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Dance Scottish

Scottish Country Dancer



From the chair
P5



CeilidhKids
P19



Reviews
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I am sorry that the previous edition of *Scottish Country Dancer* was late in reaching you. Delays occurred because we were trying to include the most up to date and accurate information, but I realise that for advertisers and (in the case of the October issue) especially members attending the AGM, it is important to receive the magazine on time. Hopefully this edition will arrive on schedule in April, although the worldwide readership and our efforts to drive down distribution costs mean that a precise date within the month cannot be guaranteed.

Editing the magazine from England gives me a particular perspective on SCD. Early in the New Year I was struck by the media coverage given to Morris Dancing. The press and television reported that traditional Morris Dancing was dying out because young people were not taking it up. A familiar story to RSCDS members, I wondered. Well actually, no. Once again on the pages of *Scottish Country Dancer* you can read about young people who are enthusiastic about SCD, and not just in Scotland: for example the youth demonstration team, CeilidhKids and the hundreds who entered the colouring competition.

More interesting than the news reports were the blog discussions about Morris Dancing. Numerous postings argued that it was very much alive. According to them the problem was the Morris Ring, which had been promoting traditional dancing since 1934 but was allegedly "resistant to change", "taking a Victorian snapshot as absolute gospel" and creating "a climate where it is easy to get it wrong." Meanwhile other Morris organisations were described as "vibrant", "innovative" and "fun" with lots of young dancers. Now that does have a familiar ring. The RSCDS has been subject to the same criticism, sometimes deserved, sometimes not. In promoting a traditional activity to a modern audience it is not easy deciding what should stay the same and what should change. If we are too conservative we lose relevance, if we are too adaptable we lose integrity.

There is no answer to that dilemma, only continuing debate, which is certainly happening in *Scottish Country Dancer* and elsewhere. As usual our 'In my opinion' and 'Overheard on the Web' columns will get you thinking. The members' survey (pages 8 and 9) produced some valuable pointers for the Management Board to consider. The comments on the magazine will be read closely by the Editorial Board, and you should see their impact in future editions. In the meantime I hope you enjoy this issue.

Please keep your comments and letters coming and happy dancing.

The next issue of Scottish Country Dancer will be published in October 2009. Please send your contributions to the editor by 1 August.

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Cover picture: The Thornhill Dancers launch the first Dance Scottish Week
Photograph by Paul Bock

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News from Coates Crescent

Elspeth Gray brings you up to date with some highlights from Headquarters



Staffing

As announced in Stop Press in the previous edition of the magazine, Elizabeth Foster has been appointed as the Society's new Executive Officer (and will also be known as Secretary). Liz joined us on 1 December, and you can read more about her background and initial thoughts in her profile on page 10. Liz is settling in well, and getting to grips with the complex organisation that is the RSCDS.

Liz's appointment means that I will be focussing on the provision of efficient and responsive services for the membership, and I will be reducing my hours to four days per week. Jill Petri is now on maternity leave, having given birth to Lucas in October. While she is away, Craig Jackson is taking over responsibility for Winter and Summer School administration. We have been joined by Moira Thomson, as Jill's maternity cover, and Moira is carrying out examinations and medal test administration, as well as helping with Spring Fling organisation. Kate Lawrie continues to deal with stock and all orders for goods, amongst other things.

The last six months have therefore been a period of "movement", but we are all now settling into our new roles.

Branch anniversaries

Congratulations to the following Branches, who are celebrating "special" anniversaries this year. We hope you have a wonderful anniversary year, and look forward to many more years of happy dancing!

80th Banffshire	50th New York,	25th Cheshire, Paris, Tokyo
60th Annan, Inverness & District	Nottingham, NW Craven, Stranraer	20th Vienna

Dunfermline, St Andrews and Kirkcaldy Branches also celebrate 80 years of dancing in those areas since they were established as centres of the then Fife Branch in 1929.

Elections, and Management Board and Committee membership

Election results from AGM 2008 were as follows:

Chairman Elect Ruth Beattie

Members of Management Board

3 years Lorna Ogilvie, Lyn Bryce, Ross Robertson, Alan Mair

2 years Isobel McMillan, Lindsey-Jane Rousseau

1 year Bernie Hewitt

Members of General Purposes & Finance Committee

3 years Marjorie Hume, Robert McColl

Members of Education & Training Committee

3 years Ann Dix, Graham Donald, Anne Smyth

2 years Malcolm Brown, Sue Porter

Members of Membership Services Committee

3 years Anne Carter, Bill Austin

2 years Helen Beaney

It was extremely encouraging to see more members put their names forward for election in 2008, and we very much hope that will continue. Details of the management posts that will be available in 2009 and the relevant forms will be circulated to Branches and posted on the website in April – keep an eye out for them, or contact Headquarters at any time for more information.

Full Management Board and Committee membership for Nov 2008 – Nov 2009

Management Board

Alex Gray (Chairman & Convenor of MB)

Ruth Beattie (Chairman Elect)

Helen Russell (Convenor, E&T)

William Whyte (Convenor, GP&F)

Pam Gillies (Convenor, MS)

Elizabeth Foster (Executive Officer and Secretary)

Lyn Bryce, Alan Carr, Neil Copland, Bernie Hewitt, Patricia Houghton, Craig Houston, Alan Mair, Roderick McLachlan, Isobel McMillan, Lorna Ogilvie, Ross Robertson, Lindsey-Jane Rousseau, Andrew Smith.

Education & Training Committee

Helen Russell (Convenor)

John Wilkinson (Schools Director)

Jayne Brown (Youth Director)

Malcolm Brown, Ann Dix, Graham Donald,

Bruce Frazer, Deb Lees, Sue Porter,

Anne Smyth.

Craig Jackson (Secretary to Committee)

Membership Services Committee

Pam Gillies (Convenor)

Marilyn Healy (Archivist)

Mo Rutherford (Music Director)

Bill Austin, Helen Beaney, Luke Brady,

Anne Carter, Jean Martin, Jacquie Riddell.

Elspeth Gray (Secretary to Committee)

General Purposes & Finance Committee

William Whyte (Convenor)

Aad Boode, Sue Duckett, Marjorie Hume,

Robert McColl, Nigel Nicholson,

Peter Wright.

Shona Coyle (Secretary to Committee)

(NB: The Chairman and Chairman Elect may attend any Committee or other meeting, without a vote.

Apology and correction

The photograph on page 5 of *Scottish Country Dancer* no. 7 was misleading. Shellagh Whyte was a volunteer dancer during the Unit 5 course at Summer School, not a candidate as the wording suggests. We apologise to all concerned.

Call for dances.

A new book in 2010. See page 13.

Homecoming Ball

Surgeons' Hall, Edinburgh

Friday 18th September 2009

David Cunningham and his Band

See page 14 and the RSCDS website

From the Chair



by Alex Gray, *Chairman*

Taking up the Chairman's reins is like Hogmanay – out with the old, in with the new. However, the handover on 8 November was less dramatic. As Irene Bennett and I had worked as a team while I was Chairman Elect, I was ready for the transition and able to carry on seamlessly initiatives she had started. Irene saw the Society through a financial crisis and it is to her credit that she did this while retaining a vision for the future. In this difficult period, the Society still moved forward, while stabilising its financial position. Among the initiatives were the appointment of Elizabeth Foster (Executive Officer), who I look forward to working with; introduction of Dance Scottish Week; Scottish Branches Conference; and introduction of regional conferences. Thanks Irene for this work and the legacy of a sound base.

I first met Ruth Beattie, our new Chairman Elect, in Edinburgh, when we danced together in Branch classes. Ruth is a team player and we already enjoy an excellent working relationship. Like all family members, we have differences but are able to resolve them

quickly and amicably. There is clearly still a great deal of work to do to ensure the long-term viability of the Society. However, we have taken the most important step by getting finance under control, as this will enable us to fund the planned new initiatives that members want. We are all members of Jean Milligan's dancing family. Like any family we have ups and downs and differences of opinion. The key factors to keeping the family together are good communications, so that everyone is aware of what is happening. Meeting and talking openly help to identify the best way forward and exactly what members want the family to do.

Katharine Hoskyn from New Zealand led a lively Members' Forum at the AGM. The Management Board received a brief initial report in December, leading to some small immediate actions. Katharine also helped with the recent questionnaire – initial results are in this issue. Full reports of both will be considered at the next Board meeting. Thanks Katharine for your efforts.

Becoming the titular head of our worldwide family has transformed my life. I am very pleased that the first regional conference, held in New Zealand in late December, coincided with my chairmanship. It let Craig

Houston and me meet many members and exchange views with them. This conference and the fireside chat that I held at Asilomar, during San Francisco Branch's November weekend, have led to our committees considering: resuming publication of books of dances (Membership Services); development of a new scheme to assist good young teachers from any branch to teach at Summer School (Education & Training); and a strategic fund to help new branch formation (General Purposes & Finance). The Management Board is looking ahead at how to position the Society so that we remain the pre-eminent authority on Scottish country dancing.

As in any family we must not neglect closer members. Kate and I recently did a Scottish and Newcastle weekend (unfortunately not a brewery visit!). We attended the Scottish Branches Conference - a friendly and lively day, where deliberations on teaching dance in Scottish schools will inform our future outreach. Then we travelled to Newcastle Branch, where Kate and I first met through dancing, to attend the 25th anniversary of the Newcastle Festival of Dance, which was a great event.

I am looking forward to meeting members, and renewing and making friendships at the Scottish country dancing events I will attend in the coming year.

Education & Training Committee



by Helen Russell, *Convenor*

Once upon a time, under the previous examination system, a tutor gave candidates some written homework containing the request "List the benefits of being a member of the RSCDS". When the time came to hand in the homework, one candidate rather apologetically admitted that she had not answered question two because she couldn't think of any benefits of membership of the RSCDS. Fortunately the tutor had a sense of humour!

This illustrates how the work of the Society has become so embedded in Scottish country dance culture that it is almost invisible to many dancers.

Everyone who dances today, in the post 1923 style, whether they are a member of the RSCDS, or not, owes the fact that they are dancing to the Society. Many of the

dances they dance and much of the music they dance to have been published and produced by the RSCDS. More importantly, from my point of view, if they were to stop and consider who taught them to dance, the trail would inevitably lead back to the RSCDS. Many dancers dance in non-Society groups and go on dancing holidays in different countries. They are able to enjoy the sociability and excitement of the dance with people from all over the world because of the work of the Society. The continuing work in standardisation of technique and formations, the training of teachers and musicians and the running of schools and workshops are all vital to the health and long term future of Scottish country dancing.

As an organisation we have not been good at stating the benefits of membership explicitly, even to our own members. All

dancers, whether members or non-members, benefit and can continue to benefit from the work of the Society. The Society, on its part, also has an obligation to listen to dancers, wherever they live and dance, so that it can ensure that it continues to serve the dancing community to the best of its ability.

Call for new Medal Test Assessors

If you are interested in becoming an assessor for the RSCDS medal tests, please contact Headquarters for information on the application process.

RSCDS Youth Director

Expressions of interest for this post (2009 - 2012) are invited. Please contact Headquarters for the job description and information on the application process.

Membership Services Committee



by Pam Gillies, Convenor

Since taking up the post of Convenor in November, there has been a lot going on – no standing still on this Committee! We have been busy with several activities and events that are reported elsewhere in this edition, including: the members' questionnaire, there is a summary of the initial findings on pages 8 and 9; and events connected with The Homecoming 2009 and the competition for The Homecoming Dance, reported on page 12. Thank you to everyone who participated in the competition. We very much appreciate the interest that was shown.

Following the thorough review of the website that was carried out by Anne Carter, there is now a group taking forward the plans for restructuring the website and

making further developments. If you are a regular visitor to the website you should notice some improvements over the next few months.

Plans are progressing for Dance Scottish Week 2009, which will take place from 12-19 September. There will be a Homecoming Ball, timed to coincide with Dance Scottish Week. It will be held on Friday 18 September 2009, in Surgeons' Hall, Edinburgh – full details will be on the website by the time this magazine reaches you.

The Committee and the Management Board have been listening to feedback from members and have decided to resume the publication of books of dances with music. There is a call for submissions on page 13, and we hope that, once again, there will be a good response. The revamp of books to the new A5 format continues, and the next to come off the press will be the

instructions for all the dances in Books 7-12. These have been revised and rewritten in accordance with the most recent Standard Terminology. Two books that have been out of print in recent months are now available again: The Scotia Suite, a straightforward reprint, and The Leaflet Dances, which has been updated.

The CD of music for Book 20, by Nicol McLaren and the Glenraig Scottish Dance Band, was released in November 2008. CDs of music for Books 7 and 8 are due to be released in July 2009, and the last of the CDs of music for RSCDS books, Book 17, is scheduled to be ready for November 2009. The music for the 5 dances in the insert accompanying this magazine will be split between the recordings of Books 7 and 17. And finally, we now have a supply of the Society's tartan in featherweight wool, in addition to the kiltweight and polycotton, and we are also stocking china mugs from Dunoon Ceramics in the RSCDS tartan.

General Purposes & Finance Committee



by William Whyte, Convenor

The central focus of GP&F committee activities through the year is obviously the annual accounts, and there is no gap between one year's accounts being approved by the Society in general assembly (the AGM) and attention switching to the next set of accounts. In fact it is even more seamless than that since the calendar for work by office staff (Shona Coyle), our accountants (Alexander Sloan – Edinburgh) and our auditor (Alexander Sloan – Glasgow) in order to prepare the 2008-9 accounts is already agreed and in place.

We hope to achieve an even earlier release date of the accounts this time, thus allowing branches and members more time to study the financial results before the AGM.

As mentioned at the AGM, ensuring that the Schools contribute their fair share towards staff salaries and office overheads

is our single most important financial objective. This will have been largely achieved by the end of this Summer School, and following that we have turned our attention to the Society tax (namely VAT) situation. We expect to make good progress in this area before the summer, and in particular to put the Society's long-term finances onto a more solid base.

Other important areas under study are our new two-year budget process, investment management policies, banking arrangements and the need to make our spending more flexible in case the financial circumstances of the Society are more affected by the current economic difficulties than we currently expect. Enough to fill our time between now and the AGM in November 2009. See you there!

Leave a Legacy

Have you thought about leaving a legacy? Your legacy could help the RSCDS preserve and promote the enjoyment of Scottish country dancing in Scotland and around the world for future generations.

Subscription Fees 2009-2010

The basic subscription for the membership year July 2009 – June 2010 will remain at £15, as this year. However, at AGM 2008, delegates approved some additional membership options, so the full range will be as follows:

Subscriptions 2009-10	£
Adult single (age 25+)	15.00
Adult single, half year	7.50
(new members only)	
Young adult (age 18-24)	12.00
(80% of adult rate)	
Youth (age 12-17) (50% of adult rate) ..	7.50
Adult joint	24.00
(80% of 2x adult rate, 2 people at same address and belonging to same branch receive membership card each but only one magazine per household)	
Headquarters members	
Adult single (25+)	25.00
Adult single, half year	17.50
(new members only)	
Young adult (18-24)	22.00
Youth (12-17)	17.50
Adult joint	40.00
(2 people at same address; receive membership card each but only one magazine per household)	
Affiliation fee	35.00

First Regional Conference outside Scotland

by Janet Favel

There were 75 of us from New Zealand, Australia, Japan, and points further afield, and we were attending the first RSCDS Overseas Regional Conference, which was held at the New Zealand Branch Summer School in Christchurch on 30 December 2008. Alex Gray, Chairman of the Society, and Craig Houston, Management Board member, had journeyed down under to talk to enthusiastic dancers from this part of the world.

Chairman Alex told us about the strategic planning exercise that was under way, and assured us that the international membership – the substantial international membership – was not forgotten. He talked about the importance of good communication with members, responsible fund utilisation, and the management of risks. We heard about the examination system, publication of books of dances and the magazine, and the introduction of a teaching course. We learned that a working group had been set up to consider the New Zealand Branch motion to the Society's 2008 AGM "That members of the Local

Association/Branch may also be members of the Society".

And we had our chance to ask questions:

- Q. A £139,000 loss is unacceptable.
- A. A contributing factor had been the undercosting of schools, and it was anticipated that in the future both Summer and Winter schools would be run on a cost recovery basis.
- Q. Given this loss, how can the Society justify the appointment of a full time Executive Officer?
- A. A problem the Society has been facing recently is the turnover of staff, with the resulting loss of continuity and experience. One of the Executive Officer's main tasks would be to provide continuity for the Society and to ensure that experience is retained in the office.
- Q. This conference was not well publicised.
- A. This was the result of various factors which are being looked into to ensure this breakdown in communication doesn't happen again.
- Q. St Andrew's Summer School forms are sent out in December when southern hemisphere clubs are closed for the summer. Could the forms be sent earlier – say September or October – to allow

dancers in this part of the world to make necessary arrangements?

- A. The Education & Training Committee will look at that.
- Q. Why can't overseas members have a greater presence on the Management Board?
- A. We now had the first Chair of the Society to be based outside Scotland. Regional conferences have been introduced, of which this is the first. An increasing amount of the work of committees and working groups was now done by modern electronic methods.

We agreed unanimously that we wanted the Society to remain an international organisation, but with representatives based locally, not just in Scotland.

We also agreed that the Regional Conference was worthwhile, and it had been useful to hear directly from the Chair about the programmes put in place by the Society, and to be able to put across our views on a whole range of issues.

At the end of the conference we were all agreed that the most important thing is communication. The most important after the dancing, that is.

The Archive

Marilyn Healy has searched the archive to answer a reader's question.



In the last edition of *Scottish Country Dancer* Moira Stacey asked whether members knew why the jig *The Border Reel* had been replaced

by a reel, *The Laird of Dumbiedyke's Favourite* in later editions of Book 12, which was first published in 1938 and republished in 1950.

The source given for the dance was: Johnson, 1748 which refers to: *Caledonian Country Dances*, 1748 published by Jno Johnson. It is clear that Mrs Ysobel Stewart had seen the book because in the archive we have one of her hand-written notebooks describing *The Border Reel*:

"The two 1st Men whole figure round their Partners. Then the 1st Man lead his Partner thro' the 2d Cu. the two 1st We. figure round the Men and ye Wo. lead her Partner thro' ?? the 1st Man sett to the 2d Wo. and turn single. the 1st Wo. sett to the 2d Man and 1st Cu. cast off. The 1st Man takes his partner by both hands and draws her quite round the 3d Cu. and round the 2d Cu. ?? ."

(In old manuscripts the mark ?? divides the dance into eight-bar phrases.)

The Society interpreted the dance as:

Bars 1-8 First and second men dance the figure of eight round their partners.

Bars 9-16 First and second women do the same.

Bars 17-18 First man sets to second woman while first woman sets to second man.

Bars 19-20 First man and second woman change places while first woman and second man set again.

Bars 21-22 First woman and second man change places.

Bars 23-24 Second couple giving right hands cross over to own side at the top of the dance while first couple giving right hand lead down and turn into third place ready for poussette. Third couple move up and join for poussette.

Bars 25-32 First and third couples poussette.

Hugh Thurston, the author of *Scotland's Dances*, had found that the poussette did not appear in manuscripts until about 1790-1800 and therefore the poussette at the end of the dance was either a misinterpretation or the dance had been changed. At the time SCDS books claimed: "The descriptions given are those which research indicates to be the original and correct method of performing each dance". Thurston, in a letter in 1949, pointed out that it should be made clear in a note where a dance had been altered. He believed the Society should not make claims about historical accuracy or careful research which could not be substantiated.

At a meeting of the Publications Committee in January 1950 his letter was discussed at length and it was decided to delete *The Border Reel* from the book "and substitute another dance". We have a letter from Mrs Stewart in South Africa, written in January 1950 agreeing to the substitution of *The Laird of Dumbiedyke's Favourite* for *The Border Reel*.

How can we improve?

Survey of Society Members analysed
by Katharine Hoskyn.

Background

A survey was included with the previous edition of the magazine seeking members' views on the Society and its activities. In total 1847 responses were received, which is 12% of the membership of the RSCDS in 2008. 1037 responses (56%) were received online and 810 (44%) by post. Responses came from the following geographical areas:

	RSCDS Membership %	Survey responses %
United Kingdom & Ireland	51	45
Europe	4	5
North America	27	27
Africa, Asia, Japan, and South America	6	5
Australasia	13	17
No answer		1
Total	100	100

The proportion of survey participants from each geographical area is fairly similar to the breakdown of RSCDS membership for 2008.

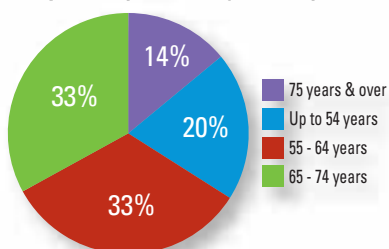
A summary of some of the results is given in this article. Greater analysis will be in a report on the website, including discussion about the implications of the response rate.

Profile of dancers who completed the survey:

Dancers were asked to give details about themselves and their interest in dancing. This is being used to indicate the needs and interests of different groups of dancers.

30% of the responses were from males and 70% from females. The average age of the survey participants is 62 years, with a breakdown of age groups as follows:

Age Group of Survey Participants



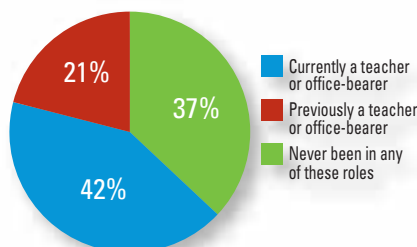
The majority of the people completing the survey had been dancing a long time - on average 27 years, with the average Society membership being 20 years.

In general, a large number of those in the survey had belonged to the Society for most

of the time they had been dancing (on average 77% of their dancing years). 69% showed an equal interest in social dancing and dancing with good technique, with 17% mainly or only interested in social dancing and 10% mainly or only interested in improving technique or dancing to a high standard. The interest in both social dancing and dancing with good technique was further reflected in some of the open-ended comments in which dancers expressed an opinion that social dancing and technique could not be separated.

Survey participants tended to be involved in the running of their local group with the majority (69%) currently or previously holding a role such as teacher or office-bearer.

Involvement with SCD



Typically, survey participants had attended a wide range of dancing activities in the past year:

Activity	%
Dancing at a local class or group	94
Informal balls, social or dances	83
Formal balls, socials or dances	65
Local AGM	53
Classes organised by other groups	50
Day school/s	37
Weekend school/s or short residential courses	36
Summer or winter school in any country (a week or longer)	21
RSCDS AGM	12

Note: with this question allowing multiple response it is not possible to add together any of the above figures.

The survey participants attended on average 4 - 5 of the above types of events.

Reasons for joining the RSCDS:

Most survey participants had 2 - 3 reasons for joining the Society. In total the reasons for joining the Society are almost equally split between wanting to support the organisation and doing so in order to go to classes/schools.

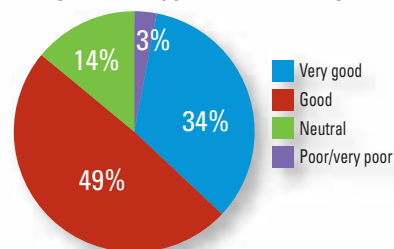
Reasons for joining the RSCDS were as follows:

Reason	All Reasons %	Main Reason %
To support the worldwide organisation for SCD	60	25
To be able to attend schools and classes	58	28
Because the Society does a great deal to support SCD	48	13
It is strongly encouraged by my dance group	32	9
In order to receive the magazine	23	2
To gain other individual benefits	17	2
It is compulsory in my dancing group	15	8
Other	17	9

Rating of support that the RSCDS gives to Scottish country dancing:

The majority 83% of survey participants rated the Society support for Scottish country dancing as good or very good, with 17% rating the Society support as neutral or poor.

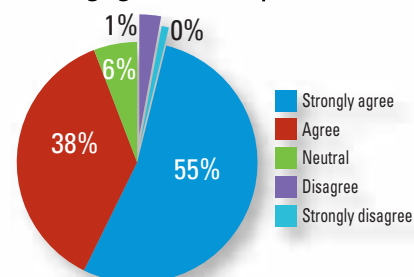
Rating of the Support the RSCDS gives SCD



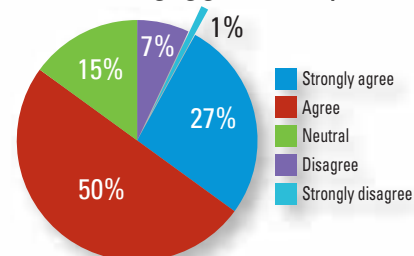
Expectations of the Society:

The majority of survey participants feels that the Society should be both promoting and encouraging good technique and the social aspects of dancing. The level of agreement for the encouragement of social dancing is very strong.

Main focus should be on promoting and encouraging the social aspects of dancing



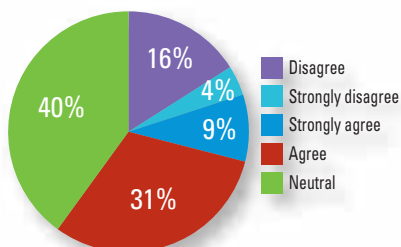
Main focus should be on promoting and encouraging good technique



Opportunity for members to have input into direction:

There is a wide range of opinion about whether the Society gives its members sufficient opportunity to have input into its direction. 40% show some level of agreement that this is the case, 40% are neutral and 20% disagree.

RSCDS gives its members sufficient opportunity to have input into its direction



Activities currently undertaken:

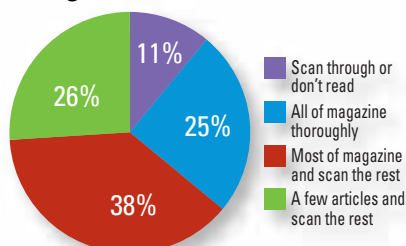
The questionnaire listed 22 activities that the Society currently undertakes and asked the survey participants which activities they personally felt should continue.

Activity	%
Teaching examinations	84
Training for new teachers	84
Publish booklets of dances	82
Maintain an archive of historical information and old dances	77
Summer School at St Andrews	75
Website	74
Produce and distribute the magazine	71
Training for existing teachers	69
Training for people wishing to train SCD teachers	67
Resources for teaching young people	65
Record and sell CDs of music	67
Courses for musicians	66
Advice about SCD and dances	66
Shops from which dancers can buy books and recordings	65
Examination tours for overseas branches	56
Promotional activities such as Dance Scottish Week	50
Scrolls to honour dancers who have contributed to the Society	46
Winter School in Scotland	45
Produce publications such as core dances	45
Medal tests for young dancers	42
Branch awards to honour dancers who have contributed to the branch	41
Dancing proficiency tests	35

Note: with this question allowing multiple response it is not possible to add together any of the above figures.

Magazine:

The feedback on the magazine is positive. Most survey participants read all or most of the magazine.



85% believe the magazine is the right length.

Survey participants were asked to give three sections of particular interest. A number of survey participants (especially those completing the paper questionnaire) commented that they found it hard to select three sections of particular interest – they were interested in many more sections. The questionnaire also asked for any sections that were of no interest or not read. The responses to these two questions were:

Section	%	%
News from Coates Crescent	21	15
Articles about events	18	9
Information about future events	19	7
Articles about history and cultural background of SCD	47	4
Articles about SCD technique	42	7
Articles about music	14	11
Reviews of CDs or videos	11	18
Interviews with well-known people	18	11
Articles about or tributes to well-known personalities	11	12
Reports from around the world	29	10
Members' letters	23	6

Sections of most interest (Each respondent was asked to give three sections)

Sections not read or of no interest

Note: with this question allowing multiple response it is not possible to add together any of the above figures.

The high level of interest in the content of the magazine can be seen from the number of people (41%) who could not name any sections that were of little or no interest. No sections stand out as being uninteresting to readers.

Open-ended questions:

The survey included two open-ended questions: suggestions for anything else the Society could do and any other comments that members wanted to make. Comments and suggestions for other activities were extremely wide-ranging and a full list will be in the report on the website. They fall into the following broad groupings:

- Comments about the need to be more

inclusive, less elitist, with a more outward focus

- Suggestions for promotion of Scottish country dancing or requests for more promotion
- Comments about costs, fees or finances
- Comments relating to overseas branches – isolation, inability to take part in activities, UK focus of some activity
- Suggestions about teaching examinations and standards. Some comments suggested that these needed to be more relaxed and others that standards needed to be maintained
- Suggestions relating to the encouragement of young people
- Request for annual dance books to be re-introduced
- Website/web-based suggestions

What happens next:

The Management Board and Membership Services Committee thank all those who took part in the survey for doing so, and for the thought and effort that went into consideration of their answers, particularly for the open-ended questions. A more detailed report will be available on the website and from Headquarters once the Management Board have had the opportunity to discuss it in depth. It will give fuller details and a breakdown of some questions by geographical area and/or by dancer profile. In the meantime, the Board make the following brief comments:

- The rating of the support given by the Society to SCD is encouraging, with most respondents this as good or very good
- The survey shows that the Society is expected to provide a wide range of services, some of which are more highly valued than others. The Board will not necessarily discontinue activities or services that did not receive a high level of overall support, as they may still be highly valued by specific groups.
- There was a wide range of response regarding the extent to which members had opportunity for input to the Society's direction. We will be looking for ways to improve this input.
- The strong indication from dancers of a high level of interest in both improving technique and social dancing is interesting and must continue to be borne in mind.
- The magazine is obviously well-rated by survey participants, which is consistent with comments made at the Members' Forum on Communication at the 2008 Conference Weekend. Nevertheless a close look at sections of interest will be undertaken.
- The Management Board will give careful consideration to the results, in particular the suggestions for future activity given in the open-ended responses.

Who's who in the RSCDS



Ruth Beattie – Chairman Elect

I began dancing at the age of three. My mother was teaching a Scottish country dance class in a village hall on the Isle of Skye and could not understand why her pupils were not paying the slightest bit of attention to what she was saying. Entranced by the music and movement I had taken myself on to the stage and was skipping and pirouetting with unreserved joy. Thus began a lifelong interest in dancing, first in ballet and subsequently in Scottish country dancing. It has been an interest which has taken me down many

different paths and given me great pleasure, enjoyment and excitement. I was fortunate to be taught country dancing at school by two very experienced Society teachers and I have never forgotten these early lessons. Later, with the confidence of youth, at the age of 19, I taught in a Youth Club in a deprived area in Edinburgh. I do not think I would tackle that now. At the same time I was dancing with the Society although it was much later I took my teaching certificate.

After many enjoyable years dancing with the demonstration team in Glasgow, recent times have brought different experiences and more responsibility. These have been in a variety of projects with the young and the not-so-young. At present, I look forward to my supporting role as Chairman Elect. My passion for Scottish country dancing and the Society has never waned in the slightest. And now, despite indications of uncertain times and difficult choices ahead, I will do my utmost to support our ideals and traditions for as long as I am required to do so.



Pam Gillies – Convenor, Membership Services

I was sent to Scottish country dance classes at the age of 7 because I walked hen-toed and was ruining all my outdoor shoes.

When I reached 18 I joined the RSCDS Glasgow Branch and after 2 years I was invited by Florence Adams to join the Glasgow Branch demonstration team.

I have many happy memories of my years with the team, but I remember the early years when you were given an envelope at class with the venue, time and dances for a demonstration – you did not know who else would be out with you, so you had to know the dances from all positions, as it was shortest to tallest.

I later danced with Inverness Branch and served on the committee there.

On returning to the Glasgow area, I attended the Branch AGM and was voted on to the Committee as Social Convenor.

I was later elected Chairman, and I still work for the Branch in the role of Youth Convenor.

Having gained the RSCDS Teacher's Certificate at Summer School and also being a Girl Guide leader, I encouraged the girls to take their SCD Badge and entered teams into Glasgow and Ayr Festivals.

I also started a class at my local church in Stewarton, which has been going for over twenty years.

One of my favourite posts was as SCD representative for Glasgow Branch when we were involved with the Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Four years ago George Lawson encouraged me to stand for the Membership Services Committee, and this year I moved into post as Convenor.

I realise that this is a demanding role, but working with the Committee and HQ staff, I hope to give members the support and materials they want for promoting Scottish country dancing in their area.



Elizabeth Foster – Executive Officer

I have been in post since 1 December 2008. Before that I was employed as the Children's Partnerships Officer for Stirling Council, where I liaised with voluntary and private sector service providers under contract with the Council. My work experience, however, is largely as a senior manager in the voluntary sector and includes ten years as Assistant Director with Save the Children in Scotland and seven years as Director of Family Mediation Scotland. I also spent two years as Chief Executive to Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, helping to set up and establish this new public office.

I began my work career in psychological research at the University of Strathclyde, where I obtained an MSc in Research. I hold an MBA from the University of Glasgow and am a trained family mediator and volunteer adviser with the Citizens Advice Bureau.

In my spare time, I enjoy dinghy sailing, hill-walking and skiing – in the company of my family. I have also commenced local classes in Scottish country dancing and was a competitive Highland dancer in my youth.

I am greatly enjoying my work with the RSCDS. As well as systematically reviewing the management systems at HQ to improve efficiency and effectiveness, I am working also with the staff, HQ volunteers, Committees and the Management Board to identify ways to secure a bright and stable future for Scottish country dancing worldwide, with the RSCDS at its centre. Looking ahead, I would be delighted to hear views, perhaps particularly from our youngest members, on how we can make Scottish country dancing a magnet for children and young people in the future. I would like also to take this opportunity to extend a very warm invitation to all members to drop in to the office when in Edinburgh, simply to say "Hello", share the latest news, have a browse through the RSCDS products, or hear about new developments. I look forward to working with you and on your behalf.

AGM & Conference Weekend 2008

by Elspeth Gray

Friday 7 November 2008 saw members gathering from all over the UK, and some from much further afield, for the Conference Weekend and 79th Annual General Meeting in Perth, Scotland. As always, a number of events were available over the course of the three days, aside from the AGM itself. The weekend began with a wine reception before the Ball on Friday; at the Ball itself, dancers enjoyed the programme devised by Paris Branch, with music from Nicol McLaren and the Glenraig Band. Perth & Kinross Council's Provost John Hulbert and Lady Provost, Mrs Sara Hulbert, attended the reception. Next morning, the RSCDS shop and the "bazaar" – members and Branches selling their goods – were bustling throughout the morning. Despite that distraction, Pat Houghton put a large class through their paces very effectively, with Jennifer Wilson providing the excellent musical accompaniment. The Members' Forum, on the single topic of "Communication" was facilitated by Katharine Hoskyn from New Zealand, and was well attended. The full report of the Forum, and a summary, will shortly be available on the website.

The AGM itself was the first to be chaired by our new President, Dr Alastair MacFadyen. The first item to generate debate was the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for 2007-08, which showed a deficit of approximately £130,000 on the operational result. William Whyte, Convenor of GP & Finance, outlined the major reasons for this and the previous 3 years' deficits, and explained the steps being taken by the Management Board to ensure that such large deficits did not recur. Alex Gray, Chairman, believed that much had already been achieved in controlling finances, but greater financial scrutiny was clearly needed, and that was part of the reason for appointing an Executive Officer.

The first motion to the AGM concerned the range of subscription options. The Management Board put forward proposals, to which Aberdeen Branch proposed amendments. After much discussion, the Aberdeen amendments were carried (details of the categories approved are given on page 6). The second motion concerned "proxy" voting; this was approved, and means that with effect from AGM 2009, a delegate or



The dance following the AGM

delegates may exercise the voting rights of up to three of the delegates to which the Branch is entitled. The third motion concerned the long-debated issue of membership, with New Zealand Branch proposing changes that would permit Branch-only membership. The Management Board proposed an amendment, to the effect that this was an issue needing careful research and consideration of all the possible implications. They asked the AGM to remit New Zealand's proposal back to the Board to bring forward a paper by 5 June 2009, fully reviewing the constitutional and financial implications and proposing a way forward. The meeting supported the Board's proposal. (Full AGM minutes are now on the website.)

The remainder of the weekend passed in a whirl of dance and lively conversation. Saturday night's dance programme was devised by Inverness & District Branch, and

John Renton's Band provided the music. On Sunday morning, for those dancers still with a spring in their step, Sinclair Barbour led a workshop on "Dances from the MacNab Books", accompanied by young musician Robert Menzies. There were meetings of current and new members of the Board and Committees, a Youth Forum, and Mo Rutherford also led a Forum for musicians

AGM and Conference Weekend 2009 will be held from 6-8 November. As there is an international conference taking place in Perth the same week, there will be a lot of pressure on hotel bookings. We did investigate alternative dates and venues, but were unable to make a change. A warning was put on the website in December, but for those who have not seen it – make sure that you book your accommodation as early as possible!

Scroll of Honour recipients 2008



Four worthy recipients of the Society's Scroll of Honour 2008, presented by Dr Alastair MacFadyen. Left to right, they are (nominating Branch/Committee in brackets): Jean Martin (Aberdeen), Jean Noble (Toronto), June Scott (Inverness & District), Linda Gaul (Education & Training Committee). Recipients who received their Scroll in local presentations were Elspeth Pyper (Melbourne & District) and Tom Toriyama (Tokyo).

The Homecoming

by Jim Healy – Immediate Past Convenor, Membership Services



Glasgow Branch giving the first performance of *The Homecoming Dance* on the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. Photograph by Alasdair Graham

The Homecoming Dance

Homecoming Scotland 2009 is a programme of events throughout the year to celebrate Scotland's contributions to the world, whether it is golf, whisky, great minds and innovations or the country's rich culture and heritage. It coincides with the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. Organisations all over the country have been invited to plan activities designed to appeal to people, whether they be Scots, of Scottish descent, married to a Scot, living in Scotland or simply interested in Scotland and the Scots.

Through our Marketing Officer, Liz Fraser, we were approached in May last year by *Visit Scotland* (the Scottish tourist agency) and invited to suggest how we might be involved. At the beginning of June we submitted proposals, but it was not until October, just two days before the previous issue of the magazine went to the printers, that we were commissioned to produce a new dance with music.

In the magazine we invited 'budding devisers and composers' to submit dances and music. We were delighted to receive ninety-three dances and twenty-two tunes. A working group was set up to go through the dances. With great difficulty they reduced the final number to be considered to four. These dances were danced by a different group who voted for the winning dance. A

similar process, led by Mo Rutherford, the Music Director, was followed for the music. The winning dance was then danced to the tunes Mo's group had short-listed and the best match voted on. The winning dance was devised by Anne Thorn of Helensburgh Branch and George Meikle, the well-known Scottish band leader and member of Monklands Branch, composed the music.



Anne Thorn, who devised the winning dance, said of her composition, "There are many dances being devised now but in my opinion the best dances flow and have a suitably lively or melodic tune, I hope that all who dance

The Homecoming Dance will enjoy it whether they are an experienced dancer, beginner or visitor to Scotland during the Homecoming Scotland 2009 year."



George Meikle who composed the original tune for the dance, JJ's Reel.

The dance was first performed by the Glasgow Branch Demonstration Group at the *Burns Illuminated* concert organised by Glasgow City Council and held in George Square on 25 January. *VisitScotland* had insisted that the dance should not be made available to RSCDS members or the public until after its premiere.

Things became more complex when, two weeks before the end of the year, we were asked by *Unique Events*, the company that organises Edinburgh Hogmanay celebrations, if we could provide a team of young dancers to take part in *The Dancin'* to be held in The Grassmarket in Edinburgh on 30 December. *EventScotland* was keen to use this event to show case *The Homecoming Dance* but the selection process was still in progress. As it happened, we had received a few 'round the room' dances for the dance competition, and a dance devised by Tim Wilson of San Francisco Branch was chosen and danced on the night. With Tim's agreement the dance was renamed *The Grassmarket Reel* and the tune which had been the runner up, composed by James Gray, was subsequently selected to accompany it.

Full descriptions and music for both dances are in the booklet accompanying this issue. Thanks are due to all members who submitted dances and music and also those who helped to reduce the original list, first to a 'short-list' and then to the winner.

The Dancin'

Luke Brady was with the team in The Grassmarket, Edinburgh.

Scotland in late December is not known for its fabulous weather. Even with this in mind, the RSCDS Youth Demonstration Team did not expect the below freezing temperatures at their latest exciting outing.

As part of the Hogmanay Celebrations in Edinburgh, 30 December saw the Grassmarket turned into a 3-stage concert venue with demonstrations of different forms of dancing from around the world. By far the most popular were the traditional forms of dancing. These brought the crowd alive and inspired the tourists, locals and police officers on duty to birl in the streets.

Team members came from all over the country with dancers from both Scotland and the North of England. The demonstration was superbly orchestrated by Margo Priestley and, with only one walkthrough, the team performed a complex medley of *Macleod's Fancy*, *Anna Holden's Strathspey*, *Scotland, Clutha*, *The Shepherd's Crook*, *The Craven Twelvesome* and the debut of a new dance for the occasion, *The Grassmarket Reel*.

The youth team put on two stellar performances and the atmosphere at the event was electric. As well as this event providing some excellent publicity for the RSCDS, the rapport and friendship between members of the youth team from all over the UK continues to grow so that these events become as enjoyable for the dancers as they are entertaining for the public. Having fun, after all, is what it is all about!



Elspeth Pyper (Melbourne and District Branch) is presented with the RSCDS Scroll by Graham Stanley, President of St. John's Group, where Elspeth has taught for many years, and Christine Freeman, President of the Branch.



Tom Toriyama is presented with the RSCDS Scroll of Honour by Noriko Nishimori (Secretary, Tokyo Branch) at a ball in November 2008.



Dancers from London Branch waiting their cue at the filming of a five minute video for the National Health Service. The video can be seen on the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk Fitness and Nutrition category where it advertises SCD as a means of maintaining health and fitness.



Cartoon courtesy of Alistair Smyth

Call for dance submissions

In response to many members' demands, the Membership Services Committee is planning to produce a book of dances with music in 2010. This will be a book for purchase. All branches are invited to submit a dance that has been "tried and tested" and RSCDS-qualified teachers can submit a dance which they have used at a school (day; weekend etc.) and has proved popular. Please note the following points:

- only one dance per branch/teacher should be submitted
- standard terminology should be used (guide available from Headquarters at a cost of £5)
- submissions should be in electronic format
- a dance can be submitted with music (preferably in electronic format), or with a suggested tune
- the Music Director's decision regarding music will be final

The deadline for submissions is 4 September 2009.

Dance Scottish Week 2008

by Ruth Beattie



Dance Scottish Week 2008 generated a network of worldwide country dancing. From the Isle of Skye to Edmonton, from Brussels to Tokyo, from Rhyl to San Francisco dancers and international friends were participating in a variety of colourful and lively gatherings. Around sixty branches were involved with well over one hundred events taking place during the course of the week. The breadth of activities taking place was an indication of the measure of enthusiasm for Scottish country dancing. Many branches opened their doors to visitors, as in Winnipeg where Society members entertained and welcomed a good number of newcomers. Several groups held street dances and London branch gave a series of stunning demonstrations at different landmarks throughout the city. How good it was to hear that, while Central Kentucky was holding 'Come and Try' sessions, Glasgow was inviting visitors to the magnificent Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum to do the same. A particularly interesting Burns presentation was mounted in central

Some of the dancers at the celebration of Dance Scottish Week in Winnipeg, Canada.



Scotland by a small group of dancers, a postscript to Dance Scottish Week and a prelude to the Year of the Homecoming. All over the world people were being invited, cajoled and encouraged to enjoy an enormous and imaginative programme of dances and music.

Colouring competition.

There was a magnificent response to the colouring competition and we are grateful to Annie Macleod for selecting the winning entries - an unenviable task. As a way of raising awareness of Scottish country dancing among children of primary school age, there is no doubt that it is having an effect. There was a jump from 460 entries in 2007 to 1018 in 2008. The vast majority of the entries were from Scotland, but there were also entries from Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, New Zealand, Tanzania and the USA. Many of the entries were of a very high standard, so choosing four winners out of a thousand was particularly difficult.

The picture included musicians on stage. In judging the competition we were impressed by the children's involvement with dancing: the way they conveyed the excitement, atmosphere and energy of the dance. Congratulations to the four winners whose entries are shown on the opposite page. With so many entrants of a high standard, twenty children were sent certificates of commendation.

One of the great successes of the competition is that it attracted many more entries from schools. Teachers wrote to say how much their classes had enjoyed taking part. All the schools should be

congratulated for encouraging their children to get involved. Entries also came in from RSCDS branches and other clubs and classes. Details of this year's competition will be posted on the website and all branch secretaries will be informed.

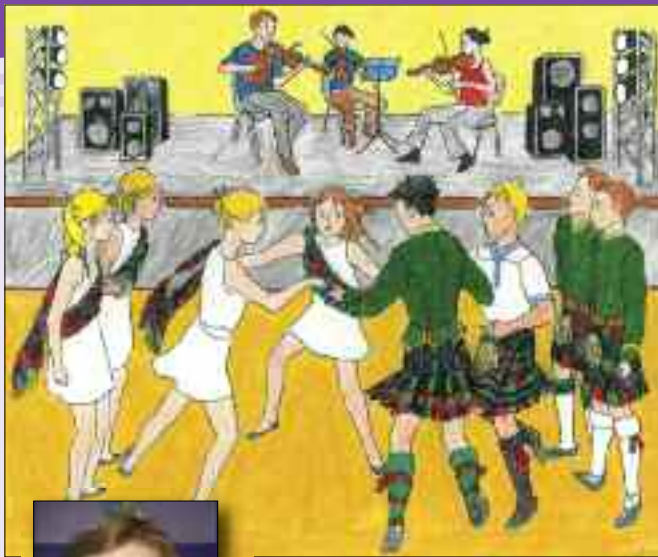
Dance Scottish Week 2009.

This year Dance Scottish Week will run from 12 to 19 September, though we shall not be holding open days at Headquarters. While there was a very successful reception, attended by Linda Fabiani, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture and several representatives from other organisations, there was little interest in 'dropping in'. We are, however, planning a Homecoming Ball in the wonderful surroundings of the Surgeons' Hall in Edinburgh. We hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend. Most of all we do hope you will organise another calendar of events in your own area. The initiatives and efforts of every branch and group are much appreciated, and they do let the world experience the benefits of our unique and very special traditional dance.

Joyce Cormack writes about the Dance Scottish Social run by Winnipeg Branch.

On September 13 an evening of Scottish country dancing was held at St. Paul's Hall in Winnipeg in celebration of Dance Scottish Week. It was intended to be a fun and casual event. A total of 64 people attended, of which 38 were visitors. They were a good mix of young and older people. During the evening almost everyone, including the children, was able to participate in most of the dances, while some of our more senior guests were content to sit and watch and listen to the music. Our members commented that it was great fun to dance with the children, and it was so nice to see grandchildren dancing the last waltz with their grandparents.

The groaning tables were well laden with mainly Scottish food provided by our members. Our guests were impressed with the variety of dishes that members had so generously donated. We used the publicity material from Headquarters, which was very attractive and high quality. I do think the whole idea of a Dance Scottish worldwide event is wonderful and a great way to market dancing to the general public. Four of the visitors who attended the evening ended up registering for classes.



Age 8: Francesca Hall of Berwick-upon-Tweed



Age 10: Emma Woodside of Mississauga, Ontario

Age 9: Brett Lumsden of Edinburgh



Age 11: Mairi MacLennan of Forres



Barbara Sharp, Leicester Branch, persuaded fifteen of her travelling companions on a trip to the Antarctic to join her in dancing *The Piper and the Penguin* on Beak Island (64 degrees south). Barbara had to train the dancers, only two admitted to any previous experience, and organise mouth music accompaniment. Not visible in the photograph is the bemused audience of Adelle penguins. You can watch the performance on Youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJq7XP7iXio>

North and South - could these be SCD record breakers at the extremes of the globe?



Meanwhile, Liz, John, Sally and Peter dance on top of the Arctic ice at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska (71 degrees north).

Interview with Sinclair Barbour

Jimmie Hill interviews Sinclair Barbour, hill sheep farmer and well known as the teacher and inspiration of Thornhill Scottish Country Dancers, one of the most successful groups of young dancers. Thornhill is a small village not far from Dumfries.



Sinclair Barbour (on the left) with the Thornhill Dancers.

Finding you wasn't easy Sinclair! Have you always lived here?

I've lived up this glen all my life apart from four years at university. My family has always farmed here. When I left school I wasn't too keen on living somewhere as remote as this!

And presumably you went to the local school?

Yes, I went to primary school in the village of Penpont, where I did country dancing, and then on to Wallace Hall Academy in Thornhill, the secondary school for the area. I did some country dancing there with Bill Clement, one of the teachers. I did more dancing at Edinburgh University in the New Scotland group, taught by Bob Grant.

So the group here was started by Bill?

Yes, and he used to take the group abroad. I got involved when he asked me to go to France and also to the Far East. When Bill wanted to give up teaching the group in 1988, he asked me to take over. Bill was a teacher at Wallace Hall and when you went into his class, his first question was, "Can you dance?" If you said yes, you were in his team! Bill was very good at encouraging

boys to dance. He did a wee bit of Highland as well as country dancing. He thought if you got boys dancing, the girls would come anyway. If you've only got girls, it's very difficult for a boy to go along! Bill advised me to start the boys off on their own with the *Argyll Broadswords*. They don't feel bad about their footwork if the girls aren't there – then start the girls a few weeks later.

Your group is famous for its trips abroad.

Yes, and that has really taken off in the past 10 years. When we first went to the Far East, we had one piper and four couples dancing *The Reel of the 51st*, *Monymusk* and other straightforward repertoire dances. The more we've been going to foreign festivals, the more demands have changed. They want to be entertained much more. Some want a modern choreographed performance that last 30 minutes without a break. They even want some singing.

So what is your repertoire?

We dance a lot of the MacNab dances and Hugh Foss's dances. Hugh Foss lived not too far away from here in Glendarroch House, which was built by one of my great great grandfathers! I find if I use complicated

dances, I keep their attention. If the dances are too easy, the young ones get fed up. We do a couple of male dances, *American Tribute* and *Perth Assembly*. I learned them from Pam Dignan at St Andrews. I try to mix some of the Highland dances into a medley. One we do with three sets is *Muirland Willie*, *Wind on Loch Fyne* and *Royal Salute*, opening up into a V-shape.

And what do you use for music on the trips?

We now go abroad with a three-piece band. At the moment we're using the young accordionist, Robert Menzies, who's at RSAMD in Glasgow. The band are all young and they fit in really well with the young dancers.

What age are your youngest dancers?

I don't take them till they are about 11 or 12 – when they start secondary school. I have a class for 1st year to 3rd year. After that they go into the adult class – when they're about 15 or 16.

How do you sell it to the 1st years?

I really don't have to. Because it's such a small area, they've all got a relative or know someone who's been in the group, or they

might have seen us dancing at Thornhill Gala or some other event. They see pictures in the paper of our foreign trips, so when they go to Wallace Hall, they want to give it a try. It's only because it's been going for so long, the boys don't think it's sissy to come along to the dancing.

Are all your teams mixed?

Yes, I don't like to see all-ladies teams. I prefer to see boys and girls. We do a lot of men-only dances – not just Highland, but also *The Reel of the 51st* with 5 couples. None of the boys thinks there is anything odd about 10 of them doing it – because that's the way we've always done that dance. I've usually got about three sets out of 1st and 2nd year.

When do you actually meet?

The youngest ones come along from 6.30 till 7.30, then the older ones come in after that. Some nights we have an overlap so that the young ones can see what the older ones are doing. It's good for them to mix because we all go to festivals together.

So do you teach these 11- and 12-year-old beginners the way you were taught to teach beginners at St Andrews?

Possibly not! I never have a warm-up session. We may do something energetic to start with, but we don't stand in a circle and point our toes. We might walk through formations. We might start with *The Sutters of Selkirk*. I get them to dive about the hall in promenade hold and avoid collisions! They all zoom about! Then we can go on and practise steps – but not strathspey. I don't start strathspey till they go up to the older group. If you do strathspeys at that age, they get fed up! I don't stick rigidly to technique. A lot of their steps are rough to start with, but some of my best older dancers now were not that good at the beginning. One of the problems I find today is that almost no primary schools in the area do country dancing any more. I used to get a lot of good dancers from Penpont because Sophia Harkness taught them. For the past couple of years some of my older dancers in the Academy have been going into the primary and teaching some dancing. It's certainly dwindled in this area in the primary schools in the last 5 years. I'm still lucky that I'm getting the dancers, but they're not at the stage they were before. They are now complete beginners.

So do you have a special teaching style?

I think I have a very relaxed style. I joke with them. It's not a school club, so I can be less formal with them. I think the attraction of the group is that it isn't just dancing. We have a big party here; we dance in the shed outside. The main thing is the competitions and trips. If I've got some good 2nd years, I'll include them on the trips if they're

mature enough. So, there's something for the younger ones to aim for.

Do you have live music at the class?

We're really lucky here because we have a lot of young pipers. There are two or three lads in the group who are good enough to play for dancing. I build up a dance using CDs, then when we're ready to dance the whole thing, one of the lads gets his pipes out and we dance it to the pipes. There's always a piper, but you can't ask a piper for the first 8 bars, please! You don't just switch on pipes! On the foreign trips we usually have three pipers as well as the band. When you hear the pipes playing with the band, the sound is tremendous.

The thing that I think marks your dancers out from other demonstration teams is the natural way they dance. There are no silly grins plastered on!

That's what I feel too. I sometimes feel that girls who aren't used to dancing with boys have developed a style which I'm not very comfortable with whereas my girls have always danced with boys. My dancers all know each other. They are genuinely a 'team'. I know that their technique is not as good as some older teams, but perhaps if I insisted on more technique, they wouldn't have as much fun or enthusiasm. Teachers come to me and say, "If only I had your dancers, what I could do with them!" But they don't have them!

Do your dancers dance socially as well as in the team?

Yes and no! We tend to go down to Dumfries Branch dances. It's not easy to get the young ones to go to an adult dance. I have to say Dumfries Branch are absolutely excellent. They always give us half-price tickets and they make an effort to speak to the young ones. There's a lot of ceilidhs in the school and there are some ceilidh bands. They tend to go to that sort of thing more where they meet friends of their own age.

And how do you fund visits?

Well, there were 35 of us last weekend at the Ayr Festival. The coach cost £250. We have to pay for that ourselves. We hold fund-raising events and we get some support from local businesses, and it's amazing the donations we get from local people. When we went to Syria, Syrian Airways paid two thirds of the fares. We were there for 10 days. I think the cost was £300 each. We raised about £100 each and the dancers ended up paying £200. We went to Qatar last year. They are hoping to host the Olympics in 2016 and they want us to be there and dance at their opening bid.

Is it one trip a year you do?

Two years ago, we went to Shanghai, Qatar and Belgium! The Shanghai and Qatar trips didn't cost us anything, so it

was only Belgium we had to fund. I like the European trips. They are very friendly and we usually stay with families. For the trips where we have to stay in hotels, we only take the older ones. Wherever we go, the older ones look after the younger ones – a bit like mentoring. And because it is all so local, we get the children of former group members.

And they all look great in their Prince Charlies.

I've built up a store of outfits over the years. And very importantly, I provide the pumps. Boys won't spend £30 on pumps.

What do you think is the key to your success here?

I don't want to be big-headed but I think the personality of the teacher is crucial. I also think boys react better to a male teacher. I'm not saying it's essential, but I think it's a benefit. I also think the social side of the group is essential. Giving them responsibility for fund-raising is important. I also have a small team of helpers who help me run it. I couldn't do it without them.

Finally, if you could design your ideal demonstration, what would it consist of?

The one that always goes down the best is *Macleod of Dunvegan* – a six-couple dance with great music. Having younger dancers makes a huge difference to the audience reaction. One dem we do which is very simple is *Scotland* with two couples starting, then another two dance in and join them and it builds up, then more, until there's 8 couples – a very simple dance but it is very effective. *Polharrow Burn* is popular with audiences as is *The Argyll Broadwords*. The youngsters like doing *The Bonnie Hoose o' Airlie* as long as you don't also do *Ian Powrie's Farewell!* A simple medley I do with the youngest dancers is *The Triumph* followed by *The Round Reel of Eight*. The last time through *The Triumph* we don't do the poussette. Instead, they all advance into the centre, meet their partner and form a square set.

How do you manage to do all this AND run a farm?

Good question! The lambing starts soon and with 800 yowes, that's some job! It's now the third week in March and the dancing has stopped till the summer when we have dems. We then start again when school starts in the autumn.

(If you are interested in finding out more about the Thornhill Scottish Country Dancers, their website is www.thornhillscd.co.uk)

What makes a good dance?

In the previous issue, regular columnist Chris Ronald asked, "So what do you think makes a good dance?" Rosemary Coupe has some suggestions.

What are the factors that make some dances so popular that they outlast the shifting tides of fashion, and appear from year to year on our programs? Here are a few possible reasons.

Sheer exhilaration At the top of many people's list of favourites are dances like *Bratach Bana* and *The Irish Rover* in which the dancing couple reach cruising speed in the first two bars and never slow down. The dynamic flow of these dances gives a sensation of free, continuous movement as the leading couple swirl around the corners and through the middle.

Irresistible music A thrilling tune like *The Deil amang the Tailors* has a direct line to any dancer's heart; any set of figures set to that tune would be encored. *Montgomery's Rant* is a superb dance in its own right, but the melding of the fast-moving dance to its driving tune makes it a sure winner. A very different fusion of dance and music gives *The Dream Catcher* its dreamlike, hypnotic quality.

Completeness of pattern Some dances are satisfying to dance because they follow a pattern to its logical end. The flight pattern of the first couple in the four half-reels of *Mairi's Wedding* takes them through all four corners of the set; they meet briefly in the middle only to soar away again and again. The last half of *Australian Ladies* has the same quality of satisfying completeness. Similarly, dances like *Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder* and *White Heather Jig* satisfy our brains' desire for order, at least subconsciously, because one half of the dance so neatly recapitulates and reverses the other.

Complexity resolved Some dances are bravura demonstrations of the deviser's art in creating and then resolving interesting complications. In composing *Polharrow Burn*, Hugh Foss must have envisioned the entire 32-bar sequence for all five couples at once - how else could he return them so

effortlessly to their progressed positions? In other dances, better unnamed, an interesting idea carries us through 16 or even 24 bars, and then the deviser seems to have asked, 'Now how on earth do I get them back home?'

Intense interaction Some dances demand careful phrasing and teamwork, so that dancers together create a harmony. In *Bees of Maggieknockater*, for example, the half reels must be timed exactly so the moments of meeting and parting are

perfectly coordinated. Accomplishing this creates a satisfaction of its own. In the 'dolphin' reels in *Pelorus Jack*, the dancing couple feel the same interdependence as each picks up and relinquishes the lead, maintaining the flow of the pattern as they do so. The greater the interaction, the greater the social pleasure. Why else is *Catch the Wind* so popular?

So might we talk about a PRIME factor (Pattern, Resolution, Interaction, Music, Exhilaration)?



A group of inexperienced dancers showed great enthusiasm and fortitude in braving the first run of the new RSCDS Dancing Proficiency Assessment, levels 1 & 2 in Hemel Hempstead, England in March 2009. Here they are with their tutor, Ken Martlew, musician, Jeremy Hill, and assessors, Angela Young and Bruce Frazer.

Visitors to Edinburgh in the summer will receive a warm welcome at the Scottish country dancing in Princes Street Gardens. These events run on Monday evenings from late May to late July. In August there is dancing indoors. Details of dates, venues and programmes will be available at www.psgdance.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk from the end of April.



CeilidhKids

by Caroline Brockbank



Toby leads his partner round the room

On community noticeboards here in Edinburgh, it's common to see posters advertising 'Family Ceilidh! All welcome!' When I talked my own children into accompanying me to some events supposedly aimed at under-fives I was disappointed to discover they were geared to families only in the sense that children attended them. There often appeared to be no concession to children's confidence and tolerance levels, attention spans, learning patterns, stamina or bedtimes. 'I can do better than that' I thought, and I cobbled together a ceilidh for the local playgroup.

By this time my own children were three and four and I thought it would be fun to organise a little group so that they and I, and other families with children of a similar age, could get together and have some fun to SCD music. I was interested in the tradition of different generations dancing together and passing on skills. Besides, I wanted parents involved because I didn't fancy being in sole charge of a room full of small children! After some trial and error, and feedback from the long-suffering families attending, we came up with a programme of adapted dances, exercises and games which seemed to work well.

Two years later and CeilidhKids has

expanded considerably. I now run three pre-school classes in Edinburgh, and am busy most weekends (sometimes teamed with a tolerant musician) running birthday parties for all ages, family celebrations such as weddings and christenings, and fundraisers for local youth organisations. Schools and nurseries have invited me in to lead one-off sessions of SCD, and CeilidhKids has been invited to take part in some bigger family-oriented events keen to include some Scottish dancing as part of the activities on offer. CeilidhKids is still very much a work in progress, as I am continually adapting things when I see what is and isn't a success.

At pre-school family classes we spend a lot of time listening to the music, clapping, marching, skipping and counting. Although every week is different we work within a small repertoire, repetition and reinforcement being very important at this stage. We enjoy a mixture of simplified ceilidh and country dances, with exercises and games which prepare those present for core SCD skills. For example a slalom round a line of chairs lays the foundations for reels. Existing dances need to be simplified within certain constraints. I soon discovered that the success of a dance must never rely on anyone else being in the right place at the right time. Little ones often wander off or have their own ideas about how the dance should go! If a pre-school child is required to stand still for eight bars of the dance, I have to say so specifically otherwise they'll just skip off into the sunset. For a preschooler, to let go of your chosen partner's hand is very scary. To be asked to hold hands with anyone else is scarier still. Concepts such as 'left/right' 'man/lady' go out of the window. An adult may bring more than one child, so every dance must be possible with two partners, or with a baby on the hip.

A few dances need very little modification, *Prince of Orange* for example, and at CeilidhKids we finish every session with a ceilidh-style *Circassian Circle*. We have made a few alterations to the *Gay Gordons*, *Britannia Two-step*, and *The Flying Scotsman*, and written a few new ones of our own. These can all be used at family weddings, playgroup fundraisers and parties, many are compatible with the 'traditional' version of the dance, so bewildered all-adult couples present can participate in the usual way.

Children's parties are the most popular CeilidhKids event on offer. They're fun to



Stuart and Anna dance hands round and back CeilidhKids style

do but very challenging, and I usually turn up with a grab-bag of dances, ideas, materials, props, games and resources to suit the mood of the crowd – I get lots of practice at thinking on my feet. Usually we start with some Scottish dances whilst the concept of a ceilidh party is a curiosity to those present, and when the novelty wears off we tend more towards dancing-related games. Traditional party games can be given a ceilidh-style twist by using SCD music. However, in addition to my Scottish CD I also take along a disco CD, just in case!

My initial idea was to run classes and perhaps a few events, instead I'm swamped with events and the classes are ticking over gently. People seem to view ceilidh dancing as a way to celebrate a special occasion rather than something to practise each week, which is perhaps more in line with the traditional outlook here in Scotland and one to which I shall have to adapt my RSCDS-oriented brain. However, if we can raise general awareness of SCD that's all to the good, and I encourage families to try out a local children's class once they graduate from my afternoon sessions and start school. I'm unsure as to how CeilidhKids would translate to locations beyond Scotland since I think part of the attraction is in upholding local tradition, and some rural communities in Scotland no doubt do this sort of thing very well for themselves.

So we'll see how it goes. In the meantime, have a look at the website www.ceilidhkids.com or contact caroline@ceilidhkids.com to share ideas. Happy dancing!



From around the world

Thank you to our international correspondents for providing these reports, and welcome to Janet Favel who is writing from New Zealand, Eilean Yates who is covering the eastern United States and Liz Hamerton from Hong Kong. In this issue Audrey Emmett is writing from Australia and Susi Mayr from Europe.



Margo Monteith with the dancers at the social to celebrate her 80th birthday. Margo is holding her framed RSCDS Scroll of Honour.

Africa

Correspondent: Terry Lynne Harris

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Margo Monteith, co-founder of the 51st Club (Johannesburg Branch), retired SCD teacher, SCD examiner and RSCDS Scroll of Honour recipient, celebrated her 80th birthday on 11 February 2009. To mark the occasion, the 51st Club held a special celebratory social in her honour the evening before. Dancers from the Pretoria Branch, the Midrand SCD Group and other friends joined the Johannesburg dancers for the evening. There was some fun social dancing, followed by tea and eats. The dancers also performed a strathspey, which was devised specially for

Margo by Sandra Turton of the Midrand SCD Group. One of the 51st Club dancers had cleverly succeeded (without raising Margo's suspicions!) in borrowing her RSCDS Scroll of Honour in order to have it framed and this they presented to her at tea-time.

Born and brought up in Glasgow, Scotland, Margo and her husband Alex emigrated to South Africa in 1956. She taught SCD to a group of dancers at the Johannesburg Caledonian Society and also taught occasionally at a small SCD group. In 1963 the two existing SCD groups in Johannesburg, one of which was the 51st Club (formed in 1951, hence the name), decided to amalgamate, the combined club

retaining the 51st Club name and becoming a branch of the RSCDS in 1968. Margo taught at the 51st Club for 55 years, retiring at the end of 2004, and also taught at the Weekend Schools organised by the 51st Club and held in the Drakensberg. In 1989 she was awarded the RSCDS Scroll of Honour and in 1998 she qualified as an RSCDS examiner, the first and only examiner in South Africa. Numerous teaching candidates have benefited from her tutoring. In 2006 Norma Craven and Martyn Nickless of the 51st Club and Wouter Joubert of the Pretoria Branch obtained their full teaching qualifications with Margo as one of the examiners.

Asia

Correspondent: Liz Hamerton

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November saw the annual celebration of St Andrew's Day in the form of a dance hosted by The Reel Club held in, what is becoming a regular venue for this event, The Hong Kong Aviation Club function room.

In the weekly classes and social dancing sessions leading up to the dance, our very patient dance instructor, Jean Young, coached beginners and 'old hands' alike through all the dances on the programme so that everyone could join in and have an unforgettable evening.

As usual it was a sell-out and following a superb dinner we all took to the floor to the music of Iain Carmichael and the Hong Kong Ceilidh Band. Due to the varying abilities of the dancers, the complexity of the programme ranged from fairly simple to challenging – *Cumberland Reel* and *Machine without Horses* to *Petronella* and *Duke & Duchess of Edinburgh*. It was a



Dancers at the Hogmanay Ball, Hong Kong.

very successful evening, enjoyed by all who attended.

Christmas came and went and we celebrated Hogmanay in fine style with a fabulous ball at one of the private clubs in Hong Kong. Once again we had a wide range of dances as Jean always makes sure

that everyone can join in and have fun by selecting a good mix of easy, moderate and more tricky dances. A highlight of the evening was a visit from the Hong Kong SAR Red Tartan Pipe Band who came and performed for us during their hectic tour of the city, appearing at a number of different events during the night.

After the seasonal holidays, the weekly classes and social dancing resumed and preparations began for the annual ceilidh to be held in early March. More of that next time.

Australia

Correspondent: Audrey Emmett

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After the hectic flurry of Christmas parties and end of year functions, dancers here in Western Australia put away their shoes for a well earned rest over the long, hot summer. A few groups do have 'keep in touch' socials, but in the main, classes and clubs don't start up again until March. Western Australia Branch held its first social

of the year on 7 March and a great turnout of dancers packed the floor.

One of the downsides of an Australian summer is the ever present threat of bushfires. Readers will have heard about the devastating bushfires Victoria endured in February. Mercifully no members of the dancing community lost their lives, but all were affected in some way. It was a terrible time, and although the fires may be out, the process of re-building lives and communities will take many years.

On a much more cheerful note, Melbourne Branch will be hosting a Ball in July to mark the Branch's 40th Anniversary. They will be dancing to the music of David Cunningham and his Band who will be in Australia to play (along with other musicians) for a week in mid July at the 34th Australian Winter School to be held at Kiama, New South Wales, hosted by Sydney Branch. Applications for the school are still welcome - details and the application form can be found at <http://www.rscds.org.au/winterschool/index2009.html>.

Back in beautiful Western Australia, we invite visitors to join us in the dance. Being one of the more isolated branches in the world, we relish new faces and anyone passing through Perth is encouraged to dance with us, teach a class or play music for us. A warm welcome awaits!

Europe

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The selection of events in Continental Europe available to dancers of all levels of proficiency is extensive and varied, as a quick look at the Celtic Circle website (www.celtic-circle.de) will show.

A special treat this year are the two workshops organised on consecutive weekends (24-26 April and 30 April-3 May 2009) by the Budapest Scottish Dance Club (<http://www.bstk.hu/en.htm>) and Vienna Branch (<http://www.rscdsvienna.org/>). The first international SCD workshop in Hungary was held ten years ago, while Vienna Branch was founded in 1989 - two significant anniversaries that deserve to be celebrated. The two groups are collaborating to link their SCD workshops with a tourist programme that begins in Budapest and ends in Baden, just south of Vienna, where the venue for the final part of this ten-day Scottish country dance extravaganza is an early 19th century palace.

Another European event 'with a difference' this year is the Kaleidoscope SCD conference in July. More information is available on page 30. The organisers are particularly looking forward to welcoming

a large group of dancers from Italy who will be joining the conference participants for the Saturday night dance.

South America

Correspondent: Marcella Galve
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The last few months down in Buenos Aires have been busy with visitors and locally organized parties. We have been pleased to receive tourists from Western Australia and Vermont, who not only danced and exchanged ideas with us but also presented us with books of SCD written by Holly Sherman from Vermont and John Brenchley from Western Australia.

BASCDancers are now trying out some of the dances in these books like *The Kangaroo Paw* and *Cardigan Back* and discovering the twists each country gives to the figures they choose, which add creativity and variety to the dance. One we noticed in *The Kangaroo Paw* was Turn Corners and Partner starting with second corner as well as starting the reel of three on the sides with second corner. We finished off 2008 with the usual seasonal parties: The Happy Meeting and our Ceilidh. At the Ceilidh our members had the chance to show their talents: playing the bodhran and teaching dances from other countries including Argentine and North American folk. And in keeping with the spirit of Homecoming Scotland 2009 BASCDancers are planning a day with dances and music related to Robert Burns.

We meet on Friday evenings in central Buenos Aires, and visiting dancers are always welcome. For more information contact www.bascdancers.com.ar

Japan

Correspondent: Tom Toriyama
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The Scottish country dancing competition, the only one in Japan, was as usual part of the Annual Tokyo Highland Games held in October, with Elma McCausland acting as adjudicator. The idea of competitive SCD is still in its infancy in Japan. Some ladies say "when we wear our white dresses, all of our figures look like 'H' (a body with no waist), not 'X'". Fortunately there are no figures 'D'! Last November there were weekend schools organised by Tokai Branch, Fukuoka and East Nagoya groups: a memorial dance for the late Junko Matsuhashi; and celebrations for Bill Clement's MBE and Tom Toriyama's RSCDS Scroll of Honour. Then there were annual dances held in Kaskabe, Kawagoe, Yokohama, Chiba and Akabane. New Year dances were organised by Tokyo and Saitama Branches in comfortable venues, with live music, providing very enjoyable



Yoshiki and Kaoru Oyama "with" Niel Gow at the Blair Castle Ball during Winter School 2009.

atmospheres for 110 and 140 dancers respectively. All of these activities were hugely successful!

Tokyo Branch celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year. The major event was a Weekend School and Ball in March, to which the Society's President, together with the Chairman and his wife, were invited.

Japan is not an exception to the global recession. The exchange rates of Japanese yen to foreign currencies have appreciated and so Society members here have benefited because the subscription rates for 2009/2010 will be reduced to 70% of last year!

New Zealand

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I am honoured to take over the role of New Zealand correspondent to the *Scottish Country Dancer* from Marjorie Crawford. Marjorie has done a wonderful job of keeping the rest of the SCD world up to date with SCD events in New Zealand.

This year's annual Summer School was held at Ilam in Christchurch. As always the event was a wonderful opportunity to enjoy great dancing and superb music, to renew old friendships and to make new friends. This year we were pleased to be joined by Alex Gray, RSCDS Chairman, Kate Gray, and Craig Houston, RSCDS Management Board



Young dancers at the New Zealand Branch Summer School.

member. Alex and Craig conducted the first of a series of regional fora (see page 7). At our Annual General Meeting (who else would hold their AGM on New Year's Day?) Beverley Young of Auckland was elected President. She showed that she is made of stern stuff with her determined use of the gavel to bring the meeting to order!

In December New Zealand dancers were sorry to learn of the death of Peg Hutchison. Peg was a past President of New Zealand Branch, and was made a life member in 1998, and co-authored '*Sociable, Carefree, Delightful*', the history of Scottish country dancing in New Zealand. Her delightful sense of humour, and her questions to the Branch Treasurer at our AGMs, will be missed.

Dancers living in, or visiting, New Zealand have a lot to look forward to this year as well as our usual club nights and annual dances. There is the Queen's Birthday Weekend School in sunny Opotiki, and the Easter Weekend Penguin Party in Oamaru, to mention but two, as well, of course, as the next annual Summer School, which is to be held in Auckland.

Don't forget to pack your pumps when you come to New Zealand - we're always delighted to welcome visitors.

Canada - East Coast

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David Grant, Toronto Branch, will be a Torch-bearer for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

The gradual rise in temperature from the frigid -20's of January and February suggests that spring may be in the offing. So too, the increasing number of notices from branches and groups throughout Eastern Canada of balls, workshops and day schools suggests that the greater part of the Scottish country dancing year of 2008-2009 is behind us.

Interesting attempts are being made throughout this wide area to increase awareness and participation in Scottish country dancing. Smaller blocks of time (say 8 or 10 weeks) have been used in some

places to attract those unwilling to commit for the entire season. Emphasis on the enjoyment of dancing with the accompanying social aspects seems to have encouraged new dancers to return for subsequent sessions. In several areas, the addition of ceilidh and/or Old Time dancing to introductory SCD classes seems to have been very successful.

One item of great interest was the recent announcement that David Grant of the Toronto Association had been selected to be a Torch-bearer for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. As the press release said: 'David Grant, who pledged to continue his life-long dedication to Canada and his community by volunteering and giving freely of his time and talents, is the first Ontario Torch-bearer'. David is an avid Scottish country dancer and is well-known for his enthusiastic involvement locally and wider afield. David, and his late wife, Betty, attended St. Andrews Summer School for many years and, jointly, they were awarded the Society's Scroll of Honour. We are sure that country dancing has kept David in shape for his participation in the relay. Well done, David.

USA - East Coast

Correspondent: Eilean Yates
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Spring is a busy time in the dance world. The Atlanta Branch Spring Workshop took place at Unicoi State Park in the North Georgia mountains late February. Florida hosted its Spring Fling in Cocoa Beach the same weekend. One of the next attractions for the Carolinas Branch will be the Loch Norman Highland Games near Charlotte NC in April where there will be a welcome dance, a ball and dancing at the platform on the field. Washington DC will be the venue for A Capitol Weekend also in April.

We are thrilled to see new groups springing up - Cartersville, Georgia has an enthusiastic new group as does Greenville, South Carolina. Another new venture is a monthly joint meeting of 5 or 6 Carolina groups at Columbia, South Carolina which is a good central location.

March 14 was the date for a surprise 90th birthday celebration in Johnson City, Tennessee for Dr Bernard Kaiman and his wife Audrey. He has done so much for dancing in the South East and was awarded the Society Scroll in 1999. He has worked tirelessly for more than 30 years promoting classes, running dances and organizing the platform at Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

Although we are so far from HQ and often face quite a challenge trying to impart just what the RSCDS is and does for

newcomers, it is good to report that we are attracting new people. As one of my beginners said, 'I never realized just how much fun I would have'.

North America - West Coast

Correspondent: Alan Twhigg
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Several groups around the West are celebrating significant anniversaries.

Members of RSCDS Houston & District Branch are celebrating their 30th Anniversary this year. They are compiling a book of dances to mark the occasion, which they hope to have published by early fall. I was fortunate to be invited to the Houston Weekend last October and was particularly impressed by the enthusiastic participation of youth dancers at the ball. One enterprising young lady had combed eBay to find appropriate attire for everyone, including a number of period costumes that lent a southern charm to the evening.

Portland (Oregon) Branch also celebrated its 30th Anniversary, with a gala workshop and ball on March 14. The Thistle & Ghillies group in Boise, Idaho is much newer and smaller, but they are sponsoring a dance writing contest to mark their 8th Anniversary. Many of their dancers are quite new to SCD, and one of their teachers explained, 'Writing a dance is an opportunity to learn it more thoroughly than any other dance you've done so far.'

The San Francisco Bay Area youth classes are hosting Youth Weekend West on May 29 to 31 in Berkeley, the first time this event has migrated down the coast from British Columbia and Washington State. Bill Zobel and Fred DeMarse will be teaching, and the event closes with a tea dance open to dancers of all ages on Sunday to the music of Fiddlesticks & Ivory.

Continuing the anniversary theme, San Francisco Branch celebrated one last autumn, the 50th year since our first dance weekend at the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove. The event has grown from a single class of 25 participants to the 250 arranged in six classes now. The event featured music by Muriel Johnstone and Keith Smith, and The Reel of Seven led by Andy Imbrie. The band recorded their performance on Saturday night and a team of videographers patrolled the campus, filming and interviewing participants for a documentary; definitely a multimedia SCD experience!

Lastly, a note from a contributor in Vancouver, BC, about the end of an era, with the last appearance by Bobby Brown's Band at the Delta Borderers' Spring Fling, a tradition spanning many years. There is hope, however, that similar frolics will continue 'down the road' at a neighbouring group in Fort Langley.

In my opinion

by Angela Bulteel, Ribble Valley Branch



Angela (second from the left) with friends from Ribble Valley Branch at the Lancaster Ball, February 2009.

Having danced for nearly four decades, I cannot help but reflect on the changes I have observed over the years. Some are very good - wonderful new dances, formations and innovative progressions for example, all of which help to keep Scottish country dancing fresh and very much alive. However, there are some areas of regret.

When I began dancing I had the good fortune to join a class with a qualified and dedicated RSCDS teacher who not only taught the required steps and formations, but the courtesy and good manners that were so inherent in Scottish country dancing, and which now seem to be fading into the mists of time.

The giving of hands, is perhaps the most notable. In *Won't You Join The Dance* it states that hands should be given wherever possible. Today, my expectant hand is often met with a raised eyebrow and ignored, or at worse, the gruff rebuke "it doesn't say hands"! I always understood courtesy and good manners didn't need to be mentioned in dance instructions, it was a matter of course.

At a dance ladies were escorted by their partners to and from the set, not flagrantly left alone to search the lines for the familiar face nor, at the end of the dance, left to scurry ignominiously back to their friends. If a set floundered - only a rare occurrence - and the only option was to stop dancing, it remained on the floor until the last chord. Dancers would never drift off willy nilly in all directions, half way through the music, as happens so often today.

At class, new dances were taught and practised over many weeks as recaps at

dances were rare and walk throughs unheard of! Nowadays due to the vast quantity of new dances one hasn't time to practise them all to satisfaction, and of course the brain can only take in so much. As a consequence, we have all come to rely on the quick recap and/or walk throughs even at the larger balls.

Another undesirable trend is the seemingly universal practice of adding a superfluous extra loop in reels rather than simply dancing into place, but much worse, is the habitual propensity to add extra spins in the middle of diagonal reels of four, punctuated with the ritual slapping of hands, which has the cumulative effect of ruining the timing for others involved and causing near collisions. One poignant remark echoes from my past. Miss Majorie Heyes of Southport, a lovely lady and life long dancer, opined, "You know, Scottish country dancing is so lovely in its own right there is no need to embellish it with unnecessary frills". How right she was.

Sadly, old dances rarely see the light of day now, being deemed too simple or boring, yet many of these lovely old dances, while appearing less complex can prove quite tricky and challenging, requiring thorough basic grounding and good skills in timing and anticipation. They also gave less confident dancers the opportunity to observe the patterns whilst working up the set, which had the added attraction of enabling them to give their best on becoming dancing couple, unlike today's dances in which the final dancing couple has probably already danced some 192 bars of non-stop mind boggling intricacy and is now in dire need of a respirator! However I

would be the first to complain if the same dances were on every programme week in week out.

Perhaps the most regrettable decline is the strathspey step, which I believe is unique to Scotland, and requires music of a distinct rhythm and strong beat. Many newer strathspeys are now being danced to Scottish Airs, without doubt beautiful melodies in their own right, but which, by their very composition are totally incompatible with the strathspey step. As a result these slow gentle airs are, in my opinion adding greatly to the demise of the quality of the step. Some months ago Ron Kerr was playing for our local branch dance. He is renowned for his superb strathspey rhythm. I watched as the dancers came alive in a strathspey, not only with their steps but with timing, posture and positioning. This made a welcome change from the usual shuffle so frequently seen in dances such as *The Dream Catcher*. I accept that this dance and its accompanying melodies are intended to convey a dream-like quality, but the result is the degeneration, albeit inadvertent, of the setting and travelling steps, which seems to contradict the objectives of the RSCDS. No society can survive by stagnation. Innovation, creativity and free expression all help to keep a club or society thriving and should be welcomed by all its members. Nevertheless, this should not be at the expense of the original objectives of the society, and, dare I say, of its more senior members, who have contributed so much over the years, to the continuance and welfare of such a wonderful and worthwhile recreation.

Scottish Country Dancing and Health

by Sabita Stewart

Sabita Stewart, a Researcher at Glasgow Caledonian University Division of Physiotherapy, carried out a study in collaboration with Glasgow Branch into the effects of SCD on bone health. Here is her report.

Background

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bone strength is reduced because of a change in bone quality and a reduction in the amount of bone material present. It is thought to affect 1 in 3 older (postmenopausal) women and 1 in 12 older men. It is often called the 'silent killer' because it may not be diagnosed until one or more bones are broken. There are 20,000 osteoporotic fractures every year in Scotland and the bones most commonly broken are wrist, spine and hip. Following a hip fracture one third of people do not regain their former independence. The personal costs, in terms of finance and well-being, are immeasurable, affecting not only the individual, but also family, friends, neighbours, work and leisure.

Studies have shown that fractures can be prevented by improving bone strength and avoiding falls. To improve and maintain bone strength, current guidelines recommend that low to medium impact exercise, such as stepping, marching or intermittent jogging, is more appropriate for individuals aged over 50 (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 1999). In the Glasgow area, there are 15 physiotherapist-led exercise classes a week which are specifically for individuals diagnosed with, or at risk of developing, osteoporosis. These classes, which cater for approximately 450 people a year, incorporate exercises such as stepping, marching and sidestepping to provide the recommended impact forces.



Fig 1: Walking on force plate

How much impact force is enough?

A large well conducted study undertaken in Germany (Kemmler et al, 2004) used 50 postmenopausal women and showed that activities which generate impact forces between 1.5 and 3.5 times bodyweight could offset bone loss.

It has been suggested that certain forms of dance, including Scottish country dancing (SCD) may provide similar impact forces and therefore also be good for bone health. Latest figures provided by the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society show that there are 3,700 registered members in Scotland dancing each week as well as an unknown number of unregistered individuals dancing with both affiliated and unaffiliated groups.

Scottish country dance study

There has been very little research on different types of dance that could provide suitable impact forces to improve and maintain bone health. A study to evaluate SCD focusing on the pas de bas step was undertaken at Glasgow Caledonian University in 2008. The pas de bas step was compared to marching and side-stepping, two of the exercises included in physiotherapist led exercise classes.

To recruit volunteers, adverts were placed in RSCDS Glasgow Branch newsletters and one Glasgow club was visited. Twenty one ladies each made a single visit to Glasgow Caledonian University where they walked, marched, danced and sidestepped over a



Fig 2 Pas de bas step on force plate

force plate set in the floor of the movement laboratory (See fig 1 and 2).

The force plate measures the forces produced as each foot strikes the plate and from this, the vertical forces reflected back into the legs and therefore the lower limb bones, can be calculated. The group who took part in the study had an average age of 65 years (ranging from 55 to 82).

Results

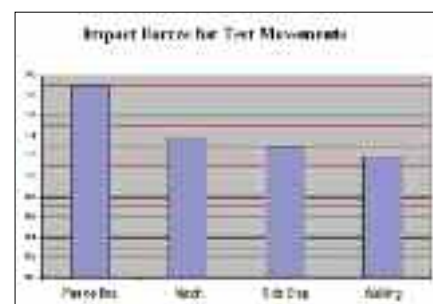


Figure 3: Range of ground reaction forces for bodyweight and test movements

On average, the pas de bas step generated forces almost twice body weight through the lower limbs. This is visually represented in the figure 3 and was shown to be significantly higher forces than generated during walking, side stepping or marching. Walking and side-stepping generated similar levels of force whilst the forces recorded during marching were higher. The horizontal green line illustrates the minimum force recorded during Kemmler's study (1.5 times bodyweight).

Implications

From this study, we have shown that the levels of force generated during the pas de bas step are higher than those recorded for walking, side stepping and marching. Therefore, as the pas de bas step generated almost twice bodyweight, it would appear to be a good exercise to offset bone loss. It would be sensible to propose that Scottish country dance should now be added to the list of recommended activities for women who wish to maintain bone health. In addition, the pas de bas step could be a valuable addition to the physiotherapy led exercise classes.

Overheard on the Web

by Chris Ronald



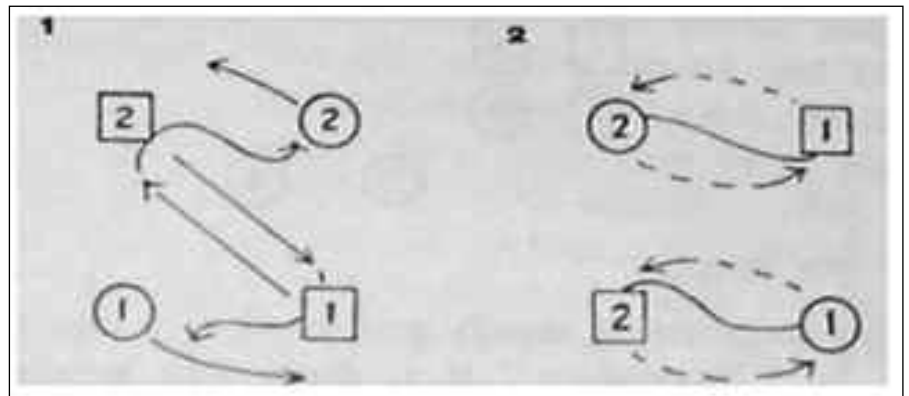
The Ladies' Chain

The hottest topic on the Strathspey list since I last wrote was the ladies' chain. This discussion was provoked by the 'Technique Doctor' article on page 21 of the October 2008 issue. It brought in comments from all over the world, Canada, the US, Germany, France and the UK. The first comment pointed out that: "according to the diagram, 2nd man and 1st lady are dancing either in the set above or pushing the violinist's music stand over, and the man will then have to take a giant step to get down to his starting place. Since the other man is not so far from home (unless he has pushed 3rd man out of the way), he will be stepping normally. Is this really aesthetically pleasing to have the two sides of the set dancing in different styles?" This contributor had "always assumed that the diagrams (in the RSCDS Manual, and reproduced in the Technique Doctor article) were simply a mistake." Another subscriber thought she must be having a "senior moment" as she read the article: "I couldn't figure out how in the world 2nd man was going to get back home", she said.

Something most unusual about this discussion was that everyone disagreed with the "Technique Doctor", and felt the "old way" or something similar was better. The ladies' chain was recognized to be a traditional figure going back over two hundred years, commonly seen in quadrilles. It's in *Circassian Circle* (RSCDS Book 1), which is a quadrille figure. It's also in *Clutha* (RSCDS Book 31), a dance in a square set, like a quadrille. Subscribers pointed out that in the quadrille there would be no room for the Technique Doctor's version of the figure. They added that there would equally be no room for it on the second and subsequent repetitions of two-couple dances like *Kendall's Hornpipe* (Graded Book). One

teacher commented pithily that, until about 1990, "dancers were polite enough to dance in their own sets instead of swinging round into their neighbours' set as tends to happen with the current invention."

It was explained that the traditional way to dance a ladies' chain is described in the book *Won't You Join the Dance*, by Jean Milligan. This book, as someone said, was the RSCDS teachers' 'bible' from the 1950s to the 1990s. One teacher observed that the ladies' chain diagrams in *Won't You Join the Dance* (see illustration below) were not particularly good, but they were better than the ones in the Technique Doctor's article.



The consensus was that the ladies' chain should be danced roughly within the same rectangle as for rights and lefts. One teacher explained: "instead of crossing right hand, [the women should] dance about a three-quarter turn to finish in the space recently vacated by the man."

A final comment was: "Sometimes the secret behind a long and happy life is knowing when to ignore what the doctor says."

Dance resources on the web

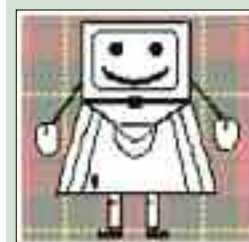
As most dancers know, the web has opened up a host of new ways of getting information, and new ways to find and buy just about anything. *Won't You Join the Dance* has been out of print for 20 years or more, but it can easily be found on the web, and only costs a few pounds. One place it can be found, for example, is www.abebooks.com. Just type in Jean C Milligan. If you'd like to know even more about the ladies' chain, other traditional dance figures, dance steps, etc., the US Library of Congress is an amazing resource. There you can see ladies' chain instructions from two hundred and fifty years ago. You simply go to their dance instruction

manuals site: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/dihtml/dicatlg.html> On this site, by scrolling down, I found a book: *La Repertoire des Bals* dated 1762, by a Mr. La Cuisse. The book contains descriptions (in French) and diagrams for many of our figures, including the ladies' chain (see pages 13 and 19 of the book.) The Library of Congress site also has several of Thomas Wilson's books, which the RSCDS drew upon in reconstructing some old dances.

Miss Milligan's original ladies' chain diagram from *'Won't You Join The Dance?'*

Cribs

Coming back to modern times, last time I mentioned how useful Minicrib is as a quick way to get abbreviated dance instructions. Other sites also offer dance cribs. They include <http://www.cardcrib.org>, maintained by Paul Bond of the Sheffield Branch, which has similar features to Minicrib, and has around 1,200 dances. Another is the Strathspey Server itself, where one can find cribs for 1,500 dances contributed by Eric Ferguson. The Strathspey Server, maintained by Anselm Lingnau, has numerous other useful features, notably a 'front end' for Alan Patterson's DanceData. Many teachers find DanceData an invaluable resource for identifying the source of a dance, the deviser, the recommended music, and recordings that have been made.



'Strathi
The Strathspey
Server emblem
created by
Anja Breest



Take your Partners for... Vol 1

Luke Brady's
Scottish Dance
Band

The title suggests that this is the first of a series of Scottish country dance music CDs to be recorded by Luke's band. If so, then that is to be welcomed as this volume is a promising start.

What immediately catches the eye is the selection of dances – a varied and interesting mix of popular dances together with one or two traditional favourites and two new dances, *George Scroggie's Strathspey* (a tribute to his grandfather and including a number of Luke's own compositions) and a jig, *The Streets of Milan* (instructions are enclosed). Not only will this compilation help fill the gaps in many a teacher's collection, but with 16 dances and nearly 80 minutes of music, it's certainly value for money!

As you might expect with well established musicians such as Mo Rutherford in the band, the playing is crisp and well executed and the tempo is rock steady throughout.

I would have liked rather more verve and vitality, but I am sure this will develop as the band matures together. The strathspeys generally lacked lift and light and shade but this is perhaps partly due to the mixing of the music, as at times the violin is barely audible against the lead accordion and the drums a bit too prominent.

The reels and jigs generally work well and I particularly liked the tunes and the playing for the dances *Portnacraig* and *The Earl of Mansfield*. The use of syncopation and "stops" are satisfying to the discerning musical ear and although the band manage these sections very competently without losing rhythm or tempo, they do have to be matched very carefully to the dance. This Luke achieves successfully in *Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan* but I would have preferred a more traditional approach for that old favourite *The Reel of the 51st Division*.

In summary, this is a very creditable attempt for a first CD from a promising young musician.

As Luke himself says in his introduction, watching Mo work reminds him that he still

has much to learn. With that refreshingly honest attitude Luke and his band will, I'm sure, go from strength and I for one am already looking forward with eager anticipation to the release of volumes 2, 3 and more...!

Margie Stevenson, Falkirk Branch



Music for 12 Perth Dances

Music for 12 Perth Dances was recorded by James Coutts and his Scottish Dance Band to complement *A Book*

of Perth Dances published by Perth and Perthshire Branch. On this CD James Coutts, on lead accordion, is accompanied by Iain Cathcart playing second accordion, Graham Berry on piano, Brian Cruickshank on bass and Ian Adamson on drums.

I found this to be an excellent recording – the richness of sound, great rhythm and lift and good tempo throughout, combine to invite one to open the book, learn the dances and dance them to the recorded music.

Just three of the 12 dances are in the standard 8x32 bar format. The collection includes two medleys, two dances (a jig and a reel) in 40 bar sequences, and four strathspeys - two 3x32 bars, one 64 bar and one 4x32 bars. Also in the collection is a 5x32 reel by Roy Goldring. I imagine that playing for this variety of formats could be more stimulating for the musicians compared with playing mainly 8x32 bar dances, but would also be more challenging. Certainly to the listener, the variety of formats enhances the overall enjoyment of the music.

All dances come with recommended lead tunes, and the musicians play them all. Another important musical skill, the selection of appropriate supporting tunes, has been achieved in every case. To my ear, the tunes in each set are in harmony with each other and fit the dance.

The use of pastoral strathspeys alternating with lively reels for the medley *The Sound of Iona*, nicely assists the deviser's intention that the dance should convey a sense of the contrasting moods of the Sound: calm waters in summer; stormy ones in winter. This medley is an interesting

one, being a dance for three dancers facing another three dancers in a round-the-room formation.

When playing the track for *Oakbank's Tribute to Christian*, I almost thought, hey, this is *Pelorus Jack*, as the same lead tune is used for both dances. *Oakbank's Tribute to Christian* and its tune, *Christian Catto*, are for teacher Christian Catto who taught the Perth Branch class at Oakbank School for many years. The deviser of *Pelorus Jack*, Barry Skelton, suggested as suitable music for his dance the music that had been recorded by Craigellachie for the dance *The Peterhead Express*. This recording has *Christian Catto* as its lead tune and explains the selection of that tune by the Society when it published *Pelorus Jack*. It would be of some interest to know how the tune came to be used as the lead tune for *The Peterhead Express*.

The introduction to the book states that all twelve dances have a strong connection to Perth and/or Perthshire and expresses the hope that the venture (book and CD) will result in these dances becoming known and danced over a wider area. I can truly say that listening to this delightful music has had the desired effect on me. This CD will make a valuable addition to collectors of Scottish dance music and teachers of this dance form.

Elaine Arthur, Canberra Branch



Silver Tassie and Other Favourite Dances - Keith Smith and Muriel Johnstone

Todlen Hame and Other Favourite Dances - Keith Smith and Muriel Johnstone

These CDs which have been recorded by Muriel Johnstone on piano and Keith Smith on fiddle include many favourite dances such as *Deil amang the Tailors*, *Reel of the Royal Scots*, *Silver Tassie*, *Sugar Candie*, *Light and Airy* and *The Minister on the Loch*.

Muriel and Keith complement each other on both of these new CDs, traditional tunes are used for popular dances and excellent



Keith and Muriel

tempos, which make these CDs great to use for classes. We tried them out with our Thursday adult class, which is made up of both beginner and experienced dancers. They enjoyed the lively music and some of them commented that this was the music that they were brought up on. However, they discovered to their surprise that *Todlen Hame* is recorded here as a 6 x 32 dance.

The tune for *The Minister on the Loch* is a particular favourite, as it fits the dance so well and makes the phrasing of the all round poussette easier to teach. The CDs are also fantastic to listen to for pleasure, especially the lilting strathspeys, which Keith and Muriel play so well.

There are dance instructions in both CD booklets, *Silver Tassie has The Dancing Years* written by Roy Goldring and *Todlen Hame* has *The Engine Room* written by Ron Wallace and Gary Thomas.

We would recommend these CDs to all.

Gill Watts, Manchester Branch, and Isobel Watts, Headquarters member

Howe on fiddle and David Bell on drums are the same musicians we've enjoyed on another Glenraig recording, *Selected Craigievar Dances* (1997). On this CD, they are joined by Isobelle Hodgson (piano) and John Sinton (double bass).

Generally the tracks are straightforward, making the music very suitable for teaching and dancing. There are little flashes of harmony and interesting drumming sprinkled throughout, providing listening pleasure and interest. I would have enjoyed a little more evidence of the fiddle and keyboard (my bias) but as a disc for dancing, it provides good steady, easily discernable rhythms and energy for both the neophyte and the experienced dancer.

The selection of tunes is generous and interesting. In almost every track, there is an offering of seven different tunes and they range from traditional to ancient and modern.

On all tracks, the first tune published in the RSCDS Book 20 is used as the lead tune.

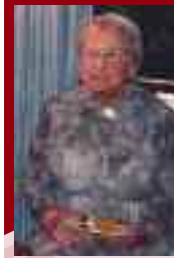
A variety of styles is used in transitioning between tunes, lending interest and energy to the music.

Book 20 was published by the RSCDS in 1959. It contains five strathspeys, two hornpipes, three reels and two jigs. All but one of the dances comes from the second half of the eighteenth century and even the exception, *The Express*, is from 1813.

The strathspeys are all 8 x 32 and are played in a strong traditional style. *Miss Ogilvie's Fancy* which is played slightly slower than the others is the one I liked best. (Note that the inside cover of the disc lists *Miss Devon's Reel* as reel when it is in fact a strathspey.) The two hornpipes (both 8 x 32) are wonderful. The choice of tunes for *The College Hornpipe* gives it a lovely nautical flavour. The reels are *Miss Burn's Reel*, *The Drummer* and *Miss Jessie Dalrymple's Reel*. The band has chosen some good tunes, with interesting key changes and bass lines. *The Drummer* (8 x 48), has plenty of drive and is the one I liked best. The two jigs are very lively. *Miss Bennett's Jig* is a robust and very danceable 8 x 32 jig. *The Express*, an 8x40 jig, is good fun with the entire band shining at different times and sounding as if they are really enjoying their own music making.

Overall, a very good disc and anyone who uses CDs for teaching, for dances or just listening, will find it a valuable addition to their collection.

Fran Caruth, Vancouver Branch



Susan Inglis taken on her 80th birthday in 1989 & provided by Robert Mackay

Susan Inglis

Susan Inglis had piano lessons at an early age and her interest in Scottish dance music was kindled through the Girl Guide movement. She played for Edinburgh Branch classes and in 1928 she played at the second Country Dance Summer School in St Andrews, and she continued playing there until well into the 80's. Many students will remember Susan and Kitty McLauchlan playing piano duets at the ceilidh (often in fancy dress).

Along with Miss Winifred Carnie, Susan assisted Miss Milligan in the choice of tunes for dances in the Society's publications. She served on the Music Sub-Committee for many years. Susan was a great encouragement to me when I began playing for Scottish country dancing and she gave me her vast collection of music, which I treasure.

Almost all her working life was spent playing for dance classes at the Mary Erskine School for Girls in Edinburgh. She had a great sense of humour and I was sorry that she did not make her century. She will be greatly missed by all of us.

Robert H Mackay



Fay Golding

After graduating from the University of London, Fay came to Edinburgh in 1953 to take up a post at St. George's School for Girls, where she later became Head of Mathematics. Scottish country dancing was one of her passions. She gained her RSCDS Teaching Certificates and she joined the Edinburgh Branch demonstration group. She taught at all stages from beginners to very advanced and to the demonstration group. Her strong principles and meticulous preparation made her an excellent teacher, and she was in demand to teach all over Europe and at Summer Schools in New Zealand and at St. Andrews. She will be sadly missed by her family and friends.

Dorothy Leurs

(A longer version of this obituary appeared in *Dancing Forth*, the Edinburgh Branch newsletter)



Music for Book 20 RSCDS

This CD by Nicol McLaren and The Glenraig Scottish

Dance Band provides not only the music for the dances in Book 20 but offers a selection of tracks that might be used anytime for the pleasures of listening and dancing.

The band presents a very well honed cohesive and rich sound, as one might expect from a group in which several of the musicians have been playing together for quite some time. Nicol McLaren on 1st accordion with Neil Caul on 2nd, Gordon

Letters to the Editor



Thank you, RSCDS

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra I wish to take this opportunity to thank the RSCDS for sponsoring the Strathspey & Reel category at the MD ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards 2008. We in the Orchestra were absolutely delighted to have won the award which will long be cherished but without your sponsorship it could never have happened. For this reason and for all the hard and efficient work your Society does (and all too often not sufficiently acknowledged nor recognised) I wish to convey to all your members our grateful thanks.

Yours,

John Mason

Principal Conductor and Director of Music, Scottish Fiddle Orchestra

The Little Green Book

Dear Editor,

All honour to Charles Upton (*Scottish Country Dancer 7*, page 26) for the work he puts in with his "Minicrib". However, as someone who cut his dancing teeth, as it were, on Mr Pilling's invaluable SCD in Diagrams, I must admit that when I want a quick reminder on the dance floor my heart sinks at the sight of an ocean of print, "One picture is worth a thousand words".

So what about it, you guys in Cheshire? Can you get the Little Green Book onto the Web in an easily downloadable form that an older computer-near-illiterate can actually manage to understand, preferably without the endless jargon, logging-in, usernames and passwords that seem to bedevil just about every web site you look at?

Incidentally, some of the newer formations can appear complex diagrammatically, although not difficult to do. For brevity, perhaps the better-known ones could be expressed as a letter code, e.g. set and link (S&L) crown triangles (CT).

Yours,

Chris Thornburn

Technique Doctor

Dear Andrew,

The underlying premise of Bruce Frazer's article in *Scottish Country Dancer 7* is that there is only one way to dance anything and that one acceptable way is set out in the Manual. In the case of the ladies' chain the formation was clearly described in *Won't You Join The Dance* (WYJTD) but that method is now to be considered anathema. Why was change necessary? Bruce contends that the previous way of dancing the formation was "not an attractive movement and certainly was not an easier one to teach". I disagree strongly with both of those reasons. I believe the 'old way' is infinitely more attractive with clear strong movements that lead to an automatic phrasing that has the half turns in bars 3-4 and 7-8 working together. As for the new way being easier to teach, that is not my experience. As a teacher, try describing the pattern of the chain to a class without being too specific and they will naturally tend towards the WYJTD version. I shall continue to teach the ladies' chain both ways and leave it up to the mature adults I teach to dance it as they feel comfortable. My experience is that they will choose the 'old way'.

My objection to the article, however, is not so much in how Bruce feels a ladies' chain should be danced but the dictatorial manner that demands that we reject past practice. I believe that phrases such as, "it is incumbent on teachers to instruct classes accordingly" have no place in a social activity. Bruce's concern, as he states clearly, is "appearance". Appearance to whom? Our dance form is being moulded on the basis that it is a performing art and I strongly believe this is wrong-headed. SCD is first and foremost a social activity. Standards are necessary, and if the Manual committee had presented 'their' interpretation of Ladies' Chain as an alternative to the method in WYJTD, I would accept it. What I object to is the notion that there is "one true way" of dancing.

Yours,

Jim Healy

Footwear at Balls

Dear Editor,

We do not need to go back to the 18th or 19th century to find people dancing in outdoor shoes. The late Winnie Wadsworth, a former Edinburgh Branch teacher, Adjudicator and RSCDS Examiner, recalled the RSCDS Jubilee Ball in 1973,

"We were all able to observe closely the dancing styles of The Queen's party from Holyrood, and needless to say we observed equally carefully the garments, jewellery, shoes, etc. Can you imagine any of those magnificent outfits ruined with battered pumps peeping out? No! The ladies and gentlemen all wore proper evening shoes to complement the rest of the outfit and their dancing did not suffer in any way."

At Edinburgh Branch Balls many dancers wore outdoor shoes. It was the Edinburgh Branch teachers who called a Summer School staff meeting in 1950, and asked that our steps be adapted in order that they might be danced equally well in either pumps or in heeled shoes. I remember this was agreed that day by Miss Milligan and all present.

Having danced at Atholl Highlander Balls in Blair Castle since 1947, every one of those 200 to 300 present dance in outdoor shoes and I have not known of any accident. Dancing in pumps is confined mostly to RSCDS members.

I once asked Miss Milligan what shoes she wore to a ball, "Oh," she replied, "Heeled shoes," so I said, "You never tell anyone." Alas the Society does not encourage members to dance in heeled shoes at a ball, and I feel we are losing a Scottish tradition.

Yours,

Bill Clement

Past Chairman, RSCDS

Dancing on air

Dear Andrew,

In *Scottish Country Dancer 7* John Carswell remarks, "We missed the opening of the Scottish Parliament." Not true, John! I remember quite distinctly struggling through the security cordons at 7am on the morning of the opening, toggled up in white dress and sash with my little tartan bag of dancing pumps, to reach the Crown Plaza Hotel. There I was scheduled along with seven others to dance the *Duke of Perth* on Fred MacAulay's breakfast show.

Dance the *Duke of Perth* we did, but not, as we expected, in a ballroom in front of an appreciative audience, but in a small upper room turned into a recording studio. The dancing pumps were superfluous: we danced in outdoor shoes so that the listeners could hear us!

Yours,

Barbara Gibbons

Day school diary

April '09 to July '10.

Compiled by John Sturrock. For contact details regarding these events please refer to branch or club websites. Issue 9 will cover day schools, workshops and festivals from October 2009 to December 2010. Please send details to mag.editor@rscds.org

April 09

- 09 – 13 Kuckucksnest, Easter Course, Schlüchtern, Germany
Janet Johnstone
- 17 – 19 Washington DC Branch, Weekend, Kensington MD, USA
Marjorie McLaughlin
- 18 North West Craven Branch, Improvers' Day School, Ingleton, England
- 24 – 26 ANZAC, Weekend School, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand
Chris Kelly, Val Mitchell, Colin Barker
- 24 – 26 Cornwall Branch, Residential Weekend, Newquay, Cornwall, England
Wendy Mumford
- 24 – 26 Budapest, 10th Anniversary International Weekend, Budapest, Hungary
Graham Donald
- 25 Argyll SD Group, Day School, Crowthorne, England
Ann Dix, Craig Houston, Maggie Morgan
- 30 – 03/05 Vienna Branch, 20th Anniversary Dance Course, Baden, Austria
Graham Donald, Susi Mayr

May 09

- 01 – 02 Belfast Branch, Weekend School, Coleraine, Northern Ireland
Andrew McConnell
- 01 – 02 Isle of Islay Branch, Weekend, Isle of Islay, Scotland
Fiona Macdonald
- 01 – 04 Far North Queensland Dancers, Weekend School, Cairns, Australia
Elaine Arthur, Duncan Smith
- 02 Winnipeg Branch, Workshop, Winnipeg MB, Canada
Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, Margaret Zadworney
- 08 – 09 Cumbrae SCD Association, Millport Weekend, Isle of Cumbrae
Helen Frame
- 09 London Branch, Musician's School, Pont Street, London, England
George Meikle
- 09 Richmond Branch, Day School, Barnard Castle, England
Linda Gaul
- 09 – 10 Clivis SCD Society, Weekend Workshop, Turin, Italy
Avril & David Quarrie
- 15 – 16 Isle of Skye Branch, Weekend, Portree, Isle of Skye, Scotland
Neil Grant
- 15 – 17 New York Branch, Pawling Weekend, Hopewell Junction NY, USA
Eric Finley, Pat Coyle, Terry Harvey
- 15 – 17 Duns & District Branch, Weekend, Duns, Scotland
Margo Priestley, Craig Houston
- 16 Scottish Chanterelle, Advanced Day School, Lyon, France
Patrick Chamoin
- 16 Swilcan SCD Group, Half Day School & Ball, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 22 – 24 Peterborough SCDS, Weekend, Lakefield ON, Canada
Mel Briscoe

- 29 – 31 San Francisco Branch, Youth Weekend West, Berkeley CA, USA
Bill Zobel, Fred DeMarse

June 09

- 04 – 07 Central Germany Branch, Teacher's Weekend School, Schlüchtern, Germany
Anne Smyth
- 12 – 14 Salt Spring Island, Weekend, Salt Spring Island, BC
Jean Dodds, Simon Scott, Bill Zobel

July 09

- 03 – 05 Kaleidoscope, SCD Conference, Geneva, Switzerland
See page 30
- 08 – 12 Kuckucksnest, Summer Course, Schlüchtern, Germany
Malcolm Brown
- 10 – 18 Boston Branch, Summer School, Plymouth, Massachusetts
Stella Fogg, Bill Zobel, David Queen
- 12 – 18 Sydney Branch, 34th Australian Winter School, Kiama, New South Wales
Anne Gray, Pat Houghton, Pat Nicholls, Susie Pugh, Helen Russell, Lisa Simon
- 19 – 16/08 RSCDS Summer School, St Andrews, Fife
- 26 – 02/08 TAC Summer School, Shawnigan Lake, BC, Canada
Graham Donald, Elaine Brunken, Ruth Jappy, Bill Zobel, Rebecca Blackhall-Peters

August 09

- 08 – 14 Prague Dance Week, Prague, Czechoslovakia
Ron Wallace
- 14 – 19 Domazlice Dance Week, Domazlice, Czechoslovakia
Ron Wallace

September 09

- 09 Central Germany Branch, SCD Weekend, Wuppertal, Germany
David Hall
- 11 – 13 35th Fort Worden Weekend, Port Townsend WA, USA.
Pat Coyle, Eileen Hsu, Dennis Wood, Bill Zobel
- 12 Lochaber Branch, Day School, Fort William, Scotland
Andrew McConnell
- 18 – 20 New Mexico Branch, Weekend Workshop, Sante Fe NM, USA
Elinor Vandegrift, Bill Zobel
- 19 North West Craven Branch, Beginners' Day School, Whittington, England
- 26 Manchester Branch, Day School, Levenshulme, England
Alex Gray, Pat Houghton
- 26 Cologne Scottish Country Dancers, 35th Day School, Cologne, Germany
Janet Johnston, David Queen
- 26 Ayr Branch, Day School, Troon, Scotland
Irene Bennett

October 09

- 02 – 04 Argyll SD Group, Weekend School, Somerset, England
Graham Donald

- 02 – 04 International & Dunfermline Branches, Weekend Workshop, Scotland
- 02 – 04 Ottawa Valley Weekend, Ottawa, Canada
Eric Finley, Mairi Hand, Bill Zobel
- 15 – 18 Kuckucksnest, Autumn Course, Schlüchtern, Germany
Anika Lange, Carola Fischer
- 16 – 18 Hamilton (Ontario) Branch, Weekend School, Burlington ON, Canada
Allison Russell
- 17 London Branch, Day School, Parson's Green, London, England
- 23 – 25 Rechberg International Weekend, Schwäbisch Gründ, Germany
Bruce Frazer
- 24 Sheffield Branch, Day School, Hope, England
Pat Houghton
- 30 – 01/11 San Francisco Branch, Weekend Workshop, Asilomar CA, USA
Jean Dodds, Linda Henderson, Pat Houghton, Gail Michener, Charles Ryer, Gary Thomas

November 09

- 18 – 22 Kuckucksnest, November Course, Schlüchtern, Germany
Deb Malton

December 09

- 28 – 05/01 New Zealand Branch Summer School, Akoranga, Auckland, New Zealand
Marjorie Crawford, Elizabeth Ferguson, Lois McEwan, Helen Russell, Ann Dix, Wendy Jaeger, Jo Reed

February 2010

- 20 Oxfordshire Branch, Day School, Oxford

March 2010

- 13 North East Derbyshire Branch, Day School, England
Eric Finley
- 13 Leicester Branch, Day School, Leicester, England
Helen Russell, Doris Buchanan
- 27 St Andrews Branch, Half Day School, St Andrews, Fife
Andrew McConnell

April 2010

- 02 – 05 Easter Weekend, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, England
Mary Murray

July 2010

- 28 – 01/08 Nova Scotia Branch, International School, Windsor, Nova Scotia
Ron Wallace, Gary Thomas, Norah Link, Merrill Heubach, Keith Smith

SCD FESTIVALS

June 09

- 27 South Wales Festival, Caerleon, Wales

July 09

- 11 55th White Rose Festival, Harewood, Leeds, England



International Scottish Country Dance Conference

3-5 July 2009

Holiday Inn Thoiry, France
(10 minutes from Geneva Airport)

There are still places left for Kaleidoscope, the first international SCD conference. The venue has been chosen for its central location in Europe and excellent transport links. We believe that having accommodation, meals and the conference in a single hotel complex will encourage spontaneous communication, discussions and the exchange of ideas and experiences in an informal environment.

The conference programme covers 25 topics, presented by 20 speakers from 10 countries on 3 continents, and the proceedings will include several additional papers submitted by contributors who are unable to be in Geneva but still want to be part of Kaleidoscope. For the full list of speakers and topics see <http://scdkaleidoscope1.strathspey.org>

As well as sessions on many practical and theoretical issues related to Scottish country dancing (see the website for a full list of speakers and topics), there will be a panel discussion on "The Future of SCD – can we get there from here?", with Andrew Timmins (Australia), Anselm Lingnau (Germany), David Hall (England) and Irene Paterson (USA), and a dance on Saturday night to the music of Angela Young, Dave Hall and Keith Smith. We are also pleased to confirm that the Chairman, Chairman Elect and representatives of the RSCDS Management Board Committees will participate in Kaleidoscope, where they will have a session on current thinking and their vision for the RSCDS.

Did you know?

The Kaleidoscope logo, pictured above, is based on a photograph of the RSCDS tartan, cleverly edited by Pia Walker.

Kaleidoscope Organising Committee: Jeff Robertson, Jerry Reinstein, Pia Walker, Susi Mayr

website: <http://scdkaleidoscope1.strathspey.org>

email: scd.kaleidoscope1@yahoo.com



Forthcoming RSCDS Events

Summer School 2009

Dates: Sunday 19 July – Sunday 16 August

Location: University Hall, St Andrews

Co-ordinator: John Wilkinson

- morning classes for all levels, including beginners
- optional afternoon classes
- social dancing every evening, and a ceilidh each Friday
- come for any one or two weeks of the four, as resident or non-resident
- Musicians' Courses in Weeks 1 and 3

Full details and application forms are on the website, www.rscds.org

80th Annual General Meeting and Conference Weekend 2009

Dates: 6 – 8 November 2009

Location: Bell's Sports Centre, Hay Street, Perth

- Friday night ball with David Cunningham's Band
- Saturday night dance with Jim Lindsay's Band
- Saturday morning class – teacher Sue Porter, musician Jennifer Wilson
- Sunday morning workshop – to be confirmed

Further information and booking form will be available in April from RSCDS Headquarters or on the website at www.rscds.org. There is an international conference in Perth the same week, so be sure to book your accommodation early!

Winter School 2010

Course 1 22 – 27 February 2010

Course 2 28 February – 5 March 2010

Location: The Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry

Co-ordinator: George Meikle

Please check with RSCDS Headquarters or on www.rscds.org for booking details

Spring Fling 2010

Dates: to be confirmed (likely to be 26 – 28 March 2010)

Location: Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Co-ordinators: to be confirmed

For people aged 16-35. Full details will be announced on the website whenever they are known. Application forms will be available from RSCDS Headquarters or on www.rscds.org in December 2009.



The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Perth and Perthshire Branch

A BOOK OF PERTH DANCES

RSCDS Perth and Perthshire Branch have published 'A Book of Perth Dances' with an accompanying CD '12 Perth Dances' with music by James Coutts SCD Band. The dances and music have local connections, written by or for people in the Perthshire area.

The book is £5.00 and CD £12, or bought together for £15.

For further information or to order please contact:

Allana Creighton 1 Mapledene Road Scone PH2 6NX

Telephone: 01738 551148 e-mail: allanacreighton@btinternet.com

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6. Koolie (3x 32)
7. Strathpeffer (3 x 32)
8. Walks
9. Middle Reels (5 x 32)
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11. Day (4 x 48)
12. Strathpeffer & Koolie available in Strathpeffer (34 x 32)
13. Day (3 x 32)
14. Show for Strathpeffer (4 x 32) + 2 for extra?
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16. Reels (4 x 42)



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RSCDS
New Zealand Branch Inc.
Annual Summer School



28th December 2009 - 5th January 2010

North Shore City, Auckland
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For application forms and further information, contact:
The Secretary, RSCDS New Zealand Branch Inc.
P.O. Box 743, Wanganui 4540, New Zealand
Phone: +64 6 344 5300 - Fax: +64 2 688 3899
email: scod@rscdsnz.org.nz
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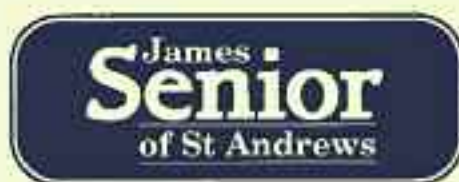
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