

SCOTTISH Country Dancer


rscds
Dance Scottish

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 26 April 2018



Winter
School

RSCDS EVENTS

SUMMER SCHOOL 2018

SUNDAY 15 JULY - SUNDAY 12 AUGUST
UNIVERSITY HALL, ST ANDREWS
DIRECTOR: JIM STOTT

- Attend as a resident or non-resident for any 1 or 2 weeks of the 4
- Morning classes at all levels and optional afternoon classes. Social dancing every evening, with a Ceilidh one evening each week
- Starters & Restarters class in weeks 2 & 4
- Class Musicians' Course in week 1
- Musicians' Course in week 2
- Junior Summer School and Young Dancers week in week 3
- Social Dancing Skills class in week 4
- Tutors Course in week 1
- Unit 5 in weeks 3 & 4; Unit 2 & Unit 3 in weeks 1 & 2 respectively
- DAA (Very Advanced) in week 2
- DAA (Intermediate) in week 3
- DAA (Advanced) in week 4

All classes and courses are subject to demand.

For further information and online booking, go to:
www.rscds.org/article/summer-school-2018

89th AGM & CONFERENCE WEEKEND 2018

2 - 4 NOVEMBER
BELL'S SPORTS CENTRE, HAY ST, PERTH

- Friday Night - Informal Dance: David Oswald and his Scottish Dance Band
- Friday Night Ceilidh
- Saturday Class: Rachel Shankland with Adam Brady
- Saturday Night - Formal Ball: Jim Lindsay and his Scottish Dance Band
- Sunday Class: Peter Cass with Bill Ewan
- Teaching Conference: 2 November from 10am to 4pm

WINTER SCHOOL 2019

17 - 22 FEBRUARY
THE ATHOLL PALACE HOTEL,
PITLOCHRY
CO-ORDINATOR: PAT HOUGHTON

- Teachers: Pat Houghton, Graham Donald, Sue Porter and William Williamson
- Musicians: Muriel Johnstone, Jim Lindsay, Marian Anderson and Ian Robertson

Contact moira.thomson@rscds.org to join our waiting list.

SPRING FLING 2019

19 - 21 APRIL
PARIS, FRANCE

Details of teachers, musicians and classes will be posted on the Spring Fling Facebook page as soon as available:
www.facebook.com/rscdsspringfling



Junior SUMMER SCHOOL 2018

29TH JUL - 5TH AUG 2018



dancing...and a whole lot more!

Junior Summer School is back in 2018, held during Week 3 at Summer School in St Andrews, Scotland.

Aimed at 8 - 11 year olds, the fun includes:

- welcome ceilidh
- games hour
- craft activities
- family ceilidhs

Differentiated classes are dependent on numbers and experience, so keep an eye on our website for updates.

Editorial

One of the most difficult tasks as Editor is compiling the *Sadly Missed* page in each issue. With only one page available, the brevity of each report in no way reflects the respect and affection in which each member was held locally, nationally, or internationally. This issue is particularly poignant with the passing of a number of greatly loved and high-profile members.

John Sturrock has compiled the Day School Diary since Issue 2. John passed away recently and we owe him a great debt of gratitude for all the work he did. The contact person for the Diary as from the Autumn Issue will be Ian Brockbank. John's own website for Scottish dance events in Scotland will in future be run by Mary Cant at:

rscds-dundee.org.uk/index.php/scd-events-scotland

This issue sees the arrival of our new Executive Officer, Chris Milne. On page 11 Chris tells us a bit about himself and his hopes for the future.

Now and again a member writes something to me which I know is not the whole story. Twice while preparing this issue people wrote, 'Miss Milligan founded the RSCDS'. Many of us know that this is not strictly the case, so I decided to do a bit of detective work on our Inaugural Meeting. I hope you will find my article interesting and informative – even if it is not what you believed before! If only we had had video in 1923 or been a fly on the wall!

I have always believed in the importance of the letters pages because it gives all members everywhere an equal chance to have their voices heard – members who are not able to come to Scotland, to Summer School, the AGM, and who may live far from any branch. Two correspondents in the last issue raised the matter of Scotland's place in the RSCDS and, sure enough, there are replies in this issue from London, Germany, Vancouver and California. None from Scotland. I try to understand why this should be the case. One of the most common comments you hear from us Scots is – well, it's only country dancing! To us country dancing is just a part of our culture – nothing very out of the ordinary.

On a practical note, if you send in picture files, it would help us identify them if you give each file a name. Picture files should be at least 1mb in size.

Finally, I hope you enjoy reading about groups and branches who have been successful in recruiting new members – we should all be a bit more focussed on that. The way forward is to recruit more new dancers, include them, and integrate them. Of course be proud of your dem team, but be prouder of your beginners' class!

Jimmie Hill, Edinburgh

Cover:

Winter School Ball, Blair Castle, Blair Atholl

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The next issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* will be published in October 2018. 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 2018.

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

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News from Coates Crescent

Mike Greenwood

Branch Anniversaries in 2018

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

Glasgow	95	New Zealand	50
Rochdale	75	Canberra and District	40
Bath	70	Saskatchewan	40
Kirkcudbright	70	Houston and District	40
North Ayrshire	70	Seattle	40
Stonehaven	70	Nova Scotia	30
Montreal	60	Isle of Skye	30
Cheltenham	60	Portland (Oregon)	30
Oxfordshire	50	Retford and District	25

Results of 2017 Management Elections

Management Board:

Linda Gaul (3 years), Theresa MacVarish Clark (3), Sue Ronald (3), David MacDonald (1) and Paul Youtlen (1)

Education and Training Committee:

Deborah Leary and Anne Taylor (3)

Membership Services Convenor-elect:

Peter Knapman (1 year, then 3 as Convenor)

MS Committee members:

Peter Avery and Angela Young (3)

Youth Services Committee:

Olga McIntosh (3)

Board and Committee Membership

The full list is as follows (the Chairman, Chairman Elect, Treasurer and Executive Officer may attend any committee or other meeting, without a vote):

Management Board

Helen Russell (Chairman and Convenor of Board)
 Andrew Kellett (Chairman Elect)
 Bill Cant (Treasurer)
 Malcolm Brown (Convenor, E and T)
 Anselm Lingnau (Convenor, MS)
 Anne McArthur (Convenor, YS)
 Linda Gaul, Theresa MacVarish Clark, Sue Ronald, David MacDonald, Paul Youtlen, Richard Austin, Clive Warren-Smith, Paul Plummer, Trevor Clarke

Education and Training Committee

Malcolm Brown (Convenor)
 Jim Stott (Schools Director)
 Alison Robertson, Mervyn Short, Ellie Briscoe, Trish Reid, Pat Houghton, Jane McIntosh, Deborah Leary, Anne Taylor

Membership Services Committee

Anselm Lingnau (Convenor)
 Peter Knapman (Convenor-elect)
 Ian Muir (Music Director)
 William Williamson, Peter Avery, Angela Young, Lara Friedman-Shedlov, Chris Ronald

Youth Services Committee

Anne McArthur (Convenor). Elizabeth Conder, Florence Burgy, Marilyn Watson, Joana Stausberg, Olga McIntosh

Nominations by 7 September!

The list of management positions available this year is below. Nomination forms will be available on the website or from HQ from 20 April. Nomination forms, profiles and photos must be received by 7 September 2018. In addition to completing the form, members must submit a profile outlining the skills and attributes they have to offer. Guidelines on the reverse of the form give an indication of what should be included, but those considering standing for election are strongly advised to read the role descriptions for Board and Committee members available on the website, at <https://www.rscds.org/article/legal-administrative>. Role descriptions and nomination forms will be included in the April Branch Mailing. Nomination forms for all posts are available on the website (as a News item), or can be requested from Julia Parr: julia.parr@rscds.org.

Vacancies for Board and Committee Positions

1. Management Board

Chairman-elect: serves for 2 years, then as Chairman for 2 years.
 3 members each for 3 years

2. Education and Training

Convenor-elect: serves 1 year then 3 as Convenor
 3 members each for 3 years

3. Membership Services

2 members for 3 years

4. Youth Services

Convenor (3 years)
 2 members for 3 years and 1 member for 2 years

Scrolls of Honour 2017

Scrolls of Honour have been awarded to Anne Kennedy (Sydney Branch), Roy Bain (Helensburgh and District), Liz Donaldson (Washington Branch) and Marilyn Healy (MS Committee). Roy and Marilyn received them at the AGM.



Andrew Kellett, Helen Russell, Marilyn Healy, Roy Bain, Jean Martin

Subscription fees 2018-19

For the year July 2018 to June 2019, there will be no increase in the basic full annual membership subscription. The full range of subscriptions is available on the website.

Headquarters staff

Chris Milne was appointed to the post of Executive Officer in November.

Centenary Preparations

As part of our Centenary preparations we would like to record memories of Miss Milligan and Mrs Stewart. Here is what Archivist Alan Macpherson has written:

'The collection of memories and anecdotal information about the founders is now more important than ever as the number of our members who had personal contact with them is diminishing. I urge all Branches to actively seek out those of their members who not only have memories of the founders, but also of the early days of the Society, and arrange to talk to them and record the conversation. I can assist by providing an information pack on how to conduct such interviews. A convenient way to record interviews is to use a mobile phone or a laptop computer, most of which have a recording facility. In the event of difficulty with the physical recording, however, please contact me (archive@rscds.org) and I will be glad to help. A 'professional' type of interview is not necessary and in fact a relaxed and informal conversation can be more productive. I am quite happy to edit recordings if necessary. I see the Oral History interviews as a permanent part of the Society's initiative to collect archive material.'

RSCDS-sponsored Awards

We had the great honour of sponsoring the 'Instrumentalist of the Year' at the 2017 Scots Trad Music Awards event, held in Paisley in December. Peter Knapman presented the trophy to accordionist Gary Innes. We hope Gary has continued success and look forward to hearing more of him on *Take the Floor*. In 2018 we will again be sponsoring 'Instrumentalist of the Year'.

Jean Milligan Memorial Fund

The JMMF provides small grants (up to £1,000) to support initiatives, innovation, creativity and outreach activities that further the aims of the RSCDS. All are encouraged to apply for funding to support events that foster dancing, new membership or just the spread of dancing awareness and knowledge. New and innovative projects are particularly welcome. Applicants should outline the proposed financial structure of the event or project. The guidelines for applying to the JMMF along with the application form are available on the website. The JMMF is intended to be used to support the aims of the Society, so the scope is large! There are three application deadlines for JMMF:

31 May 30 September 15 November

For more information please contact Sandra Parish:
sandra.p Parish@rscds.org

Dance Revisions

The following errata have come to our attention for the combined A5 edition of *Books 31-38*:

The Diamond Jubilee (p.9), bars 9-16: 'On bar 16, 4th couple do not pass each other' should read 'On bar 16, 4th couple do not pass 1st couple'.

Mr Robert H Mackay (p.82), bars 17-20: '1st and 3rd couples dance a half poussette' should read '3rd and 1st couples dance a half poussette'.

New Products in the Shop

Facebook users will have noticed that our wee shop is now featuring on our Facebook page. Our aim is to promote the RSCDS work to a wider audience and we hope you will help share our publications with ease and make people aware of our dynamic and vibrant community. We are pleased to announce that we have

received the 9th edition of Scottish Country Dances in diagrams, well known as the Wee Green Book, which contains 589 dances. Many less popular dances have been transferred to the web (theweegreenbook.org) and replaced with newer dances.

We have also been busy bringing the RSCDS tartan materials back in stock at a reduced rate. To inquire about tartan fabric please get in touch with Coates Crescent.

The RSCDS HQ Team is busy creating a new range of souvenir products and t-shirts that will be available at our Winter and Summer School shop. We hope the new scarves, tea towels and bags will be favourites among our members.

New CDs and Books

Book 52 and CD will be available for the first week of Summer School. Jim Lindsay and his Scottish Country Dance Band are recording the CD. CDs from *Book 1* to *Book 51* are now available to purchase online via Amazon and iTunes! *Graded Books 1* to *3* will be available very soon.

Hamlyns – Winter School Sponsors

'Hamlyns of Scotland is delighted to sponsor Winter School for the second year running. Hamlyns is part of a family food business which started oat milling in 1888, so we like to think that we know a thing or two about oats! Our traditional range of Scottish Porridge Oats and Scottish Oatmeal is produced from premium Scottish oats, grown by a network of Scottish farmers, and milled at our oat mill in Banffshire. It's the only brand that's guaranteed to be 100% Scottish from seed to mill to finished product. For such a quintessential Scottish product we believe that's important. Whether you like to make porridge the traditional way from oats or oatmeal, cooked in a pot and stirred with a spurtle, or prefer the convenience of microwave sachets or instant pots, Hamlyns have a healthy porridge to suit everyone. You'll find our products in most supermarkets and local retailers throughout Scotland. If you don't have a local stockist, you can order direct from our online shop. Find out more about how we produce our porridge oats, and be inspired by a wide range of recipes at www.hamlynsoats.co.uk'



RSCDS, New Zealand Branch Inc Nelson Summer School

2018/19

We look forward to seeing you at NZ Branch Inc Summer School to be held in Nelson (at the top of the sunny South Island) from 28 December 2018 to 5 January 2019. We have a great line up of teachers from NZ, Australia and the UK as well as local and overseas musicians. There will be a full range of classes for all abilities and ages.



Nelson is known for local arts and crafts stores, and art galleries. It's also a popular base for nearby vineyards and the Abel Tasman National Park. Nelson regularly tops New Zealand's most sunshine hours and has several golden sand beaches.

Further information and details, contact the Organiser:

Doug Mills
Email: ss2018@dancescottish.org.nz
Web: ss2018.dancescottish.org.nz

From the Chairman



Helen Russell

One of the most enjoyable aspects of Scottish country dancing is that it gives us the opportunity to express physically the emotional response we have from listening to the music. As I write this I am just back from a Branch weekend

which had no fewer than three top-line bands playing in three different rooms for over 350 dancers. I am sure it is not just me, but I certainly feel something like an altered state of consciousness from the combination of the music, the pattern of the dance and the interaction with my partner and the other dancers in the set. It is a feeling of euphoria and extreme well-being, even if I have not danced every step and formation perfectly. When I talk to other dancers and musicians, some of them can identify with this state of mind. Non-dancers have a different reaction to hearing this; they look sceptically at me and I can almost hear them wondering whether I am taking mind-altering chemicals! We should all go out into the community and encourage non-dancers to achieve that feeling of well-being.

As I travel round to visit branches, I am so impressed by the commitment shown by those who volunteer to run branches and organise events. Every branch has a different 'flavour', which is wonderful. I like the diversity of approach and the creativity shown by so many people. The loyalty of members to their branch and the work they undertake are very important assets of the Society and should be celebrated. There are many unsung heroes out there. We should be thanking more of them. I write quite a few letters to congratulate people who have received Branch Awards, but I would be delighted to write even more. If there is someone in your branch who has given loyal service and outstanding commitment, why not organise a branch award for them?

I often think about what the 'ideal' branch would be. The answer is that the 'ideal', and hopefully successful branch, will have its own distinct identity, but will show some of the attributes and activities that I have encountered in several of the branches I have visited in the past year. Such branches are friendly and welcoming, inclusive, supportive of other branches and local SCD groups, outward-facing into the non-dancing community with excellent internal communication and broader networking. There is no substitute for an enthusiastic energetic branch member, or teacher, who can engage with people, especially new dancers. Beginners' courses, classes for children and young people, and the occasional branch ceilidh are a few of the activities which have been successful in some areas. Spreading the message that SCD is fun and good for your sense of physical and mental well-being is something we can all do. Matched funding for new initiatives in branches is still available, so why not apply for money and reach out for new dancers?

Since the founding of the RSCDS the branches have been the engines driving the Society forward. As with many other organisations, it is increasingly difficult to recruit new dancers and people to serve on branch committees. Social change and an ageing dancing population may be the reasons within our organisation, but if we wish to maintain and increase membership, we must all work to increase the momentum required to generate interest in traditional Scottish dance within our communities, whether these communities are geographical, or on-line. Many branches have told me of the difficulty of recruiting and retaining new dancers, whilst others have been successful in growing their membership. Whether an initiative succeeds or fails may depend

Education & Training Committee



Malcolm Brown, Convenor

Perhaps because I am currently engaged in the budgeting process for the year 2018 – 2019, I thought I might explain what it means to be a 'Cost centre' rather than a 'Profit centre'. For all of the Society exams, (Teachers, DAA and Medal Tests), the

Society pays for the travel expenses of the examiners or assessors to the location, and the centre pays for any other expenses such as meals and accommodation. The candidates pay a small amount to take the exams (if you regard £70 to take the combination of Units 2 and 3 as a small amount). The examiners or assessors receive an even smaller amount for assessing each candidate. So the most significant costs for the Society are the travel expenses for the examiners, and I hope this explains why we try to use local ones wherever possible for overseas exams. As an example, the travel costs for the two examiners visiting Russia last year amounted to about £1,200. This year we have exams in Australia, at TAC in Minneapolis, as well as the ones at Summer School.

Which nicely brings me on to the topic of the new Teaching Qualification, where hopefully assessment will not require the presence of two examiners, but which will instead make use of videos and on-line streaming. We presented our ideas at the AGM weekend in November, both at the Teaching Conference on the Friday, and at a session on the Saturday. We received a lot of feedback which we have tried to incorporate into our final proposal. We have now appointed three Working Groups to develop three aspects of the final proposal, i.e. to develop the Syllabus, to produce a Teaching Guide, and to develop Guidelines for the selection and training of coaches and tutors. We are trying to move as fast as possible, and we have asked all three groups to at least have first drafts available by 1 June 2018.

We have always had the view that we should make more use of video material in the new qualification process. Because we have replaced two of the dances in the current Unit 2 Syllabus, there is a need to video the new dances, and we are going to take the opportunity to discover the problems of developing training videos showing how to teach some of our less common formations.

Although we are working on the new training system for teachers, the current system will continue to run in parallel with it, at least for the time being. We have taken the opportunity to make a few small adjustments to the current Syllabus, and the revised Syllabus is now up on the website, with exams from the beginning of July being based on it.

We have also revised the marking sheets for the Dancing Achievement Awards, and intend to revise the Syllabus in the next few months. Hopefully, we will also find time this year to look at the dances in the current Medal Test Syllabus, as it is some time since it was produced.

on the geographical region, or the type of local community, but failure of one initiative should not deter us from trying something else. It can take several attempts to find a model that works in our own area. It takes determination, resilience and energy to search for and find an activity, or activities, which will attract new dancers to your branch. It is so important that we all try to do this, otherwise we shall be unable to transmit our traditional form of dance to a new generation of dancers.

Youth Services Committee



Anne McArthur, Convenor

Global Youth Week is now in its third year. The idea behind it was to encourage young people throughout the world to dance. Dates in January have been trialled for three years. Groups were encouraged to invite young people to their classes. The feedback is that January is the wrong time of the year to have a worldwide project. The Committee has decided to move GYW to September in 2019.

In 2017 three development grants were awarded with great outcomes. In 2018 development grants were again offered. Only one application was received. The committee is disappointed with the lack of interest as they are anxious to build children and youth capacity.

Young people from Scotland, other parts of the UK and Europe love competing at the Newcastle Festival and one of the highlights is the Display section. This year there were nine entries, all greatly enjoyed. The Youth Committee came up with the idea of a virtual festival as part of GYW. This was announced in January and entries have to be submitted by 6 October. This provides the opportunity for teams from all areas of the world to compete for a glitter trophy. We want to celebrate Scottish country dancing as being fun, full of energy, and appealing to young dancers. We would like an uncut video up to 6 minutes long of a performance with an 'Around the World' theme. You are asked to use RSCDS recordings, mostly Scottish country dance steps and formations with appropriate dress and props. Full information is available on the website. We would love a worldwide entry for this venture as we keep discussing how we can engage young people in the Americas, Australasia and Africa.

Spring Fling is a developing event and has become a must for the young and young-at-heart. The weekend now has a social dance on the Sunday as well as the Friday night dance and the Saturday ball. Glasgow is geared up to welcome you in April; Paris plans are well advanced for 2019; and Sheffield is the venue for 2020. The committee is presently considering the possibility of taking Spring Fling outwith Europe in the future.

At the conclusion of Junior Summer School in 2017, parents requested a family-friendly weekend. The committee gave the request due consideration and a pilot weekend will take place in Leeds during October 2018 in partnership with Leeds Branch. Please go to the website for details.

Since I became Convenor of YS, I have been aware of a possible link with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and youth organisations such as the Scouts and Guides. We were approached towards the end of last year by a Scouting enthusiast who raised the fact that organizing a Scottish Ceilidh Night now appeared in their syllabus. One of our committee members has been working on matters Scouting and the information will be on the website shortly.

The Youth Services Committee continues to work hard to give young people opportunities to dance as well as having a listening ear to the views of the young.

Membership Services Committee



Anselm Lingnau, Convenor

Once more it is time to report on our activities – and the Membership Services committee has been keeping a number of balls in the air on your behalf. Work on this year's new book, *Book 52*, is proceeding nicely; the 12 dances and their music have been selected out of a pool of nearly 150, and congratulations to the successful devisers! After last year's book of simpler dances, this new publication will again appeal to those who enjoy somewhat more challenging material, and we trust that the accompanying CD, to be recorded by Jim Lindsay and his band, will once more be a huge success.

In the new-book department, our plan for 2019 will be to hold off on *Book 53* and instead re-issue the *30 Popular Dances* book which contains dances from early RSCDS publications (up to approximately *Book 25*) that have proved perennial favourites. This book is currently not being sold but given to new members of the Society as part of their introductory goodie pack, and we feel it deserves a lot more exposure! We shall accompany this with another book of 30 well-received dances drawn from the more recent RSCDS repertoire as well as non-RSCDS sources where we can obtain permission to reprint, and we're sure that this will prove a cracking combination both for beginning (or 're-starting') as well as more seasoned dancers.

A combined A5 edition of *Books 39-45* has been planned for 2020 – last year's new combined version of *Books 31-38* as well as the re-issue of the one for *Books 19-24* have been very well received, and this will, for the time being, conclude our effort to revisit older dance descriptions and fold in many of the errata, extra notes, and improvements to the explanations that have arisen since their original publication.

There is ongoing debate on how much detail to include in dance descriptions – on the one hand, it is important to explain how a dance is to be performed, but on the other hand, specifying every movement exactly creates the impression, at least in some circles, that there is one 'right' way to perform a dance and all others are 'wrong'. In fact, many dances legitimately allow several ways of executing a certain movement, and if the Society specifies method A that is tried and reasonable, that does not mean that methods B and C are necessarily inadmissible and must always be corrected. What really matters in the end is finishing in the right place with a smile on one's face and without having been in other people's way, and our dance descriptions are about enabling that, as well as giving detail for those people who want it.

We also appreciate that the written word is not the only way of 'explaining' a dance, and we do strive to produce more high-quality videos of dances for those who prefer a more visual approach. Several dance groups have been enlisted to participate in this project, and if your group would like to join in, let us know! Of course we welcome all communications (not just about dance videos) and you can reach me at: convenor@msc.rscds.net or info@rscds.org.

From around the World

We encourage all branches and groups to be in touch with their area correspondent. We want to read about your success stories: what worked for you; how you managed to recruit a new beginners' class; that great family ceilidh you ran. This section is compiled by Caroline Brockbank at caroline@ceilidhkids.com

Canada East

Correspondent: Elaine Hoag
elaine.hoag@gmail.com

Hamilton Branch celebrated Canada's 150th anniversary with an '1867 Dance' on 5 November. Dancers in 19th century dress enjoyed a programme of contemporary favourites such as *Petronella*, *Circassian Circle*, and *The Haymakers*. High Tea rounded off the afternoon in suitable style!

The Toronto Association marked its Diamond Anniversary with a Gala Dance on 25 November, welcoming RSCDS Chair-elect, Andrew Kellett, as guest of honour. Also celebrating Diamond status, the Association's **Calvin Group** held its anniversary dance on 21 October, exactly 60 years to the day on which it was originally formed.



Orillia Festival

On 15 July, six sets of dancers from groups in Southern Ontario showcased Scottish country dancing at Orillia's 40th annual Scottish Festival. Every year since its inception, Scottish country dancing has been a part of the Orillia Festival, and this year's festivities were particularly significant, marking the 150th anniversary not only of Canada's Confederation, but also of the incorporation of the city of Orillia itself. After showcasing their skills, the experienced dancers introduced onlookers to some easy participation dances.

Similarly, in September, the **Ardbrae Dancers** represented Canada's Scottish heritage at Ottawa's Inspiration Village, a summer-long exploration of Canada's rich cultural heritage in its 150th year. Ottawa natives and tourists, young and old alike, enjoyed a taste of Scottish country dancing in the nation's capital.

Nova Scotia Branch reports that its 35th Anniversary Fall Workshop with 100 dancers, held 6-8 October, was a splendid success. Half of the participants came from Nova Scotia, the other half from seven other Canadian provinces, as well as Maine, California, Oregon, North Carolina and California, France, Sweden, Scotland and even Japan. It was a busy weekend, beginning with a Ceilidh on Friday evening, followed by morning and afternoon dance classes on Saturday and more classes on Sunday morning, from Jim Stott and Ron Wallace. The highlight of the weekend was the Banquet and Ball on Saturday night held in honour of the late Pat Kent, founder of the Branch and dedicated promoter of Scottish country dancing in our province. The wonderful music was provided by pianist, Dean Herington, and fiddler, Mara Shea, both from North Carolina. The success of the weekend was evident in the smiles, compliments and warm thanks received from all present.

USA East Coast

Correspondent: Eilean Yates
edgyates@gmail.com

Dancing is going strong all along the Eastern seaboard during the winter season. Snowbirds are coming south to escape the harsh northern winters, so groups enjoy having many interesting visiting dancers. An easy way to find out what is going on is to check the Inter City Scot www.intercityscot.org where there is a wealth of information on classes and events all over the country. The internet is now a widely used tool to help us all spread the word and keep members informed. All the details of classes and events are easily found right on your phone. Gone are the days of writing letters and hoping someone might reply. In addition the RSCDS site has a convenient Branch and Group finder to identify places to find dancing.

Ways to attract new dancers to established groups and to keep them attending has always been a challenge. **The Durham/Chapel Hill** group has been particularly successful this year. A couple of years ago a separate beginners class was formed in a nearby location. Basic classes were taught in footwork, formations and easy dances for two years. The groups then combined with sessions comprising one hour basic, one hour joint basic and established, and one hour experienced dancers for about three months. This worked well. The class is now amalgamated to a two-hour combined class. The original group now has ten new regular dancers. This has been a real success story. It has taken quite a long time and patience but it has paid off. So often beginners come, get overwhelmed, and then just leave. It would be great to hear how others have approached this age-old problem successfully.

North America West Coast

Correspondent: Roberta Gotfried
rgotfried@alum.vassar.edu

All branches on the West Coast are busy exploring new ways to attract new dancers to their classes to sustain or grow membership or counter increased expenses. Let's take a look at some of the approaches that are worth learning from – some old, some new:

Many branches hold a beginners class or open house once a year (usually summer) to attract new dancers and prepare them to join the regular class in the Fall. Vancouver Island has taken some innovative approaches to the open house concept and it has paid off for them. When the usual approaches no longer worked, Vancouver Island started having Ceilidh dances. It all started with an invitation from Dance Victoria to run an event at their Dance Days week in February 2011 (ten days featuring all kinds of dancing) and widely advertised throughout the city of Victoria. That night 122 people attended and 76 of them were guests! Out of those 76 guests ten joined the club. The Club decided to have another ceilidh of their own in August and they welcomed 31 guests. The ceilidhs feature easy Scottish country dances. After each ceilidh, they had a contact list and made follow-up calls to ask how they had heard about the event and if they wanted to be on distribution for future free events. This has resulted in a list of over 100 people who get notices whenever events are held. They now offer ceilidhs three times a year – one in August to get the word out before the September Open House, another in January and one in the spring after the Highland Games, which provides an opportunity to promote the spring classes. The January Open House this year produced thirteen new members.



The Kazan Workshop Ball (photo by Artem Konstantinov)

The spring classes were a new idea which started about five years ago. After the regular season is over in mid-April they offer a package of six classes to pull in people who have finished up their year of, say, art classes or tap classes, which interfered with trying out Scottish country dancing. It also allows new beginners to bring friends to learn about Scottish country dancing before the summer break intervenes.

Many branches have started using social media – Meetup, Facebook, NextDoor – with some success. Everyone emphasizes the importance of having people who maintain these sites and keep them fresh, with good quality photos of people of all ages dancing and enjoying themselves.



2017 Asilomar Ball

San Francisco Branch is finding the use of business card and postcard formats effective at advertising events such as the Winter Ball and Asilomar. These are easy to hand out at events, and as a result, they had a record number of new attendees in 2017. It pays to take a fresh look at how we are doing our recruiting and sometimes small changes in timing or methods can produce better results. To end on a note that I hear many times: it is important to have a fun environment where people feel comfortable as they learn, and a social aspect on top of the dancing is good to encourage. The first challenge is to get people to show up because the dancing is fun, but once they do, it is the atmosphere in the group that gets them to stay. We are looking forward to welcoming visitors to our dance events: Catalina Weekend 4-6 May, and Asilomar Weekend 26-28 October.

Europe

Correspondent: Margaret Lambourne
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On 21 October, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of **The Thistle Club** in Eindhoven, there were dance and music workshops followed by a ball in the evening. There was a great day of dancing taught by Dave Hall with music by Sandy Nixon's band. Sandy himself led the music workshop consisting of pianos, fiddles, bass guitar and recorders. The musicians led the dancers through five dances in the matinee. After a buffet supper all the dancers in their finery had a fantastic evening dancing to the music of Sandy and his band.

The Swilcan SCD Group in the Netherlands organised two workshops in October and November. *Book 51* was October's, led by Margaret Lambourne, and November's was a Drewry Day led by Wil van den Berg. The Drewry Day was good, if more taxing on the brain!

In **Kazan**, Russia, the annual Scottish Dance Spring Workshop took place in May. Classes at different levels were taught by Malcolm Brown, Jim Stott and Fiona Grant. Fiona Grant taught Cape Breton Step, to the great interest of many Russian dancers. Malcolm Brown adjudicated at the SCD Festival, and Jim Stott tutored ten candidates taking their Unit 2 and 3 exams in Kazan. The Spring Ball united all the participants. Everyone enjoyed the great atmosphere and wonderful music of Judith and Ian Muir.

In November, **Moscow Branch** and Clann McCeol Band organised an Autumn Ball to celebrate 24 years of Scottish dancing in Moscow. It was a wonderful success with visitors from Saint Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary and Kirov.

2018 started with Scottish Dance Holidays hosted by the **Flying Scotsman SCD Club** in Kirov. The classes taught by Jane McIntosh united dancers from Kirov, Perm, Yekaterinburg, Ufa, Nizhny Novgorod, Naberezhnye Chelny, Nizhnekamsk, Saint Petersburg, Moscow and Exeter. The beginning of the year was friendly and joyful. The annual Burns Festival took place in Cheboksary at the end of January and included SCD workshops, a Robert Burns poetry evening, performances and a Literature Ball. Many clubs from all over Russia joined a video flash mob dancing *Burns Night* by Robert McOwen, and shared recordings of the performance with friends from other cities.

South Africa

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The Pretoria Branch celebrated its 45th anniversary with a Ball in October, attended by members of the branch and friends from as far afield as Cape Town and Durban. The lively programme included a couple of dances from the book *Happy Blues* published as part of these 'sapphire celebrations'. The demonstration team performed in January at the Fort Klapperkop Heritage Site in Pretoria for their 120th year celebration and used the opportunity to promote Scottish country dancing.



Pretoria Branch Ball

2018 will see two clubs in the Cape region attain significant milestones: **Bergvliet Scottish Country Dance Club** will be celebrating their 60th birthday with a ball in June, while the **Grahamstown Club** in the Eastern Cape celebrates their 40th anniversary in September.

A high point in October last year was the arrival of 50-plus dancers from Europe for the 'Dancing in New Places' event held at Cape Town's **Kelvin Grove Club** with its wonderful sprung floor. Local dancers joined in the morning classes, superbly taught by Pat Houghton, plus three evenings of social dancing. Classes and dances were accompanied by inspirational live music (a rarity in Cape Town!) provided by George Meikle and James Gray.

The **Cape Town Branch** Chairman was interviewed on a regional radio station, Cape Talk, towards the end of 2017. We hope the opportunity to talk about Scottish country dancing and the RSCDS may attract new members. The timing coincided with thoughts of New Year's resolutions and getting fit or fitter and trying new fun activities. We have also targeted the inaugural Cape Town Celtic Festival to be held in April, as a marketing opportunity to try and attract new members and grow the branch.

Dancers from around the country are gearing up to join pipe bands and Highland dancers in the Garden Route town of Knysna for the fourth Knysna Celtic Festival weekend in February. We are looking forward to dancing in the ceilidh on the Friday evening. We will also be holding our RSCDS banner high as we march along Knysna's main street as part of the Massed Pipes and Drums Parade with 150+ pipers, drummers and dancers from all over South Africa!

Japan

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The **Gifu Scottish Country Dance Club**, one of the groups in **Tokyo Branch**, celebrated its 50th Anniversary from 29 September to 1 October. They prepared classes, tours near Gifu city, a welcome party and a ball for about 200 dancers over three days. The guest



Young Japanese Dancers

teacher was Mary Murray (Vancouver) and the musicians were Marian Anderson, Max Ketchin and Graham Bell. On Saturday evening, participants, including 18 dancers from Australia, Canada, England and Scotland, were divided into 6 small boats to watch Ukai – Japanese traditional cormorant fishing – in the River Nagara and enjoyed dinner afloat! At the Golden Jubilee Ball, piper Ian Aitken (Australia) started a march from the hotel garden to the ballroom. Marian and her band played both the Japanese and Scottish national anthems at the beginning of the ball. Marvellous live music reverberated in the hall and everyone enjoyed the dances very much, especially the three young girls in the photograph.

Saitama Branch held a Weekend School in October in Nikko with about 70 dancers. The teacher was Sue Porter and the musician was Hiroko Kokai. For three days, her classes were filled with spirit and an enthusiastic and friendly atmosphere. At the ceilidh, we were entertained by a harmonica solo, a piano solo, a creative dance, chorus, dances and Japanese folk dance. Everyone enjoyed it very much.

Tokyo, Tokai and Saitama Branches each held a New Year Party to start 2018.

New Zealand

Correspondent: Sue Lindsay
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The 61st **New Zealand Branch** Summer School was held in Masterton from 28 December to 5 January. We were all accommodated in the Copthorne Solway Park Hotel where wonderful meals were provided. Classes for dancers of all levels were provided along with a Teachers and Musicians Course. This enabled teachers who don't always get the chance to work with musicians at a class level to get the confidence to work with a musician.



Liz Douglas, New Zealand Branch member, at the AGM in Perth

2018 is the 50th year that the New Zealand Branch has been in existence (before that it was the New Zealand Society). To celebrate, a toast to the New Zealand Branch was made after the AGM, and at the President's Ball Mary Ronnie and Peggy Hudson cut the Anniversary Cake. The branch is planning to hold another event during the year in August. The branch is again running a Dance Scottish event with participation from the clubs. 45 clubs from around New Zealand are 'giving it a go' during February and March 2018.

Chris Milne – our new Executive Officer

In November Chris Milne was appointed as the new RSCDS Executive Officer. Here he answers a few questions about himself and his views on the Society.



Chris Milne

Where are you from?

I seem to be migrating very slowly south, having been born in Perth, raised in Fife and now living with my young family in East Lothian. My only memory of country dancing while I was growing up was the occasional session during my PE class at Queen Anne High School in Dunfermline, which I think was taught by a football coach! If anything, it was a slightly traumatic experience, so I'm pleased to see that my own kids are really enjoying country dancing at their primary school, where the teacher is enthusiastic and encouraging.

What has your career been up to now?

I graduated from Stirling University, what seems like eons ago now, with a degree in Accountancy. I decided to take a different path from there and ended up working

with the Scottish Government for around 10 years, including a lengthy spell as an adviser to Ministers on Sustainable Transport. That covered policy on everything from cycling to electric cars and biofuels derived from used cooking oil (among many other weird and wonderful things)! It was interesting, but I knew that the charity sector was a calling for me, so I left for a temporary post working with students at Heriot-Watt University. From there I worked as the Scotland Director for the charity Hearing Link, a leading charity for people with hearing loss, then the Head of Trusts for Shelter Scotland, the charity for homeless people, before arriving at the RSCDS.

What attracted you to apply to the RSCDS?

It honestly looked like such an exciting challenge and one that was quite far removed from the rest of the charity sector. I really loved the idea of supporting such a large and diverse community of dancers from around the world. For so many people to be so passionate about SCD is an incredible thing and I knew that I wanted to help develop that even more, by both growing our reach and enhancing the experience that existing members have. I'm also quite proud of Scotland's cultural heritage, of which I think SCD is a big part. So the question of where SCD and the RSCDS will be in 20 years is very much one that I want to help answer.

What are your impressions of us so far?

I'll be honest about the fact that I'm not a dancer, although I have been assured that will change! That has made it a steeper learning curve since joining in November, but a very enjoyable one at that. I've had great support from the staff team at Coates Crescent, as well as a number of Trustees, Committee members and RSCDS members, so a huge thanks to you all for making me feel very welcome. That includes our Honorary Archivist Alan Macpherson, who gives me a regular history lesson on the Society and SCD! I'm still learning, and will be for some time, but I already feel very passionate about the work that we do here. I've had glimpses of what's going on out there within the branches, but I really do want to see much more, as that's how I think Coates Crescent can serve our members better.

What is your vision for the future?

The vision for me is a fairly simple one – to support a thriving community of teachers, musicians, branches and dancers, who have a really positive experience of both SCD and the RSCDS. There are a lot of good things going on out there, but despite that we face some significant challenges. The major one is participation, with fewer people dancing each year. I think there is more that we can do to support branches and I do plan to arrange some regional forums over the coming months to ask branch Secretaries what we can do to help them continue to thrive. We're very much committed to working for our branches and members.

Membership Numbers

Society membership stands at just under 11,000. It peaked in the late 1980s at just under 30,000, due to the growth in branches in the UK and abroad.

Scotland, understandably, has always had the largest number of members, but the decline in Scotland began in the 50s after a post-war period of great enthusiasm. Perhaps the spread of television in the 50s had something to do with it. According to the 1950 Society Bulletin, the Society's largest branch, Edinburgh, had 1400 members but by the peak in 1989 was 836, Glasgow went from 827 to 565; Aberdeen from 675 to 230; and Dundee from 600 to 211. One important caveat when quoting past membership numbers is that they were not always reliable. Today's figures are much more accurate. Today just under half of all members are in the UK. Here are the figures for 2016/17:

UK – 5079

Scotland	2717
England and Wales	2362
Northern Ireland	162

North America – 3258

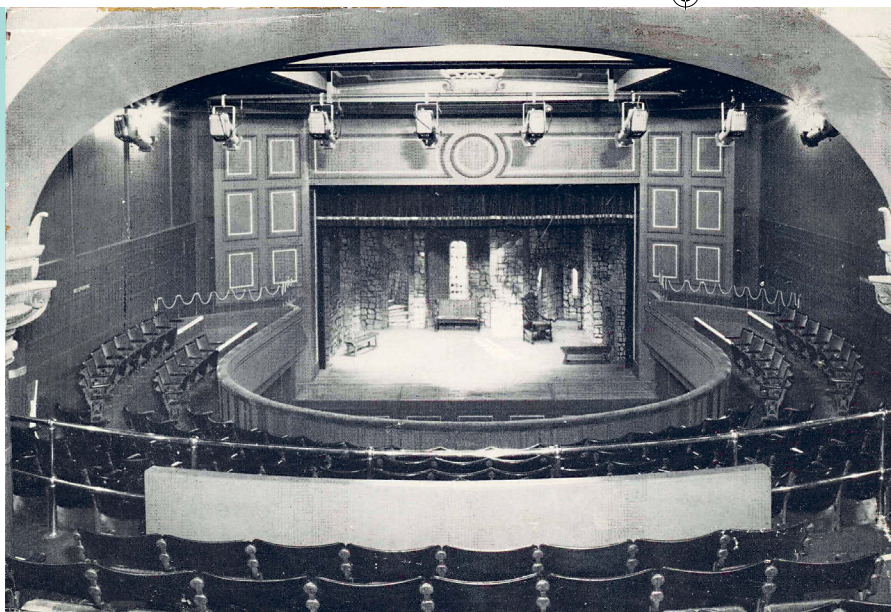
United States	1803
Canada	1455

Overseas – 2134

New Zealand	737
Australia	697
Japan	640
South Africa	60

Europe – 484

France	158
Germany	137
Sweden	79
Austria	48
Russia	25
Netherlands	19
Italy	18



The Atheneum theatre

Our Inaugural Meeting

Monday 26 November 1923 was a dull day for news. It was the middle of a General Election campaign. There was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Yorkshire and a report of hooliganism at a public meeting in Bridgeton, Glasgow. Among the Public Notices in the Glasgow Herald was a small advert for a meeting for anyone interested in 'Scots Country Dances'. Although Jean Milligan came eventually to be closely identified with the Society, any account of that founding meeting involves Ysobel Stewart to a far greater extent, along with Michael Diack and Francis Bisset. Editor Jimmie Hill attempts to read between the lines of the minutes of our inaugural meeting.

Mrs Stewart's idea

We know that the idea of forming a country dance society and publishing a book of dances was Mrs Stewart's. It was she who approached a publisher, who then introduced her to Jean Milligan. Careful reading of the Executive Committee Minutes gives us an insight into some of the other important characters who were involved.

The advert

The story which we have come to accept is that a newspaper advert was placed for anyone interested in 'Scots Country Dances' to attend a meeting at the Athenaeum, St George's Place, Glasgow, and that those who came along founded the Society. The reality is slightly different. The advert was placed only in *The Glasgow Herald* and appeared on the morning of the meeting itself. Had it appeared a couple of days earlier, anyone living in the Central Belt would have had a chance of attending. The meeting was held in a convenient venue within a few minutes walk of the four main Glasgow railway stations of the day. Railway timetables from 1923 show that anyone from Ayr in the west to Edinburgh or Dunfermline in the east could have been there for the 5pm meeting and been home in time for the 9.30 News Bulletin from London on the wireless.

Who was there?

Today we talk about our two co-founders, but the 27 people present at the inaugural meeting were all 'founders'. Two crucial figures were present, Mr Francis Bisset and

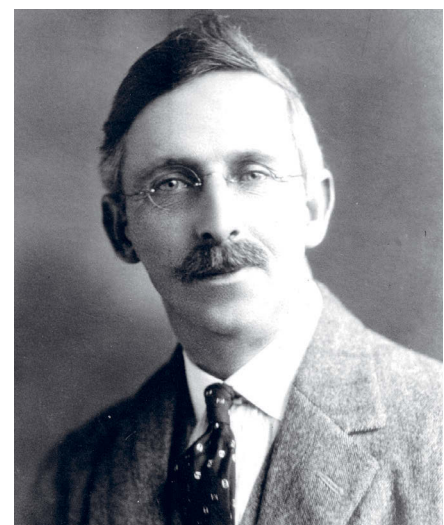
Mr Michael Diack, along with Major and Mrs Stewart, Jean Milligan, two other men and 19 women (all 'Miss'). Jean Milligan, as a college lecturer, was solidly middle class, but the Stewarts were upper class, both from 'county' families, far higher on the social ladder. This was an important social distinction. In 1907, two years before her marriage, Ysobel Campbell had been presented to King Edward VII at Court, an honour given only to the daughters of a small number of landed and aristocratic families. It is difficult for us today to understand just how important 'class' then was. To have members of the aristocracy involved in your organisation gave it immediate credibility. The importance of Mrs Stewart in the early years of our Society has been seriously under-estimated. Unlike Miss Milligan, she had the connections, the status, and the influence to persuade Bisset and Diack to back this new Society and to recruit her friends in the aristocracy and the Girl Guiding movement to come on board. But what of the 19 women? In 1923 Jean Milligan was a lecturer at the Glasgow Provincial Training College, known as Jordanhill. The class lists for 1923 are in the Andersonian Library of Strathclyde University. Seven of the 19 were students of Jean Milligan, including a Miss Helen Macdonald of The Manse, Appin, Argyll, who may also have been known to the Stewarts. Of the others present Percy Thomson and Lillian Ross would later play important roles in Glasgow Branch. We can conclude that at least half of those present had a link to either Jean Milligan or Ysobel Stewart.

Who was not there?

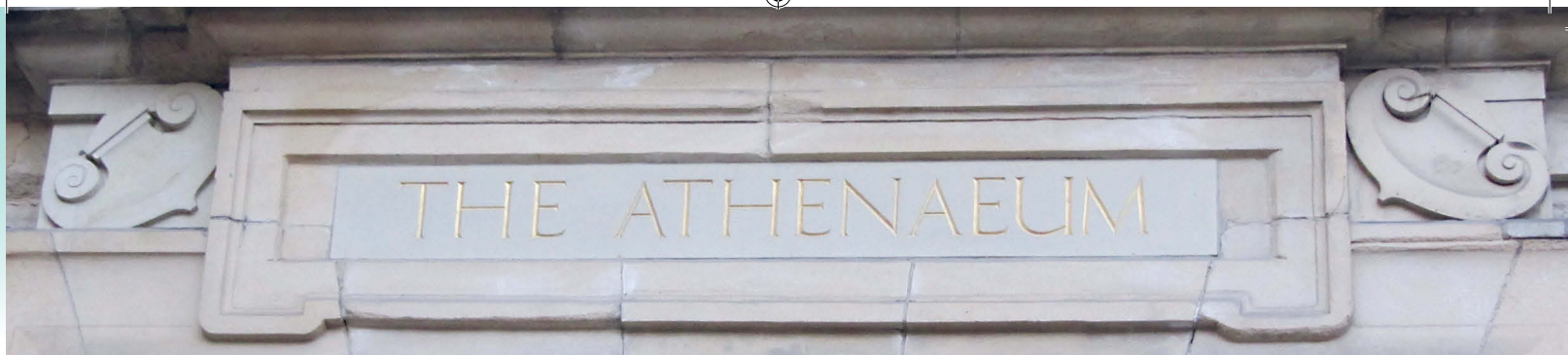
Of the 23 apologies, a number were clearly friends of the Stewarts: one Lord, two Ladies, a few more from the county set, one army colonel and two captains. We are talking *la crème de la crème* of Scottish society – the Atholls and the Butes: Lady Helen Tod and her brother, Lord James Stewart Murray, who became the 9th Duke of Atholl; Lady Margaret MacRae, one of the Crichton Stewarts, and daughter of the 3rd Marquis of Bute, said at the time to be the richest man in Britain, and the man who rebuilt the family seat, Mount Stuart House near Rothesay on Bute (and well worth a visit). Also in the list were Mrs Burnley Campbell of Ormidale, Colintrave, Argyll, and Miss Campbell of Inverneill, one of Mrs Stewart's unmarried sisters. Mrs Burnley Campbell and Mrs Stewart were both involved in An Comunn Gàidhealach – the body devoted to the promotion of the Gaelic language, music and culture. Among the other apologies, we find Miss Dalmahoy of Edinburgh and Miss Sharp of Dundee, both, like Mrs Stewart, involved in the Girl Guides. With the advert appearing only that morning, is it likely that 23 chance readers of the Herald's classified ads would send in apologies in advance unless they had received prior notice? It is clear that a deal of pre-planning had gone on in advance of the actual meeting.

Messrs Bisset and Diack

Two men whose importance for the Society must be recognised are Mr Francis Herbert Bisset and Mr John Michael Diack. They were instrumental in our formation. Mr Diack was Director of the music publisher, Patersons, but he was also involved in education in Glasgow as Superintendent of Music in Schools. Nationally, he was a well-known music arranger, his name appearing as the arranger on much of Paterson's sheet music. He was a conductor and popular broadcaster on the wireless. He became famous for his musical arrangements of ballads and well-known nursery rhymes such as *Wee Willie*



John Michael Diack



Winkie, Sing a Song of Sixpence, and *Little Jack Horner*, set in the style of Handel, beloved of choirs to this day (check him out on YouTube.) Both men were deeply involved in the musical life of Glasgow. As far back as 1909 we find that Diack was the conductor of the Glasgow Bach Choir while Bisset was the Secretary. The famous English composer, Sir Malcolm Arnold, dedicated his *Tam O'Shanter Overture* to Michael Diack. His obituary described him as 'one of the foremost teachers in the Athenaeum School of Music, a man of quiet manner, with unbounded enthusiasm and tireless energy.' Dr Alastair Macfadyen quotes Mr Diack's son in his biography of Jean Milligan:

I remember so well the day when Mrs Stewart called at my father's office in Glasgow and told him about her idea of a Scottish Country Dance Society. He at once thought of Jean Milligan . . . He introduced the two of them.

Francis Bisset was the Chairman of the Federation of Musical Festivals. He had been one of the founders of the Glasgow Music Festival in 1911 and was Secretary and three times Chairman of the Festival until 1926. Michael Diack was also involved, serving on the Festival's Executive Council. Mr Bisset was the editor of the small Festival Booklets, published by Patersons, used to prepare competitors. He was also involved with the world-famous Glasgow Orpheus Choir. His name appears on the silver salver presented to its eminent conductor, Sir Hugh Robertson, in 1932. Bisset and Diack were leading figures in the cultural life of Glasgow and were to play crucial roles in the Society in the next few years. Look back at our early dance books – the arranger and publisher is Michael Diack.

Why the Athenaeum?

The Athenaeum was an adult educational institution founded in 1847. Charles Dickens had delivered the inaugural address at its opening ceremony. It developed into a music school, then eventually into the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, counting Ruby Wax and David Tennant among its alumni. The RSAMD, now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, moved out in 1987. The building still exists in Nelson Mandela Place, formerly St George's Place. *The Musical Times* of 1 June 1930 contains an article on its history – written by none other than our Mr Bisset. Thus we have the connection and why Room 17 was booked



The Athenaeum

for that historic meeting. Today, apart from various offices, it contains both a Thai and an Italian restaurant.

The business of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by Mr Bisset who started the business, not with a general discussion of the state of country dancing, but with the proposal that a Country Dance Society be formed. The three objects were announced, clearly prepared in advance: to practise and preserve country dances as danced in Scotland; to collect old books etc; and to publish descriptions of country dances with music. Major Stewart hoped that such dances would be included in ball programmes. What he hoped to see would be dances such as *Petronella* and *The Duke of Perth* sitting alongside the polkas, waltzes and quadrilles of the contemporary ballroom. This did happen, but has not been the case since the 1950s. Was it ever the intention of those present that country dancing should become the preserve solely of enthusiasts such as ourselves?

When Mr Bisset hoped that the competitive Musical Festivals would include sections on country dancing, Miss Milligan (had she been silent up till then?) suggested that the teachers would require 'backing', ie training. It is interesting that the idea of forming a Society was Mrs Stewart's, but at the meeting it was proposed by the chairman, Mr Bisset. It is worth remembering that 1923 was only five years after women over 30 were given the vote. Was it agreed in advance that the proposal would be better coming from a man?

Mr Diack proposed the formation of an interim committee whose first task would be to publish 12 dances. How this was to be done was not made clear but a Miss Montgomerie suggested that Marjorie Kennedy Fraser, the collector of Gaelic

songs, could be asked to collect any dances she came across during her travels in 'the Islands'. One of the men present, a Mr Gregson, proposed 'getting hold of the children' – perhaps an odd turn of phrase, but with the proposal for Festivals, this suggests that the teaching of children was seen as a priority.

The meeting duly resolved to form a SCD Society, to frame a constitution, and to attract members until it was possible to have an AGM. 12 people were appointed as the interim committee. They included Messrs Diack and Bisset, Miss Milligan, and Mrs Stewart plus 8 others, 7 of whom were present. Mrs Stewart was appointed interim Honorary Secretary. The committee member who was not present was not even in the list of apologies. She was Lady Marjorie Dalrymple, sister to the 11th Earl of Stair. As Assistant Girl Guide Commissioner for Ayrshire, we can assume she was a close associate of Ysobel Stewart, who lived in Ayr itself. By all accounts Lady Marjorie was a fascinating character. She arrived in North Borneo in 1925 and was instrumental in setting up a Guide company in Sandakan in what is now Malaysia. A year later we find her introducing Girl Guiding to Hawera, North Island, New Zealand. We can probably deduce that Mrs Stewart contacted her in advance to see if she could put her name forward for the committee. After all, she was a 'Lady'.

The meeting then divided Scotland into three areas: Edinburgh, Glasgow, and 'the North'. Committees for each area would be set up with a view to starting classes. The members' subscription was set at five shillings per annum, and it remained the same until 1967. It is worth noting that the final resolution of the meeting was to interest children in the Society. One aspect of the meeting which today we may find odd is that there is no record of votes being taken for any resolution.

If you had seen the advert in Edinburgh or Greenock that morning, arranged to leave work early, caught the train, and come along expecting a meeting for those interested in country dances, you would have been faced with a *fait accompli*.

The next article will cover the years 1923 – 1928.

(I am grateful for the help of Society Archivist Alan Macpherson, the Archive Department of the Andersonian Library of Strathclyde University, scotlandpeople.gov.uk, and the Archivist of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.)



Mervyn Short

20 Tips for a Good Dance Programme

At the Teachers' Conference at the 2017 AGM Weekend, Mervyn Short presented his views on what makes a good dance programme. In your branch or group, who makes up the programmes? Is it an individual or a committee; are teachers involved? Do you involve the band or just present them with the finished article? How many dances do you have on a typical programme? Whatever your views, it is easy to criticise a programme – until you have made one yourself!

1. Today it is usual to have a recap and/or a walk-through at dances and balls. Programmes are now shorter than they used to be. 18 seems to be the average number of dances.
2. If your programme is for a Ball, it should consist mostly of well-known dances.
3. It is usual to start with a jig, especially if there is live music, as they are easier to play than reels.
4. The first dance should be very well known and be a 3-couple dance in a four-couple set – to be able to accommodate a fifth couple. The dance should only include skip change and very little pas de basque. Slip step is an energetic step and should also be avoided in the first dance.
5. Include a mix of easy and more difficult dances and include the source of the dance.
6. The programme should include as many well-known formations as possible. It is helpful to use a formation check list or *The Manual*. This will ensure that formations are not used twice, except for very popular formations, e.g. half figure of eight and hands across. Reels of three will appear several times but there should be a variety of types: with corners, mirror, parallel or unusual, e.g. as in *Red House*. Make sure you don't neglect some of the older formations such as the poussette and set and turn corners in reel and jig time. Some programmes are made up of dancers' favourites with no consideration to the formations the dances contain. This can lead to a very unbalanced programme.
7. Aim for variety in your programmes. Make sure you include a square set or a medley such as *Johnnie Walker*. A round-the-room dance could also be included but not as the first dance as it could be too energetic.
8. 8 x 32 bar strathspeys are disappearing from some areas. It is not uncommon to find programmes that only include one 8 x 32 bar strathspey.
9. 3-, 4- and 5-couple dances require a specific number of dancers. If there aren't enough dancers to make up a set, it means that up to possibly nine dancers will have to sit out. This is anti-social. There should be no more than two of these dances in each half.
10. 2-couple dances are traditionally danced in four-couple sets. It's best not to begin with a 2-couple dance, nor have two close or even next to each other.
11. We all like to increase our repertoire of dances and if a 'new' dance has become popular in a club, it often appears on a programme. Try not to include more than two 'new' dances on a programme; make sure that there are lots of old favourites. Dancers come to dance, not to spend half the evening walking!
12. Include dances from a wide selection of RSCDS books; remember the earlier books.
13. Include non-Society old favourites, e.g. *Blue Mess Jacket*, *Dundee Whaler*, *Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterader*, *Lord MacLay's Reel*, *Mairi's Wedding* and *The Baldovan Reel*.
14. John Drewry, Roy Goldring and Derek Haynes are probably the most prolific devisers of recent years. We all enjoy doing their dances but be careful that your programme doesn't consist of too many. There are other fine devisers.
15. If using dances longer than 32 bars, be careful not to have a 40-bar dance next to a 48-bar dance.
16. If you can, aim for a range of different tune types. Make sure you have not neglected traditional strathspeys. In certain areas strathspeys using slow airs are taking over.
17. After preparing a draft programme show it to the band for their comments.
18. If the programme is changed after being reviewed by others, check carefully the mix of formations introduced by the new dances with those already on the original programme.
19. Never choose 2 dances that use the same original tune, e.g. *None so Pretty* and *Mrs Stuart Linnell*; *Wee Cooper of Fife* and *The Cooper's Wife*; *Highland Fair* and *Muirland Willie*.
20. Finish the dance with a well-known '3-couple dance in a 4-couple set' so that a fifth couple can join in if required. A lot of people like to finish with a dance with six hands round and back as the last formation. Never finish with a dance which requires a specific number of dancers.

50 Years Ago

From Bulletin 46, 1968

- Mina Corson's visit to Canada and the US, on behalf of Miss Milligan, was an outstanding success. Hamilton Branch described her as 'a delightful person and an inspiration to all.' (see page 29)
- Book 24 was published during the year, including *The Wild Geese* and *The Sailor*.
- In 1968 there were 3 branches in Africa: Nairobi, Johannesburg and Cape Town. There were 12 affiliated groups: 4 in South Africa, 3 in Zambia, 2 in Uganda, 2 in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and one in Khartoum in the Sudan. May Yarker visited Kenya for 10 weeks and taught classes in the Nairobi Branch, which reported 111 members.
- The AGM of 1967 was held in Oban. One interesting motion, which was carried unanimously, was that the immediate past-Chairman be a member ex-officio of the Executive Council and each standing committee for one year. Another was from English members who wanted the AGM held in a more accessible place in future.
- Staff salaries for the year amounted to £2,463 and members' subscription income was £3,500.
- Dunfermline Branch reported that their general class gets one hour of instruction, then a break for tea, then social dancing.
- At a summer school ceilidh Miss Milligan appeared regally attired as Miss Scotland 1968 complete with sash. Apparently this left 'a lasting impression'. One ceilidh item sung to the tune of the Skye Boat Song went:

*Speed! Bonnie folk to St Andrews in Fife.
Onwards! Miss Milligan cries.
Dance till your feet are weary and sore,
And come back next year for more!*

Young Dancers

News of young dancers is edited by Joana Stausberg. Please send her news of your youth events to ysc@rscds.org

Global Youth Week

2018's Global Youth Week brought cool events worldwide! Thank you very much to everyone who participated with workshops, picnics, social dances, beginners' classes or pub evenings. Congratulations to the Springy Reelers who won this year's Facebook competition (and may just be the youngest winners ever).



Four young Springy Reelers

Who are the Springy Reelers?

Springy Reelers is a family friendly dance group (so kids can come and dance) that aims towards a reasonably skilled level of mixed dancing (ceilidh and Scottish country etc) which is fun, always open to beginners and allows dancers to develop in an easy-going environment. It is based in Nottingham. I wonder how many branches and groups are 'always open to beginners'. The group is aimed at young adults with children. They meet once a month, on a Sunday morning, dance a mixture of ceilidh and country dances for two hours and then adjourn to a pub lunch. Marie Fox, 40, says, "It's fun, friendly and is a great way to get the family moving on a Sunday." Her son, Alexander, 6, and daughter, Hazel, 4, like it because they get to dance with their friends then eat together afterwards. Katy Ellerton, 32, likes it because "it is such a supportive, joyful group to be part of." Kat Morrow, 37, describes it as "a chance to meet up with new found friends, for a dance, and a bit of a blether – as well as the pub lunch." They sound like a lot of fun! Is this an idea for your area?

Branch Youth Development Grants

A year has passed after 2017's Global Youth Week announced its development grant winners: Glasgow Branch as well as Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles Branch and Central Germany Branch. Time to take a look and see what became of their various projects.

Glasgow Branch and the Glasgow young dancers crowd used their grant to run a teacher training course (Units 2 and 3) for 12 undergrads and recently-graduated young dancers last summer. Congratulations to all the successful candidates with their tutor Alasdair Brown. Many them are now working on Unit 4, teaching classes in Glasgow or helping the Branch with teaching in local primary schools.

Central Germany Branch used their grant to support young dancers from Münster run their first ever Youth Workshop in October. 35 young dancers from Germany, joined by an adventurous pair of young dancers travelling from the UK, enjoyed either beginners or general classes followed by a social dance. Smiles all round after a great weekend – we can hardly wait for this year's follow-up organised by young dancers in Heidelberg in late September!



400 children!

And last but oh so definitely not least: Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles Branch used the grant to work with primary schools in Hawick and Galashiels to organise St Andrew's Day ceilidhs – live music and snacks included. With over 400 children taking part, this grant has introduced lots of families to the fun of Scottish country dancing. Super work, well done – you can't start dancing early enough!

Scholarships: Go for it, please!

We want you to participate in events worldwide even if you do not have the money for it so the RSCDS and its branches offer scholarships to young dancers. There are scholarships for schools, Spring Fling, some specially dedicated to young dancers, future teachers, travel grants and more. So, do apply for one. It does not matter if you are 12 or 28, a beginner or an experienced dancer, just give it a try! For questions, email: ysc@rscds.org

Let's hear from Saskia de Graaf:

'The 2017-18 New Zealand Summer School held in Masterton was a spectacular event. It was a week packed full of dancing, live music, meeting old friends, making new friends, and a swimming pool that we made use of daily (to combat dancing in temperatures of up to 30°C). As always, my favourite part of the school was the evening dances where I had the chance to meet and dance with people I only see at Summer School. I would like to thank the RSCDS Youth Services for giving me a scholarship to attend the school. It was an amazing week that I would not otherwise have been able to experience.'

Witchampton School, Dorset



Witchampton School, Dorset

Marilyn Watson of Bournemouth Branch was asked to teach 24 seven-to-nine year olds Scottish country dancing in Witchampton School, which is in a small village in Dorset. They were having a day about Scotland and many were wearing something tartan. They were exuberant and enthusiastic and all joined in. It was great to see such happiness on their faces as they danced.



The RSCDS



Left: Children from Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles, Johnstone at Winter School; Moscow Autumn Ball
 Centre: Sue Porter and members of Saitama Branch Festival Display Joint Winners – Edinburgh Scottish
 Right: Dancing Lord McLay's Reel at the AGM; Win



Weekend 2017

Saitama Branch
Dancing



S in Pictures



eebles; Ian Muir, Shona MacFadyen and Muriel Ball.
anch; Global Youth Week - Ceilidhkids; Newcastle
ottish Dancers and the German Team.
Winter School Ball; Nova Scotia Fall Workshop.





Anniversaries

Dancing in Pittville Pump Room by Hugh Brogan

Stirling Branch 90

In September Stirling celebrated 90 years of country dancing in style with a dinner and dance in the Albert Hall, Stirling. We welcomed dancers from a' the airts and all enjoyed an evening of good music, dancing, food and a celebration cake. Whilst it is a time to reflect on the past it is also a time to look forward to the future. We remembered with enormous gratitude and affection the wonderful teachers whose enthusiasm and teaching skills ensured that we enjoy our dancing to the full. We also remembered all those dancers who are no longer with us and surely our continued enjoyment must be their legacy. We will endeavour in Stirling to continue to promote all the positive benefits of Scottish country dancing – fun, exercise and friendship – and we will continue to extend the hand of friendship to anyone who joins us.

Catriona Fleming, Chairman, Stirling Branch

TAC Teachers' Association (Canada) 60

During 1957, a group of teachers and candidates in southern Ontario were discussing the possibility of forming an organization to allow them to share ideas, keep up with changes from the RSCDS, maintain consistency in the teaching of SCD, and promote uniformity in the dancing from group to group. Miss Milligan visited that year, on her first North American tour, and she thought the idea was absolutely marvelous. In April 1958, the founding meeting was held in Toronto. Now, 60 years later, TAC continues to serve the dancing community and its teachers. Full membership is open to teachers who have achieved certification at either Level 1 (preliminary) or Level 2 (full). RSCDS members who are teaching or supporting Scottish country dancing without completing RSCDS certification can now join as associate members. Members hail from all over the world. Since 1973, TAC has helped to encourage and promote Scottish country dancing by holding an annual summer school. Originally, the venues were largely in Ontario, but now, to allow dancers from all regions of the continent to attend, the week-long workshop is based in different cities across North America. This year's Summer School will be held at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in Minneapolis from 29 July to 5 August. The workshop is for ALL Scottish country dancers, at any level of proficiency or experience. In line with the goal of fostering excellence in teaching, TAC holds a teacher candidates' course in conjunction with Summer School in even numbered years. This year Units 2, 3, and 5 will be offered from 22 July to 5 August. TAC also coordinates the examination tour for candidate courses in various branches in North America. Scholarships are available for dancers, candidates, and musicians. Many teachers will be familiar with (and thankful for) other projects of TAC, such as TACNotes, TACTalk, TACBooks, TACSound, AskTAC, TACWeb, and Outreach, as well as books and recordings produced by TAC. Happy 60th Anniversary!

Cheltenham Branch 60

There was much anticipation amongst Cheltenham Branch members as the time of our Annual Ball approached. Not only was this the first event to celebrate our 60th year as a branch of the RSCDS but the Ball had returned to its traditional venue – the Regency splendour of The Pittville Pump Room.

As dancers arrived, they were welcomed by the sound of the Pipes played by Pipe Major Sandy Walker. Once everyone had their dancing shoes on, Sandy's pipes again marked the beginning of the evening, before our MC, Anne Walker, and Nicol McLaren and the Glenraig Band took over.

We were not to be disappointed, as the wonderful music and the splendid surroundings lifted our dancing. Dancers joined us from local groups and from as far afield as London, Edinburgh and Cardiff. It was great to make up sets with partners from a' the airts. Given the venue, it was particularly fitting that the dance 'The Pump Room', devised by Anne for our 50th Anniversary, was included in the programme; we have enjoyed learning it afresh. Our founder member Bill Paxton also enjoyed the evening. He pointed out, however, that the first committee met in May 1958; it is for this reason that our Anniversary Dance will be held on 19 May when the Luke Brady Band will be playing for us.

We would all like to say thank you to everyone who came along and created such a fantastic, friendly atmosphere and launched our 60th Anniversary Year in such style. Will we be back at the Pittville Pump Room next year? We're working on it and I am sure Margaret Winterbourne will devise an equally popular programme.

Toronto Association 60

Over 100 dancers followed piper Peter Cotton in a Grand March into the ballroom at Sala Caboto on 25 November. Once dancers were assembled, Chair Jean Lindsay welcomed our Guest of Honour, Andrew Kellett, Chair Elect of the Society. He brought us warm greetings from Coates Crescent and complimented RSCDS Toronto for our 60 years of accomplishment. Then he, too, joined the crowd and danced all evening. Laird Brown and Scotch Mist were on fire, and their music kept spirits high all evening, and many dances were reprised. The very do-able and meaningful programme devised by David Booz reminded us of Toronto devisers and characters and allowed us to honour them in dance. Other special guests included two original members: Sandy Bain and Georgina Finlay (whose dance, St Andrews Links, was on the programme). Happily, quite a few of the dancers on the floor were new faces since the 50th Gala and they were excited to join us for the 60th.

The day after the dance Tea and Chat with Andrew Kellett provided opportunity for questions and lively discussion. We asked the Chair Elect, 'What should he specifically, and Coates Crescent generally, be doing better to promote SCD?' He said one of his aims is to

improve networking among the various branches. We discussed the decline of Society membership across the world, but he noted that, recently, about half of the branches have actually grown — including, especially, Toronto, and he was eager to share our success model. Andrew applauded each one of us as a valued member of the SCD community. "You," he said, "are the RSCDS and should feel empowered by that." But that comes with responsibilities, among which is "for each of us to always be encouraging and helpful" and "to project what is best about RSCDS Scottish country dancing". He noted these qualities were fully apparent at the wonderful 60th Anniversary Dance.



Helen Russell toasting the Crieff weekend

25 Years of the Crieff Weekend – 350 Dancers!

January in Scotland can be a long, dark and dreary month unless of course you stumble upon one of Scottish country dancing's best kept secrets – The Crieff Weekend! Organised by Falkirk Branch, this annual event took place in Crieff Hydro over the weekend of the third week in January and again attracted over 350 Scottish country dancers!

Not one band, but three! Marian Anderson, Gordon Shand and David Oswald, three of Scotland's top bands, played in three venues within the hotel each evening after dinner, the dancers moving from one to the other as the mood took them. Those who knew the dances went to the Ballroom, where dances weren't called. Not so sure about the next dance? Then slip through to the Drawing Room, the same programme but called. For those who fancied some ceilidh, then on to the third venue for a *Pride of Erin* or *Postie's Jig*. But no matter where you went in the hotel there were two things in common – great music and smiling faces!

During the drinks reception on the first night, Falkirk Chairman, Margie Stevenson, presented branch member Anna Marshall with a special gift to mark her 25 years as chair of the Crieff sub-committee – a framed copy of a new dance devised by Alan Macpherson together with the original music composed appropriately by Gordon Shand, who has played at the weekend for 24 out of the 25 years! And as the dance, *Anna Marshall's Strathspey*, had been clandestinely scheduled in as a Teacher's Choice on Saturday night's programme, a 'pop-up' demonstration team of Falkirk members performed the dance for Anna and the assembled guests, accompanied of course by Gordon Shand.

On Saturday morning, weekenders were again spoilt for choice. Top class teachers from around the country ran several Scottish classes, a ceilidh class, a walk-through session covering that evening's programme and a light-hearted session of ceilidh and social dances. In the afternoon, Gordon Shand's three children on accordions and David Oswald's son on drums contributed to an outstanding concert from some very talented and enthusiastic young musicians. For those who had danced holes in their shoes, the staff from Arabesque Shoes in Perth were on hand in the Foyer with what seemed like their entire stock of dancing shoes. Just opposite them, a team of podiatrists was on hand to give advice on looking after those aching feet! In between times of course there were all the hotel facilities available such as the spa, the gym, swimming, horse-riding and miles of tracks and paths for walking through the snow in the beautiful Perthshire hills – all right on the doorstep. Feedback to date – the best one yet!

Margie Stevenson, Falkirk Branch



Anna Marshall and Margie Stevenson

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Anna Marshall's Strathspey

Recruiting Successes

Scotland – The Aberdeen Branch Ceilidh Class

Starting small

From time to time Aberdeen Branch has received requests for help with one-off ceilidh events, often from oil companies. In late 2012 the Committee discussed staging a ceilidh class and it was agreed to have a trial run with a class on a monthly basis from January to March 2013. With Sheila Bain as the teacher, the class began on a snowy January evening and, as numbers were encouraging, it continued until June by which time our Summer Socials were in full swing. From September 2013 the class resumed and by 2015 was meeting twice monthly on Tuesdays when numbers varied but with an average of 20 attendees per session. Since 2015 the number of dancers has increased and today there's around 48 at each session. Initially the teacher used CDs, but since the beginning of 2017 two accordionists have taken turns to cover the class and there's no doubt they have contributed to its continuing success. There is a huge range of people attending the class: regular ceilidh dancers, people wanting to learn dances for weddings, including a number of brides-to-be with or without their grooms, and visitors to the town. Some branch members also attend from time to time.



Aberdeen Branch Ceilidh Class having fun

Increasingly popular

So why has it become so popular? Our teacher, Sheila Bain, is friendly, welcoming, and has a knack of making sure that everyone feels included. She has an infectious enthusiasm. New people are welcomed, dancers are encouraged to swap partners every dance, and fun is definitely the key word! The programme for each class includes favourite and new (to most people) ceilidh dances. Sheila also includes straightforward country dances and there's a new dance on every occasion.

Comments from some attendees are:

Good exercise, learning something new in a friendly informal setting. Sheila's dances are fun-filled and action-packed. I love dance. I love coming here. Such a wonderful atmosphere. Stress-free and fun. You are made so welcome. It's a very friendly crowd and newbies and singles are made very welcome. Delighted to be

here – brought my friends too! There's a great crowd; it's lots of fun and Sheila is a fab teacher. The best Tuesday night you can get; great music and teaching; good fun and you soon make friends.

The Ceilidh Class is one of the most successful Branch classes and some dancers also try out country dancing. By always including a country dance, Sheila is actually advertising SCD and that encourages people to try our other classes. The Branch is very pleased that the Committee of 2012 decided to start the Ceilidh Class.

Lynn Wood, Aberdeen Branch

New Zealand – Small Town Success

Background

18 months ago my wife and I moved from New Zealand's biggest city, Auckland (pop c. 1.4m), to the small rural town of Lawrence. The area has a total population of about 1,000 of which half live in the town. We started a SCD group and now have 16 members of whom generally 12 will attend in any given week. On a per head equivalent basis that is 17,000 people dancing each week in the Edinburgh city region. All our dancers were new to SCD. On the way through a few people have come and tried and decided it was not for them.



The personal invitation

My wife is the local GP. She, therefore, gets to meet a large proportion of the population; she knows their family and social circumstances and they respect what she says. She has been able to identify people who would enjoy and benefit from SCD.

We are both brazenly 'evangelical' about Scottish country dancing, happy to talk about it to anyone and ask them to come and try.

The general point from this is that it is personal invitation that actually gets individuals to come along, not advertising or notices in the paper.

Advertising and promotion

Our area has a free weekly community newspaper, available online and delivered in hard copy in town. People read it because it contains notices and ads and reminds people whether this week it is recycling collection or general rubbish. A regular notice in it keeps our group in people's view. It reaches close to 100% of the population – for the equivalent of about £4 a time. In a bigger centre it would be difficult and prohibitively expensive to try to reach such a high proportion of the population. Despite my comments about personal invitations being the most effective method of getting people to come along, keeping SCD 'out there' in front of people is important. Two of our dancers have come after seeing the notice in the Tuapeka Times for weeks or months and finally tipping over the edge.

Small Communities are easier – and harder

People know each other; they know what is going on. Lawrence is also a place where people get on and do things rather than moan about why someone else isn't doing it for them. They see and respond to an initiative positively – the local librarian puts our hall heat on in the winter on her way home so that it is much nicer to come in to, she doesn't dance but just suggested it! On the other hand, the pool of

dancers is smaller and it is harder to give those who progress faster wider experience as is possible when there are other dance groups in the area. We are also subject to the great demands on volunteers' time in small communities – for example, volunteer ambulance service training every 2 weeks takes out one of our dancers.

Talk to people a bit more

Aside from asking possible recruits (no potential dancer left unturned), it is important to talk to everybody about SCD. I do this when I meet local government politicians and council staff, people who live in our nearest city, Dunedin, and other towns; and anyone else who will listen – physiotherapists, podiatrists, dental hygienists, schoolteachers, petrol station staff, policemen, other dog walkers, anybody. It all creates a background network of knowledge and agents that both makes a more fertile recruitment ground and will provide sometimes surprising additional support.

Make them feel at home

It is important that new adult dancers are able to step safely outside their comfort zone. This obviously includes remembering their names (name badges!) and care with how instruction and correction are given, but there is more beyond. They need to see the Branch, and within the New Zealand Branch, the Region, and HQ as just being other dancers – not a 'them'. So do not allow conversations that start 'why don't they...' or 'why did they put THAT dance on the programme?' We have had wonderful support from the New Zealand Branch and Regions and from individual very experienced dancers and I make sure that the Lawrence dancers are well aware of it, helped by visits from the Branch President and others.

Quentin Currall, Lawrence SCD Group, New Zealand

Seattle – A Successful University Course

For many years those of us in the USA Pacific Northwest wondered if a programme at Western Washington University in Bellingham was the only 'for credit' Scottish country dance course at a University anywhere in the world. The course was offered regularly from 1990 to 2013 and it was an unqualified success. A professor in the mathematics department, Tom Read, suggested to the PE department that his wife, Rosemary, a qualified RSCDS teacher, could offer an experimental course in SCD in the Fall of 1990. Within a year the course appeared in a course catalogue and word spread among the student body. It attracted its limit of 40 students each time it was offered, which eventually became three sections each academic year. In the spring of 1994, a group of students chose to take their dancing outside the confines of a formal class when they formed their own SCD club at the University. They also took part in a demonstration at the Bellingham Highland Games. Students found that the classes and the club gave them a release from the stresses of college life and an opportunity to enjoy themselves while learning new skills. Rosemary, always supported by Tom, created the perfect atmosphere. One student wrote that Rosemary and her husband Tom always had the right mix of seriousness and fun to make club nights something to look forward to every week. By 2000, dancers from the group had begun to join the wider dance community and attended events in the Vancouver area. About a dozen attended the first Youth Weekend West in Vancouver in 2003. The group showed their commitment to dancing when they volunteered to organize the second YWW in 2004. This was followed by three more such workshops held in Bellingham, Seattle, and Portland.

Economic pressure

Administrative changes at the university resulted in the classes no longer being offered. Fees increased dramatically from \$20 to \$250. This drastically reduced enrollment. The class was offered for the last time in Spring 2013. The club ceased to attract new



Tom and Rosemary Read with their students at the Highland Games 2004

members. An experienced and enthusiastic core group of Scottish dancers continued through 2014, hosting another YWW, before the club disbanded.

Comments from students

"I joined the class because I love all things Scottish and Irish. I absolutely loved the class."

"Scottish country dancing has become a cherished part of my life, all because I took a PE course to fill a space in my schedule!"

"Being able to meet other dancers young and old made the whole thing feel so much bigger than anything else I participated in while at University."

"Rosemary, Tom, and SCD had a huge impact on not only my university life, but also my life after university. Dancing doesn't come naturally to me and before SCD I was not an active or healthy person. I think of SCD as a catalyst for me learning how to enjoy exercise and to getting my health on track. Being encouraged to attend YWW in Vancouver secured my love for dancing. 10 years after graduating from WWU I am living in South Korea. I am still active in SCD with the St Andrew's Society in Seoul."

Rosemary and Tom Read did a wonderful job at Western Washington University for 23 years establishing a culture of SCD for so many young people. Several Branches in the NW and further afield have benefitted from the youth, energy and organizational skills resulting from their efforts. For their initiative and dedication, the Reads were awarded RSCDS Branch Awards in September 2016 at the Seattle Branch Fort Worden Weekend.

The only university course?

I have not heard of any other university which offers Scottish country dancing as a formal course. The course at the WWU PE department lasted for 13 years and was a huge success. After graduating, students scatter to the four winds. They take country dancing with them. I wonder if this success could not be replicated elsewhere in the world.

Elinor M. Vandegrift, Seattle Branch

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In my Opinion



Ian Robertson

Time to change the formula?

Ian Robertson was born and brought up in Buckinghamshire in a family steeped in Scottish music. His great-grandmother was a fine pianist who accompanied James Scott Skinner in the late 1800s and his father led his own band for many years. Classically trained, but with a lifelong passion for the fiddle, Ian has played with Scottish dance bands for many

years, including 15 years leading his own, Sound Company. In 2011 he competed in the Glenfiddich Fiddle Championships at Blair Castle. In recent years, he has been a regular at Winter School and has played across the UK and Europe, as well as Canada and Australia. Ian is an accomplished composer and in 2014 published *The Call of Home*, his first volume of compositions for fiddle and accordion. In 2017, he recorded *Full Circle* with Muriel Johnstone.

Bands are uniquely placed to observe trends in dancing. Apart from the obvious vantage point offered by the stage, they travel widely and see similarities and differences locally, regionally and even internationally. I've been playing for Scottish country dancing for over 35 years. Much of that has been in the South of England and I freely accept that some of the thoughts which follow may reflect the dancing norms of my home turf. However, with frequent forays into Europe as well as to North America and Australia perhaps my observations will not seem too parochial.

Increasingly over recent years, I have seen a trend for dancers to leave a dance part-way through the second half. It is almost as though they have come for the first half, stayed for supper and the raffle and then decided to call it a night! I wonder if it is worth thinking about the impact this has on those who remain? First, those left have to dance harder because the call for 'one more couple' to make up a set puts pressure on those who may wish to sit out a particular dance. We've all seen those moments when either six people are disappointed at not being able to dance, or two people struggle through a dance they either don't know or don't care for! Second, and perhaps more important, the reduction in numbers has a dramatic effect on the atmosphere. Organisers book a hall appropriate to the number of attendees they expect and bands work hard to build and sustain an atmosphere – a tangible buzz on good nights. If dancers leave before the end, that buzz in the hall is diminished; there is a sense of deflation as shoes and coats are donned; and the hall is suddenly too big for the number of people.

What is the solution? Probably a combination of things! More often than not there are 20 dances on a programme and the evening lasts for 4 hours. Is it time to recognise that as the dancing population continues to age, the level of stamina is now insufficient to sustain this model? Should organisers look at reducing the number of dances to, say, 15? Let's not get hung up on the exact number, but one of two things could happen as a result. Either the function could be the same duration but more relaxed and less physically demanding. Or the number of dances per hour could be maintained and the evening shortened. Either way, perhaps those with lower stamina might be encouraged to stay. But perhaps there is also a responsibility on dancers to commit fully to an evening. After all, Scottish country dancing is a social (and sociable) activity, not a consumer experience. There will always be some with good reasons for needing to leave before the end, but it is worth remembering that it is up to us all to preserve and foster the spirit, not just the practice, of Scottish country dancing. Just a thought.

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Scottish Schools

This page celebrates the hard work of individual RSCDS teachers and members in Scotland in the past months. The three events resulted in almost 1200 children having a wonderful country dance experience, all with some of Scotland's great traditional musicians.

Bearsden and Milngavie Dance Festival – 400 children



What a great advert for Scottish country dancing!

400 primary school children from Bearsden and Milngavie schools gathered at Milngavie Town Hall on 6 October for the annual Scottish Country Dance Festival. For them the answer to that well known Glaswegian question "Are ye dancin?" was a resounding "Aye, ah'm dancin'!" The Festival was opened by Education Committee Convenor Mohrag Fischer who, in addition to congratulating the children on a resplendent turnout and commenting on the exciting atmosphere, related that her 80-year-old aunt in Jamaica was still teaching Scottish country dancing. The Hall then resonated with the invigorating sounds of the John Carmichael dance band, flying feet, hoochin and birling, but mostly with the smiles and laughter of the hundreds of children awash in a sea of tartan.

The event is organized by members of the New Kilpatrick Country Dance Club with the support of Glasgow Branch. Volunteers visit schools weeks in advance of the festival helping to teach Primary 7s the programme of dances that includes the core social dances: *The Dashing White Sergeant*, *Virginia Reel*, *Flying Scotsman* etc. Each school, however, has a choice of two special dances that they perform as a demonstration in front of a very discerning audience.

Patrick Murray, one of the teaching squad, commented, "The kids, although some a bit reticent at first, soon begin to relish our weekly visits, frequently resulting in amusing dialogue. Giving the boys a bit of encouragement I tell the story of how the clansmen in the olden days would dance before they went into battle. "Why do you think these brave warriors would dance before fighting?" I asked. One wee lad put up his hand. "It stops you from getting a heart attack," he said. Event organizer Walter Proven said, "This unique event, now in its fifth year, brings together the primary schools in our area for a day of social interaction, physical exercise, and a traditional experience that will endure throughout their future lives". Getting on the bus on the way back to school, one lad was heard to say to his mate, "Did you get everything right?" – Silence – "Well I did!"

Patrick Murray, Milngavie

North Ayrshire Day of Dance – 536 children



Springside Primary School

North Ayrshire Branch once again held its annual Children's Day of Dance in November. This year it was held in The Portal, the new sports centre in Irvine. This new location played a large part in yet another successful day for 24 of the 44 Primary Schools in North Ayrshire. A total of 536 children of differing class ages attended, 14 schools with 346 children in the morning and 10 schools with 190 children in the afternoon. Society dances were demonstrated by some of the schools. Volunteers from our branch and the Kilmarnock Branch helped to run the sessions smoothly. Music was provided by Matthew Maclennan and Nicky McMichan, the children just loving this, as they normally practise to CDs. Having musicians created a very lively atmosphere in both sessions. Each lasted for two hours, with the children dancing ten dances, and finishing with their favourite, *The Flying Scotsman*, and with the ears of all adults present ringing to the sound of the 'train whistle'.

Alison Coy, West Kilbride, Ayrshire

First Dumfries Half Day of Dance – 250 children

On 30 January at 9.30 in the morning 250 primary children from the Dumfries area were piped in to the Assembly Hall of Dumfries Academy by a kilted laddie from the secondary school. They came from 8 schools, some large, some small. There were some two-teacher schools there with their full complement of children while others had brought a whole year group. One teacher said that country dancing was one of the few activities where she could mix children of 7 years old with children of 11, something that is impossible in most sports. One very uplifting aspect of the day was to see children with additional support needs taking part with everyone else.

Dumfries has its competitive dance festival every March but this was something new – 250 children coming just to enjoy dancing to live music together without the stress of competing. I had worked with local schools, the local Active Schools Staff and Dumfries Branch to organise this event, the culmination of a block of teaching in each of the schools. All the dances came from the Society's *Jigs and Reels* pack. Just before the interval, I sprang a surprise on the children by announcing that all the teachers and helpers would dance *The Virginia Reel*, greatly enjoyed by the audience of 250!

It was clear that the children enjoyed the event immensely and the teachers got great satisfaction seeing the results of their work. And the children cheered their musician – George Meikle.

Jayne Riddett, Dumfries

Spotlight on London



It is said that 'you can dance somewhere in London almost any night of the week'. There are many Scottish country dance groups in the area. Some pre-date the formation of the RSCDS and most owe their establishment to Scots moving south who wanted to maintain their culture. Today, dancers come from a variety of backgrounds and all the clubs welcome visitors, so if you are in London why not drop in? The London Branch website www.rscdslondon.org.uk hosts a dance diary and a list of classes. From there you can check individual club websites for more details, including programmes and cribs. The Branch newsletter, *The Reel*, also has a lot of information.

In central London the dancing hub is St Columba's Church of Scotland, Pont Street, Knightsbridge, SW1X 0BD known to dancers throughout the world as Pont Street. This is where London Branch holds most of its dances. Also meeting there are:

St Columba's Dancers meets on Monday evenings from October to May. There is no admission charge except on band nights.

The London Highland Club, founded in 1923 like the RSCDS, holds dances usually on the first Saturday of the month from September to June.

The Little Ship Club meets on Thursday evenings. Dances are kept simple and are clearly explained. Participants bring supper and wine is provided.

When most other clubs are taking a break, '**Summer Tuesdays**' meet weekly at Pont Street from late June to mid-September. These are very popular, with live music often provided by bands that have travelled down from Scotland. Dances are not usually recapped or walked through.

In summer **London Branch** runs dancing in Kensington Gardens on some Saturday afternoons, weather permitting. There is a mix of ceilidh and country dances for regular dancers and newcomers to enjoy. Admission is free.

The Gay Gordons specialise in gender-free dancing. Their events, which are open to all, include ceilidhs at Pont Street and classes for beginners and improvers in Islington on Wednesday evenings.

Wednesday is when **London Branch** holds most of its classes – beginners, intermediate and advanced – all at the same venue in Chelsea, plus an afternoon class at Pont Street. Occasional classes are aimed at families.

Moving away from central London, groups, clubs and Caledonian societies, too numerous to mention by name here, offer weekly classes and socials, monthly dances and annual balls. Check the London Branch website or *The Reel*. **Croydon Branch** holds classes in Coulsden, Surrey, and cooperates with other SCD groups in south London through the **Tartan Jigsaw**.

Reeling is popular across west London with at least one social a week and up to 300 people attending **London Reels'** monthly social in Pont Street. There is also a season of formal balls from St Andrews Night to the season finale, the Royal Caledonian Ball, one of the oldest charity balls in the world, which will be running its 170th ball in May 2018. Reeling evenings are full of energy with a programme of 10-12 traditional dances. *The Eightsome Reel* is a favourite and it often extends into *16some*, *32some*, *64some* and even a *128some*.

Many organisations run ceilidhs, the most prominent is **The Ceilidh Club**, which meets 3-4 times a month at Cecil Sharp House, NW1, the home of the **English Folk Dance and Song Society**.

Daniel Capron

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Turning around Asilomar!

Asilomar is one of the most impressive weekend workshops in the Scottish country dance world. To experience it is to be sold on it – a wonderful venue, the Pacific Ocean, great food, great music, great teaching, generous welcoming people, and, above all, great organisation on the part of San Francisco Branch. A few years ago numbers were down. Charlotte Greig, in charge of marketing the weekend, tells how the branch met the challenge.

The impetus for change

In 2014 San Francisco Branch set out to increase attendance and attract more first timers to its Asilomar Weekend. Last November 250 dancers, including 55 new ones, had quite a weekend! The Weekend is held in California's idyllic Asilomar State Park and Conference Grounds right on the edge of the Pacific. For years attendance rose and rose until in 2001 we received 330 applications for just 240 places. However, in the years leading up to 2014, we experienced declining attendance. Rising prices, the recession and increasing competition were all factors.

Making changes

Hard discussions followed. Our goal was to focus on increasing attendance, enhance visibility and attain financial sustainability. Two new positions were created focused on fundraising and marketing. Fundraising concentrated on raising monies to help defray rising costs rather than having to rely on registration fee income alone. A variety of different activities such as direct fundraising, 'house concerts' and raffles were used. Monies received by the Asilomar Fund and the Branch Scholarship Fund help us provide flexibility in our pricing, allowing us to keep prices reasonable, and in particular extend discounts for young dancers.

Importance of social media

We established a social media presence. We created the Weekend Facebook page. Since 2014 we've added Twitter, Pinterest, Google and YouTube. All help to reinforce our name and raise awareness. We've used a variety of content such as our series of 'past dances taught' posts on Facebook. We share information such as places to visit in San Francisco for visiting dancers. For fun, we periodically share nostalgic photographs from past weekends. Nowadays we find that we use an increasing number of photographs and videos.

A dedicated website

A dedicated Weekend website was developed. Countless branch members and attendees pitched in with technical support, photographs and general help. We share pertinent details such as teachers and musicians, programming, pricing and application specifics along with other useful data. In 2016 we added a blog for updates. We've added social media feeds and historic materials from past Weekends and the Branch archives. Last, as innovation does not stand still, we've tried to optimize our website to be mobile friendly and easier to find online.

Revised marketing

We revised other marketing efforts to attract new dancers from a wider geographical area. While we think we have a great product, one consideration is what dancers actually think of it. In marketing terms, word of mouth promotion occurs when customers have such a great experience with a product that they recommend and share their experience with others. They become product 'ambassadors'. By continually striving to ensure that the Weekend is an awesome experience, our goal was and is that dancers have such a great

time that they'll share when they get home. We also asked other Asilomar ambassadors to take and distribute marketing materials for us. At their suggestion, we printed business cards and color postcards. Easily carried when traveling, these are handed out at various events and gatherings. Lastly, to reach a wider audience, we placed advertisements in *Scottish Country Dancer*.

Reaching out to other communities

We also identified and reached out to other Scottish cultural, dance and other communities. In 2015, we contacted our State's two US Senators and the Mayor of San Francisco as we celebrated the Branch's 50th Anniversary. We happily shared their salutations during that Weekend. Similarly, we approached state and county tourism authorities.

Using video

Probably our most effective activity has been our use of video. Our initial project was to create a short video about the Weekend. With Branch funding, the video was managed and filmed during the 2015 Weekend by experienced filmmakers, who are Branch members. Copies of the video were uploaded to our YouTube channel in Spring 2016, helping to achieve the earliest 'sold out' date in recent history. Today, the collective Asilomar video suite has been viewed well over 3,000 times. We also created another video that is used for fundraising. Most recently, we selected dances from the 2016 dance programs to be filmed and added to YouTube. These were linked to specific dances on the Scottish Country Dance Database. Similarly in 2017, we filmed more dances for later release. Looking back to 2014, by embracing change, the Branch and the Asilomar Committee has made investments in time, resources and budget that have made the Weekend more financially sustainable, more visible and so far has resulted in increased attendance. The Weekend has sold out for the last three years. A great result!

Increase in new dancers

We've seen increases in new dancer attendance each year. In 2015 we welcomed 29 first timers and last year 55. As a result of that, we've adjusted what we offer over the Weekend. To help our first timers enjoy the Weekend, get acclimatised quickly and meet fellow participants, we've re-instigated special orientation events on-site on Friday afternoons. We are also happy to report that 14 (or 60%) of our new branch members in 2017 attended the last Weekend. Obviously we can't take credit for new branch memberships but we can speculate that the Weekend may have been partly why some became members. Last but not least, outstanding fundraising efforts have allowed us to attract more youth dancers to the Weekend. It is especially pleasing that many of these dancers have already become regulars. With some certainty we have made considerable progress toward our goals to increase attendance and to attract new dancers to a much loved and treasured dance event. We feel the Weekend is more visible today and as a result, vibrant. The next Asilomar weekend is 26-28 October.

Charlotte Greig

Letters to the Editor

The letters from John Carswell and Bob Taylor about the place of Scotland in the Society in Issue 25 resulted in several replies. Some were long so, rather than print them all in full, here are extracts relevant to the debate:

The Place of Scotland

From Daniel Capron, London Branch

The letters from Bob Taylor and John Carswell are wrong in that both refer to the RSCDS as Scottish. As the Society has branches and members in many countries it is more accurately described as international. Bob Taylor asks 'What is a Scottish country dance?' and replies that it is like a Melton Mowbray pork pie! But there is an important difference in that the term, a 'Melton Mowbray pork pie', is defined in law, but 'Scottish country dance' is not. As we all know, a Scottish country dance is a dance in a particular form once danced mainly in Scotland but now danced all over the world, as every issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* shows. Scotland's place in the RSCDS must be a place of honour. We are all grateful to Scots who have practised and preserved Scottish country dancing and promoted it in many parts of the world, creating the great international Society we now have. But there must be no discrimination by location or nationality, as that would be unfair to those discriminated against and detrimental to the RSCDS as a whole. For example:

1. The criteria for publishing a new dance are that it is in Scottish country dance form and is enjoyable to dance. Whether the deviser is Scottish by Bob Taylor's definition is irrelevant.
2. Events like Spring Fling should be held wherever is best for the participants.
3. We need committee members and office bearers from wherever in the world Scottish country dances are danced. In the past most committee meetings have been held in Scotland and committee members and officers have had to live within easy travelling distance. With modern technology people can participate in meetings wherever in the world they live, and the Society can benefit from the talents and experience of all members.

From Tim Hoffmann, Central Germany Branch

I'm not Scottish. Neither do I have Scottish ancestors, nor have I lived in Scotland or have any other connection to Scotland apart from SCD. However, I have been dancing Scottish for more than 10 years. I'm teaching SCD and I'm participating in SCD events in Scotland and all over Europe. By all that, I consider myself a full member of the Scottish country dancing family. What defines a Scottish country dance? A characterization solely by origin would fail. Not every dance written or danced by a Scot is a Scottish country dance. On the other hand, during this year's Spring Fling in Germany, I saw a Norwegian dancing to a jig written by a French person. This occasion qualified as Scottish country dancing by all standards of the RSCDS. If you ask people why they are dancing Scottish, most likely they won't say because it originates in Scotland or because they want to preserve the dances. Instead, responses will include the style of dancing, the music, the feeling, the fun and the social aspect. This is what I would like to call 'SCDness'. As a part of the SCD tradition, Scottish aspects are an essential ingredient to this. However,

to promote Scottish country dancing, we'll have to look for SCDness rather than just Scottishness. SCD has become more international in the past 50 years. I don't think this is weakening its position at all. Quite the opposite. The unique selling point is not the Scottish roots, but the SCDness. It is really unique that I can go anywhere in the world and find like-minded people with whom I can experience SCDness. You do not find this easily with other forms of dancing. This is an achievement of the RSCDS, for which it deserves the highest respect. It has established and maintained a common standard and a worldwide connected community. Without it, SCD would probably have diminished like all other forms of traditional country dances in Europe. As a living tradition, SCD has evolved over time. For example, think of the additional instruments introduced from fiddle to piano and accordion. The tempo of strathspeys in earlier times was a lot faster. Formations like Allemande or Strathspey Poussette were danced with different phrasing or footwork. There was a time when hard shoes were worn, women with high heels. Like the development of a language, you cannot control this externally, but it's shaped by its users. Thus, it's no surprise that internationalization has influenced SCD. In my opinion, this change is not negative, but a sign of the liveliness of SCD. It's the big challenge for the RSCDS to represent this living and growing tradition: remain rooted in its great Scottish heritage, but at the same time accompany and actively shape the development of SCD to keep up and promote SCDness. All of us who have a passion for Scottish country dancing should contribute to this, Scots and non-Scots alike.

From Tom Ward, Livermore, California

After reading the letters in Issue 25 from Messrs Taylor and Carswell, I concluded that, despite appearances, I've haven't been Scottish dancing, simply because I'm not Scottish, I don't live or dance in Scotland, and many dances were devised by non-Scots. This is weird. Have I been living a fantasy here in the Colonies? I sure thought it was all Scottish. As a past chair of San Francisco Branch, and an energetic and generous supporter of Branch activities, I worry that these letters are not welcoming to non-Scots, and not conducive to recruitment. Mr. Brooks' letter highlights the shrinkage of Society membership caused, in part, by a failure to recruit. Our branch works hard to recruit dancers. Each year, a large (non-Scot) volunteer team organizes the Celtic Heritage Area at the Games hosted by the Caledonian Club of San Francisco. We assemble stages, canopies, changing rooms, information tables, first aid, and sound equipment. We put on numerous demonstrations. Our teachers lead audience participation and free classes. We encourage people to join the activity we love. We spread the joy of dancing to many, and bring new dancers to our classes. There is, of course, a difference between a new dancer and a new Society member. About £20 difference. For a dancer to become a member requires that they see a benefit to joining the Society consistent with that cost. We offer member discounts on branch events, and dancers recognize the branch's value, but the Society's incremental value is more abstract, and many do not see it. We strive to encourage dancers of all backgrounds, ages, and skill levels to join a global Society that will welcome them as Scottish dancers worldwide. It would be most helpful if the Society's members would, in fact, welcome them. Both correspondents quote the Society's aim, to 'practise and preserve traditional dancing as danced in Scotland'. The key word here is 'as'. The Society's aim is NOT to preserve dancing in Scotland, it is to preserve dancing as it is danced there, whoever may be dancing, wherever they are. Scottish dancing should

thrive where people want to have fun, socialize, listen to great music, and advance a vibrant, beautiful heritage.

I'm going to continue living in my little fantasy world, supporting my branch, slipping on my kilt, hose and ghillies, joining my friends, and moving with the beat.

From Rosemary Coupe, Vancouver Branch

The letters 'Scotland's Place' and 'A Scotland Branch?' in the October magazine are troubling. I understand the concern about 'non-Scottish' elements creeping into the tradition of SCD. Non-Scottish tunes should never be anything but an occasional novelty. Also, careful thought needs to be given to the introduction of new formations: the movements of 'La Baratte', for example, seem alien to the tradition and I wish that formation were not enshrined in *The Manual*. However, think of the ways in which originally non-Scottish elements have enriched our tradition. Without the French quadrilles, we would not have the *Eightsome Reel*, the ladies' chain, the grand chain, nor for that matter any square-set dances. And consider the ceilidh staple *Dashing White Sergeant*, which blends an English tune with the threesome reel dance pattern. Long use has incorporated these into the Scottish tradition. They are the dances which all Scots know, and nobody questions their Scottishness. The essential Scottishness of SCD, in particular the music which is its heart and soul, is something we all work to preserve, wherever we may live. However, it is not wholly a function of location. Readers of this magazine do not need to be reminded of the gifted devisers, teachers and musicians not born in Scotland but steeped in the Scottish tradition. The Vancouver Branch, among others, has always affirmed the connection with Scotland. For years we ran an annual weekend for teachers and musicians, and most of our instructors were brought from Scotland. Musicians from Scotland have played at our last two Heather Balls. Their Scottishness is contagious. Technology has allowed members from outside Scotland to give their time and talent to various committees of the organization. But Scotland is still central: it has our HQ, the AGM, and Summer and Winter Schools. To experience the connection with Scotland, overseas members are willing to pay travel costs to attend. Our membership fees help to support these events; by contrast, the summer or winter schools held elsewhere in the world are entirely run by volunteers. For centuries, key characteristics of Scottish music and dance have been liveliness and excitement. Our tradition (as well as Society membership) only stands to gain from the vibrancy of youth groups outside Scotland, especially in continental Europe. Please don't re-build Hadrian's Wall.

Dear Editor

Issue 25

I would like to comment on a few of the issues raised in the last issue:

1. I suggest the Society is set up as a recruiter. 'The purposes of the Society shall be to advance the education of the public in traditional Scottish country dancing...'. This is surely the first stage of the recruitment exercise. We cannot logically expect otherwise. I believe that Branches should have a similar clause in their constitutions. The Society provides the framework, but we are its representatives on the ground so ultimately it is us, the established dancers, whose responsibility is first to enthuse the public by example and thus to recruit the next generation to take our activity forward, each in our own area.
2. I believe that one of the problems facing the Society, and difficult to reconcile, is that there seem to be some who feel intellectually that SCD is a healthy exercise, etc, and the more complex the

dances the better. On the other hand are those for whom the music is the inspiration, who just want straightforward dances, but done well and with style. I am in the latter group. In my experience local branch dances in Scotland seem more lively with more of a 'buzz' than those in England and Wales – Scots dancing socially in Scotland, rather than intellectually? I mind coming off a crowded floor in Pitlochry to be told by a much older man, "It's a'right tae birl, my son!"

3. I get the impression that some women often seem to prefer dancing with other women. As a result of encountering an over-exuberant man in the past?
4. With regard to new books, how about asking experienced teachers to list the dances they use for day schools and why, and make it a regular feature in the magazine? These dances are often from less well-known parts of the repertoire and it would give them an airing, with some authority.
5. Finally, I think that more experienced dancers need to make a greater effort to get out of their social/comfort zone to dance with less experienced dancers at both classes and social dances, in a spirit of friendship, rather than condescension, as long as you are physically able to do so.

Andrew Smith, Bristol Branch

Dear Editor

Attracting New Dancers

I strongly agree with the sentiment of Michael Derby in the October edition of the magazine. Hooking new dancers through Ceilidh Dancing is a great way of introducing new blood. I especially applaud the work which has been started at Celtic Connections with a Saturday night dance run by someone with RSCDS connections. I was at this event last year and it was great. This is not enough though. I think the Society as portrayed in *Scottish Country Dancer* is a very unfriendly place for a new generation of dancers. There is an obsession with detail which I feel is of no interest at all to people coming into dancing to enjoy themselves. I am sure I am not alone in finding the debate about the precise timing of tracks boring and if it must take place at all surely it should take place behind closed doors in a chat room on the website rather than taking up space in a magazine which is there to promote our hobby. In my opinion the music should not always be the same, different bands should have their own interpretation and arrangements of the tunes. What is wrong with adding in a few other instruments and different arrangements as Reel of Seven do? Personally, I would love to dance some of the RSCDS repertoire to a modern Celtic sound such as Natalie McMaster's band or Cutting Edge, and I am sure the younger generation would too. I also think that a huge step forward could be taken by means of a 're-branding' exercise. Young people have not long left school and they are surely put off by all this talk of Summer School, Winter School, Classes, Teachers with certificates etc. I know I was, and this is something which still puts me off going to Summer School. Why not bring our terminology up to date and less scholarly by re-naming these events 'Summer Festival of Dance', 'Winter Festival of Dance', 'Dance Workshops', 'Dance Callers' etc. I have partaken in many different dance styles over my life and I see so many parallels between the place that the RSCDS is in now with declining elderly membership and the place that The Morris Ring was in the late 70s. The Ring was set in the past and un-moveable, so in the end people of our age (in our 20s then) started a new rival organisation, the Morris Federation which soon had far more members than the Ring and of a much younger age profile. I really hope that the RSCDS can move into the 21st century before history repeats itself!

Ian C. Hazell, York

Dear Editor

CD Timing

Ian Muir in his piece on CD timing talks about selecting tracks to match a tune's speed with a class's capability. Special CD players can easily change track tempo but come at a high price. There are many tempo changer players for mp3 files. Some are hard to use or will only change tempo in 5% steps. I use the free Android Maple JB player. Speed is adjustable in 1% steps and a bookmarked track includes the changes. It can stop after one track, an unusual feature. Playlists can be set up so the music for a complete evening's dancing can be quickly accessed. The user interface is English, not icons. Maple is an Android program. Are there players that will do all of this on other systems? Maple is also ideal for playing RSCDS mp3 files bought from Google Playstore, Amazon or iTunes. Maple displays the CD cover the track is played. Single RSCDS CD tracks can be bought for 99p each. Ideal for finding a particular tune or just to listen to. This is very little known and does not seem to be advertised. Only one of the people I have told about it already knew it. For a small group a 'cassette tape adaptor' from a car accessories shop in the cassette player on a boombox makes a complete music system. Spotify also has all the RSCDS tracks. Visiting my daughter in New Zealand I put *Orpington Caledonians* and *Flora's Fancy* on my son-in-law's Spotify. I soon had a lounge full of dancing grandchildren, and dare I say it, grandparents.

Steve Smith, Cheltenham

Dear Sir

OMOV – One man one vote

Completing my choice of candidates for the Council of the National Trust at its AGM and casting my vote on members' motions, it occurred to me that if the Trust can invite its 5 million members to vote individually at AGMs (by post, on line or personal attendance) there is no reason why the RSCDS should not do the same with its 11,000.

The Society claims that one benefit of membership is having a voice in running the organisation but voting at the AGM is by Branches and it is up to each Branch whether it consults its membership as to how it should exercise its vote. I have never been consulted as a member and even if I had my preference may not be expressed at the AGM as it is not binding on the Branch. If I am an HQ member I would fare even worse as I would have no vote at all. I quote from the Society's website as follows: 'The many benefits of membership include:

Through Branches, a voice in the running of the organisation (this applies to Branch members only; members who join directly through Headquarters do not have representation at the AGM).

Should the Management Board be minded to bring forward a motion to amend the constitution to provide for one member one vote it could also take the opportunity to align the membership and accounting years, currently the end of June for the former and March for the latter, to give a better idea of strengths compared to financial performance.

Roger Brooks, Loyne Affiliated Group, Lancaster

Dear Editor

1950 Paris Trip

Thank you for the article about the Gillespie girls and featuring Dorothy Cairns. It's important to remember our dance history as a way to link past, present, and future of Scottish dancing.

Dorothy is a wonderful example of an accomplished dancer who deserves to be recognized for all she has given to Scottish dancing these many years.

Donna Weidenfeller, San Francisco Branch

Dear Editor

Encourage Affiliated Groups

The letters from Michael Derby and Roger Brooks echo what I have felt for a long time – a lack of encouragement to the very many affiliated groups of the RSCDS. Over my 70 years of teaching in branches, but principally with the Chester St Andrew Society, we stressed what Miss Milligan urged on us – 'to spread friendship and happiness wherever we can through our Scottish music and traditional dances'. At Chester we had two qualified teachers taking beginners, improvers, demonstration team dancers, as well as the weekly social dances. Our demonstration team attended both national and international festivals, sent ten students to nearby and summer school teacher examination courses and ran day courses, concurrent with Liverpool Branch, which were taken by teachers from Summer School for us for 30 years. However, our magazine covers merely branch news, omitting the opportunity to bring so many dancers into Society membership. Given today's plethora of choices in activities for youngsters, it is all the more essential to show an interest in presenting Scottish country dancing as the ultimate way to keep fit and mentally active. Here on the Isle of Arran our group continues to support mainland courses and welcomes all on the island and visitors alike. If the Edinburgh Tattoo put on male dancers, as formerly, we might attract them too.

Rachel B Phillips MBE, Sannox, Isle of Arran



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Sadly missed

Mina Corson, Edinburgh

In 1916 Mina was born in Calgary, Alberta, where her parents had been sent to study milking methods. They returned to Scotland in 1918. The family moved to Edinburgh where Mina attended James Gillespie's High School for Girls. She then studied Gymnastics in Aberdeen, eventually becoming assistant to Allie Anderson who was head of PE at Gillespie's. On Allie's retirement Mina became Head of PE. Presumably with Allie's example, she took up country dancing. Mina was a very distinguished Edinburgh Branch and Summer School teacher. She taught widely abroad, eventually becoming an examiner. She devised the popular jig, *Miss Allie Anderson*, as a tribute to her old teacher. Mina was awarded the Scroll of Honour in 1998.

Bob Grant, Edinburgh

Frans Ligtmans, Zierikzee, the Netherlands

Founder member of The Thistle Club, Frans first experienced Scottish country dancing during a course in Vlissingen (Flushing) when a dance teacher came from Scotland to lead the course. She immediately went to Summer School and later gained her Teacher's Certificate. In 1977 she started The Thistle Club. Her family supported her and they each became good dancers, gaining their teaching certificates. Renske also taught Highland dancing and learned the bagpipes! Frans had a strong personality and was an exceptional teacher. She did a lot to promote SCD in Eindhoven, elsewhere in the Netherlands and abroad. Frans was awarded the Scroll of Honour. She will be remembered by everyone as the deviser of one of our most popular dances, *Mrs Stewart's Jig* in Book 35.

The Thistle Club, Eindhoven

George McLennan, Edinburgh

Many in the Society will be saddened by the news of the passing of George. After a career in town planning, he became a regular and greatly loved pianist at Summer School. He played widely at day schools and in Edinburgh Branch. He had strong views on tunes, which he was not afraid to share! George had spent his National Service in the Middle East, an area he was very fond of and which he visited regularly. A quiet man with a pawky sense of humour, he was good company and many Summer School dancers will remember him fondly.

Jimmie Hill, Edinburgh

Heinz Duewell, Hunter Valley, Australia

Heinz was a founder of the Hunter Valley Branch in the early 70s. He designed the Branch badge and he also wrote the first Branch constitution. He served for some years as chairman. He set up the Branch magazine, 'The Rant'. He wrote wonderful editorials, great musical reviews and some highly regarded articles on the technical side of dancing. He was awarded the Scroll of Honour. As a teacher he founded Colleges' Class in the 1950s. He also published a book of dances where he invented new and intriguing figures.

Ros McKie, Hunter Valley Branch

Dr Naomi Fraser-Holland, Exeter

Naomi learned to dance during her time in Canada in the 50s and 60s. She took both her Preliminary and Teaching Certificates during a trip that Jean Milligan made over there, with just one month's gap in between. She was a founding and life member

of the Montreal Branch and its first Secretary. She taught several classes in the area, before returning to the UK. She was a founder member of Exeter Branch, and formed the Exeter and Mid-Devon SCD Club in 1969. Her teaching was the stuff of legends; very precise and always elegant. Those she taught and encouraged have spread dancing across the UK and internationally.

Rosemary West, Exeter

John Monro Sturrock, Cupar, Fife

John was the son of a General Surgeon at Dundee Royal Infirmary. As a result of measles, contracted when John was 8, both he and his brother progressively lost all sense of hearing. They had already started mainstream education, but John had heard the birds sing – and he had heard Jimmy Shand play. He studied Mechanical Engineering at St Andrews/Dundee University and there he formed a close friendship with a fellow student who loaned him his lecture notes each day. It was at that time that he met his wife, Sheena. They settled in Cambridge where John worked as a Design Engineer. He had learned country dancing at school but later favoured more outdoor pursuits. However, while in Cambridge he decided to give dancing another try and was quickly hooked. He did not come to Summer School until 1980, but he was to return regularly thereafter, recording over fifty weeks of classes.

When the opportunity arose to take over Jimmy Walker's Dance Diary, John had it up and running almost overnight. John compiled the Day School Diary in this magazine from Issue 2 until last autumn. John helped rationalise the Branch files at HQ. He was St Andrews Branch Chairman, teacher, and contributed to the Society's Technique Panel. In 2016, he was awarded the Branch Award by St Andrews and at the Society AGM later that year, the Scroll of Honour. A very remarkable man.

Alan Mair, Cupar

Jennifer Hignell, York and North Humberside

Jennifer started dancing with York SCD club in the late 60s and then with the York and North Humberside Branch. She participated was involved with the White Rose Festival not only as a dancer but also as a talented seamstress. She and her husband hosted many visiting teachers (including John Drewry, who arrived with his own casserole). They moved to Scotland in 2005 and Jennifer became a member of East Lothian Branch and Chairman in 2012. Even when seriously ill, she bravely and cheerfully continued teaching and attending day schools, Weekend schools and Summer School (where she also took her grandchildren).

Sheila Sergeant

Annette Harris, Norfolk, Virginia

Annette was the founder of Scottish Country Dancers of Tidewater and taught for many years until she retired in 2006. She was a gracious lady and is sadly missed by all her many dancing friends.

Eilean Yates, North Carolina

Jean Matheson, Ayr

Jean was a life member of Ayr Branch. She was a friend of Miss Milligan, and taught for her. She also knew Mrs Stewart. Jean was Ayr Branch Secretary in 1958. She taught in youth clubs in the area and entered teams for festivals with a high degree of success.

Wilma Brown, Ayr

Day School Diary - April 2018 – December 2018

The Day School Diary will in future be compiled by Ian Brockbank. Please send details to ian@scottishdance.net. Issue 27 will cover events from October 2018 to July 2019.

April 2018

- 6-8 Helensburgh Branch, 40th SCD Weekend
- 7 Vancouver Island SCD Society Workshop
- 13-15 Weekend Workshop, Oldenburg, Germany
- 20-22 RSCDS Spring Fling, Glasgow
- 20-22 RSCDS Spring Fringe, Glasgow
- 21 Aberdeen Branch Half-Day School
- 21 Brussels Dance Scottish, Day School, Brussels
- 27-29 Lyon Branch, SCD Weekend, Lyon
- 28 Cheltenham Branch, Day School, Cheltenham
- 28 TAS Workshop, Helensburgh
- 28 Edinburgh Branch Workshop
- 28 Argyll SD Group, Day School, Crowthorne

May 2018

- 11-13 New York Branch, Pawling Weekend
- 11-12 Cumbrae SCD Association, Millport Weekend
- 18-19 Isle of Skye May Weekend, Portree
- 18-20 Duns and District Branch, Weekend School
- 18-21 Whitsun SCD Course, Munich
- 25-27 Méaudre Reels, 10th Anniversary Weekend, Vercors, France

June 2018

- 8-10 Midwest Scottish Weekend Workshop, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, USA
- 15-17 Stornoway Weekend, Outer Hebrides
- 15-17 International Weekend, Grenoble, France
- 27-17 Kuckucksnest, Summer Course, Schluechtern

July 2018

- 6-14 Pinewoods Summer School, Boston Branch
- 8-13 Thistle School, Banner Elk, North Carolina
- 8-15 Australian Winter School, Shoal Bay, NSW
- 15-12/8 RSCDS Summer School, St Andrews
- 29-5/8 TAC Summer School, Twin Cities, USA

September 2018

- 22 Dumfries Branch, Half-Day School
- 28-30 Saskatchewan Fall Workshop, Moose Jaw
- 29-30 Young Dancers Workshop, Heidelberg

October 2018

- 2-14 Ottawa Branch Weekend
- 20 Exeter Branch, Half-Day School, Broadclyst
- 26-28 Asilomar Weekend, San Francisco Branch

November 2018

- 2-4 RSCDS AGM Conference Weekend
- 10 Bristol Branch Day School
- 10 Toronto Workshop, Branksome Hall
- 18 Berkhamsted Strathspey and Reel Club Day School, Hemel Hempstead
- 20 London Branch Day School

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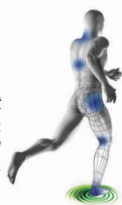
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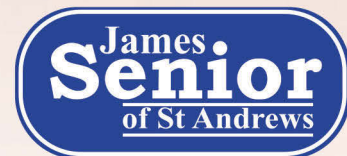


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