hosted by the Lisbon Lapa group. Dancers from other countries are welcome.

Young Dancers' Page



Matilde Kvisilla

Matilde and Sirli from Tallinn

Matilde, 16, and Sirli, 15, live and dance in Tallinn, Estonia, and together came to Summer School for their first time last year. Matilde brought her violin, and Sirli brought a freestyle dance for the Friday night ceilidh.

Sirli and Matilde, do you have a favourite Scottish country dance memory?

Matilde: I think I love almost everything about Scottish country dances. My first experience of it took place last summer in St Andrews. I was really fascinated by all the friendly people, the live music and the dances. I was a real beginner and it was surprising and very lovely that everybody was so helpful and kind during the week. It was also very interesting to play for the dancers on the last evening.

Sirli: That is really hard to answer because I love every memory I have about SCD, but the best ones are probably from the events abroad, for example the International Branch weekends in Copenhagen and Killarney and, of course, the week in St Andrews. They have given me so much experience and I have made many acquaintances from all over the world.

Matilde, you're a very good violinist. When did you start playing Scottish tunes?

I have been playing the violin for almost nine years, but I started playing Scottish tunes about four years ago when my Dad gave me a book of Scottish and Irish folk tunes. I haven't played for our group yet, but I think that Summer School gave me a very good experience of putting sets together and I'm quite sure I will try playing for our dancers in the future.

Sirli, you clearly love dancing in general. What is special about Scottish country dance for you?

Scottish country dance is a big part of

me because I have been dancing for as long as I can remember. I'm dedicated to dance for as long as my feet can carry me because it makes me feel good and I can meet so many good people that I wouldn't otherwise meet.

Estonia has a rich folk tradition. How did you come across Scottish country dance there?

Matilde: My parents have always loved Scottish music. As my Dad is a folk musician and plays mostly Estonian tunes, I played Estonian folk music at first. But about 4 years ago I started learning Scottish and Irish tunes. About a year ago, Sirli's mother, asked me if I would like to go to St Andrews with them and join the Musicians Course. It was as if all my dreams had come true! I was a real beginner in dancing but by the end of the week, I had learned so many things and in the autumn I joined the group in Estonia.

Sirli: A colleague of my mother's came across SCD when I was very young and they started the Tallinn Scottish Country Dance Group. My Mum took me to their classes and I have been obsessed with SCD since then. Now my mother is the teacher and it makes me want to go to the classes even more because she is a very committed and talented teacher.

SUSCDF workshop and ball in Edinburgh

SUSCDF stands for the Scottish Universities Scottish Country Dance Festival. I went to its annual ball for the very first time this year. I joined the afternoon workshop with other members of the Youth Services Committee and a few other dancers. Sadly, we were just enough to form a set or two, although the hall was big enough for a lot more people. The evening dance, on the other hand, was crowded, with dozens of students coming from different

parts of Scotland. Glasgow, Edinburgh, St Andrews and Aberdeen Universities each did a demonstration, which added more fun to the already great programme. I danced with the Aberdeen team, trained by Louise Wilcox. The dem was not easy, but with only a few weeks of rehearsal, we achieved something great. There was a fantastic atmosphere, and we all had a lot of fun. SUSCDF is definitely an event to look forward to again in the years to come.

Florence Burgy

Youth Branch Weekend Away in Paris

Deciding quite spontaneously to take part in the Weekend Away with two fellow dancers from Bonn, I was really excited to go to Paris again, my last visit having been fifteen years ago with school. We arrived on Friday evening and after checking in at our hotel, we took a stroll past Notre Dame and along the Seine.

On Saturday we made our way to the American Church in full sunshine, excited about a whole day of dancing ahead. Between challenging and fun classes with Rachel and Raphaëlle we had time for a picnic by the Seine in the sun, time to relax and get to know the other dancers better. The afternoon class was directly followed by a highland class with Mathias for those whose feet and minds were still up for more challenges. Before the social dance in the evening with Paris Branch, there was more free time to regain some strength with delicious French food, again by the Seine.

On Sunday, before heading home, we had the opportunity to see some more sights of central Paris on a guided tour led by Corentin.

The Weekend Away was a great opportunity to meet other young dancers from all over Europe and even farther afield. I'm looking forward to meeting them again at the Spring Fling in Bonn or maybe at the next Weekend Away, wherever it may be!

Mareike Mölders



SUSCDF Ball, Edinburgh

Global Youth Week



Young dancers from Houston and District Branch

The Youth Services Committee spent months preparing Global Youth Week, trying to involve as many people as possible. Setting a date was never easy. January is a great month for the Northern Hemisphere, but on the other side of the world, dancing hasn't started.

What is important is that youth events happen all over the world. If your group or

branch is not doing something in January but November is a better time, please take pictures and share them during GYW next year. We don't really mind the actual date of the photo; we just want to encourage you to do something.

We have produced flyers with ideas on how to link with schools or universities. If you need more ideas, please be in touch. Youth-

related events are vital to Scottish country dancing; we need to encourage the new generation in any way we can.

We have had lots of interesting reports from all over the world: a Youth Workshop in London, a ceilidh in Lisbon, a Burns family ceilidh in Newcastle, a 'Bring someone younger than yourself!' dance in Aberdeen, a music and dance workshop followed by a Burns Night in Jamaica, a fun afternoon of dancing for children from Edinburgh and the Borders, an evening for young dancers in Paris, dancing in Oslo, teaching Guides to dance in Dublin, a Youth and Whisky night in Lyon, 20 5th-graders dancing in the British Embassy in Washington DC, kids dancing in Houston, some fun at the Selkirk Cubs, St Petersburg's evening of dances dedicated to Burns, a family ceilidh in Forres, a 'Joint Venture' class run between Glasgow University Scottish Country Dancers, Alba Scottish Country Dancers and Glasgow RSCDS, a Burns Night Flash Mob in Perm, Russia... and probably many more! The Youth Branch collected articles from members round the world giving their experience with SCD. I am sure all those events were lively and successful! Please keep working at making SCD friendlier and younger; we do need you all for that!

Raphaëlle Orgeret



Oslo dancers dressed for January!

GYW – Germany

In a mundane gymnasium in Central Germany, the well-known notes of the *Teddybear's Picnic* strike up as young dancers freeze. Young dancers are known for a variety of things – (too much) spring, (too much) twirling, (too much) dancing, etc - but freezing is not commonly one of them. A camera reveals frozen allemandes, frozen reels of four, frozen poussettes and frozen undone shoelaces all under the

auspices of a frozen teacher while frozen 'mature' dancers rest outside. A bystander may begin to wonder what is happening, but they soon learn an entry for GYW 2017 has just ended: our take on the mannequin challenge.

These young dancers don't live around the corner, nor do they practise together regularly. They come from all over Europe; they dance anytime they get the chance; and they want to share this global Scottish

culture with friends and family. Most start at university, many continue after, and more become involved through Summer School, central European RSCDS events, and Germany's more than 60 small groups hidden away in the countryside. Each group may not number more than twenty or thirty dancers, but each stays connected with the rest through a hundred balls, weekend courses, workshops, and social dances every year.

Coming back to Global Youth Week and young dancers: Tim Hoffmann, who runs a weekly student dance class at Aalen University, introduced Scottish dancing at the local university ball. His class first skipped their way through a short show part, and then did ceilidh dances for all on a floor as smooth as glass. The students greatly enjoyed themselves, so fingers crossed some of them will remember Scottish dancing fondly and come back to it at some point in their lives, e.g. next semester.

Alas, it will be too late for them to join this year's Spring Fling in Bonn. We are incredibly excited and very happy to be hosting this event. Even the usual suspects were surprised by the number of young German dancers coming from all over. So to make sure we push our inner-German networking a little further, a Spring Fling follow-up for German dancers is already being planned!

Kenton Stutz

Scottish Schools

Wheeling and Reeling with Jamie

When Milngavie Primary School in the north of Glasgow took part in the 4th Bearsden Primary Schools Scottish Country Dance Festival, opting out for 11 year-old Jamie Findlay did not come into the equation. Country dancing in a wheelchair? Why not? Jamie doesn't exclude himself from any activity.

When the Festival opened on 7 October, the local Education Convenor said, "Wouldn't it be more beneficial for young people to get away from iPhones and devote more time to dancing? It not only improves fitness, but it's a great social pastime. It's also a great way to meet future boy and girl friends."

Jamie was then joined by 400 children from nine primary schools who danced, jigged, reeled, and pah-dee-bahed to the invigorating sounds of John Carmichael's band – the first time most of the children had had the opportunity to dance to a live band. The most popular dances were *The*

Dashing White Sergeant, *the Virginia Reel*, and the *Flying Scotsman* with the hall shaking at the rafters with the resounding "Woo-Woo!" imitation of the famous steam engine.

One of the team who taught the primary 7s at Milngavie said "Jamie's an exceptional young lad, who adopted the spirit of the dance right off, dancing every one on the programme. Obviously, some practical adaptations had to be accommodated, but the camaraderie of his classmates facilitated these without any specific instructions". His partner, Jay Wilkie, said "I started dancing with Jamie as a partner, and I couldn't imagine having more fun dancing with anyone else".

The Festival is organised in conjunction with the New Kilpatrick Scottish Country Dance Club and supported by the Glasgow Branch whose members help out on the day and attend the various schools in advance of the festival to teach the dances. The day was enhanced by the



Jamie with his friends

participation of a group of young dancers from the Alba Scottish Country Dance Club. The children bounced out of the hall at the end of the day with the music still ringing in their ears, memories of a great occasion, and a foundation of their traditional dance that will last throughout their lives.

Patrick Murray



Six Scotsmen in kilts!

Rebecca's Story

Rebecca Gorarra, Aberchirder Primary School

It all began one morning long ago as I was starting out in my teaching career. It was my first class, Primary 3. I was full of enthusiasm. Scottish country dancing came into my life at just the right moment! I remembered learning the *Gay Gordons* in secondary school and finding it incredibly embarrassing. I was to observe Anne McArthur as she taught my class. Her infectious love of dancing inspired me. The class whirled, tapped and moved in time to the music.

Over a few years myself and two colleagues, used every opportunity to teach country dancing from nursery to P7. This fits well into the new Scottish Curriculum. Teaching country dancing develops rhythm and musicality in all our young people and gives them a brilliant head start in this valuable life skill going forward in their lives as young Scots. The children increase their skills using Scottish

dances in regular cross-curricular activities. These range from St Andrews Day celebrations, Christmas parties, the Christmas play to a Scots Week every March shared with the local community.

Every two years we use the *Jigs and Reels* pack to prepare for the Moray Festival where our children dance with hundreds of others. Our school now has gold accreditation from the RSCDS. Over the years I have watched children grow in confidence and ability. Fundraising has also been an important element of our dancing. This year the whole school learned *Pudsey Bear* for Children in Need. At a time when we are worried about sedentary life styles and obesity, country dancing is one of the answers. Add to this the blossoming in confidence in children and you can understand why I see Scottish country dancing as one of the best things about Scotland. It is a true life skill, which makes all our lives better. I can't imagine teaching without it.

Edinburgh Branch in Barcelona



Edinburgh Branch on parade!

Edinburgh Branch were delighted to be invited to represent Edinburgh and Scotland at the Jornades Internacionals Folkloriques Catalonia. This International Festival has been running for 44 years but we were the first Scottish country dancers to attend. We had a few challenges along the way but 14 dancers and musicians left Edinburgh on a Thursday lunchtime looking forward to dancing and playing in Spain. Our delightful guide and translator was Josep Centelles, a Scottish country dancer in Spain.

Friday morning was practice time. We hadn't realised we needed to book a space

but being resourceful we quickly found an ideal space in the sun beside the pool. We then had some free time to investigate the beach and town before we headed back to Barcelona for our main performance.

Sadly, the rain clouds rolled in and a massive thunder and lightning storm struck Barcelona that evening, meaning the outdoor performances had to be cancelled. We eventually splashed our way back to the coach where some very disgruntled dancers 'entertained' the Chilean dancers to some Scottish songs.

It was an early afternoon start on Saturday for the Parade of Giants, part of the Festival of La Merce, Barcelona's biggest annual event. We had little concept of the length of the parade (over 3 hours), and we were astounded at the number of Catalonians who came out onto the streets to watch, cheer and celebrate. It was truly memorable and was rounded off with our evening performance in the town square in front of thousands of people. The other dance groups from El Salvador, Peru, Chile, Macedonia and Senegal were all bright, colourful and loud. When we walked out and the audience saw the tartan there was absolute silence as we danced, followed by riotous applause.

Sunday was an early start and a change of costume into more casual dress. We danced at the Museum of World Cultures in Barcelona and this was a more relaxed setting. We were the only performers able to incorporate some dances for the audience to try. They were really enthusiastic and we soon had them dancing the *Gay Gordons* and the *Flying Scotsman*. It was lovely to dance in the cool, shady courtyard at the museum, but the cobbles weren't very kind to our feet!

It was a brilliant few days, with a great team of dancers and musicians. Many thanks to all who allowed us the opportunity to take a taste of Scotland to Catalonia.

Elizabeth Harry

JANET WASHINGTON at CLAIRE CHARLES DESIGNS



- 20 years experience
- Exclusive stockist of RSCDS tartan silk and polycotton
- 70 Clan tartans also available
Silk £30 per metre
Polycotton £15 per metre

Full Stock Carried.
Closed Thursday & Sunday.
For bespoke outfits please make an appointment

8 West Moulin Road, Pitlochry PH16 5AD
Tel: 01796 473787 www.clairecharlesdesigns.co.uk

Linlithgow Scotch Hop 2017

Scottish Dancing for All - 28th year

Linlithgow Palace between Edinburgh & Glasgow

Lively • Friendly • Fun • Great Scottish Bands

Wednesdays
12th July - 9th August
at 7:30pm

Tickets at the door
Tea and shortbread included




Open air courtyard round the fountain

Dance in the Palace

Mixed programme of called dances - see website

www.facebook.com/LinlithgowScotchHop

Alternative venue for bad weather - Low Port Centre, by Linlithgow Station

00 44 (0)131 331 1528

www.scotchhop.org.uk

Registered Charity Linlithgow Scotch Hop SCIO number SCO46165

Summer School Social Class

Have you been dancing for years and attended several classes? Are you comfortable with your performance of the steps in reel, jig and strathspey time? Do you attend local dances and sometimes have a worry when a dance is recapped when the MC mentions a formation such as the *rondel* or *tournée*? If so, the social class at Summer School may be just what you are looking for. The aim in this class is to work on formations rather than precise footwork, and to improve the execution of these formations to a level which enables people to perform them not only competently but also help others in their set who are less confident. Make no mistake though, this is not a class for beginners or for those who just want an easy life at Summer School!

The class was started by Jim Stott four years ago and now has a loyal core following in Week 4. In early 2016 when details were sent out, it appeared that the class was not on offer. An immediate flurry of emails from loyal attendees resulted in it being reinstated. There were eleven people in the class this year, and it would be great if other dancers who are at a similar level in their dancing were to join. Through the week, the two teachers, Sue Porter and Gary Coull, selected two or three formations per session and then worked hard on these in the context of relevant dances, many of which were on the programmes for the evenings dances.

The class really concentrated on getting people ready to take part in dances in social settings. People learned a lot more than they

realised in the relaxed, but hard-working atmosphere generated by the teachers. There was never any doubt that they were there to learn, and the teaching ethic of Summer School was certainly well to the fore.

One class member kept a note of what was taught each day. In the six days of Summer School the class went through no less than 35 dances, having first mastered the formations, and transitions between them. During the entire week there was a grand total of seven 8-bar sessions of step practice, mainly so that the teachers could see that the class could execute the steps sufficiently well for social dancing. The class felt very sorry for the class above them in Upper Victory Hall. We could hear the synchronised pounding of the floor, revealing the amount of step practice!

But, to be fair, who actually worries that much about the finer points of their footwork in a social setting? Executing formations accurately, getting to the right place at the right time, heading in the right direction and hopefully holding out the correct hand to the right person, having already indicated to a slightly less sure person where they should be heading for, is far more important. This is what the social class was all about, and it certainly worked. So, when it appears as an option for Summer School this year, why not sign up and give it a go? After all, if you find it is not for you, you can always switch to another class for more step practice!

Bernie Hewitt



Unit 3, Newark Road South,
Eastfield Industrial Estate
Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland KY7 4NS

Factory visits welcome

+44 (0) 1592 779111
info@thistleshoes.com | www.thistleshoes.com

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.”

Letters to the editor



Dear Editor

Too many new dances

As I continue to get to grips with *Book 49*, allow *Book 50* to linger in my in-tray for a while longer and see *Books 51* and *52* on the horizon, I begin to wonder if this plethora of new dances is really in the best interests of Scottish country dancing. I am certainly not against new dances in themselves. While the RSCDS did a brilliant job in reviving and publishing the traditional dances of Scotland, this has provided a firm basis for the development of SCD with new dances and formations from the likes of Drewry and Foss. It is clear that Scottish country dancing would be very much the poorer if it had remained unchanged since 1960. Branches, clubs and individuals will continue to publish new dances and, while initially of local interest, some of them will gradually filter out to the world at large.

What I question is the need for the RSCDS to go out of its way to actively promote several new dances each year. It seems to me that they are being thrust upon us and teachers have the unenviable task of trying to integrate them into an ever-increasing repertoire. This tends to have a distorting effect on dance classes and programmes as the onus is on teachers to familiarise their class with these (generally, more complex) dances, only to find that many of them achieve a short-lived popularity and then simply disappear.

On the other hand, there is a wealth of existing dances, both traditional and modern, which can easily provide all the variety that is required by the most demanding of dancers. I am certainly not saying 'old dances good, new dances bad'. Let's face it, there are some pretty dire examples in the earlier books and some brilliant ones in the later books. However, the essential flavour of SCD will change if we continue to skew the repertoire towards the latest dances and allow many of the earlier dances to become neglected and, quite possibly, unfamiliar to recent converts.

There are certainly occasions when it might be appropriate for the RSCDS to publish a new book such as the centenary in 2023 and, if publications were to be limited in this way, the cry 'There are too many new dances nowadays' might be heard less often.

Andrew Patterson, Rotorua, New Zealand

Dear Editor

Emphasis on footwork

Patrick Capper does two things in expressing his disappointment at the overemphasizing, for the more mature dancers, of proper footwork by Canadian teachers (Issue No 23). He underrates the intelligence and willingness of older dancers in dealing with varying levels of infirmity and at the same time he downgrades the importance of footwork.

The easiest way to address the latter is by reference to other recreational activities involving coordinated movement of the body. In the good golf swing the foot and leg movement create the weight transfer and hip rotation which maximises the shoulder turn, hence the full sweeping swing of the arms, hands and club. Similarly with tennis it is the footwork that gets your body to the correct position with the appropriate hip orientation for a forehand or backhand shot. Again the space and freedom for the shoulder turn and arm movement follow naturally. The upper body is dependent on what is happening down below.

With ballroom dancing be it waltz, quick step, foxtrot, tango, or

jive it is the footwork which creates the flow, rhythm and style of the dance. In Scottish country dancing the footwork gives us short or long steps, phrasing, covering, upper body posture, the distinctive character of the dance.

Whether it is ballroom or Scottish you can't ask or expect a teacher to minimise attention to the feet. Equally, I know on the first tee at the golf course that if I do not keep my eye on the ball, the outcome of my shot will not be good. Similarly, I know to enjoy my dancing I need eye contact with my partner and a smile on my face.

Alastair Forsyth, Banchory, Scotland

Dear Editor

Emphasis on footwork

I read Patrick Capper's letter (Issue No 23) about his disappointment with the emphasis on footwork. I have a different view. As a middle aged-dancer who has had injuries, I believe that there is a place at all levels for teaching good technique. I have seen that many 'beyond beginner' dancers can lose their ability to dance at their best. Many of us can get into sloppy habits, and it is good to have an alert teacher to spot this happening. While dancing for the last few years in Moscow, I was fortunate enough to be taught by Olga Ivanova and Mikhail Smagin. I enjoyed very much their emphasis on correct technique and especially footwork. Of course our physical limitations inevitably increase with age. But within those limitations some of us still like to strive for dancing at our best. There needs to be room for us, as well as those whose enjoyment of dancing (equally validly) does not depend on having good technique.

Wanda Hyde, Haarlem, Netherlands

Dear Editor

Emphasis on footwork

It is with respect that I have to disagree with Mr. Capper's comments in Issue 23. Whilst I fully appreciate the toll that injury can take any teacher worth their salt will recognise this and will take such injuries into account when trying to improve footwork. The idea that it is only beginners who need to learn is quite remarkable, I have danced for most of my life and hold a full teaching certificate but still find things to learn. Not everyone may wish to learn, but should that mean that we deny the chance of improvement to everyone? The whole point of a class or workshop is to learn and improve therefore I would argue that everyone attending has at least the aspiration to advance even if the reality falls somewhat shorter. Additionally, it is the goal of every teacher to inspire their students and to help them achieve their full potential whether that is perfecting their technique or the arguably more challenging but much more satisfying goal of helping people to dance in way which helps them most to enjoy their dancing despite any long term health issues.

I feel that we are in danger of losing the uniqueness of our dancing with the continued dilution of footwork and technique. I see so many examples on media such as Facebook and YouTube where dancers dance as individuals rather than acknowledging the others in the set and strathspeys where there is a noticeable absence of the downward movement to start the step. If we are to be an inspiration to the future and attract new dancers what better way than to show them how exquisite it can look.

Claire Johnson, Leeds

Reviews

Birmingham Branch Platinum Dance Book

This useful book consists of 15 dances with an equal balance of reels, jigs and strathspeys. The clear contents page identifies the number of bars and the number of repetitions for each dance – a boon for hard-pressed teachers, searching to find a particular length of dance in a hurry. Six are four-couple dances, useful for programme selection but trickier to exploit when teaching. There is a mixture of straightforward and more complex dances providing something to appeal to all levels of ability. I was also pleased to see the inclusion of two formations, new to the RSCDS: the *rose progression* in *The Symphony Hall Strathspey* and *la baratte*, in *Doodling at Dawn*, a straightforward, but clever, four-couple dance that also includes a *pick-up chain*.

My own class took particular delight in the complex choreography found in *The Cross City Line* and *Colin's Delight*, which feature intriguing reels. *The Lunar Society Reel* was also well received with its *weasel reels* but the additional challenge of having the 2nd couple start, means that even competent dancers need to retain their focus. *Spaghetti Junction* is not as daunting as the title implies.

Amongst the more straightforward dances the reel, *Portincaple* is one of my favourites, with an interesting structure and transitions.

Although the book is without a CD, all the dances have music, including a mixture of traditional and modern composers, with George Meikle providing some of his own tunes and arranging the traditional ones.

Birmingham has produced some very talented dance devisers whose work is featured in this book. I would have no hesitation in recommending this book to teachers and dancers alike.

Di Rooney, Cheshire Branch

Book 50

Most of the dances in *Book 50* require sustained energy and effort, but once mastered, are most enjoyable. They are dances suitable for teaching at various levels of ability and the music provides the impetus required. *The Spring Fling Reel* is lively and enjoyable with different turns in bars 37–40. *Les Remparts de Seville* proved to be popular with an interesting twist in setting to corners and partner. *There's Something about 30* is a beautifully flowing strathspey with an interesting variation in the middle of the dance. In contrast to this *192 Miles Home* is a lively jig danced in a square set. Dancers enjoyed this dance and the high energy required to perform it well. *The Doonhammer Delight* is a round-the-room dance requiring nimble changes of direction. It involves all the dancers moving throughout the 32-bar sequence. *Mathilde is a Delight* has known and lesser known formations Attention must be given to phrasing, in particular in bars 23 and 24 to enable ease of entry into the 6 bar formation, the capstan. In contrast *The Wandering Wallaby* is an excellent dance for teaching newer dancers reels of four and a three-couple promenade. It is, nevertheless, not without its challenges for beginners. *Shadow* and *Trip to Applecross* present some challenges. The latter includes variations in the *ladies* and *men's chains* as well as in *set and rotate*. *Dancing Spirit* is a lively dance with flowing entries into a figure resembling *the spoke* and finally, *La Baratte your Way Home* presents difficulties in initial learning but, once mastered, is a refreshingly new, if challenging, dance. Congratulations are in order to the young devisors and to their fellow dancers. Let us hope that they continue to enjoy dancing in the spirit engendered by this book of dances.

Jean Noble, Toronto Branch

Miss Milligan's Miscellany CD Part 5

This recording by Luke Brady and his Scottish Country Dance Band puts on record the music for yet another group of dances from *Miss Milligan's Miscellany*. Few of the dances are widely danced. The CD makes very pleasant listening, the overall sound full and rich, with the whole six-piece band blending easily together to support the brilliant playing of Luke Brady on lead accordion. This tight ensemble is used throughout until the final Waltz track, where the pianist, Maureen Rutherford, comes into her own. The fiddle is rarely audible.

The lead tunes used for each dance are generally the originals or the 'customary tune' and Brady has made a bright selection of supporting tunes. Although there is seldom general agreement about tempo and speeds, for me the strathspeys sounded comfortable for dancing but some of the reels and jigs are over-brisk.

There are two awkward points of confusion. *The Honey Moon* (two words) appears on the insert as *The Honeymoon* (one word) in spite of a note in the Miscellany pointing out that *The Honeymoon* is a reel in the *Graded Book*. *The Countess of Lauderdale's Reel* is listed in the Miscellany (both original and the 2007 single volume) as a 40 bar jig. However, a correction published in *Scottish Country Dancer*, October 2008, stipulates, 'This dance is a reel, not a jig as stated'. This recording as an 8x40 reel, using as its lead tune the reel bearing the same name, is perfectly in order.

These, and a number of other errors in the accompanying insert about track timings, will frustrate teachers who use CDs for most of their classes and need accurate information. However, for the general listener this is a very enjoyable disc with skilful playing and many bright tunes.

Dennis Tucker, Oxford Branch

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING HOGMANAY IN THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH LAKES



18:30 Fri 29 Dec 2017 to 9:00 Mon 1 Jan 2018

For regular dancers with at least 3 years' experience, good working knowledge of traditional steps and formations to improve technique. Morning classes, optional afternoon sessions, evening social dances - culminating in a Hogmanay Dinner and Ball.

Mervyn Short & Maureen Haynes
with musician George Meikle

Residential: £303 Non-residential: £212

www.highamhall.com 017687 76276

Higham Hall, Bassenthwaite Lake,
Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 9SH

Sadly missed

Irene Edgar (1938 – 2016)

An inspiring teacher, elegant dancer and wonderful partner, Irene Edgar was a breath of fresh Scottish air on the dance scene in the south east of England. A Helensburgh lass, she met her husband Glen at the Albert Ballroom in Glasgow, then spent most of her life in the London area. After taking her Full Certificate, Irene started a beginners' class which grew into the Reigate Scottish Country Dance Club. Irene's was not a typical class. It was a revelation: technique with lots of laughter, lots of dances with lots of fun. Her class went from strength to strength; people came from miles around, often with six sets dancing. Irene understood dancers' capabilities as well as their limitations; she was always encouraging. She was a great fan of the three young musicians of the band, Green Ginger, who often played for her class. Irene's influence was seen as her dancers attended all the day schools in the area as well as Summer and Winter Schools. She was a lady with style! At her funeral it was said, "She danced through life!"

Cas Sloan and Alister Reid, Reigate

Lena K. Barclay (1939 – 2016)

Originally Lena was a member of the Dumfries Branch of the RSCDS and she came to Aberdeen as a student at the Dunfermline Physical Education College where, as part of her studies, she sat her Preliminary Certificate. Once married to Wilson and back in Aberdeen she completed her certificate in 1968. Lena taught a range of classes, at primary and secondary schools in the city and over the years, various Branch classes, including the advanced class. She was an exacting teacher and her festival teams, both children and adults, were always extremely well prepared. The teams had notable successes such as winning the Cussons Trophy (the 'Soapy') at the Edinburgh Festival, the Oban Festival and, of course, locally in Aberdeen. The mantelpiece groaned with trophies! Her teams were in great demand at the Town House when visiting dignitaries came to the city. In addition, Lena taught at Summer School and at various day schools throughout the UK and in North America, as well as representing the Branch at the Executive Council. In recent years Lena was quite ill and her immense talents were greatly missed.

Alistair D Reid, Aberdeen

Nigel Carter (1925 – 2016)

Nigel began dancing in the Temple Bar, Ewyas Harold, Herefordshire in the early 1960's at classes run by John Gradon of the Black Mountain Reel Club. Nigel was a vet. He took his preliminary exam in 1969 following a suggestion from Miss Milligan whilst he was 'stooging'. In 1970 he passed the full certificate at St. Andrews. It was his idea to bring other clubs in the area under one umbrella and in 1967 the Herefordshire Branch was formed. He will be sadly missed when the Branch celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2018. Nigel was Chairman and President of the Branch for many years and enthusiastically encouraged everyone to become RSCDS members and to support other clubs' functions. In 2005 he was presented with the Branch Award. Nigel had a great sense of humour and we will miss the little jokes he made at the end of a function. *The Jovial Vet* was devised for him. He will be remembered with grateful thanks and affection.

Dorothy Paterson (1934 – 2017)

Friends, family and fellow-dancers were saddened to learn that Dorothy had passed away peacefully in her own home on 24 February. Dorothy gave great service to the RSCDS. She was Secretary of Glasgow Branch at a time when the membership exceeded 700, then Chairman, during which time Glasgow hosted the AGM. She directed its planning with meticulous care. Dorothy served on the Executive Council and was a valued member of the General Purposes and Finance Committee for many years.

Dorothy was also a Society teacher, who not only taught in Glasgow but also at Summer School. Of the latter she had many amusing tales to tell, not least, how they all tried to evade Miss Milligan's strict curfew rules. Dorothy also assisted with forming the Glasgow Branch Senior's group. Quite apart from dancing Dorothy had many other interests. After her parents died, she moved to Inveraray, where she made a positive contribution to village life and the community in general, becoming Secretary of the Neil Munro Society and the History Society. Her hospitality was legend: it could be said she had a 24-hour house where everyone who appeared at her door at whatever time of day was greeted warmly. Dorothy's faith and her Church meant a great deal to her. She assisted in whatever way she could. On a very practical level she was a key player in raising thousands of pounds every summer which contributed handsomely towards maintaining the fabric of the church building.

Many of us gathered on a beautiful, sunny, Inveraray day in the Church she loved so much, to say farewell to a lady who, every moment of her life, strove to help people, promote causes and share burdens of friends and strangers alike.

Ruth Beattie

Tony Staples (1924 - 2017)

Tony Staples was the husband of Sue Staples, whose obituary appeared in the last issue. Tony was a huge support to his wife in her teaching in Tunbridge Wells, Bournemouth, Culzean Castle and Maybole in Ayrshire, and in Sue's town twinning work with the dance group in St Germain en Laye, France. In April last year Tony was awarded La Légion d'Honneur by the French Government at a ceremony in Glasgow for his war service. A very distinguished gentleman.

Jill Andrews, Edinburgh

Carl R. Oliver (1925 – 2017)

Carl danced in Darlington then in Stockton on Tees. On retiring he and his wife moved to Queensland where he danced in Maryborough before helping to found a new group in Bundaberg. He was still dancing at 91. His daughter said that he hadn't died, he had just dropped to the bottom of the set.

Michelle Gaffney (1954 - 2017)

Michelle Gaffney from Delaware Valley Branch Michelle was both a children's class teacher and program director of the demo team for many years. She always enjoyed dancing, but she especially enjoyed teaching children.

Jim Gaffney

Day School Diary - April 2017 to December 2017

Day School Diary is compiled by John Sturrock. Please send details to john.m.sturrock@btinternet.com. Issue 25 will cover mid-October 2017 to May 2018. For more information please refer to the relevant websites.

April 2017

- 1 Geneva Spring Workshop & Dance, Dardagny, France
- 7 – 9 Lyon Branch, Weekend & Music School, Lyon
- 7 – 9 Lethbridge SCD Club, Weekend Workshop, Lethbridge, AB, Canada
- 8 Swilcan SCD Group, Day School, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 13 – 17 Kuckucksnest, Advanced Easter Course, Schluechtern, Germany
- 21 – 23 East Lothian Branch, Dance Weekend, Atholl Palace, Pitlochry
- 22 Paris Branch, Highland Workshop, Paris
- 22 Cheltenham Branch, Day School & Dance, Cheltenham
- 22 Argyll SD Group, Crowthorne, Berkshire
- 28 – 30 RSCDS Spring Fling, Bonn, Germany
- 28 – 30 Spring Fringe, Bonn, Germany
- 28 – 30 Leeds Branch, Weekend School, Scarborough
- 28 – 1/5 International Branch, Dance Weekend, Pafos, Cyprus

May 2017

- 5 – 6 The Millport Weekend, Isle Of Cumbrae, Scotland
- 5 – 7 Dance Weekend, Oldenburg, Germany
- 5 – 7 10th Budapest Scottish Dance Club, Weekend, Budapest
- 6 Intermediate Day School, Denkendorf, Germany
- 13 TAS Spring Workshop, Dumfries
- 13 Lyon Branch, Day School, Lyon
- 19 – 21 New York Branch, New Pawling Weekend, Copake, NY
- 19 – 21 Duns & District Branch, 63rd Weekend, Duns
- 19 – 20 Isle of Skye Branch, Weekend, Portree, Isle of Skye
- 20 Swilcan SCD Group, Afternoon School, Utrecht
- 20 – 21 Clivis, Workshop, Turin
- 26 – 28 Tokyo Branch, Weekend, Tokyo

June 2017

- 2 – 4 SCD Hamburg, Weekend Course, Hamburg
- 9 – 11 Midwest Scottish Weekend, Beaver Dam, WI, USA
- 10 Luxembourg SCD Club, Day School & Ball
- 24 – 30 Prague Workshop, Prague, Czech Republic
- 30 – 2/7 Scots Bonnet, Weekend, Saint Quay Perros, Brittany

July & August 2017

- 1 30 Years in Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany
- 2 – 7 Thistle School, Banner Elk, North Carolina
- 9 – 16 42nd Australian Winter School, Hahndorf, Adelaide
- 12 – 16 Kuckucksnest, Summer Course, Schluechtern
- 16 – 13/8 RSCDS Summer School, St Andrews, Fife
- 23 – 30 TAC Summer School, Vancouver, BC
- 26/8 TAS Autumn Workshop and AGM, Broxburn

September 2017

- 2 Thistle Club, Day and Musicians' School, Wing, Buckinghamshire
- 9 Lochaber Branch, Day School and Dance, Corpach
- 16 Leeds Branch Day School, Leeds
- 23 Ayr Branch, Day School, Troon
- 23 Tamburin-Stuttgart, Advanced Course, Denkendorf, Germany
- 23 Ribble Valley Branch, Day School, Samlesbury, Lancashire
- 29 – 1/10 Hamilton & Clydesdale Branch, Weekend, Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry

October 2017

- 6 – 8 Argyll Scottish Dancing Group, Weekend School, Ilminster, Somerset

- 6 – 08 Nova Scotia Branch, Fall Workshop, Dartmouth
- 6 – 08 Marhamchurch Dancers, 22nd Weekend, Bude, Cornwall
- 6 – 09 Calgary Branch, Scots Gathering, Canmore, AB
- 19 – 21 Dancing in New Places, Weekend School, Cape Town, South Africa
- 19 – 22 Kuckucksnest, Autumn Course, Schluechtern
- 21 Thistle Club, Day and Musicians' School, Eindhoven, Netherlands
- 27 – 29 Westbury Scottish Club, Weekend School, Torquay, Devon

November 2017

- 3 – 05 RSCDS Conference Weekend, Perth
- 10 – 12 Croydon Branch, Weekend School, Eastbourne
- 11 Toronto Branch, Day School, Toronto, Ontario
- 11 Bristol Branch, Day and Musicians' Day School, Henleaze, Bristol
- 17 – 19 San Francisco Branch, Asilomar Weekend
- 22 – 26 Kuckucksnest, Very Advanced Course, Schluechtern

December 2017

- 1 – 3 Leeds Branch, Weekend, Malhamdale, Yorkshire
- 28 – 5/01 New Zealand Branch, 50th Summer School, Wairarapa

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE FESTIVALS

JUNE 2017

- 24 South Wales Branch, Festival, South Wales

JULY 2017

- 08 White Rose Festival, Harewood, Leeds

ARE YOU READY FOR A MAGICAL WEEKEND?

**RSCDS San Francisco
Asilomar Weekend 2017
Pacific Grove, CA, USA**

November 17-19, 2017

"Magnificent!"

**"Absolutely fantastic & the best dancing weekend
I have ever encountered."**

Located on the beautiful Monterey Peninsula, 120 miles south of San Francisco. Woodlands, sand dunes, ocean beaches, historic Landmark buildings with breathtaking Merrill Hall all create the setting for an unforgettable weekend of Scottish country dancing.

Join dancers from near & far at Asilomar!

Accepting applications from April 1st
Visit our website for more information

Asilomar.rscds-sf.org

IDTA

International Dance Teachers' Association

www.idta.co.uk

At the heart of dance

Training the next generation of passionate and expert dance teachers and their students. As a leading dance qualifications body and membership association for professional dance teachers, with over 7000 members in over 55 countries, we define standards across the widest variety of dance forms, examine performance for both professionals and non-professionals of all ages, develop the skills and professional practice of our members and promote the love of dance across a dynamic, global community.

One of the world's largest dance examination boards, the IDTA aims to:

Promote knowledge and foster the art of dance in all its forms.

Consult.

Maintain and improve teaching standards.

Offer a comprehensive range of professional qualifications in all dance genres.

Provide and maintain syllabi and technique in all dance genres to train dancers for the profession.

The IDTA is an Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA recognised awarding organisation and a member of: British Dance Council (BDC), Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET), Federation of Dance Awarding Bodies (FDAB), Sport & Recreation Alliance (SRA), Theatre Dance Council International (TDCI).

Over 110 years at the heart of dance

From a small group of founding members in Manchester, to a global Association with over 7000 members, the IDTA has been at the very heart of dance since 1903. In 1967, the International Dancing Masters' Association and Dance Teachers' Association merged, becoming the International Dance Teachers' Association Limited.

Love 2 Dance

IDTA

At the heart of dance

International Dance Teachers'
Association
International House,
76 Bennett Road
Brighton,
East Sussex BN2 5JL

Telephone: 01273 685652

Email: info@idta.co.uk

Website: www.idta.co.uk





PERFECT
PORRIDGE

IN EVERY
WAY



*Proud sponsors
of the RSCDS
Winter School*



www.hamlynsoats.co.uk

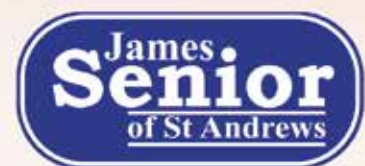


The reel deal since 1954

For 60 years James Senior has been leading the way with our extensive range of Scottish Country and Highland dance footwear. Classic styling married with high-tech full-forefoot in-built shock absorption* ensures you can look the part without getting jiggered.

* James Senior was the first to develop a completely integrated shock absorption system, medically proven to protect the metatarsal area and minimise the risk of injuries associated with Scottish dancing.

Unit E6, Newark Road South, Eastfield Industrial Estate, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 4NS
Tel: 01592 779000 Email: sales@jamessejior.co.uk



MANUFACTURED BY
ST.ANDREWS SHOEMAKERS

jamessejior.co.uk