



rscds
Dance Scottish

Scottish Country Dancer



Teaching
Certificates
P14



Interview with
the Music Director
P16



Reviews
P24

Forthcoming RSCDS Events

79th Annual General Meeting and Conference Weekend

7 – 9 November 2008

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

- Friday night ball with Nicol McLaren & The Glencaig Scottish Dance Band
- Saturday night dance with John Renton and his Scottish Dance Band
- Saturday morning class with teacher Pat Houghton and pianist Jennifer Wilson
- Members' Forum on Saturday morning – topic "Communication"
- Sunday morning workshop – "Dances from the MacNab Book", led by Sinclair Barbour with musician Robert Menzies
- Musicians' Forum on Sunday morning led by Mo Rutherford – all musicians and interested dancers welcome!

Further information and application form available from RSCDS Headquarters or on the website at www.rscds.org.

Winter School

26 February – 3 March 2009

Location: The Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry

Co-ordinator: George Meikle

Places have now been allocated and there is a waiting list.

Winter School 2010

Dates not yet confirmed

Application forms will be available in June 2009 – please check with RSCDS Headquarters or on the website at www.rscds.org for exact dates of availability and submission date.

Spring Fling

27 – 29 March 2009

Location: Aberdeen

Co-ordinators: Jayne Brown (Youth Director) with a team of young people from the Aberdeen area, led by Paul McKnight

- for people between the ages of 16-35
- classes from beginners through to advanced level
- teachers and musicians confirmed so far: Jim Stott, Catherine Livsey, Jimmie Hill, Mo Rutherford, Neil Copland

Further information and application forms will be available in December from RSCDS Headquarters or on the website at www.rscds.org.

Summer School

19 July – 16 August 2009

Location: University Hall, University of St Andrews

Co-ordinator: John Wilkinson

- come for any one or two weeks of the four, as resident or non-resident
- morning classes for all levels including beginners
- optional afternoon classes
- social dancing every evening except Friday, when there is a ceilidh
- two musicians' courses will be held, dates to be confirmed

Further information and application forms will be available from RSCDS Headquarters or on the website at www.rscds.org in December 2008.

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Editorial

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* and that you can identify with at least some of the people and events on its pages. As always many members and HQ staff have been involved in its production. I am especially grateful to those who have contributed articles and photographs, and also to readers who have submitted items that have not made it into print. Please keep your ideas and letters flowing, so *Scottish Country Dancer* can reflect the growing diversity of the RSCDS.

You will find a questionnaire enclosed. Do take time to complete it. Your views are valued and the Editorial Board will be particularly interested in your feedback on the magazine. It is primarily a members' magazine, but the editorial policy is that it should also appeal to all Scottish country dancers wherever they dance and that it should broaden awareness of the rich country dance heritage of Scotland. In addition, the magazine should promote the Objects of the Society and the strategic aims of the Management Board. We also hope it makes you smile. Each issue is put through an "Edinburgh bus test." Imagine a member sitting on the local bus. He is engrossed in reading *Scottish Country Dancer*. Suddenly he realises he has reached his stop and leaps off the bus, inexplicably leaving the magazine behind. The next person to take the seat, it may be a local resident or a tourist, young or old, vaguely familiar with country dancing or totally ignorant, picks up the magazine and flicks through its pages. What impression does he get of the RSCDS?

Well, it's for people of all ages. Anne McArthur writes about the inspiring dance project that has enthused primary school children in Banff, there are reports of young dancers' weekends and we can read about how Glasgow Branch is catering for its older members who may be past dancing. It's international. Our correspondents from around the world describe the wealth of Scottish country dancing activities in every continent (there is even a connection to Antarctica!) and how it appeals to people from different cultural backgrounds. Yet it is firmly rooted in Scottish tradition. Mo Rutherford talks about the influences that shaped her as a musician playing for country dancers. Some members advocate precision and detail, others don't. Bruce Frazer (Technique Doctor) breaks down the Ladies' Chain bar by bar, John Carswell (In My Opinion) had finished with classes by the time he was twelve. But above all it's about the enjoyment of dancing. Look at the smiles on the faces of dancers throughout the magazine.

What would that proverbial man on the local bus make of your branch or club? We are all Ambassadors for the RSCDS. Sometimes, though, we can get so involved in internal constitutional debates or arguments over what should or should not be done on the dance floor, that we risk taking our eye off what the Society is really about. That surely has to be conveying the joys and benefits of Scottish country dancing to anyone who might be interested in taking part. If we succeed, other things, like upholding the tradition, maintaining standards and balancing the books, will take care of themselves. Not everyone will share our enthusiasm for Scottish country dancing, but if we individually, in our branches and as a Society as a whole can encourage more people, young or old, Scottish or not, Bruce or John, to join in with us then the future of the Society and all it stands for are assured.

Contents

News from Coates Crescent	4
A new appointment, elections and awards	
From the Chair and Management Committees	5
Irene Bennett's thoughts on stepping down from office	
Youth	8
Reports on the vibrant youth scene within the RSCDS	
Teachers' Association (Canada)	10
TAC celebrates 50 years	
Glasgow Seniors	11
Staying in touch with the RSCDS	
The Archive	12
Branch histories and the result of our photo challenge	
In my Opinion	13
Challenging views from John Carswell	
News in pictures	14
RSCDS life in photographs and cartoon	
Interview with Mo Rutherford	16
The RSCDS Music Director talks to Scottish Country Dancer	
From around the world	18
Reports from our regional correspondents	
Technique Doctor	21
Bruce Frazer on the Ladies' Chain	
A branch and a club	22
Banffshire Branch and Leeds Scottish Country Dance Club	
Reviews	24
New recordings and books	
Overheard on the Web	26
Recent postings on the internet	
Letters to the Editor	27
Obituaries	28
Day School Diary	29

Cover picture: Dancers at the RSCDS Summer School
Photograph by Fraser Band, www.fraserband.co.uk

Editor Andrew Kellett	Contact mag.editor@rscds.org	
Editorial Board Elspeth Gray, Jimmie Hill, Pat Houghton, Jean Martin	Advertising Linda Gaul mag.advertising@rscds.org	
Publisher The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7AF		
Website www.rscds.org	Telephone 0131 225 3854	E mail info@rscds.org
Graphic Designer Its All Good The Haughs, Cromdale, Grantown on Spey, PH26 3PQ info@itsallgood.org.uk t: 01479 870 435		
Printer J Thomson Colour Printers Ltd 14-16 Carnoustie Place, Glasgow G5 8PB		

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society - a registered Scottish Charity no. SC016085

News from Coates Crescent

Elsbeth Gray brings you up to date with what is happening at Headquarters.



"Happy times with friends . . . and fun dancing every day" Laura Shroeder

"The accommodation was great... the ceilidh was wonderful... the nightly socials were fun." Michelle Cobb

"Wonderful time for practising, wonderful music with wonderful musicians and wonderful beer!" Philippe Kocian

"I found the week incredibly enjoyable, and went away a better dancer and with many new friends." Sarah Queen

"And to finish I'll say, 'Hip, hip, hooray' Because I qualified as a teacher today!" Pamela Emerson

Staffing

In July, a letter from the Chairman and Chairman Elect concerning a Management Board decision on staffing was sent to Branch secretaries and posted on the website. As a result of a report from an external HR consultant in the course of 2006/07, which considered the current and future requirements of the Society, and with further input from a number of sources, the Management Board's HR Panel recommended a revised staffing structure to the Board in April 2008. The proposal was further refined and approved by the Board in June. The main recommendation was the appointment of an Executive Officer (to be known as Secretary). As the current Secretary, I will be taking a step sideways and focussing on member and Branch communications, and will be moving from 5 to 4 days per week.

This strategic decision was not taken lightly by the Board. The organisation will have someone with the necessary skills to drive the executive functions of the Society and monitor the financial position more closely. The Board considered it could not afford, either in management or financial terms, not to take this action.

STOP PRESS

Elizabeth Foster has been appointed as our new Executive Officer. She will be taking up her post on 1 December and she hopes to attend the AGM on 8 November. More in the next issue.

Elections to management posts

I am delighted to report that this year, more members have put their names forward for election to positions on the Management Board and Committees. Nominees are as follows (all of the profiles are on the website – go to the News section for links to them):

Chairman Elect: Ruth Beattie

Management Board (6 vacancies): Lyn Bryce, Bernie Hewitt, Alan Mair, Isobel McMillan, Lorna Ogilvie, Ross Robertson, Lindsey Jane Rousseau

GP & Finance Committee (2 vacancies): Marjorie Hume, Robert McColl

Education & Training Committee (5 vacancies): Malcolm Brown, Ann Dix, Graham Donald, Pamela Emerson, Sue Porter, Trish Reid, Lucy Smallwood, Anne Smyth, Rachel Wilton

Membership Services Committee (3 vacancies): Bill Austin, Helen Beaney, Anne Carter, Christiane Orgeret, Keith Stacey, Philip Whitley

Scholarships

A number of scholarships are available for attendance at the RSCDS Summer School in St Andrews. The form for 2009 is currently being finalised, and will be made available on the website whenever it is ready. The deadline for submission will be 22 February 2009, so please keep an eye out for the form appearing.

Here are some of the comments from recipients of scholarships who attended Summer School for the first time in 2008:

"I had a brilliant time dancing and partying . . . I befriended people from all over the world . . . an experience and a half." Alison Queen

Branch Awards update

Congratulations to all those who have been the proud recipients of Branch Awards since our last update in issue 5. The names are as follows:

Name	Branch
Elaine Arthur	Canberra & District
Mary Baird	Orlando Florida
Dick & Ena Baxter	New Haven
Dianne E Christie	Kirkcudbright
Bruce Clark	Canberra & District
Margaret Dickson	Dumfries
Dennis Duncan	London Canada
Betty Ferguson	Dumfries
Annette S. Harris	Northern Virginia
Sheila Harvey-George	Cornwall
Norma Hutchinson	Sheffield
Frank Ibbott	Los Angeles
Margaret Irvine	Helensburgh & District
John Johnston	Glasgow
Dianne Lask	Toronto
Madalene Lee	South Argyll
Jane Leys	Aberdeen
Mae Lorimer	Dumfries
Peter Luke	London
Ann Malley	Hamilton (Ontario)
Rita Marlow	London
James McMillan	Glasgow
Leslie Morrow	Melbourne & District
Junko Oda	Tokyo
George Potts	London
Elsbeth Pyper	Melbourne
Evelyn Ramwell	Carlisle & Border
Margaret Sim	Sydney
Ruth & Robert Taylor	Kingston (Ontario)
Doris & Kenny Young	Aberdeen

From the Chair



Irene Bennett, *Chairman*

As my term of office draws to a close, I have been reflecting on the changing face of our Society.

I have served on a number of committees in various capacities for over twenty years. In the early days of my involvement, the influence of Dr Milligan was still strong, although she was no longer with us. Most of the people serving on the committees had worked with Dr Milligan and had been active in the Society at the time of its great expansion both at home and abroad.

We are now approaching a time when there are very few people, in senior positions, who knew our co-founder. Those of us who have been active, during a somewhat long transition period, have recognised the need for development but it is not easy to initiate change in a large, worldwide organisation run by volunteers.

It is now thirty years since Dr Milligan's death and many of our current members know very little about her as I have discovered during my travels. I am not suggesting that we should look backwards but I do think members should understand why and how our Society started in 1923. Each Branch should be encouraged to make available to new members copies of "Dance With Your Soul" and "An Album for Mrs Stewart". I think it is important that our members know why the future of the Society is worth safeguarding.

The current management structure of the Society has now been in existence for six

years. The idea behind the present structure was to streamline the management, so that it was more accessible for the membership to become involved. I am not convinced that it is working in the way in which it was intended. It is vital for the success of the Management Board and the Committees, that people who do stand for election have some knowledge and experience of Branch committee work before they consider standing for management office.

There is no doubt that Branches feel more isolated from the Management Board than they did when they were represented on the Executive Council. We have realised that communication needs to be improved. I hope that the Members' Forum at this year's AGM, entitled "Communication" will go a long way in giving members an opportunity

to let the management know what they want to hear about. It is up to the members to attend and to bring lots of ideas for the Board and the Committees to consider.

I have enjoyed the time I have served the Society. Meetings are always interesting – there are so many different personalities with such a variety of experiences and ideas. I have found the visits I have made and the people I have met most fulfilling. The welcomes have always been extremely warm and have made me feel quite privileged and special. We really do have a worldwide family so I would urge you to do nothing which might put that in jeopardy.

I wish the incoming Chairman, Alex Gray, and the new Management Board every success in meeting the challenges which undoubtedly lie ahead.

Irene with our former President, the Earl of Mansfield (seated) and distinguished guests outside Scone Palace (see page 14).



Calling all budding devisers and composers

Homecoming Scotland 2009 marks the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns and is a year long celebration of some of Scotland's greatest contributions to the world. The RSCDS has been invited to produce a reel and accompanying tune to be used in events throughout the Year of Homecoming.

Given that so many of our members are experienced devisers and composers, we are inviting submissions to find a suitable combination.

Homecoming Scotland has only just signed off the project and so, time is of the essence!

The dance must be a 32 bar reel which is suitable for general social dancing. We are looking for something that can appear on dance programmes, not a technically demanding demonstration dance. The tune should fit the criteria of the dance.

The winning dance will be chosen by the Membership Services Committee and the tune will be selected by a panel led by our Music Director, Mo Rutherford. To stimulate the creative flow the dance and tune will be premiered at the signature event to open Homecoming Scotland in January 2009. For

this purpose, the dance will be called 'The Homecoming Dance'.

The Society, in conjunction with Homecoming Scotland, is offering a cash prize of £250 each for the chosen tune and dance.

Entries should be received at Coates Crescent or emailed to info@rscds.org no later than **15 November 2008**.

For further information on Homecoming Scotland visit www.homecomingscotland2009.com

From the Management Committees

Finance on behalf of the Management Board

Annual Accounts - April 2007 to March 2008

The table below shows the numbers for the 2007/8 and 2006/7 financial years in a similar format to that produced during the 2007 AGM. It summarises the cost per member of the various activities of the Society. Some headings used last year have been combined to make this overview clearer. Also the 2006/7 figures are different from those presented last year as the work done during the year has led to a clearer understanding of our financial position and the relationship between the various activities.

As predicted at the 2007 AGM the Society has a deficit for 2007/8. The actual deficit of £139,433 is slightly less than the forecast of £150,000 due to measures put in place during the year as a result of a very detailed analysis of income and expenditure. This led to a much clearer understanding of the finances of the Society and how income streams have to be matched with expenditure. At a very basic level there are two income streams – subscriptions, and income from activities such as sales, Schools, tests, examinations etc. The activities fall into two categories – those where we seek to break even (Schools, tests, etc) and those which generate a surplus (sales). These, together with the subscriptions, have to cover the Society's expenditure. At the 2007 AGM we concentrated on the problem with the subscription income stream and this has been addressed by the increase in subscription passed at that meeting.

Since the AGM last year, we have concentrated our attention on the other activities, with the aim of achieving a positive balance at the end of this financial year (2008/9). The table shows the staff costs (net of Schools + sales contribution to staff costs). It is the Schools and sales contribution that are the main elements of activity income generation. The analysis showed that the main problem in this area is the contribution from Schools which should cover the costs of running the events, ie staff salaries and the office running costs associated with the event. In recent years this contribution has fallen (approx £44,000 in 2006/7 to £33,811 2007/8). It is now

clear that this contribution was not covering the internal costs of running these events, which we have calculated to be about £88,000 for 2008/9. As part of our investigation, external quotations were obtained to determine the cost of running these events by outsourcing. This showed that £88,000 is a reasonable cost for these services and is less than would be charged by an external service provider. This shortfall is being addressed by raising the fees for the Schools. Sales currently generate a surplus but targets for the contribution these make have also been increased which regrettably has resulted in a need to increase prices with effect from 1st April. Preliminary indications from shop sales at the Summer School this year are that the revised targets are

achievable. The range of measures adopted is intended to result in a broadly break-even position in this financial year (2008/9), provided no new factors come into play. Had these measures been in place in the year under review, and given the increased magazine cost in 2007/08 due to the timing, the effect would be a reduction in costs of £5.22 per member. This would have reduced the expenditure from £19.49 in 2007/8 to £14.27 per member, which is less than the new annual subscription of £15.00.

The greater understanding achieved this year means that the budget in particular and the financial situation in general is back under control. The full annual report and accounts is available on the website.

	2007-8	2006-7
Number of members (inc life and long term)	15,712	16,350
Staff (net of Schools + sales contribution)	£6.00	£4.43
Office running costs (equipment, stationery, etc)	£5.96	£5.81
Governance	£0.97	£1.07
Magazine	£4.82	£1.77
Website	£0.22	£0.34
Publicity	£1.27	£0.24
Archives	£0.25	£0.15
Total	£19.49	£13.81
Annual subscription	£10.00	£10.00
Shortfall on annual subscription	£ 9.49	£ 3.81

Table showing cost per member of the core activities of the Society to be covered by the annual subscription

The Unit 5 candidates at Summer School 2008.

Top, left to right: Margaret Bird (Sheffield), Nicole Baromska-Glab (Brussels), Donald Andrews (Leeds), Maria Grimoldi (Buenos Aires), Gill Watts (Manchester), Dorothy Hamilton (pianist), Shellagh Whyte (Paris), Sue Porter (teacher). Bottom, left to right: Isobel Watts (Manchester), Niamh Friel (Glasgow), Rachel Friel (Glasgow), Raphaëlle Orgeret (Lyon).



Education & Training by Helen Russell, Convenor



Following the Examiners' Seminar at St Andrews in 2007 the revision of the examination syllabus for the Teaching Certificate has been completed and came into use from July 2008. The main alteration is that the number of set dances in Unit 2 has been reduced from 15 to 12. There have also been some changes to the assessment sheets, rules and conditions of entry. The revised syllabus (May 2008) has been posted on the website. Paper copies are also available on request from 12 Coates Crescent. To help candidates, branches and examination centres to prepare for Unit 1, the written paper, a bank of questions from past papers has been prepared for use by examiners, tutors and candidates. This will be sent to all candidates.

If you are an experienced teacher and have been asked to mentor, or are interested in mentoring a candidate during their Teaching Practice, there are supplementary notes on the role of the mentor currently on the website. I quote what I think are the two most important points from these notes:-

1. *The role of the mentor is to support and advise the candidate.*
2. *The mentor has a crucial role in encouraging analysis and evaluation of teaching progress through discussion with the candidate.*

Don't be reluctant to become a mentor. Any teacher should find it a valuable process.

Continuing Development of teachers and musicians is very close to my heart. We all aim to serve the dance and the dancers by acquiring as much expertise as possible. On the RSCDS website is a template which teachers and musicians can download and on which they can record further training undertaken, thus maintaining a list of their achievements.

New adjudicators

As a result of a recent training course, the following new RSCDS adjudicators have been appointed:- Jayne Brown, Graham Donald, Jean Martin, Jim Stott, Anne Taylor, Fiona Turnbull and Marilyn Watson. I hope to see them in action at forthcoming festivals.

A tutor training course was held in Reigate in April, led by Helen Frame and Jennifer

Wilson. I would encourage experienced teachers to consider attending future courses. As well as preparing the tutors of the future, they give a valuable insight into one's own practice as a teacher.

Three new RSCDS examiners at their recent induction course. Left to right Marilyn Watson, Andrew McConnell, Anne Smyth.



Membership Services by Jim Healy, Convenor



As always, the run-up to Summer School sees a flurry of activity to have things ready for those who like to feel the quality before they buy. A number of the new items are reviewed elsewhere in the magazine but here is the complete list.

CD of music for Book 9 plus 4 Dances 2008 plus two Eileen Watt Dances. A double CD, one each by two younger band leaders, Lindsay Weir and Liam Stewart in one package. Thanks to Ayr Branch for their sponsorship of the Liam Stewart disc which has allowed us to produce this at modest cost to our members.

CD of music for Book 11 by John Renton and his Band. In contrast to the younger

band leaders on the other CD, this comes from one of the most experienced band leaders in Scotland with his own distinctive traditional Scottish band sound.

The Dance Scottish pack for teaching SCD in Schools has been reissued in a revamped format with the music on CD and the video on DVD. The 'booklet' of dance instructions is included as a pdf file on the DVD so that teachers can print off the instructions for each dance as needed.

The revamp of books to a new A5 format, begun with *Miss Milligan's Miscellany*, continues with the instructions for all the dances in Books 1-6 which have been completely revised and rewritten in accordance with the new standard terminology, of which the latest version is also now available as a booklet.

After a number of false dawns, in association with Education and Training,

we have published *An Introduction to warming up and cooling down for Scottish Country Dancing*.

In addition to these new items, there is an updated A5 format Index to dances which includes, for the first time, the Collins book as this is now only available through the Society. There is also an updated *Originally Ours* with printed music for all of the Society's dances up to 4 Dances 2008.

Finally, we have new lines in the Society's own tartan with shoe bags, ties and bow ties and a new badge intended originally for children but proving popular with all ages.



Spring Fling

by Lucy Smallwood



The annual Spring Fling youth weekend in the UK for 16-35 year olds has once more proved a great success. Spring Fling itself dates back a number of years and has been held in locations across the whole of the UK. It is staffed by volunteers from within the youth community, who organise the full event with help from RSCDS Headquarters for registrations. In March this year, it was Glasgow's turn to host an event that may only be slightly eclipsed by the 2014 Commonwealth Games!

The weekend attracted over seventy dancers from across Europe including representatives from France, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Switzerland, England and Wales. Unsurprisingly, the biggest contingent by far were the thirty five dancers from Scotland.

Fantastic accommodation was provided for residents in the 1850's built Glasgow Youth Hostel, located high up in an old part of town with views right across the city. The Hostel itself provided breakfast, dinner and a party room, which was fully utilised by all accounts.

The opening ceilidh on the Friday night was a big success. The venue of the Glasgow University Union proved ideal. There was just about enough space for everyone to dance, and with great music provided by John Carmichael's band. It set the scene for the rest of the weekend, with everyone getting involved and having a good time.

The classes held over the weekend included

The youth demonstration team continues to flourish, having recently danced at the Scottish Parliament. Youth workshops for 2009 are being planned and details should soon be available on the website or from Headquarters



Participants in Spring Fling 2008

Scottish country dancing taught by Margo Priestley, Alasdair Brown and Craig Houston and Highland dancing from Caroline Rose and Mo Rutherford. The weekend was also extremely lucky to have Mo Rutherford, John Carmichael, Neil Copland and Alasdair Brown as class musicians. The standard of dancing and teaching was excellent, with the teachers pushing us hard, but rewarding us with lots of new dances to learn.

The Saturday evening dance proved a real hit, with many comments on the great programme, the atmosphere and the hall decoration which lifted the hall from a standard school gym to a real dance venue with begged and borrowed accessories. Above all, after hard work and rigorous classes all day, the fantastic sound produced by the Neil Copland band lifted everyone's dancing and kept the spirit going right to the end. All the dancers mixed together and there was great local support for the dance, filling the hall and adding greatly to the atmosphere.

We were impressed to see the many smiling faces arriving on Sunday morning for classes. The final event was a dance

deviser's workshop with everyone taking part. Dancers worked in groups to devise a dance and perform it in front of the other groups. A wide range of innovative dances were created, and the performances went very well, with some great comments from the teachers on the standard of the dances devised. It was fantastic to have Neil Copland, Mo Rutherford and John Carmichael join together for the final session to play for the dance deviser's workshop. All the dancers were impressed by the brand new tune composed by the musicians for the occasion.

The weekend finished with a lunch provided for all participants, teachers and musicians, giving people the opportunity to fill in their evaluation forms and take their time saying their goodbyes.

Glasgow provided its standard share of gloomy weather, but there was no chance of it dampening spirits. Luckily the short distance between venues helped to reduce the amount of soakings but not the mood of the weekend.

Next year it is Aberdeen's turn to host the event, from 27th to 29th March 2009, and I am sure that we can look forward to another fantastic event, with plenty of high quality dancing. You can find out more through the email address: springfling@rscds.org or from the RSCDS website (<http://www.rscds.org/springfling/>).

Spring Fling 2010

If your local youth SCD group has attended and enjoyed previous Spring Flings and would like to organise and host Spring Fling 2010, please send an expression of interest to Headquarters by 17th November 2008, giving names of the proposed organising committee and any initial ideas for venues and activities.

Youth Weekend West

by Catherine Berner, Christopher Berner and Zuriah Meacham

Spring Fling is not the only SCD event specifically for young adult dancers. In Canada Youth Weekend West (YWW) is well established. This year it was hosted in Vancouver. It is an incredibly fun Scottish country dance workshop for ages 12 to 30-ish. In the three years we've attended multiple levels of Scottish country dance classes have been offered. These have included a fast-paced introduction for anyone with little or no experience of SCD; intermediate and advanced classes for experienced dancers to do fun and challenging dances, with more advanced formations and the opportunity to improve technique; plus classes in Highland, Old Time and dances of India. To help keep costs down lodging has been in youth hostels or motels offering group rates, with



Smiling faces at Youth Weekend West

dancing in community halls or on college campuses. Some meals are provided and the rest are self-catered. Last year there was an informal welcome dinner, held picnic-style on the beach.

YWW is attended by wonderful dancers, and equally awesome local Scottish country dancers join in at balls and tea dances. The teachers have been great and have taught in a style that suited young, energetic dancers. We have learned a lot in

an atmosphere that was relaxed, and we have done some of the best dances we have ever encountered. It's almost impossible not to have a good time. Everyone is creative and happy, and in a good mood. People help each other out and it is fun, fun, fun! Ah, such nice memories; we want it to be Youth Weekend West time again, and it will be on May 29 - 31, 2009 in the beautiful San Francisco Bay area. We'll be there and so should you!

Youth Weekend East

by Alicia Tarasick



Step practice at Youth Weekend East

Youth Weekend East took place at Trent University, Ontario in May. When I walked into the dance hall on Friday night, the energy inside was enough to make me forget just how tired I felt from my long bus ride. It also made me realize that I shouldn't worry that there wouldn't be enough socializing over the weekend. As the first dance of the evening was called, we all gathered in the spirit of the music, and the anticipation of what might happen over the next couple of days.

Classes the next day were great! There wasn't a moment to rest, but that didn't matter. Each teacher had something

different to share and the classes flowed from one to the next because they were linked well. Cathy Bertics started off with a dance called *"The Scalliwag"*. It wasn't a difficult dance, but offered something of a twist with its arrangement of figures and progression. This theme was continued by Rebecca Roman, when she taught a dance where the top of the set shifted from one end to the other. She also taught a dance she called *Green Light Moment*. This was her way of showing that with proper phrasing one can just flow into each figure without stopping. It proved how important phrasing is to the appearance and enjoyment of the dance too!

In Colin Philips' Strathspey class, his first dance began with a "set and rotate" and finished with a circle. The first time through, I felt there wasn't quite enough music or that I'd danced an extra step. Quickly enough, I realized that this was a "Green Light Moment" and I needed to use Rebecca's exercise. All I needed to do was to lengthen my step, and bingo! Following a full day of classes, we all still had energy to spare for Saturday night. It was a great program with lots of favourites-and a few added variations! The fun lasted long after the music stopped.

After the night before, I found it difficult to get out of bed on Sunday, but it wasn't a class to miss! Cathy Bertics taught a step class. She began with *"Bonnie Dundee"*, which is done in lines of three. It has a good variety of both Scottish country and Highland steps, including petronella turns using skip change. She also showed us some variations for the Glasgow Highlanders step. I also really enjoyed a dance called *Twiddle in the Middle*- mostly because it already had the twirls written in! The weekend was filled with so many opportunities to learn and to meet new people. A wonderful experience I hope to have again.

Teachers' Association (Canada) turns 50

John Middleton reports on the celebrations and gives an insight into this remarkable organisation.



The 50th Annual General Meeting of the Teachers' Association (Canada), TAC, was held at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, on Saturday, August 9th, 2008. TAC members representing all parts of Canada and the USA; Australia; England; Japan; New Zealand and Scotland attended the meeting. One of the "founding members", the TAC's Membership Secretary, June Shore, was in attendance.



The AGM was an integral part of the TAC Teachers' Weekend, which gave ample opportunity

for the 145 participants to celebrate TAC's 50th birthday; to renew acquaintances; and to hone their dancing skills. The Weekend started with a Welcome Dance to the music of Muriel Johnstone. The class on Saturday, taught by Ruth Jappy, centred on various dances from *Miss Milligan's Miscellany*. The AGM followed in the afternoon and then there was the celebratory Dinner and Ball with music supplied by the inimitable Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent.

TAC was the first association that concerned itself with the needs of Scottish country dance teachers. From the original 13 "founding members" it has grown to become an Association with members from around the world. At one point, we attained a membership of 800!

Early in 1957, the idea for a Teachers' Association originated at a meeting of the very few Scottish country dance teachers from the Southern Ontario region. These teachers were a very close-knit group with a tremendous enthusiasm for all that was best in Scottish country dancing and a real desire to maintain the ideals and expectations of the RSCDS. Being far from headquarters, and with instant communication being a thing of the fairly distant future, it was felt that it would be of advantage to the teachers in the area to form an organization that would provide a forum where problems of consistency of style, of teaching, and of performance could be discussed. As it happened, Miss Milligan was in North America at the time - her first North American tour - and while she was in Toronto, Bill Clark of the Hamilton Branch



Former TAC Chairmen line up at the celebratory weekend.

approached her with the idea that such an association be formed. Miss Milligan thought that it was a wonderful idea and, on April 13th, 1958, 13 Scottish country dance teachers from the Hamilton-Toronto corridor met to form the organization which ultimately became the Teachers' Association of Canada.

As the years have passed, the TAC has grown greatly in numbers. As the membership has increased, new and welcome ideas for furthering the organization have been proposed. According to demand, new TAC activities have been put in place. Any new feature, however, always has to hark back to the roots of the association: providing assistance to teachers of Scottish country dancing so that each one of them can continue to maintain the traditions of excellence of the RSCDS.

The first TAC Weekend for teachers of Scottish country dancing was held in 1963. Each Weekend since that time has had a different focus depending on the featured teacher and, often, whether a new RSCDS book had been introduced at St. Andrew's. The first TAC Summer School was held in 1973. For the first many years it was held at venues in Southern Ontario but, more recently, TAC has been delighted to be able to move Summer School between the West Coast and Ontario. The AGM is now usually held in conjunction with Summer School.

Other TAC initiatives over the years have included TACNotes which provides help in how a dance should be interpreted; TACTalk - the quarterly journal of the association; the operation of Candidate Courses - both

at Summer School and during the North American Examination Tour; TACSound - making a wide variety of SCD music available to the Scottish country dance fraternity; TACBooks - the print resource division; the Outreach division which provides partial funding within certain guidelines for groups running weekend schools or workshops of various types; and, most recently, TAC Forum which provides an opportunity for discussion on the Website.

The area which makes TAC most happy, however, is that of Scholarships. Over the years, 2 Scholarship Funds have been set up: the Jubilee Scholarship Fund and the Bob Blackie Scholarship Fund. The interest from the first provides scholarships to Teacher Candidates attending Teacher Training at TAC Summer School (this year, we were able to provide some assistance to 8 candidates). The interest from the second Fund provides a full scholarship to attend TAC Summer School to a dancer who meets the set criteria. It is hoped that, before long, the interest from this fund will be able to provide 2 scholarships!

Since its humble beginnings, TAC has come a long way. I believe that I can finish in no better way than to quote TAC's immediate past Chairman, Ian Souter, in his introduction to TACTalk's 50th Anniversary Edition: "The Teachers' Association of Canada was born of their [the founding members] love for our favourite pastime. Now, fifty years later, the values, goals and traditions that our founding members set up are still in force, are top priority, and are carried out on a daily basis."

Glasgow Seniors' Group

by Ruth Beattie

In 1998 Glasgow Branch held a Reunion for all its members. After the event it was very apparent how much everyone appreciated coming together, meeting again and having the opportunity to reminisce and hear up-to-date news. Scottish country dancing was the common and enduring interest. Equally it became apparent that for many, once they were no longer able to dance, friends and contacts were lost and a large gap appeared in their lives.

Following the Reunion the idea of meeting regularly led to the formation of our Seniors' Group, initially on a trial basis. That was in 1999 since when the Group has met regularly in a city hotel. We have had some wonderful gatherings with most interesting speakers and uplifting musical sessions from many of our Society musicians. One of our very first speakers was George Lawson who gave us insight into his travels on behalf of the Society and his experiences of teaching, adjudicating and examining abroad. Gordon Simpson, Dorothy Paterson and John Renton gave us recitals which had the hotel staff stopping in their tracks to listen. They enlightened us with the fascinating historical backgrounds to the music they played. Ian and Heulwen Hall entertained us with piano and accordion taking us on an exciting musical journey through their own experiences of playing and dancing



Glasgow Seniors at St. Andrews with Schools Director John Wilkinson.

together. Johan Maclean enthralled us with haunting tales of Gaelic mouth music; Christine Traynor gave us a most amusing rendering of poems by Pat Batt and we have heard dissertations on cultural issues. Most recently our new President, Dr. Alastair MacFadyen, gave us a fascinating talk. We have been truly privileged to have been entertained by many other guests too numerous to mention.

Our summer outings have also given us much pleasure. After our last visit to Summer School, where we were warmly welcomed by the Director, one of our members commented "some things change

with time but the camaraderie generated by Summer School seems to go on for ever." While we continue to promote the work of the Society we continue to retain the interest of many who have served it faithfully in different ways and who wish to offer their support where they can. That apart, I believe we have a duty to care for those who still want to keep in touch but who can no longer actively participate.

A few years ago Glasgow Branch put forward a motion at the AGM to establish a "Friends of the Society" group similar to our own which was rejected. Would the Society like to think again?

Dancers in North America show their enthusiasm for Scottish country dancing and the RSCDS whenever they take to the road. These car registration plates were spotted there this year.



The Archive



Marilyn Healy

Members' Memories

A few years ago it was suggested that Branches consider interviewing some of their long-standing members and record their memories of the early days of the Branch. A few Branches did respond but many seemed unsure as to how to go about it. One suggestion that was made in the initial letter was that members be interviewed individually, but Newcastle and District Branch archivist, Irene Waters, took a different approach. She got a few members together at a time, no more than five or six, to talk and reminisce – and record their conversation. One of the advantages of this approach was that it encouraged a more relaxed atmosphere. Talking to a tape recorder can be an intimidating experience, but chatting together helped to stimulate memories and set off trains of thought in each member's mind. In all, Irene carried out eight 'get-togethers', recorded the memories of twenty-eight members and ended up with more than eight hours of recording which were transcribed and eventually edited down to a 56 page A5 booklet, called

Reminiscence Reels. Each chapter has a title reflecting dance names and terminology such as: Ready, and ..., The Merry Dancers, The Dancing Master, The Music Makars with the last chapter entitled Auld Lang Syne. Some of the topics touch on events in the Society's history such as the Golden Jubilee Ball in Edinburgh in 1973.

As Irene notes in the introduction "The events and characters are described from different perspectives and occasionally memory disagrees with written records. There may be an element of nostalgia and some rosy-tinted spectacle wearing, but there are also shrewd comments on changing standards." A project like this is very time consuming and needs people with an interest and the time and skills to see it through, and I congratulate Irene on her tenacity. Once again we invite branches to support a similar project so that we can leave a rounded history of the Society and its branches. If only the memories and reminiscences of Mrs Stewart and the early teachers and pianists at Summer School had been recorded in this way.

Reminiscence Reels is available at £3 (plus 80p postage & packing in the UK, £2 non-UK) from Chris Hiller, 4 St Chad's Crescent, Sunderland, SR3 3TR.

E-mail: chrishiller@dsl.pipex.com.

Archon list of archives

In his interview with Jimmie Hill in the last edition of *Scottish Country Dancer* Dr Alastair MacFadyen mentioned that he would like to see the Society's archive registered on the 'Archon' list of archives. The Archon Directory is maintained by the National Archives in London, and lists the contact details of record offices, libraries and other record collecting institutions throughout the UK. It includes 240 repositories in Scotland.

The RSCDS archive is registered with the National Register of Archives for Scotland and Dr Alison Rosie, Registrar with the NRAS, visited the archive in October 2005 to advise whether we could or should improve the way we store our records. She was very positive but advised against including the Society's archive in on-line registers. She suggested that we would be inundated with descendants whose granny/granddad/aunt/uncle etc. had danced and who would therefore contact us to find out more about their ancestor's dancing days. She felt that we do not have the facilities or the staff to cope with that and I agreed. It is claimed that genealogy is the fastest growing hobby in the UK. Headquarters did not keep and does not have records of individual members of the Society; until two years ago membership details were kept by branches (with the exception of HQ members).

Photograph challenge

We received a few replies to our photograph quiz in Issue 6; one reader identified a young Tom Flett as Dancer No. 1, whereas we had three suggestions for Dancer No. 12 - Hugh Thurston, Donald M Stephen, who later became a minister in Edinburgh, or Dr Forbes Semphill.

Dancer No. 1 - Tom Flett

No. 2 – Alice McLennan

No. 5 – Willie Dunbar of Aberdeen

No. 6 - Tihi West

No. 7 – Archie Patterson of Aberdeen - a past Chairman of Aberdeen Branch

No. 8 - Bill Ireland

No. 11 – Les Walton, probably dancing with his wife Cath, who is hidden

No. 12 - Hugh Thurston, although other

readers have identified him as Donald M Stephen or Dr Forbes Semphill

No. 13 - Tibbie Cramb

Nobody has suggested a name for Bill Ireland's partner (No. 10). She appears in a number of the photographs in the archives.

So, can anybody name dancers nos.: 3, 4, 9 and 10 – and settle the argument over the identity of No.12?



In my opinion



by John Carswell, Linlithgow

I would like to thank the Editor for the opportunity to write for *Scottish Country Dancer*.

I recently re-read the excellent article by Geoffrey Selling which starts "... (it may) come as a surprise to many in North America that what they learn in their RSCDS classes... is but one form... of the tradition of dancing in Scotland and none is the 'correct' or 'most traditional' way." Most members would prefer to remain in ignorance like the lady who asked me if Linlithgow Scotch Hop was SCD or ceilidh. I suggested she came to find out. I could also have said, mostly SCD, but it is not the Bell's Sports Arena in Perth, home of the RSCDS Conference. It has lots of young folk dancing in a ruined Palace! The Society must broaden its outlook, improve its profile, spice up its programmes and reduce the number of interminable strathspeys, especially if it really wants more young people.

I think the most traditional occasion for Scottish dancing must be the wedding dance when everyone is dressed in their best (with ordinary shoes). The event will be much the same throughout Scotland with a very similar dance programme everywhere. I believe more effort should be made to help the bride, groom and guests enjoy the event and this should be the base line for teaching, ideally starting in schools as in former times. Technique, footwork, demonstration etc can follow for those who are interested but clearly our teaching, teaching manual, publications, branches, HQ are not in any way geared up for this.

I am a life member and believe that is the only form for anyone who is really interested in dancing. It seems short-sighted not to continue with life membership. I have often been asked for a donation but the practicalities had not been thought through and so much money has been wasted. For example, we have maintained a headquarters that has not been looking after dancing but has been supporting a management system that was taking us nowhere and a subscription system that was doing more harm than good. Any suggestions about communications with members fell on deaf ears. We at least have *Scottish Country Dancer* now!



Linlithgow Scotch Hop which takes place in the courtyard of Linlithgow Palace every summer.

I have belonged to Branches but became disillusioned with them and so became a Headquarters member. At the next AGM Branches will be represented and will vote under a constitution that they approved but HQ members have no say. Is it not time that this ridiculous situation was resolved? As I live 20 miles west of Headquarters I also found the suggestion that I join the International Branch equally ridiculous. For a start could not someone be co-opted as a representative? I also believe affiliated groups should be represented.

Promoting the Society beyond Scotland is fine provided it is not a cover for failure in Scotland which I think it is. Those beyond may find it frustrating but I wonder how much they know about dancing in Scotland? In my opinion the Kaleidoscope seminar in Geneva next year will do nothing for 'Scottish dancing as danced in Scotland' and I certainly do not agree with it: I would prefer to give the Chairman a piece of my mind at the AGM or here in Linlithgow. Why do we not make more of the AGM weekend with dances and events in every hall in the town, similar to The Mod or the Edinburgh Fringe? Let us have thousands

Dancers enjoying Linlithgow Scotch Hop.



dancing. At the moment it seems to be the chance for the chosen few to meet and dance together.

I started attending children's classes when I was 7 years old and by the time I was 12 years old I had learnt enough to be finished with classes for the rest of my life. I had a wonderful teacher, a Mrs Nan Summers. Then as a young teenager I attended the same dances as my parents (but in a separate corner of the hall). In my early twenties I had moved on but was still enjoying dancing and thought I should give something back and became a life member. I was perhaps lucky but in my opinion not only do we have the wrong culture now but also have a standard and style that do not encourage a wider range of young people to dance.

There have been a few excellent exceptions, for example with Glasgow Branch out in George Square, but recent 75th and 80th anniversary celebrations seem to have been held behind closed doors. In my opinion it is time we got out and about and were seen. Every city, town, village, hamlet has an annual parade: why is dancing not part of it? Have we got the next Olympic and Commonwealth Games firmly in our sights and 2023? We missed the opening of the Scottish Parliament.

In my opinion the new Management Board should or should have been allowed by now to be burning the heather and they are not. Our chairmen must manage and lead the Society and represent it in the wider world and not spend time teaching or have branch duties for their terms of office. There are plenty of teachers available. I would also prefer to 'Scottish Dance' rather than 'Dance Scottish'.

Happy dancing to you all!

News in Pictures



On Friday 30 May, a Cedar of Lebanon, the tree to mark the retirement of the Earl of Mansfield as the Society's President, was planted in the grounds of his home, Scone Palace, Perth. The Earl and Countess of Mansfield welcomed the new President, the Chairman, the Chairman-Elect and four past Chairmen to the ceremony. Bill Clement piped the party from the palace to the grounds to the tune "The Earl of Mansfield". It was a very happy occasion despite the very wet weather. The photograph shows our President, Dr. Alastair MacFadyen, and Chairman, Irene Bennett, with the Earl of Mansfield.



21 year old twin sisters Niamh and Rachel Friel from Glasgow Branch successfully completed the Teachers Certificate at Summer School in 2008. They were presented with their certificates by Scotland's Minister for Culture, Linda Fabiani, at the Dance Scottish Week Reception in Coates Crescent. Congratulations to Niamh and Rachel. Are they the youngest fully certificated RSCDS teachers and are there any other twin teachers?



For the Scottish dancing fraternity, the highlight of Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture was a Grand Ball held in the prestigious St. George's Hall. The sight of 350 people dressed in their finery - kilts and black jackets for the men and a beautiful array of evening dresses for the ladies, was something magical. The event was organised by the Liverpool and Wirral Branches, and Marian Anderson and her Band provided some wonderful music. David Haynes (Wirral Branch Secretary) Irene Bennett (RSCDS Chairman) Ian Black (Chieftain of the Lancashire & Cheshire Federation of Scottish Societies) and Margaret Palmer (Liverpool Branch and Chair of the 2008 Grand Ball Committee) were the first line of dancers in the Grand March.



With winter approaching for most branches cartoonist Alistair Smyth reminds us of the dedication of our members. You can see other examples of Alistair's work at www.alistairsmyth.com and he will be contributing regularly to Scottish Country Dancer.

Miss Milligan's Miscellany

Since the publication of the revised single volume version of the *Miscellany* last year, a number of experienced teachers have offered comments on the contents. Some of these comments are personal preferences or teaching points, which are not required in dance instructions, but some of the comments are the sort of teaching points typically dealt with in Chapter 7 of the *Manual*. A few errors, which, regrettably, are inevitable in this type of project, do require correction.

No. 1 - Abernethy Lassies

Bars 15-16. '1st and 2nd couples, giving left hands to partners, turn to finish in original places.'

Comment: All the correspondents have pointed out that, while the dance can be done as described, it is difficult. Most have proposed a variation on the solution offered in the new 5th edition of TACNotes where the two men begin to dance up or down the sidelines on bars 13 and 14 and then, on bars 15-16, 1st man, giving left hand to his partner, crosses to his own side while 2nd man dances in to give left hand to partner to begin the turn and release hands in time to dance out to place.

No.18 – The Countess of Lauderdale's Reel

This is a reel, not a jig as stated.

No.27 - Glasgow Regatta

Bars 5-8 should read,

'1st man leads his partner round by the right to set to 2nd woman.'

No.56 – Miss Betty Boyle's Reel

The customary tune should be *The Singing Strathspey* (Adam Allardyce) and not *We're a' nodding*, which is the lead tune for *Miss Betty Boyle* in the Graded Book.

No.73 – The Seagull

Bar 11 should read, '1st and 3rd couples dance into the middle and begin to turn'

Bar 12 should read, '1st couple finish facing first corners and 3rd couple retire to places.'

No.75 – The Thistle

Bars 1-16. The final sentence should read '2nd couple step up on bars 11-12', not bars 3-4 as stated.

And finally ...

Four Dances 2008

A Trip to Lorient

Ian Brockbank, the deviser of this dance, suggests that bars 1 – 4 of the strathspey would be better danced as advance for one, retire for one and repeat rather than as described in the leaflet.



London Branch launched their Dance Scottish Week events by dancing an Eightsome Reel at eight distinctive London landmarks. A full report of activities during Dance Scottish Week will appear in the next issue. Don't miss out on having your Branch included. Please let the editor know about your involvement in DSW 08.

Photograph by Andrew Dunsmore www.picturepartnership.co.uk



Meanwhile a different kind of Eightsome Reel (well nearly) as dancers show the true spirit of Summer School on the West Sands at St Andrews during Week One.

Interview with Mo Rutherford



Mo Rutherford

Let's start at the beginning, Mo. Where do you come from?

I live in Perth now, but I come from Keith in Banffshire. My mother taught the local SCD class and my father played the accordion. He had two bands – the Glenisla band, who played for Scottish country dancing, and a second band that went round the clubs and played at weddings.

So you grew up surrounded with music?

Yes. Dad had band practice at home. There were always musicians coming to the house, and I remember listening to them rehearse – from a very young age.

What about music at school?

When I was in Primary 2 (aged 6) I remember the class singing a Christmas carol while the teacher accompanied on the piano. I started imitating her, so she asked me if I thought I could play better than her. I replied, "Yes, Miss." So she made me come out and play – and I think it was better! I think I must have been a horrible child! I always liked performing. By the time I left primary school, I knew I wanted a career in music. When I got to secondary school, music was all I ever wanted to do. I used to skive off Maths and Science to go to the Music department.

And then you became a music teacher, didn't you?

I actually started teaching piano and accordion when I was still at school – when I was about 16. My own piano teacher, Mrs Robb, died quite suddenly, and I took on all her private pupils, as well as her role as organist in the Parish Church. That was only a month after my sixteenth birthday. I did that even while still at university. I used to come home from Aberdeen at the weekend to teach her pupils, to play in church, as well as playing in my Dad's band!

Jimmie Hill interviews Maureen Rutherford – known to everyone as Mo – music teacher, class musician, band member, dancer, and wife of band leader, Neil Copland. Mo has been RSCDS Music Director since 2004.

So did you study both the piano and the fiddle at university?

At Aberdeen University I studied piano and singing. I had only started the fiddle when I was about 16, which, with hindsight, was too late. However, I really wanted to be a fiddler. At university I was in the choral society; I played in a chamber music group; and I also played violin in the pit band for some amateur operatic performances – Gilbert and Sullivan and shows like *Lilac Time* – as well, of course, as running home at weekends to play in Dad's band. Neil's poor Granny used to get trailed into all these shows to use my free tickets!

When you were in your teens, who were the musicians you looked up to?

Ian Powrie and Jimmy Blue – no question! Jimmy Blue's widow, Joan, is a very dear friend. Another big influence on me was Pam Wilkie, Ian Powrie's pianist. When I was about 10 or 11, I used to listen to their records and play along. I was Scottish dance music mad in those days, but today I'm more steeped in classical music. Scottish dance music has parameters and once you cross these it's no longer Scottish dance music in an appropriate sense. I love listening to groups like Capercaillie and Blazing Fiddles, but what they are doing with the tradition is different from what we do as dance musicians.

What are these parameters?

I don't like lots of off-beats, syncopation, and going off at a tangent with instrumental solos, but some people do! I believe in keeping it simple, rhythmic, uncomplicated, with good tempo, an interesting melody line with interesting harmonies, but "dinnae start mucking it up with flash things!" As Muriel said, the musician should be "the servant of the dance and the dancers". You have to watch the dancers. They can give you a great feeling when they respond to your playing.

Did you learn country dancing from your mother?

No - I did Highland dancing as a girl with Betty Jessiman of Huntly. She had been a former world champion – and she was Pam Dignan's teacher as well. I concentrated on Highland and competed until I went to university. My mother was my biggest critic. She spent hours helping me with my dancing. I suppose it's quite unusual for a band player

also to be a dancer. On the other hand, most class musicians dance. I just find it very hard to listen to the music and keep still.

What brought you down to this area of Scotland?

After Aberdeen I went to teacher training college in Dundee and started playing in Allan Kindness's band. When Allan gave up playing through ill health, Neil took over his band bookings. He hadn't done much country dance playing before – his background is classical. Christian Catto encouraged me to play for classes and persuaded me to go to Summer School for the first time. That was about 1985.

How did you get on playing at St Andrews for the first time?

I absolutely hated it! I didn't feel welcome or supported as a young musician, so I stayed away for 8 or 9 years. When I came back things had changed. Perhaps I was more mature, but I found the whole thing very different. One thing that does stick in my mind from that first year was being invited – no! 'summoned' – to Kitty MacLachlan's room. I was so scared! I thought I had done something terrible. She said, "Come in, girl, here's a dram!" That was a good memory, but the protocol was out of date and stuffy. You even had to stand up at dinner when the Director came into the room.

Where did you start as a music teacher?

My first job was at Kinross High School, then in Dundee at Linlathen High School. The Head of Music was a brilliant man, Mel Young, and he was a great influence on me. He was inspirational and I succeeded him when he retired. The school was a bit rough, but the kids were gems. When they came in on a Monday morning, they knew we would all be there for them. Some found the stability in the school which, perhaps, was missing from their home lives. Linlathen then closed and I went to St John's as Principal Teacher of Music. I now teach piano in Perth schools, both primary and secondary. I'm also involved with Perth Youth Orchestra, a lovely bunch of children, and I play 2nd violin in Perth Symphony Orchestra.

When did the Neil Copland Scottish Country Dance Band start?

Around 20 years ago Perth SCD teacher Jean Black formed Craigie Dancers, and needed some music for trips abroad and for various demonstrations, so we started out

as a 'family' unit: Neil's brother Allan on 2nd box, and my sister Annie on keyboard.

So, you're basically a four-piece?

We prefer a five-piece band: two accordions, fiddle, keyboard and drums. So far this year, we have only had five on two occasions. People will simply not pay for a five-piece band. People want a three-piece or even a two-piece band. It's a sign of the times.

Which instrument gets dropped first?

Usually, it's the fiddle. A lot of accordionists nowadays have midi-basses, so they don't need a keyboard player either. But if you asked me what I really prefer, it would be to play acoustically. I like an acoustic sound. One of the best times we had in the band was when we played in Edinburgh: Peter Shand from Aberdeen played the grand piano; Neil played the accordion; and I played the fiddle. There was no amplification. The sound was magic. It was a smallish hall, but it's a kind of sound that has been lost. I would love an acoustic piano and a double bass, but it means extra money and people won't pay for it. It's odd that it's the economics which now determine the kind of sound people dance to. Traditionally, Scottish country dancing was a very cheap hobby and a lot of people gave their services for free or for very little, but young musicians today are not interested in playing for nothing. And you can't blame them. You spend a lot of time and money learning your craft; you spend money maintaining your instrument; buying your amplification; buying a big enough car to get to gigs.

When Neil's band plays, you seem to move between piano and fiddle.

I'm better on the piano, but I actually prefer the fiddle. The pianist in a band is vamping most of the time and I find it infernally boring! The piano's in the back line and you're in touch with the dancers because you're keeping the rhythm, but I lose concentration and start talking to the drummer! When I'm playing the fiddle, I feel more in touch with the dancers. I just love to play the fiddle and dancers love its high clear sound. There's a lot of young people today playing traditional Scots fiddle music, but, sadly, not for country dancing.

When did you first play for a country dance class?

When I was 13, I played in the local village hall. The teacher was Sandy Walker from Fochabers. I played almost until I left school. After that I didn't play till I teamed up with Uncle Allan (Kindness) when I came down to Tayside. My class playing now is mainly at Summer School and Day Schools. A particular highlight was last year's Spring Fling in Glasgow. The young people who organised it did a brilliant job.

What is different about a class with a musician?

The teacher doesn't have to mess about with a CD player. I can go to the particular bar the teacher needs. There was one occasion when Neil was playing for class, he was able to point out to the teacher he had missed out 8 bars, but that doesn't happen very often! The downside to being a class musician is when the teacher talks too much and you are sitting around doing nothing. It is very important that the teacher constantly involves the musician. I like a punchy teacher who keeps driving the class forward with lots of practice – lots of dancing, not talking about dancing! I have worked with many excellent teachers who get me involved in the lesson all the time. Dancers like it when the musician gives some information about the music.

As Music Director you are also involved in the training of musicians.

I have taken many day schools for musicians both at home and abroad. When I was first involved at Summer School, David Cunningham taught the accordionists and Judith Linton the fiddlers. After a few years it was obvious it was the same people coming back year after year. The highlight of the week was when all the musicians played for the Saturday evening dance. The emphasis is now on playing for classes. Individual musicians go out and shadow experienced class musicians. The most important thing about musicians who come on these courses is that they should be able to play their instrument competently. There have been some great successes with musicians who originally came to the musicians' course – with some now playing at St Andrews. The Music Director is also responsible for any new recordings and for arranging the music that accompanies any published dances.

Do we market our courses to young Scots musicians?

No, we tend to market the courses within the Society. I'm not sure what the take-up would be here. If young Scottish musicians play for dancing, it's usually ceilidh dancing.

And if they started their own band, they would expect to make some money!

Yes, and they wouldn't make a living playing solely for country dancing or classes!

In your role as Music Director, are all the tunes submitted with new dances accepted?

No, sometimes we're not very happy with a tune. This could be for one of a number of reasons: if it's not a very good tune; if it's not very easy to play; if it doesn't follow a good melody line; if it doesn't have a good harmony; if it doesn't go anywhere musically; if it's a very intricate tune which doesn't give the dancers a definite beat; if it doesn't fit the formations of the dance; or if it just doesn't sound Scottish.

Is there anything that really bugs you when you're playing?

One thing that really annoys me is at a dance when a dancer comes up and tells us what to do. A band works with the MC and it's his or her job to keep us right about tempo or volume and technical things like that. Some dancers think they know better, but the vast majority are very complimentary. I remember my Dad saying, "Oh, no! Here's so-and-so coming!". We actually find today that the vast majority of dancers are very complimentary. Oh, and all bands like to be well fed!

Your band is known as a very traditional band in choice of tune, style and tempo. Is this because you and Neil both come from the North East?

I don't think it's necessarily a North East thing. We both admire people like Ian Powrie and his sound will always be in my head. We met him when we were out in Australia not long ago and it was a very special day for us. His sound was magical. But his tempi were significantly faster than today's bands. The strathspey is quite a bit slower today. I think dancing was softer and lighter in the past. The differences in style between strathspeys is something I always highlight when I'm teaching musicians – the strength and power in tunes like *The Braes of Breadalbane* and *Alltshellach*; the more schottischy style of *The Glasgow Highlanders*, and slow airs such as *Miss Gibson's*.

What about playing abroad?

We've been to Australia, twice to New Zealand, Germany, the Netherlands, as well as England! The main thing about playing outside Scotland is how greatly appreciated we are in places where there is very little live music.

What about the future?

Thanks to the Accordion and Fiddle Clubs and the Festivals, there will always be a supply of new young talented traditional musicians coming along.

Finally, if you had to choose your all-time favourite jig, reel, and strathspey tunes, what would they be?

For a jig it would be *The Swilcan* – Gordon B. Cosh – a swine of a dance! – but an absolutely great tune. For a reel, I don't think you can beat the original for *The Duke of Perth*. It's just smashing! And *The Braes of Breadalbane* would be my strathspey. It's a great tune in a minor key. Tunes in minor keys can be dreich, but it depends how they're played. If I had to choose a strathspey in a major key it would be the original tune for *The Gentleman* – *The Ceilidh Umbrella* – or the original for *The Minister on the Loch* – *Muriel Johnstone's compliments to Robert Mackay*. Both tunes are georgous.

From around the world

Thanks, as always, to our international correspondents, to Lyn Edwards for covering Australia in this issue and, especially, to Marjorie Crawford who is retiring as our New Zealand correspondent.

Africa

Correspondent: Terry Lynne Harris

harrilt@unisa.ac.za

Cape Town Branch's Grace Lofthouse, Scroll recipient 2001, past president and teacher (1974 to November 2007) celebrated her 80th birthday in class on Monday, 2 June 2008. In her honour we danced *80 Years Young*, choreographed by Pat Donaldson. Our 80-year-old dancers are an inspiration to us all. The six of them are pictured in the photograph. How many branches can equal or better our amazing record?



Seated: Grace Lofthouse (80)

Left to right: Jean Houliston (80); Mollie Moles (82); Alf Husband (81); Brenda Brebner (83); and Dulcie Nicol (80)

Irene van Maarseveen, long-standing Pretoria Branch member and teacher, left Pretoria in May 2008 and moved to Belfast in the province of Mpumalanga to join her partner, Sid Jones, and take up a new job. Born in Johannesburg, Irene grew up in Pretoria and obtained her BSc degree in Physics and Maths at the University of Pretoria. Her interests include music, hiking, photography and, of course, Scottish country dancing, which has been a passion of hers for almost 30 years. In 1986 she passed her preliminary exam and in 1994 she became a fully qualified SCD teacher. She has devised numerous dances, two of which, *Joie de Vivre* and *Noah's Ark*, were published by the RSCDS. Pretoria Branch's two books of dances, *Dancing Thistles* and *Many Happy Hours*, both contain a number of Irene's dances. Irene is sorely missed in Pretoria. The Branch is sincerely grateful for her friendliness and vast contribution to SCD in Pretoria.

Asia

Correspondent: Arthur McNeill

amcneill@hkbu.edu.hk



Stephen Li with some of his students

In most Scottish country dance groups located outside the English-speaking world, the members are a mixture of locals and expatriates, and classes are generally taught in English. In Hong Kong, where 98% of the population are native speakers of Cantonese, there are probably many potential dancers who would like to learn Scottish country dancing, but would prefer to be taught in their native language. To find out whether classes taught in Cantonese would be popular, Stephen Li, Hong Kong's only Chinese (almost) fully certificated SCD teacher, devised and conducted a series of workshops, taught in Cantonese, following the RSCDS teaching principles he has learned both in Hong Kong and at the St. Andrews Summer School.

During 2007-2008 a total of five different workshops were held, ranging in length from two to five days. Between 30 and 35 participants attended most days. The workshops introduced participants to the basic steps and formations and typically started with a simple dance like *Cumberland Reel* and culminated in more complex dances such as *Moulin Rouge* and *Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder!* In fact, most of the participants were enthusiastic dancers who had already learned different styles of international dances through their membership of local folk dance groups. Stephen trained his best dancers in advance so that they could demonstrate the new formations and

dances. They are now preparing a demonstration video, which should help to promote Scottish country dancing to even more Chinese dancers.

Stephen is aware that learning Scottish country dancing involves more than a mastery of techniques. The workshops included cultural elements such as the stories associated with particular dances, some dance etiquette, the kilt and other dance clothing, and an appreciation of the music. If Scottish country dancing is to make a serious impression in China, classes taught in Chinese are likely to have the highest impact. Perhaps the soundtrack of Stephen's video needs to have instructions in both Cantonese and Mandarin.

Australia

Correspondent: Lyn Edwards

Queensland Branch (on this occasion)

lynedwa@bigpond.net.au

One hundred and seventy eager participants gathered at Tallebudgera on the beautiful Gold Coast of Queensland from 6th to 13th July for our annual Australian Winter School.

Teachers were Bill Zobel, Vancouver Island; Noeline O'Connor, Wellington; Avis Harrison, Leeds; Anne Kennedy, Sydney; Mary Davidson, Brisbane; and Mechthild Timmins, Adelaide. All were treated to fantastic music throughout the week by Muriel Johnstone, Vancouver Island; Keith Smith, UK; Catherine Fraser, Adelaide; Bruce Mitchell, Caboolture Qld; and Balmoral Band NZ consisting of Iain McKenzie, Sharlene Penman and Anne-Marie Forsyth. Muriel led the musicians and 'wowed' us with her music each dance session and every social night. Keith and Catherine lead some fiddle workshops that were much appreciated by local musicians, and Sharlene took some sessions for the junior musicians who showed off their expertise at the Musician's Social on Friday evening and stunned us with their rhythm and playing.

On Tuesday evening we held a ceilidh with Muriel as an entertaining MC. Queensland Branch began with an item about the serious water restrictions in place including four-minute showers. Some members then danced the *Four Minute Reel*. The junior



RSCDS 33rd Australian Winter School Queensland 2008 Committee

class taught by Mechthild was piped in by Andrew Timmins. The members were all dressed as little penguins and danced The Piper and the Penguin. They had made all their accessories in class and looked wonderful. Melbourne and District Branch made fun of the cold and showery weather and Sydney showed a great PowerPoint presentation to promote the 34th Australian Winter School at Kiama (south of Sydney) in July 2009.

We were bussed to a formal dinner where Keith and Catherine treated us with their fiddle playing followed by some dancing as other musicians joined in. The juniors were well catered for with activities in the Kids' Club.

After supper each night, many gathered in "Kirra Beach" room and had more fun with music, dance and rhyme until the late hours. Bill did an amazing job with sound all week, constantly checking levels and making sure all was just right. This was truly appreciated by all. Queensland thanks all the participants for sharing the fun.

Details and brochure for the 34th Australian Winter School may be found at <http://www.rscds.org.au/winterschool/index2009.html> where Kiama will be The Trysting Place. We hope many overseas dancers will join us there.

Europe

Correspondent: Christiane Orgeret
ochristi@gmail.com

Last November, money was a sore point, hotly debated at the AGM. So I interviewed the European secretaries on the topic. They all agree that locally SCD is not a costly activity and they aim at keeping it that way. The admission fees to balls and weekend schools are higher in Europe than in the UK because of the travelling expenses of musicians and teachers. The positive consequence of this extra spending is that within Germany, Holland, France etc., many are offering shared transport, and hospitality to dancers from elsewhere.

RSCDS scholarships have been much appreciated by the recipients, but many do not fit the requirements in age or skill and, even those who do, may apply in vain. The half scholarships offered this year are considered an excellent idea: two (young) people will attend Summer School instead of one, both undoubtedly keen since they are ready to pay for part of it. Interesting initiatives are being taken within groups: some help future or current teachers pay the tuition of the teaching certificate, or manage small scholarships of their own. Others prefer to favour the attendance of balls and social dances or workshops nearer home.

The RSCDS is a charity and charity should and does begin at home, by finding funds to subsidize SCD: raising money through demonstrations, tea parties, will pay for hall-rental; holding a ceilidh the day before a ball means we can afford live music for both events. It is only fair to make sure that all members can afford to attend their own group's events.

Individual members also struggle to overcome money obstacles: when a young dancer comes to St Andrews with her grandmother (what a fabulous Christmas present!), when couples with small children rent a house or hire a babysitter together, the people concerned share much more than money and their youthful enthusiasm benefits fellow dancers.

Some remarkable schemes have been implemented: after a trip to Russia, the participants thanked the young and welcoming group by inviting some of them to Summer School; a raffle with only one prize - a Montpellier Ball weekend for two - sold enough (very cheap) tickets to send two more young Russians to St Andrews.

The infinite potential of goodwill among members of our Society can thus transform financial issues into opportunities for creative and enterprising projects. The theme of the next AGM is communication: let's hope its outcome will promote exchanges, twinnings, all ways of sharing SCD as widely as possible

South America

Correspondent: Marcella Galve
bascdancers@yahoo.com.ar

Fortunately BASCDancers goes on incorporating new members as well as keeping our old friends - The Old Generation - as we call ourselves. Considering we are a relatively new group we are becoming leaders in Scottish country dance classes in Buenos Aires. There was proof of this at a Scottish party organised lately by a very

popular group of pipers in our city, the South American Piping Association.

We had a whale of a time dancing, showing and teaching how to dance to other guests in the party who have never danced before. SCD is social dancing and even those who had never heard of it before, could understand the true objectives of the dances: having great fun, socialising and meeting new friends. It was incredible how young people joined the dances at the party and asked for a repeat after they had learnt the figures. BASCDancers is proud to have made this viable since we consider it our task to transmit the spirit of SCD in our city and country.

And in doing so we had our Annual Walking and Dancing Day on the Delta of the Paraná



Buenos Aires Scottish Country Dancers.

River last April. This time our teacher put the emphasis on dances with Promenade and Allemande - figures we are still polishing in our weekly classes. *Tribute to the Borders, Rakes of Glasgow and Sandy O'er The Lea* are a few examples of what we are attempting at present.

Japan

Correspondent: Tom Toriyama
Tomtori@aol.com

Tokyo Branch's weekend was held on 22-24 February. 150 dancers, in spite of hail, heavy rain and gale-force winds, enjoyed dancing classes, as well as music classes and social dancing in the National Women's Education Centre. Our visiting experts were Robert and Barbara McOwen together with our own Shigeo Igarashi, Hiroko Kokai and Mieko Murakami. Usually activities in public venues in Japan must finish by 9 p.m. Robert and Barbara said aloud, "Finish dancing? In Boston it is just time to start dancing!"

With 48 dancers from foreign countries, the International SCD Festival organised by Atsuko Clement and her helpers on 4-6 April was a great success. The music provided by Muriel Johnstone, Hiroko Kokai and Keith Smith together with the teaching of Bill Zobel and Muriel excited and stimulated 230 dancers.

The total number of RSCDS members in the



Dancers from Japan help TAC celebrate its 50th Anniversary,

three Japanese Branches fell from 790 in 2006/2007 to 713 in 2007/2008. We could not decide if this was caused by an increase in subscription nor could we think of another reason. Anyway, we should try to encourage an increase in membership for next year.

In the last issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* opinions about strathspeys were disturbing! To us they are never "second best" and it is not too much to say that we do quick-time dances between strathspeys. If the number of strathspeys at a social dancing event were less than one in three the dancers would blame the organisers for depriving them of their enjoyment! Some of our teachers are still keen to teach pre-1923 strathspeys. Also, slower strathspeys under 30 bars per minute are comfortable for us. Perhaps this is because of Japanese culture as most Japanese traditional dances and performances, wearing kimonos, are in slow time. Our daily life of sitting down and standing up on tatamis (straw mats) helps to maintain muscle control. Old strathspey tunes are very much in harmony with Japanese people's feelings.

New Zealand

Correspondent: Marjorie M Crawford

jaymarcrawfors@actrix.co.nz

As I pen this message - my last article for *Scottish Country Dancer* - I cannot help but reflect upon all I have said (or read about) over the past three years. It's been wonderful to hear opinions from all over the Scottish country dance world and I congratulate the Society on its decision to replace *The Bulletin* (useful to Branch Officers - as I was in the 1980's - but probably of little interest to the membership as a whole) with such a vibrant and informative publication.

What's been going on in New Zealand since I was last in touch?

Examinations at Wellington Summer School went ahead as planned, using the web-based learning environment: and it is planned to continue in this way, offering examinations at Summer School in Christchurch in December this year.

We are delighted to hear that Muriel Johnstone will be joining us once again.

Summer School 2009/2010 will be held in Auckland - in North Shore City (i.e. across the Harbour Bridge)!

I am delighted to tell you that one of our long-standing members, Dr Timothy Haskell, a physicist who dances at the Lower Hutt Club (Wellington Region) was awarded the New Zealand Antarctic Medal in the 2008 New Year's Honours List for his very significant contribution - and services - to Antarctic Science. The combination of Tim's professional work and his participation in Scottish country dancing led him to an interest in William Spiers Bruce, and to the 1902-1904 Scotia Expedition to the Antarctic.

North America - East Coast

Correspondent: John Middleton

jjceilidh@sympatico.ca

The main event this summer has been TAC's 50th birthday celebrations (see page 10).

Thistle School of Scottish Country Dance happens in early July in Banner Elk, North Carolina. This very successful school provides an essential meeting place for the dancers and teachers of the southern and mid-west US to get together, to talk together, and to dance together.

TAC Summer School followed immediately after the TAC Weekend and was also held at Wilfrid Laurier University. Again, a most successful school upheld the traditions of excellent teaching, fine music, good dancing and fun. There were over 200 participants at the Saturday night Dinner and Ball. Next year, the school will be held, once again, at Shawnigan Lake on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

The Carolinas Branch will be performing at the opening ceremonies of the Charleston, South Carolina, Highland Games on September 20, 2008. This is to help celebrate Dance Scottish Week. Dancers from both North and South Carolina will be dancing at this event and Western North Carolina will also help celebrate Dance Scottish Week with a Tea Dance.

I will close this report on a sad note as we recognize the passing of six pioneers of Scottish Country Dancing in this general area. We also recognize that their enthusiasm for our favourite pastime made huge contributions to the success of dancing in their respective areas. Dr. Larry Crist of the Central Kentucky Branch; Nora Kindness of the Cincinnati Branch; Betty Speirs of the Montreal Branch; and Marianne Taylor of the Boston Branch, John Dey and Terry Murphy, Windsor, Ontario Branch. Their respective Branches will miss them - as will the entire Scottish Country Dance community.

North America - West Coast

Correspondent: Alan Twihigg

keltech@earthlink.net

In Vancouver, BC in May two teaching events were held simultaneously in different venues, the Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, which I attended, and Youth Weekend West. On Saturday evening the groups converged at the Thistle Ball with Neil Copland's Band, held at a First Nations meeting hall. Lesley Martin, accompanied by James Gray, conducted the teacher workshop and the musicians had separate classes on Saturday with Maureen Rutherford and Neil Copland. We all then met together on Sunday morning for a synthesis session - it was great to observe and hear all the different approaches to teaching and Scottish music from the varied participants!

Elsewhere in the north, RSCDS Victoria Branch celebrates its 35th anniversary this year. On November 1, they will hold a workshop geared towards beginner dancers, followed by a lunch and a social dance. The program will contain dances popular during the 1970s and 1980s, many of which are still danced regularly. Vancouver Island will host the 2009 TAC Summer School at Shawnigan Lake, BC from July 26 to August 2. I've attended the past Summer Schools held at this facility and can strongly recommend it!

From Seattle Branch comes a tale of dancer longevity - members went east to Yakima in May to celebrate the 100th birthday of a formerly active dancer, Harold McNiece, and he was able to join in dancing *The Belle of Bon Accord*, his favourite dance.

Proving that SCD happens in the interior, the Thistle & Ghillies Scottish Country Dancers of Boise, Idaho, will hold their annual St. Andrews Supper and Dance on November 22. The evening includes a finger-food supper, a relatively short dance program and a ceilidh. Houston & District Branch has big plans for Dance Scottish Week with two programs at Discovery Green, a new 11-acre park in downtown Houston. First will be a program for children, then a promenade through the park following a piper, before dancing on the main stage. In November, the Branch will celebrate its 30th anniversary.

San Francisco Bay Area dancers are preparing for the major Highland Games on Labor Day weekend at the Alameda County fairgrounds. It's one of the largest games in North America and has been held since the 1860s, not old by Scottish standards but quite venerable for California. For a number of years the SF Branch has staged a Scottish country dance adjudication, where teams at various levels present a medley of dances to be critiqued by two senior teachers. The teams are not ranked in competition, but perform for the experience and to achieve their personal best.

Technique Doctor

Bruce Frazer offers some helpful guidance on dancing the Ladies' Chain.



After teaching a ladies' chain I was once asked about the pattern of the formation. I realised the question had arisen because the dancer had been taught it originally as it had been written in "Won't You Join the Dance?" and so my first observation was to point out the description in the Manual had changed the floor pattern particularly for the women. Perhaps this is a timely reminder that some of our instructions have developed with subtle changes and it is incumbent on teachers to instruct their classes accordingly. For many, it is like passing your driving test – opening the Manual (Highway Code) after passing the test is something of a rarity.

Depending on the dance, the ladies' chain may start with couples side by side with their partner eg *Rudha Dubha* (Book 23) although this is more common in square sets or round the room dances. More commonly in longwise sets, the first couple are on opposite sides of the dance in second

place eg *Kendall's Hornpipe* (Graded Book). The important thing to remember is that the men should have a woman on their right to start. For the purpose of this article I have adopted the positions used in the Manual ie first couple on the men's side and second couple on the women's side, both women on the right of their partner.

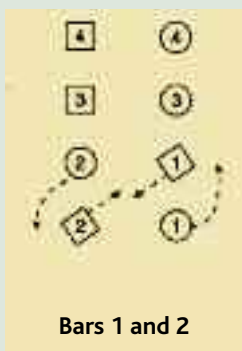
WYJTD had the two women giving right hands to cross over and dance into the opposite man place whilst the men danced into their partner's places before starting the left hand turn. I always felt this was not an attractive movement and certainly was not an easy one to teach. The Manual on the other hand has the women giving right hands to cross over whilst the men curve to the right and dance towards their partner's place – a point to be emphasised. The diagram shows quite clearly the women then being in the middle of the set to start the left hand turn. This gives a much more pleasing appearance of a straight line on the

diagonal between the right hand cross and left hand turn.

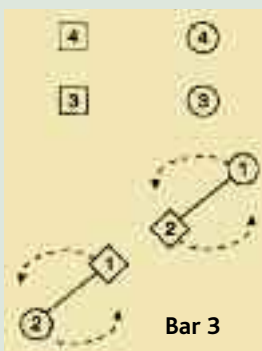
As with all chain movements, there are excellent opportunities for good handing and eye contact. Hands are given at shoulder height in two bar phrases – right hands on bars 1-2 and 5-6 and left hands on bars 3-4 and 7-8. At no point should right and left hands be joined at the same time. The women, having acknowledged each other with right hands can look forward with anticipation at the men as they dance up on the sides (photo 1). As soon as they let go with the right hands, women then join left hands with the men in a straight line, centring the turns in 1st woman's and 2nd man's places (photo 2). An exciting element of dancing is light and shade – variation in the length of steps within a formation and so it is in a ladies' chain, especially for the men who have to lengthen their steps to complete the left hand turns.

These comments also apply to a men's chain of course and if you want to add an extra challenge by rotating the axis of the formation through 90 degrees try the *Royal Albert Country Dance* (Book 34) or *Speirs Bruce, the Pole Star* (Scotia Suite).

Footnote: When I congratulated Derek Haynes on matching the pattern of the targe in *The Clansman* (Book 32) with the real thing, he responded by telling me it was based on a ladies' chain danced badly!



Bars 1 and 2



Bar 3



End of Bar 4

Ladies' chain

This formation is danced by two couples. The starting position may vary, but the women always stand on the right of the men.

Steps 8 travelling steps

No of bars 8

Hands The hands are given at shoulder height with a shake-hand hold.

Bars

1-2 1st and 2nd women, giving right hands, cross over to pass each other. At the same time, curving out to their right, 1st and 2nd men dance towards the woman's place.

3-4 Giving left hands, 1st and 2nd women turn their partners. The women finish diagonally opposite their starting place and the men finish back where they started, facing out.

5-6 Repeat bars 1 and 2.

7-8 Giving left hands, 1st woman turns 2nd man and 2nd woman turns 1st man. All finish in their starting positions.

Note

1st and 2nd men finish the final turn by pulling back the left shoulder (polite turn).

From Banff to Norway

Anne McArthur writes about an initiative to promote SCD among the children of Banffshire that produced some surprising results.

RSCDS (Banffshire Branch) likes to push back its boundaries. In 2004, the Branch published its first book of dances to commemorate its 75th anniversary. In 2006, it launched its successful CD *A' the best fae Banffshire* to complement the book. In 2008 the Branch turned its attention to teaching in local primary schools.

In partnership with Active Primary Schools, the Branch prepared a proposal to teach dancing to primary pupils in the Banff Primary Schools Network – 8 schools, 56 classes, children aged 5-12. Funding was secured from the local Community Development Group and Banffshire Branch provided the teachers. The project was implemented between January and June 2008.

Every child: primary one-primary seven had the opportunity of four 45 minute sessions of dancing. Some children loved the experience, their eyes lit up, their smiles told it all while a few tolerated it with hands in their pockets and shoulders slouched.

Primaries one–three skipped and slip stepped their way through *The Flying Scotsman*, *Virginia Reel*, *A Reel for Jeannie* and of course *Prince of Orange*. There was a lot of enthusiasm and plenty of energy among the children. They listened well, aided and abetted by teachers and auxiliaries.

Primaries four and five were gems. They made a real attempt at the steps, the formations and the dances. Be it *Gay Gordons*, *Strip the Willow* or *The Flying Scotsman*, there was a great relationship between the dancers, the music and the teachers. In one school those in wheel chairs were pushed around the room to the music and joined in with some of the dances. Yes, it is possible.

Some of the primary sixes and sevens were really excited and anxious to learn, but some didn't want to dance. And then there were the challenges.

Some classes liked to choose their own



Portsoy Primary School dancers on stage at the Skude Festival in Norway.

partner, other classes didn't and had to be lined up to take pot luck. Occasionally boys would only dance with boys and girls with girls with never the twain meeting. Hands? You might hold sleeves; you might hold wrists; you might even link arms; you might just dance round each other but you just don't hold hands. Pupils' attire caused issues. Black gym shoes with velcro don't really work, they open and trip you up.



Sightseeing in Skudeneshavn.

Trainers make you sound like an elephant. Fashionable long trousers that trail on the ground make you slip. Oh for a pair of pumps and a skirt or shorts.

The next step was to organise continuous professional development sessions for teachers and support staff. The evaluations were positive although the participants said the dance teacher didn't give them enough rests.

The Scottish Traditional Boat Festival in Portsoy, Banffshire, now in its seventeenth year, has music and dance as a key feature. This year the children involved in the project were invited to bring along a parent or grandparent to a family ceilidh, where the adults were invited to participate with the children in country and ceilidh dancing. A happy afternoon was had by all.

The 'icing on the cake' came out of the blue when the organisers of the Skude Festival in Norway invited a team of dancers to perform at their annual festival in Skudeneshavn in July. There was strong competition from the six/seven class at Portsoy Primary School for the team places. Funding was provided by the Banff and Buchan Arts Forum, Banffshire Branch and local businesses, including Soy Kilts who provided matching tartan skirts. The children did some fundraising themselves.

Dressed in Oakleigh tartan skirts and black t-shirts the girls danced a selection of Scottish country and ceilidh dances at different venues over the three day festival. They gave an impromptu performance for local television, and on another occasion guided some Norwegian children through *The Flying Scotsman*, *Virginia Reel* and *Prince of Orange* with some mouth music from the dance teacher.

The whole project has been fruitful. The feedback has been very positive. Children want to continue dancing, teachers and auxiliaries are asking about classes. There is life in one of your oldest Branches yet as it nears its 80th anniversary.

Leeds Scottish Country Dance Club

by Lesley Enoch and Gerry Yates



Young dancers at the Leeds Festival of Scottish Dancing

The club was formed in 1951 by a group of people interested in Scottish dancing. The early dances were held at Adel, but as attendances grew they moved to their present home, St Chad's Parish Centre. Shortly after the Club was formed the committee organised its first Festival of Scottish Dancing which was to be held outdoors if the weather was fine, but a programme was always devised so that if it rained we could move indoors. In later years the Festival attracted over 40 adult and 20 children's teams from all over the country, with usually the City of Leeds Pipe Band leading a spectacular Grand March and the dancing accompanied by a band from Scotland.

The afternoon took the format of massed dancing for both adults and children, Highland dancing and demonstrations from some of the teams. If the Leeds RSCDS Branch or one of the other groups had a party of dancers from abroad visiting, they would be asked to give a demonstration. The Festival was always followed in the evening by a social dance with the same band playing. One year in the late 1950s Jimmy Shand played and a live recording was made.

The record attendance at one of these evenings saw 909 dancers attending, dancing to three bands in three dance halls (Jimmy Shand, Jim Johnstone and Andrew Rankine). Those were the days!

Unfortunately after 43 years the Club was unable to continue organising the Festival. York SCD Club took up the challenge for six successful years, and for the last four years Leeds Branch have taken the reins. This year was the 54th White Rose Festival (as it is now called) with dancing to the music of Nicol McLaren and the Glencairn SCD band. Unfortunately the event had to be held indoors owing to the amount of rain leading up to the day. However the Festival went with a swing and a very successful and enjoyable time was had by all. We opened with a Grand March led by our piper Alan Harrison. The programme theme this year was the dances of Hugh Foss and Hugh Thurston (with a generous sprinkling of Roy Goldring) so the programme included *JB Milne*, *Fugal Fergus*, *Schiehallion* and of course *The Flying Scotsman!* Over 240 dancers, including some of the children, stayed on for the evening dance. We look forward to welcoming even more dancers to

our next Festival on Saturday 11 July 2009 when George Meikle and the Lothian Band will be playing.

A former highlight of the Club's calendar was a dance held at Bolton Castle in the Yorkshire Dales (one of the castles where Mary Queen of Scots was held captive). This wonderful weekend ran for over 21 years. As dancers arrived we had a lone piper on the ramparts welcoming us. Dancers would often camp locally and on the Sunday most would go on a walk in the beautiful Dales countryside. When the owners decided to use the castle differently, an alternative venue couldn't be found, so now we end the season with an almost equally prestigious Summer Ball.

Another popular activity is the Autumn Weekend, when dancers get together for a weekend of social dancing and walking. Weekends have been organised in the Lake District, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales and on the Yorkshire coast. Just after New Year we hold our President's Dance when the President chooses his or her programme and MC's the event. This is always a sell-out!

We still dance on two Saturdays a month, one to live music and the other to CDs. A recent innovation has been the walk through dance, when every dance is walked through. This theme was introduced to encourage less experienced dancers from the Branch and other classes to come to a social dance with live music, before they attempted a dance with just a recap.

With over half a century behind us we are still a thriving SCD Club holding friendly and happy dances. Bands down from Scotland often remark on the warm social atmosphere we always seem to conjure up. Hopefully Leeds SCD Club will continue to thrive for many more years.

Record Breakers



In the last issue members were invited to lay claim to the highest, lowest, biggest or most unusual Scottish country dance. No one has yet surpassed the achievement reported in Marcela Galve's column in issue 4 of *La Paz Scottish Dancing Group* who danced at 5,260 metres (17,358 feet) on Mount Chacaltaya in Bolivia. However Cy Chadley has told *Scottish Country Dancer* about the time in 1997 when members of San Diego Branch went to the other extreme and claimed the lowest Scottish country dance in Death Valley at 86 metres below sea level (minus 282 feet). Cy added, "What made this even more remarkable was that a couple of days before the same group had danced on top of Mount Whitney (4,418 metres) in what was, at the time, the highest Scottish country dance."

Any more record breakers out there?

Cy (third from left) and friends on top of Mount Whitney.



Platinum

St Andrews Branch

Platinum is the well chosen title for the CD and booklet of dances celebrating '70 Years of Dancing at St Andrews'.

The neat booklet, inserted into the CD case, contains instructions for 13 dances, which comprise this recent package from RSCDS St Andrews Branch. Also included are poignant photographs of St Andrews and details relating to the music and dances. However teachers will need to enlarge the rather small print for ease of use.

The CD is in two parts; the first part encompasses 5 new dances. The first three, written by Lewis N. Derrick, celebrate both the 70th Anniversary and the close relationship of St Andrews Branch with the present RSCDS Chairman – Irene Bennett. Dances 4 and 5, written by Branch members, are dedicated to Prince William's undergraduate years in the City.

The second part embraces dances originally written for the Golden Jubilee in 1987.

This two part theme is continued with the music. David Cunningham Snr with Ron Gonella recorded the original Jubilee music that has been digitally remastered for the benefit of the CD. The music includes a wealth of well known traditional tunes along with the original for each dance. The tunes blend well, are pleasant on the ear and expertly played providing a steady rhythm and good impetus for the dancer.

The music for the first five dances is played by David Cunningham and his Band; recording some 20 years after his father. David R. Cunningham has written the original tunes for the Prince William dances while the originals for the 70th Celebration Dances were written by the late Ian R. Morrison. Jigs and reels are jaunty and rhythmical giving plenty of lift to the dancer while *Irene Bennett's Strathspey* is played in David R. Cunningham's inimitable style; the tunes blending harmoniously.

The 5 new dances contain a variety of formations. *The Chairman's Chain* involves an interesting Chain Progression followed by Allemande while *The Bejant Royal* emphasises its royal connections with crown triangles.

Teachers of Scottish dance will find the new dances an interesting addition to their

repertoire and much enjoyment will be gained from dancing to the excellent musical renditions of the Cunningham Bands.

Marion Turnock, Leicester Branch

Music for Book 11 RSCDS



This CD is recorded by John Renton and his Scottish dance Band featuring a line-up of John (lead accordion), Marie Fielding (fiddle), Ricky Franci (2nd

accordion), Agnes Liddell (piano) and Gus Millar (drums). The recording is a fine example of straight-forward traditional playing with a solid beat.

From the first track of *Knit the Pocky* to the last track, *Miss Murray of Ochertyre*, we are taken on a musical journey from the 18th and 19th centuries to the present. The tunes are a good mix of traditional and modern and include several of John's own compositions alongside those of Mackintosh, Gow and Skinner. All tracks have carefully selected and well matched sets of tunes which suit the style of the dances.

Johnny McGill (40 bar jig) and *The Moudiewort* have particularly fine sets which are lively and playful. Both, however, could be played with a little more lift.

John's selection of 8 terrific tunes for *The Long Chase* (64 bar reel) is excellent, providing greater interest and encouragement to the dancers! *Miss Murray of Ochertyre* (16 bar reel) is a super final track. John plays 4 x 32 bar tunes; the jauntiness of the hornpipes suit the dance well. Perhaps these fine arrangements will inspire teachers to revisit these long-forgotten reels, or at least use the music in class. Much loved dances *Knit the Pocky* and *Sleepy Maggie* have energetic sets of tunes with good variety and great transitions.

The strathspeys feature strong, traditional tunes which will be recognised by many. The music for *Monymusk*, *Inch of Perth* and *Glasgow Flourish* has purpose and drive.

I feel however, that the strathspeys are played on the brisk side, most noticeably *Monymusk* (7:50). At this tempo, the very character and strength of the strathspey step is lost.

The jigs and reels are played slightly slower

than we are used to on the west coast of the United States. Tempi are a matter of taste dependent on several factors, one being local preferences. Indeed, this recording reminded me of dancing in my youth in Scotland.

All the musicians on this CD are skilled and have a wealth of experience. Personally, I would like to have heard more prominent fiddle and piano. One slight criticism I have is the lack of "light and shade" in the phrasing of the music. A variety of "texture" within the tunes refreshes the dancer and inspires a flowing execution of figures to match the musical phrase.

That said, this recording is a welcome addition to a dance teacher's CD collection. As well as providing the music for many favourite dances, it will be most useful for teachers working with beginners, both adults and children, who may otherwise have difficulty hearing the beat. John Renton and his Band remind us all how traditional music is played in Scotland. Well done!

Linda Henderson, San Francisco Branch

Music for Book 9 plus 4 Dances 2008 plus 2 Eileen Watt Dances RSCDS



What a wonderful idea – to give us not just the music for book 9, but to add recordings for 6 modern (and I'm sure by now favourite) dances, several of which have not been recorded before to my knowledge.

I am not a musician, but I have been dancing since the days when people still had 78s. Our club always had a great collection of LPs and now has more than 100 original CDs, so I've heard a few tunes. I got this double CD, looked at the dance titles and immediately skipped to track 4 on the second CD. Liam and his team do an excellent job of *Cadgers!*

The following track (*Cauld Kail*) is one of the best recordings of a medley I've come across. The tempo of both the strathspey and the reel are good and the junction is beautifully done, from a dancing point of view.

I enjoyed all the reels and jigs on both recordings. The fingering of both Lindsay Weir and Liam Stewart is very clean, tempo is excellent and there are some cracking new tunes to add to the traditional ones.

My concern with both bands is that their strathspeys are a little chunky. I'm not favouring the move to Scottish Airs that we are hearing more of, but I like to hear a distinction between a dance that involves Highland Schottische (as *The Braes of Busby* and *The Jimm Waist* do) and one that doesn't (*Madge Wildfire's Strathspey* or *The Duchess of Atholl's Slipper*). I noticed particularly that there was "white space" (a singing term) between the end of the "urge" note of Lindsay's strathspeys and the following note – making for a crisp but choppy sound.

I am pleased that a 6 x 32 recording of *My Love She's But a Lassie Yet* has been included. Many of our club members in New Zealand can't handle 96 bars of reel or jig on the trot any more. However, I'm not sure that four times *Festival Interceltique* is really enough – maybe 6?

One final observation before closing: Both bands have fiddlers, but I missed them. I would also have liked to hear some variation from the drummers.

This two CD set has some wonderful, high-energy tunes on it that made me want to get up and dance; both the dances from the 18th century and the brand new ones.

Damon Collin, New Zealand Branch

Dance Scottish Pack RSCDS



I took part in the original pilot of the Dance Scottish Pack and was pleased that all the suggestions were accepted. In Easdale we have used the pack every year and find it very helpful in both content and layout, e.g. spiral bound instruction book. We used the CD with the pre five children for movement and clapping rhythms which they enjoyed. They love skipping to the music.

Every child in the school learns at least one set dance per year and all children can do

most of the social dances. They really like the Grand March. We hold a St Andrew's Ceilidh every year in school and last year some of the parents joined us. The senior class usually make up a set dance using the moves they enjoy best.

New Pack

I found the DVD very helpful and I am sure all our staff will agree. I would also use it with the children to demonstrate more complicated moves. I was pleased to see boys taking part as I find primary boys feel less uncomfortable doing dances with definite moves and strong rhythms – they also enjoy jive for the same reason. I thought the warm up section was fun and children could develop their own ideas for warm ups. These could be used for warm ups for other PE activities and we will use these with the children from the pre five unit this session.

The CD is lively and has a good pace for children. The rhythm and phrases are very clear which again is ideal for children.

The PDF file is very similar to the original instruction book. The instructions are clear and the diagrams clarify most difficulties. It is very helpful having a glossary with instructions for moves. We have had few difficulties following the instructions in the original book and have taught most if not all the dances since the pack was issued. We have found with some of the more difficult dances you have to try them out with the children before you fully understand the instructions. The new video clips will resolve this. It is useful having the grading on the dances.

Suggestions

There are many ways that this pack could be used across the curriculum, e.g. use the instructions as a functional reading activity with older pupils, used to consolidate tables especially x8 etc.

- 1 Add some new long set dances especially very simple ones for infant classes or make the instructions for "alternative dances" available on the RSCDS website as each one seems to be in a different book.
- 2 Continue to make a spiral bound instruction book available perhaps at an additional cost.
- 3 Consider putting additional video clips on the RSCDS web site

Staff and pupils have really enjoyed using the pack and staff found it helpful and easy to use. The new pack has welcome additions. Thank you for producing it.

Maggie Anderson, Easdale Primary School, Oban

An introduction to warming up and cooling down for Scottish Country Dancing RSCDS

This is an A4 booklet which gives comprehensive information on the rationale and methodology of preparing dancers for classes or social dancing. Given the importance of warming up and cooling down in the avoidance of injury and the enhancement of the dancing experience, this booklet should be regarded as an essential part of any teacher's or dancer's resources.

While much of the information will be familiar to those with movement training, the range of exercises suggested, will increase and enhance their methodology. For those less familiar with core movement skills and anatomy, the booklet is a treasure trove of knowledge and experience. It will be well worth the time and patience to become familiar with it.

The booklet is easy to follow with exercises separated into groups related to particular purposes – increasing blood flow, stretching, strengthening and heightening mental activity. There are suggested tunes for musicians, also CD tracks for those relying on recorded music.

The sections, giving hints on applying the exercises to different types and levels of class, are very useful, particularly for those taking a children's class for the first time.

Anne Smyth, Lochaber Branch



London Branch dancers launching Dance Scottish Week.

*Photograph by Andrew Dunsmore
www.picturepartnership.co.uk*

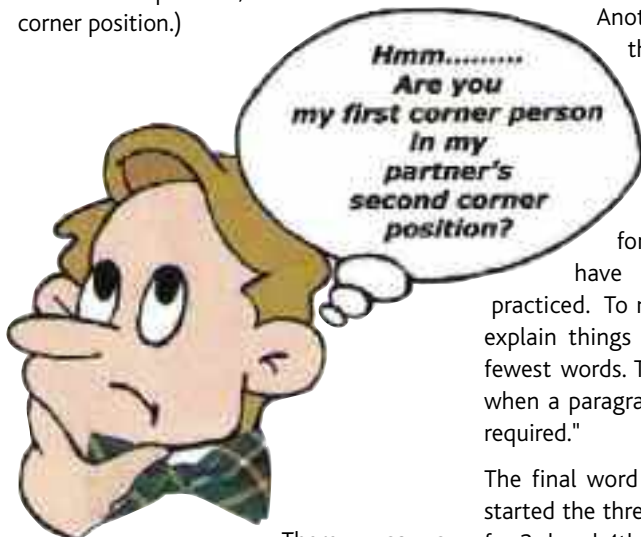
Overheard on the Web



Regular contributor Chris Ronald (New York) shares two hot topics from the Strathspey List with readers of Scottish Country Dancer.

Corner positions

A teacher preparing crib notes for a dance asked for opinions on the words to use when referring to corner persons who are no longer in their original corner positions. The options were: (1) Refer to the person (e.g. 2nd man and 3rd woman); (2) Refer to the corner where they began (e.g. first corner people); or (3) Refer to the corner position where they are now (e.g. partner's first corner position, or 3rd corner position.)



There was a broad consensus on using the third option. But this was only the beginning of the discussion. It quickly emerged that the word "corner" can be confusing, as it's sometimes used to refer to people and sometimes to positions in a set. A number of subscribers urged that "corner", when used on its own, should refer only to a position, rather than to a person. As one said, "for brevity, and in my own notes, I prefer positions, and to have positions all numbered, i.e. to say "4th corner position" rather than "partner's 2nd corner position". Not everyone agreed. One said, "I strongly dislike "3rd corner" and "4th corner" adding that "1st corner (person) who is now in partner's 1st corner position" would be "clearest of all" for her. Another, while preferring 'position' to 'person', explained "3rd and 4th corners don't mean much to me, probably because I haven't thought of it that way for all these years and have developed other ways of thinking about it."

Another said: "I have no problem with "partner's first or second corner" but just because I am very familiar with it. However, I think that 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th corner is much more logical and, initially, teachable. It is simple, just 1, 2, 3, 4 rather than 1, 2 of one's own corner and then 1, 2 of one's partner's corner. To say "partner's corner" adds another thought process, which is not necessary with the 1, 2, 3, 4. I would say that for new dancers and for simplicity, the four corners are preferable."

Another teacher added: "If I ask them to face their 3rd corner there is no problem because we have done it before. It is as easy as teaching 1st and 2nd corner. They, too, are foreign concepts before they have been explained and practiced. To me, a good teacher should explain things clearly and simply in the fewest words. Too many speak a chapter when a paragraph - or less - is all that is required."

The final word goes to the teacher who started the thread: "My own preference is for 3rd and 4th corners" since it's "quicker when coaching through a dance than the rather wordy 'partner's first corner', which I feel one would have to start telling people where they were heading for about 3 bars earlier than normal!"

What makes a good dance?

One dancer thought there must be "countless teachers and MCs looking for "fine" dances for their classes or events, but finding these amongst the 14000+ existing dances is a daunting job." He proposed a world-wide effort to grade dances from zero to three feathers. Three feathers would be awarded to dances that could "make your evening".

Most subscribers were doubtful. They pointed to the diverse elements that can make a dance memorable. For many dancers, the music was crucial in terms of enjoyment of an individual dance or a dance evening. Others emphasized social

interaction. As one said, "If the dance is so "interesting" that everyone has to concentrate so hard that they forget they are dancing for pleasure with 6 or 8 other folk, then I believe the point has been lost." Another added: "I don't think that a dance needs to be intricate to be good, I much prefer interaction, sociability and fun."

A further dimension is one's partner. One subscriber summed it up this way: "I also find one's partner in a dance can make such a difference as to whether you find a given dance good, bad or indifferent. I have often had favourite dances spoilt by having a partner who almost never acknowledged me, and equally have thoroughly enjoyed a dance that I was not fussy about dancing completely transformed by an engaging partner."

So what do you think makes a good dance?

Resources on the web

In the next editions of this column we plan to feature one or two websites that dancers find particularly useful. To begin, Chris tells us about 'Minicrib'

Minicrib

www.minicrib.care4free.net

Dancers at a ball can often be seen clutching a neatly printed sheet of paper containing short descriptions of the dances (cribs). Very likely, they obtained the cribs from 'Minicrib'. A set of minicribs for an entire Ball can be put together in a minute or two. One simply has to download the latest version of Minicrib from the website - see above - which takes a matter of seconds, and then select the desired dances. Minicrib is frequently updated, the most recent (at the time of writing) being June 2008. At that time, there were 3,720 dances in Minicrib, so the chances are good you'll find the dances you need. And if you don't find one, you can write to the brilliant, hard-working person who created and maintains Minicrib, Charles Upton, and he will undoubtedly try to include the dance in the next version.

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

Browsing through a second hand bookshop I came across an old set of RSCDS books, and what was fascinating was that there are notes in the margins. These are a great source of information and an insight into how dances were done. On the inside of the books is the name Areusa A.G. Tiplady, and the books are from the 1930s. In Book 12, dated 1938, Areusa Tiplady has become Areusa McDonald. I have tried to find out more about her but with no luck. Her Books 1 and 3 are now in the RSCDS Archives.

Also interesting about her copy of Book 12 is that it includes *The Border Reel* which is a jig. If you look at today's Book 12 you will find, instead of *The Border Reel*, *The Laird of Dumbiedyke's Favourite*, which is a reel. Why did *The Border Reel* lose favour and *The Laird of Dumbiedyke* find it? It seems it was changed by committee in 1950 but no reason for doing so was recorded.

If any *Scottish Country Dancer* reader knows anything about Areusa Tiplady/McDonald or *The Border Reel* please get in touch with me at moira@stacey1254.freemove.co.uk or on 01557 339308.

Yours,

Moira Stacey

Dear Editor,

The International Branch is incredibly well organised, and it is like a breath of fresh air. It was formed to cater for the Headquarters members in the Society, who "by virtue of their geographical location or personal or practical circumstances are unable to take part in RSCDS Branch activities." This strangled phrase implies that HQ members live far away from a branch.

This is not true. Most HQ members (538) live in England, where there are 45 branches. Another quarter (211) live in Scotland, where there are 44 branches. Therefore we can reasonably assume that most HQ members live near a branch, but choose to dance elsewhere rather than with the local branch (and there is a lot of dancing elsewhere). According to the criteria most HQ members are not eligible to join the International Branch, but many (such as myself) break the rule and join anyway. I suggest the criteria be changed to permit all HQ members to join the International Branch.

What is so bad with some branches that one

member in sixteen chooses to be an HQ member and pays more for the privilege?

Yours,

John Marshall

Editor's Note: All members are free to join any branch. There is no 'rule' that UK-based HQ members are not allowed to join the International Branch.

Dear Editor,

Many of our dances are 3 couple dances danced in a 4 couple set. In order to be sociable we sometimes have a 5 couple set so that no one has to sit out. On those occasions it used to be that the 4th couple danced once from top place and then went to the bottom while 5th couple danced from top place. Recently the pattern has developed that 4th couple stays in second place (as payment for only dancing once as lead couple?) However, it turns out that what this does is cheat other couples of a balanced dance.

When I sat down to analyze the pattern I was very surprised to discover that (in a 3 couple dance, danced 8 times through in a 5 couple set) if 4th couple stays in second place, it is 2nd couple that loses out. 2nd couple dances only 3 times out of 8, while 4th couple dances 6 times out of 8. In the interests of fairness and sociability, could we please return to the practice of 4th couple dancing once in top place and then slipping to the bottom.

Yours,

Jane Robinson

Dear Editor,

In issue 6 (April 2008) Robert Lambie mentions the footwear worn by men and ladies at balls. Where the ball is predominantly Scottish country dances, I believe that a closer look at the appropriate footwear is necessary. Inappropriate footwear in a crowded ballroom can lead to significant injuries to other dancers. At a ball I attended a number of ladies received injuries from the heavy shoes worn by some of the men in adjoining sets.

Whilst accepting that some men are such expert dancers that they can wear almost any form of footwear without risk to others, they are in the minority. In many cases the perpetrator is totally unaware of the pain he is inflicting on others. Your cover picture shows a young male dancer clearly wearing soft ghillies as worn by most of us - these should be the standard for men.

As regards the ladies, the vast majority wear soft, flat ballet shoes. Those ladies

who choose to wear shoes with heels can also inflict injury if the heels are narrow and sharp rather than small, block heels. Regrettably these are not always the most comfortable or elegant shoes for ladies to wear, I've been told. Even block shoes can inflict painful injuries on those of us wearing softer, more appropriate dance shoes.

Yours,

Julian Crawford

Dear Editor,

As President of the Naramata Scottish Country Dancers in British Columbia, I am writing regarding the increase in the RSCDS membership fee.

We appreciate greatly the work that the RSCDS does in promoting and supporting dance and the groups worldwide that engage in this wonderful activity. We also enjoy the magazine and the opportunity for workshops and dances when our members travel. We also understand the increase in costs of various kinds and the need for the RSCDS to maintain a financially responsible and viable organization. At the same time we are concerned at the across-the-board increase in fees. Those of us outside the UK are seldom able to take advantage of membership benefits other than those mentioned above, and it would seem fair to have a lower fee for our groups.

We would like the RSCDS Board to consider a separate, lower membership fee for those outside the UK.

Yours,

Eva Durance

Dear Editor,

I am disappointed with the Core Repertoire of Scottish country dances. There are 56 dances in the introductory section. It can hardly be encouraging to a newcomer to say, "Once you have mastered these 56 dances, you can go to a Scottish ball confident that you can take the floor for most of the programme." In my opinion, if the idea is "to provide inexperienced dancers with a manageable Core Repertoire", it should contain no more than 30 dances. Surely 30 is quite enough for a beginner to take on board. A ball usually has 22 dances in a programme. It should not be a problem for programme devisers to select 10 excellent dances out of the 30 in my proposed Core Repertoire; that still leaves 12 dances to provide variety.

Yours,

Bernard Bligh

Continued on page 30



Muriel More

Many of us were saddened to learn of Muriel's death in March this year. She was born in the west end of Glasgow and she subsequently moved to Bishopsbriggs where she spent the rest of her life. She worked as a nurse before graduating from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, then known as the Athenaeum. In the 1960s she began playing the piano for Glasgow Branch classes, and her talents were recognised further afield.

She was a popular choice for weekend schools throughout Britain, as well as The Netherlands, Germany and Austria. She played frequently at Summer School, supporting the teaching staff by readily adapting to the pace and requirements of the class.

I remember her best as a devoted pianist and friend to the Glasgow Branch demonstration group. Muriel loved playing in a firm and distinctive style. She had a wonderful partnership with whatever piano she played, and there were many that could barely be credited with the name. Whatever the occasion her vigorous style lifted us all in spirits and allowed us to execute the dances with the finest style and grace. Her sensitive playing at the memorial service for Dr. Milligan at Jordanhill College in 1978 was unforgettable, touching hearts and minds in a moving and uplifting way.

She was awarded the Society Scroll in 2001. We shall remember her for her vibrance, her energetic musicianship and her cheerful smile.

Ruth Beattie

Nora Kindness

The Midwest dancing community lost a gifted teacher and a dear friend with the passing of Miss Nora Kindness. Since the 1960s Nora, a founding member of the Cincinnati Branch, dedicated her life to the promotion of SCD in this area. She can be credited with the establishment of branches and groups throughout the Midwest. She served as the TAC area rep for Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky for over twenty years, and she was awarded the Society Scroll in 2003.

Tracey Applebee

Lena McFarlane



Lena (on the right) dancing with the RSCDS team in Nice.

Lena McFarlane was a capable and remarkable person with a ready wit and a great sense of fun. She enjoyed dancing in all its forms and it played an important part in her life beginning when she attended Babs Wilson's dance classes in Aberdeen.

In 1950 she was selected to dance in one of the first teams to be sent abroad by the Society to represent Scotland at a festival in Nice. She served Aberdeen Branch in many ways – as a gifted teacher, an efficient treasurer and finally as a very gracious Honorary Vice-President. The RSCDS and the Branch have lost a true friend.

Lesley Martin



Alastair Hunter with the Lorne Scottish Dance Band.

Alastair Hunter

Alastair, son of Charlie Hunter, the renowned violinist and composer, maintained the family tradition and excelled in playing several instruments from an early age. He led his own band as a teenager and by that time was also broadcasting as a member of Bobby Macleod's band.

At University in Glasgow, Alastair danced in Miss Milligan's class but he always found time for playing music and soon realised that his real interest lay in accompanying dancing. His first recording was made in the late 1950s and he was to make sixteen recordings in all, two of which were for the RSCDS. Alastair's links with the RSCDS, the Aberdeen Branch and with other dance groups throughout NE Scotland were strong. Friendships with Roy Goldring and others led to many engagements overseas.

Alastair Hunter was a gentle, unassuming man of many talents and the SCD world was very fortunate to have enjoyed not only his playing but also the tunes he composed, which will live on in the SCD canon.

Robert Drummond

Jim South

Jim was born in England and was a crewman on a P&O ship when in 1967 he met Phyllis, a young Australian Scottish country dancer on her way to Summer School. Shortly afterwards he moved to Australia, caught the SCD bug and married Phyllis. He had a flair for organising that led him to become Chairman of the Combined Clubs Committee, the forerunner of South-East Queensland Branch. When the Branch was formed he was its first Chairman. He also convened two Australian Winter Schools (1980 and 1994) organised SCD tours to the UK and Canada and with his wife trained candidates for the RSCDS teaching certificates. In 2002 he and Phyllis were honoured with a Society Scroll.

David South

Day school diary

Entries for April '08 to July '09

Compiled by John Sturrock. For contact details regarding these events please refer to branch or club websites. Issue 8 will cover day schools, workshops and, if space allows, festivals from April 2009 to July 2010. Please send details to mag.editor@rscds.org

Oct 08

- 24 – 26 Rechberg International Weekend, Schwabisch-Gmund, Germany
Pat Houghton
- 25 Exeter Branch, Day School, Broadclyst, England
Marilyn Watson
- 25 Herefordshire Branch, Day School, Hereford, England
Janet Johnston
- 31 – 02/11 Asilomar Weekend, Asilomar, California, USA
Joan Baker, Ellie Briscoe, Fred DeMarse, Alex Gray, Jennifer Kelly, Elinor Vandegrift

Nov 08

- 2 Cologne Branch, ½ Day School, Cologne, Germany
Helmut Biesenbach
- 7 – 9 Northern Virginia Branch, 25th Anniversary Weekend, VA
Elinor Vandegrift, Cecily Selling
- 8 Toronto Branch, Workshop, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Fiona Grant, Claire Collier, Fiona Philip
- 14 – 16 Scottish Chanterelle, Weekend School, Lyon, France
Mervyn Short, Samantha Schad
- 15 Norwich Branch, ½ Day Workshop, Wymondham, Norfolk
- 15 – 16 Societa di Danza, Weekend, Bologna, Italy
Helen Russell
- 19 – 23 November Course, Kuckucksnest, Schluchtern, Germany
Eric Finley
- 22 – 23 SCD Group Basel, Ladies' Step Dance Workshop, Basel, Switzerland.
Atsuko Clement
- 22 Seattle Branch, Teachers' Workshop
Mary Murray, Lisa Scott
- 29 – 30 Scottish Dance Group of Monaco, Weekend, Monaco, *Ann Dix*

Dec 08

- 27 – 04/01 New Year Course, Gemund, Germany
Rudi Spagele, Carola Fischer
- 28 – 05/01 New Zealand Branch, Summer School, Christchurch, New Zealand
Iain Boyd, Nicky Hawkins, Margaret McMurtry, Susie Pugh, Katharine Hoskyn, Heather Byers, Debbie Roxburgh, Wendy Jaeger, Graham Donald, Cathy Fraser, Duncan Smith, Muriel Johnstone

Jan 09

- 17 – 18 EMO Dancers, Weekend School, Essen, Germany
Linda Gaul
- 30 – 01/02 Scottish Chanterelle, Weekend School, Lyon, France
Tom McKinlay, Patrick Chamoin
- 31 Freiburg Scottish Country Dancers, Day School, Freiburg, Germany.
Jim Cook

Feb 09

- 07 Inverness Branch, Day School
Anne Smyth
- 07 – 08 Nunspeet, Weekend, Nunspeet, Netherlands
- 21 Oxfordshire Branch, Day School, Headington, Oxford
Pat Houghton, Eric Finley, Dennis Tucker
- 26 – 03/03 RSCDS Winter School, Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry, Scotland

Mar 09

- 07 Somerset Branch, Day & Music School, Keinton Mandeville, Somerset
Anne Smyth, David Hall
- 13 – 14 Lorn (Argyll) Branch, Weekend, Oban, Scotland
Jean Martin
- 14 Berks/Hants/Surrey Borders Branch, Day & Music School, England
Maureen Haynes, John & Ruby Wilkinson, Nicol McLaren
- 14 Leicester Branch, Day School, Leicester, England
Mervyn Short, Doris Buchanan
- 21 Tunbridge Wells Branch, Day School, Tunbridge Wells, England
Eric Finley, Marilyn Watson, Rachel Wilton
- 21 Scottish Chanterelle, Day School, Lyon, France
Patrick Chamoin

April 09

- 03 – 05 Lethbridge SCD Club, Weekend, Lethbridge, AB
Elinor Vandegrift, Susan Wood, David Booz
- 03 – 05 Helensburgh & District Branch, Weekend, Helensburgh
- 03 – 05 East Lothian Branch, Weekend, Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry
Sue Porter
- 24 – 26 Cornwall Branch, Residential Weekend, Newquay, Cornwall
Wendy Mumford
- 24 – 26 Budapest, 10th Anniversary International Weekend, Budapest, Hungary
Graham Donald
- 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
- 08 – 09 Cumbrae SCD Association, Millport Weekend, Isle of Cumbrae
Helen Frame
- 15 – 16 Isle of Skye, Weekend, Portree, Isle of Skye, Scotland
Neil Grant

- 15 – 17 Duns & District Branch, Weekend, Duns, Scotland
Margo Priestley, Craig Houston
- 15 – 17 New York Branch Weekend School, Hopewell Junction, NY.
Eric Finley
- 16 Scottish Chanterelle, Advanced Day School, Lyon, France
Patrick Chamoin

Jun 09

- 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
- 10 – 18 Boston Branch, Summer School, Plymouth, Massachusetts
Stella Fogg, Bill Zobel, David Queen
- 19 – 16/08 RSCDS Summer School, St Andrews, Fife
- 12 Lochaber Branch, Day School, Fort William, Scotland
- 26 Cologne Scottish Country Dancers, Day School, Cologne, Germany
Janet Johnston, David Queen
- 26 Ayr Branch, Day School, Troon, Scotland

Sept 09

- 12 Lochaber Branch, Day School, Fort William, Scotland
- 26 Cologne Scottish Country Dancers, Day School, Cologne, Germany
Janet Johnston, David Queen
- 26 Ayr Branch, Day School, Troon, Scotland

April 10

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

July 10

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

SCD FESTIVALS

Feb 09

- 14 Newcastle Festival, Newcastle, England

Jun 09

- 27 South Wales Festival, Caerleon, Wales

July 09

- 11 White Rose Festival, Harewood, Leeds, England



International Scottish Country Dance Conference 3 – 5 July 2009 Holiday Inn Thoiry, France (9 Km from Geneva Airport)

Why "Kaleidoscope"?

Kaleidoscope n. (1) a tube containing mirrors and pieces of coloured glass or paper, whose reflections produce changing patterns when the tube is rotated. (2) a constantly changing group of bright or interesting objects.

A very suitable name for an event wanting to convey the huge spectrum – of people, dances, music, ideas and opinions – that makes up the worldwide family of Scottish country dancing and the RSCDS.

Contributors and conference programme

At the time of writing, the list of potential contributors includes more than two dozen names, from Australia, North America, Europe and the UK, both from within and outside the RSCDS. The list is not final yet – some of them will be in Geneva while others have agreed to submit papers for publication in the proceedings.

The programme itself is structured in six sections:

- ▶ Origins and development of social and Scottish dancing
- ▶ Topics (not only) for teachers
- ▶ Organising successful workshops (and other SCD events)
- ▶ The attraction of SCD – ways to discover SCD & reasons to keep doing it
- ▶ Using the Internet and other new media for SCD
- ▶ "A chance to dance"

An opportunity for discussion

In addition to providing an ideal environment for networking among participants and the exchange of ideas during the conference sessions, we are looking forward with particular interest to the panel discussion "The Future of SCD – can we get there from here?" with panellists from Australia, Europe, North America and the UK, and the opportunity to hear more about the RSCDS and its current and future plans from the Chairman and Committee Convenors. And of course to the dance on Saturday night – with David Hall, Keith Smith and friends!

For more information about Kaleidoscope, the programme and venue, sponsorship and sales exhibition opportunities, please contact us at

scd.kaleidoscope1@yahoo.com

or visit the event website

scdkaleidoscope1.strathspely.org.

Continued from page 27

Dear Editor,

Little information is published about the Society's membership statistics, but the broad picture is clear. Membership rose from zero in 1923 to about 30,000 in 1985-88. Since then it has fallen slowly but steadily and is now about 16,000 just over half the peak number. It fell 5% from 2005 to 2006 and a further 2% from 2006 to 2007 and is likely to fall more sharply this year because of the 50% increase in subscription.

The recent subscription increase, coming five years after a similar big rise, was said to be due to inflation, but inflation can only be partly responsible. Another factor must be falling membership numbers. Much of the Society's expenses are independent of the size of membership, and if the number of members decreases these costs must be shared between a smaller number of people.

Unless changes are made, membership can be expected to continue to fall and subscriptions to rise in real terms. It will be interesting to see how the Management Committee propose to deal with these trends in the forthcoming strategic plan. It would also be interesting to know whether any branches have managed to buck the trend and increase membership and if so how.

Yours,

Daniel Capron

Dear Editor,

I would like to offer my observations on the letter from Daniel Capron in issue 6 (April 2008). When I first went with the Gay Gordons to the monthly RSCDS dances in London we were made to feel welcome. We now get many offers to dance from the ladies who have seen that we are capable and getting more accomplished in our knowledge of the dances. Quite a turn up as I thought that it was the man who asked the woman. Keep asking!

We have noticed that in SCD as in most other forms of social dance that it has always been acceptable for women to dance with women, often because of not having enough men to go round, but not the only reason. We have been politely told on a number of times when offering to split all female partnerships, "We wish to dance with each other, thank you." As gay men we also like to dance together from time to time.

Yours,

Barrie Gabbott



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For application forms and further information, contact:
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email scd@rscdsnz.org.nz
Web : www.rscdsnz.org.nz



Teachers' Association (Canada)

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Celebrating our 50th Anniversary in 2008

- An Association of Scottish Country Dance teachers located mainly in North America and with a world-wide membership.
- Promotes and encourages excellence in the technique and social enjoyment of Scottish Country Dancing.
- Membership is open to RSCDS members who hold the Society's Preliminary part 3 or Full part 5 certificates.

Membership Services

● TACTALK

Quarterly magazine with articles on many aspects of Scottish Country Dancing, book and recorded music reviews, teaching hints, etc. Subscription information for non-teachers available through the Corresponding Secretary.

● ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Classes, socials, ceilidh, banquet and ball, afternoon activities. Candidate courses offered on alternate years.

● TACSOUND

(catalogue available on line) Sells and produces recorded music for dancing. Recorded music available for RSCDS books. Instructional videos available.

● TACBOOKS

(catalogue available on line) Sells and publishes printed materials pertaining to Scottish Country Dancing.

● AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Area representatives provide local networking contacts and support.

● OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Provides sponsorships, grants to new groups or events, advice, and encouragement to new teachers.

● AGM ANNUAL WEEKEND

A teachers weekend held in North America with a Guest teacher each year. Classes, banquet and ball. Annual General Meeting in afternoon.

● TAC WEBSITE AND FORUM

We have our own website at the above address. TACForum is set up to help teachers communicate on dance matters and pass information.

● Corresponding Secretary (for all general inquiries)

Alicia Manson,
586 Rebecca St. Oakville, ON L6K 3N9
manson@globalserve.net

● Membership Secretary

Claire Collier
467 Dutton Drive, Lewiston, NY 14092
colleec1@msn.com

● TACSound Manager

Marie Disiewicz
TACSound@telus.net

● TACBooks Managers

Craig and Jody Williams
99 Gray Crescent,
Kanata ON K2K 3J7
TACBooks@storm.ca

● TACTalk Editor

Lara Friedman-Shedlov
2103 Emerson Ave, South
Minneapolis, MN 55405
ldfs@bigfoot.com

Visit our website at

www.tac-rscds.org

Calling all teachers who would like to



Chairperson
Janet Johnston

- ▶ share experiences and ideas about SCD
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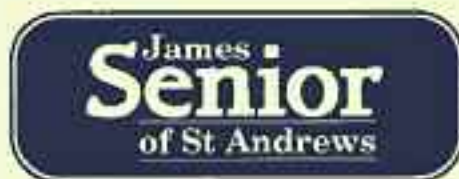
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