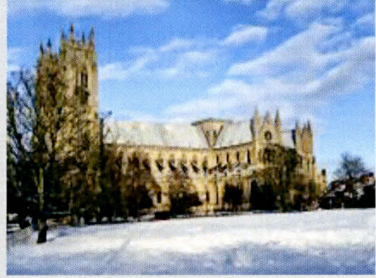
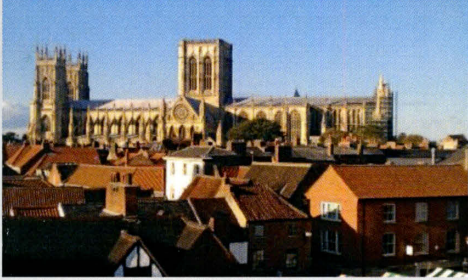


RSCDS

YORK & NORTH HUMBERSIDE BRANCH



40 MEMORABLE YEARS



A

COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

Introduction

Many years ago I received a letter from the RSCDS Chairman, suggesting that instead of sending letters to the Society proposing improvements, I should put my efforts into making my branch the best in the world. This commemorative booklet I hope explains why this was not possible – it had already reached that point!

Somebody coined the acronym “Y B DIB” – “York Branch Does It Better”, and throughout the last 40 years we have strived to turn this into reality. However I must admit it was only when I trawled through our nearly complete set of Brown’s Reels that I realised just how much we had achieved, both locally and on behalf of the Society.

I would like to thank the various people who have contributed items for inclusion in the booklet. If you think that it contains too many items written by the editor, I make no apology. As it was my idea to record all the various memorable things we have done over the last 40 years, and as it has been such a large part of my life, I probably have more memories than most!

As well as looking back at all we have achieved, hopefully the booklet will inspire members to continue to develop the branch and introduce Scottish Dancing to a wider public.

Malcolm Brown
2015

Starting the Branch

Although the idea had been around for a while, it was a remark by Josie Clampitt which started the whole thing off. Malcolm had passed his full Teaching Certificate in St Andrews in 1972, and Helen had bravely gone to St Andrews on her own in 1974 to pass hers. With two fully certificated teachers we had reached the minimum requirement for forming a branch and Josie suggested that we make an application.

Our first application was refused, mainly because the people concerned did not understand what we were trying to do, or even why we were calling it York & North Humberside. It was suggested that we begin by starting an Affiliated Group; as the York club was an Affiliated Group which had been running for 20 years, and there were several other Affiliated groups in the area, we did not think this was a good idea! After a phone call to the Chairman, and a re-application sent with an accompanying letter and map, we finally received permission to see if there was sufficient support.

We wrote to all the groups we knew about in the area, and while nobody opposed the formation of the branch, at least two of the groups wrote to say they did not think it was necessary. We put an advertisement in the local papers, and had our inaugural dance and meeting in the Father Croker Hall in Pocklington on 22 November 1975. Helen and I had no idea if anyone would attend, so catering was a little difficult but people from almost every dancing group were present. We explained what we were trying to do, and there was overwhelming support. We needed to form an initial committee, and we were very lucky in that we were able to get somebody from almost every group to serve as a committee member, with Malcolm as Chairman and Helen as Secretary.

We had been asked by the Society to draw up a Constitution which they would approve, so I sat down and put together what I thought would work, including the “three year rule”, limiting the number of continuous years that anyone could serve on the committee. We also incorporated such novel ideas as the committee selecting the Officers, whereas in most branches, even today, the Officers are elected by the members! We had our first committee meeting to agree the draft Constitution, (and to organise the first General Meeting) in the Bell Hotel, Driffield, selected because it was fairly central to the people coming from Scarborough, Hull and York, and it was on neutral territory. (Committee meetings continued to be held there until very recently).

As the next stage was to hold a General Meeting to approve the Constitution, we arranged a dance in Driffield, and publicised it by means of an interview on Radio Humberside .

On 28 February 1976 the Branch held its first General Meeting in the Town Hall, Driffield, to approve the Constitution during the interval - somebody pointed out that "to actively seek out" showed too much influence from Star Trek, and perhaps "seek out actively" was better English! - with this minor amendment the Constitution was approved, and the branch was finally up and running.

The Early Years

Looking through the minutes of the first AGM, in March 1977 the secretary reported we had held 8 dances, including the Inaugural Ball. We had held a Day School in October, and it was planned to repeat it this year. Fourteen members had taken and passed the Preliminary Test for teachers.



Stockport Festival Team

during the previous year we had danced several times to the music of the Border Reivers (they gave us a special rate) and once to the Danelaw, and we had also held our first ceilidh. The branch also purchased its own music equipment, a disco unit costing £205, which was used for the first time that night.

The branch had also sent teams to the Leeds, Stockport and Teeside Festivals. 1978 was also the year we held our first Charity dance, which raised £75 for a local charity.

We had also held a second set of exams, with four members passing the Full Certificate (and a fifth went to Leeds where he passed the exam), and seven more passed the Preliminary Test. In 1979 the Day School became an "all day" event instead of an "afternoon only", with the addition of a Highland class. During the year the branch held a variety of



Early Leeds Festival Team

It was recorded that the Branch now had 12 records and a record case!

Membership had increased from a total of 52 to 168, and despite having purchased a duplicator for nearly £68, the branch had a balance of nearly £198 to carry forward.

At the 1978 AGM membership had increased to 177, and

classes, including six monthly highland classes. Three members went up to St Andrews and passed the Full Teacher's Certificate.

BROUN'S REEL - the Stories

May 1980 saw the first edition of Broun's Reel, produced as a way of keeping members informed about what was happening in the Branch area. It included reports on visits to the Doncaster Day School and the Stockport Festival, as well as what turned into a regular series of articles "Spotlight on a Group" (Scarborough Caledonian Society Dance Class), "Why I started dancing, And What I get out of it", and the "List of Committee Members". The two features which have continued to this day are the "Editorial" and a "List of Forthcoming Events", although the "Record Review" was very short lived idea.

Issue No 2 came with a colour supplement attached, containing reports by branch members who had made a trip to Rodez in southern France to dance in a Folk Festival.

In July 1980 we danced the new dance "Fair Donald" with two teams as a "Solo" at the Leeds Festival, and held our Day School in October in Driffield with Bill Hamilton and Alex Gray as the teachers. In November we had McBains Band to play for us at our annual ball.

After receiving reports that people were picking up copies of Broun's Reel in class, reading it and then replacing it, it was decided to make no charge for issue No 4, instead of the 10p we had been charging. The editorial was on the subject of recruitment, and the issue contained an article questioning whether we were a "Friendly Branch", as well as one on the Social etiquette that had been found on a visit to Canada.

In 1981 we had our second branch dinner at Fridaythorpe, and we had our first mention of the Branch Scrapbook, started by Diana Keech.



After Dinner Story

Issue No 5 also contained the Fable of the Techer Bird and the Quandary, written as a result of watching variations in Ian Powrie's FTA, as well as the first mention of a death of a branch member, and the engagement of one of our younger members.

In 1981 we moved our Day School to the St John's training college gymnasium in York, with Duncan Macleod (of Macleod's Fancy) and Bill Little as the teachers - how well I remember the problems of getting lunch served quickly so that they could get back in time for the afternoon session.

Issue No 6, in September 1981, contained two reports from the Summer School in St Andrews, which went on to become another regular feature.

1982 marked the start of one of our long running money making enterprises - the second hand bookstall! Members would bring their books for recycling, replacing them for a modest sum with the books that others had brought in.

Our Day School teachers that year were Jackie Johnstone & Johan MacLean, and issue No 11 contained a report of the day written by Helen Russell.

It also contained an article written by George Crosby regarding the reels of three in Cadgers in the Cannongate; this eventually went to vote at the Executive Council of the RSCDS, where by 35 votes to 25 it was decided to abide by the decision of the Publications Committee. The latest Society publication takes a much more relaxed view, with a note that "In some areas" it is danced differently!

This was also the year that we held a joint branch event with Richmond Branch, welcoming them to one of our dances.

Issue No 14, published in 1983 congratulated Pauline Garrod on passing the Preliminary Test, and George Crosby on passing the Full Certificate, at St Andrews.

Over the years many branch members have gone to St Andrews to take the exams, including Anne Dawson, Bill Bishop, Yvonne Mortier, Helen Penrose, Joyce Cochrane, Alasdair Brown, Duncan Brown, Lesley Digby, Jennifer Hignell and Ian Russell.

In 1984 the branch briefly became part of the White Heather Show when it visited Bridlington and Scarborough. This was an interesting challenge in logistics, when we found that for the second performance they wanted us for five days, and not everyone was available for the entire period!



White Heather Show Team



Llangollen Team

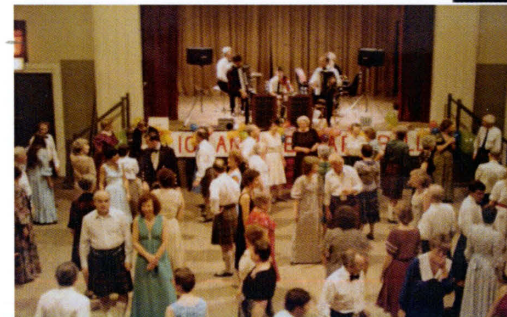
This was in marked contrast to the other "demonstration" put on by the branch that year, when a small team went across to compete in the Llangollen Folk festival. It would have been better if we had seen it before selecting our dance programme and source of music - a solo violin played by Wendy Lyons.

The Day School that year became a single teacher event, so we moved out to Stockton on Forest village Hall, which was barely large enough; well the teacher was John Drewry, who was a huge draw. (Almost a pun!)

1985 marked the tenth anniversary of the branch, celebrated with a ball in Malton to which we invited the teachers from our Day Schools, although I can only spot Alex Gray in the photos! - we even had a special cake which was decorated with Scottish dancers (and cut jointly by Helen & Malcolm Brown)



10th Anniversary Cake



10th Anniversary Ball

The 1985 February edition of Broun's Reel, Issue No 20, contained an article describing its production process, and the number of turns of the handle required to produce the number of copies (at least 1200 turns!). Fortunately issue 21 boasted that we had acquired an electric duplicator, which speeded up that part of the process.

Also in 1985 we introduced Dancing Certificates for the children's classes, and held tests for them in both York and Nafferton (these were at three levels, and were the brainchild of Helen Brown, many years before the Society introduced a similar scheme.)

In 1987 we actually cancelled our Day School because of lack of numbers applying, and in 1988 we changed to an afternoon Day School taught by branch teachers—Margaret Jepson & Malcolm Brown. However the following year we reverted to an “All Day” event, with Jackie Johnstone as the teacher. 1989 was the year that we published the branch “Competition Book”, comprising dances devised by branch members. (There are still some copies remaining, if anyone is interested in these collector’s items.)

Issue number 40 was published in March 1990, and was the final edition edited by Helen Brown. (She had received an ultimatum - either Editor or Secretary, but not both!) At that point she was replaced by Joyce Cochrane as editor, with publication and distribution by Clare Bunton and Rosemary Robins. (Joyce and Rosemary continue to produce and distribute it.)

February 1990 marked the first use of new technology when the new Tape Cassette player was used, marking the end of the branch’s “disco equipment” and when membership records were first transferred to computer.

The Day School that year was due to be taken that year by Alex Gray, but because he was unable to attend Malcolm Brown filled his slot. At about this time cribs started to be entered on MLB’s computer, so that they could be generated more speedily and with greater accuracy, and at the moment it contains cribs for over 400 dances.

In 1991 the Cottingham Reel Club, one of the original groups, announced it was ceasing to operate. This was also the first year that branch purchased “knitwear” with the branch name under the RSCDS “crown of shoes”. We again went for a big name teacher for the Day School, with Bill Ireland travelling up from London to teach.

In 1992 the various groups which had been running autonomously up until that point, using their own names, took up the offer to become “branch classes”. This meant they no longer had to worry about paying the PPL to play music as it was covered by the Society. This was also the year that Helen Russell started a beginners class in Hull.

The report from St Andrews that year included the information that this was the first time that both Alasdair & Duncan Brown were in the Country Dance display team (they had both danced in the Highland team with their father the previous year).



Burnby Hall Gardens, Pocklington

1993 was the first year we held an Open Air Dance in Burnby Hall Gardens, Pocklington (following up a suggestion from our retiring Chairman, Eric Taylor) and looking at the photographs we appear to have been blessed with a fine day.

In March 1994 we held a “Ladies Step” school taught by Jenny Greene, and in April we held a “Cheese & Wine” dance. The Day School that year was taught by Anita Mackenzie.

1995 was a fairly significant year for the branch, as it was not only the 20th Anniversary, but it was also the first time that we had a branch weekend School at the Cairn Hotel in Harrogate. Our first teacher was Ann Dix, with Pat Clark as her accompanist, and Scottish Measure providing the music for the Saturday dance. If remember rightly, we had the top of the set in three different directions during the weekend!



Cairn Hotel, Harrogate

The Day School that year was taught by Jim Rae, and Sound Company played for the evening dance.

The 20th Anniversary Ball was held in the Memorial Hall, Beverley, with Alasdair Brown piping for the Grand March, and Alan Gardiner’s band playing for the dancing.

Issue number 61 contained an article written by Derek Haynes discussing the pros and cons of re-caps; some issues never go away!

In 1996 we were informed of the demise of the Kirkella class, and at the Society AGM in November it was agreed that branches would become independent Local Associations, and seek charitable status. This was also the year when we decided to use less well known teachers for our Day School, with Andrew McConnel as the teacher.

In 1997 we made Arthur Keech our first (and so far, only) Honorary Branch Member (this was before the creation of Branch Awards).

This was also the year that Lesley Digby put together a small team to run the first White Rose Festival at St Peter's School in York., which she organised for a total of 5 years.



Jennifer Hignell & Lesley Digby

1998 was the 75th Anniversary of the Society, and in April we held the joint Anniversary Ball in the Dome, Doncaster to the music of Muriel Johnstone and her dance band. Coaches went from both York and Hull, and over 400 dancers attended.



**The Dome, Doncaster
75th Anniversary Ball**



York Assembly Rooms

The White Rose Festival was greatly expanded from the previous year, including a Saturday night dance in the Assembly Rooms, as well as a Friday night dance.



White Rose - York (Friday)



White Rose - York (St Peters)

As part of the Society celebrations for its 75th anniversary there was a reception for the Queen in the City Chambers in Edinburgh, and Duncan Brown was one of the young people who danced for her.

This was also the year when Malcolm Brown, in producing the commemorative video for the Society, first encountered computer video editing and decided it was the future!

By 2000 Broun's Reel had reached issue number 80, and contained two significant (at least they were long) articles, one entitled "The Society, the Branch and the Individual" and the other "Scottish Dancing, The PC and the Internet". Not bad for a system which according to Wikipedia only came into everyday use in 1993 - it was so widely accepted by parts of the Scottish Dance community that by 2000 it was worth writing about what resources were available on line! Not only that, but our first branch website appeared, designed and still maintained by Rita Eastwood.

The branch celebrated its 25th anniversary with a ball at Woodmansey to David Oswald's band, and the Browns were presented with a silver quaiich to mark the event..

In 2001 the Step School was taken by Helen Russell, and the branch dinner was replaced by a picnic in Dalby Forest, which was memorable if for no other reason than the appearance of George and Diana Edwards on their tandem - I thought it was a long way from Hull!



George and Diana Edwards

This was the year of the last White Rose Festival in York, and it was then passed over to Leeds.

One of the more entrepreneurial events took place this year, when Mary Ashworth produced and sold kits of wooden numbered "men" with magnetic bases to be used in conjunction with a metal base. My kit lives in the top drawer of my desk, and proves invaluable in working out new dances!

In 2002 the first dance written by a branch member to be published by the Society appeared - Chequered Court, written by Duncan Brown. This was also the first year that Helen Russell taught at the St Andrews Summer School. At the Society AGM that year Peter Clark and Malcolm Brown were elected to the new Management Board, and Pat Clark was elected to serve on the Education and Training Committee.

In 2003 we tried out yet another new venue, holding our annual ball in Howden to the music of Ian Thomson.

In 2005 Duncan Brown was the teacher at the branch Day School - (his parents left the country to avoid being embarrassed), and in 2005 the first edition of the RSCDS Magazine "Country Dancer" appeared. Around this time our Treasurer decided to take advantage of the fact that the branch was a registered charity and made a claim for Gift Aid - something which has continued to assist branch finances up until the present day.

In 2006 we held a 30th anniversary ball in Howden to the Music of David Oswald..

The following year we took up the idea of Roy Goldring, and joined with Leeds branch for a joint ball - at which the dance "Branches Together" was danced for the first time by the officers of both branches.



Branches Together



Leeds Joint Ball

This was also the year when we started to have an annual morning walk, followed by lunch in a suitable hostelry. The event was not blessed with good weather, although a few hardy souls did manage to finish the route. Meanwhile some of us just turned up for the lunch!

In 2010 the Society began to involve the members more in selecting the dances to be published in the new books, and since then we have enjoyed dancing the various groups of dances that have been submitted - it is amazing just how many of the branch classes get involved in the testing and evaluation process.

Members have been going to Pitlochry and attending the Society's Winter School for many years, but in 2010 a total of 13 branch members attended, eleven the first week, and another two the second, and this was only a few weeks after the Harrogate weekend.

In recent years the branch has continued to innovate - the one-off Pickering dance to the music of Robert Whitehead has become a regular event on the branch calendar. When it was realised that people were reluctant to travel at night during the winter months we experimented with afternoon dances. This brought about two new successful ventures, the Burns afternoon dance



York Joint Ball



York Joint Ball - Riley Smith Hall, Tadcaster

Branch Walks



Assembly



Walking



Resting

in Dunnington, where not only is the Haggis piped in courtesy of our own piper, but we actually have a tame Scot who is willing to address it! The second venture is the product of the three year committee rule - one of our newest committee members decided that live music was missing from dances in the Hull area, and in 2014 we held a very successful Sunday afternoon dance in Swanland with music provided by Ian Slater.

In 2013 we took a fairly radical decision to pay the travel expenses to St Andrews of somebody who was not even a branch member. Vladimir Gabuzov from Nizhny Novgorod in Russia had been awarded a scholarship to attend St Andrews to study for Units 2 & 3, but while this covered his living expenses, he would still have had major problems with financing his travel - York & NH Branch stepped in, not only providing the cash, but also running a small dance in Dunnington so that he could meet our dancers on his way up to Scotland! (By the way he passed)

It has been hard to summarise all that the Branch has done over the last 40 years - I hope the newer members get some idea of its history, and the older members are reminded of some of the things they had forgotten.

Demonstrations & Displays

I am not sure why Scottish dancers do "dems". The official reason is to attract new embers, but we all know that this doesn't happen. It might be so that it gives us yet another excuse to dance (and show off), but deep down I suspect it is just to gather yet more "war stories". Those near calamities, when despite everything, instead of the polished performance you had hoped for, you end up wondering why you had left home that morning!

The first branch "dem" took place soon after its formation, and although I doubt that the spectators could see much (it took place in a crowded restaurant, with only a very small place to dance), we were paid quite a large amount, so nobody complained!

Amongst the various shows and places we danced one of the most memorable took place in Wigginton, where we danced on tarmac in the blazing sun; a very stupid idea! The only time our dancers actually complained of burning their feet!

Our demonstrations used to be based around pairs of "similar" but well known dances - such as the Sailor & Shiftin Bobbins. We didn't change the programme much, and people didn't need to practise, just be reminded which pair of dances they were going to do next!



Last Branch "Dem"

One of our last demonstrations took place in the ground of Hovingham Hall. On this occasion we actually had five pairs of dancers, so we decided to finish with our "Military Medley" (Reel of the 51st / Reel of the Royal Scots) dancing in a 5 couple set - a major cause for concern for some of our team!

One of our most worrying displays took place at the Seaton Ross show. A group of us were going off to dance at a folk festival in France, and this seemed an ideal opportunity for a dress rehearsal. There were two slight problems; the first was that we were dancing in the field that had been used for the show jumping, so the surface had been badly cut-up by the horses landing (I had visions of somebody twisting an ankle); the second problem was that they didn't have a sound system we could plug into, so we finished up playing the music through their microphone.

Our most ambitious branch displays were with the White Heather Show when it visited the area. Originally this was with Andy Stewart and then with Moira Anderson when he became ill. The first time it was only for a few nights, but the last time was for a week, and we knew that not everybody could be available every night. So not only did we have to choreograph the performance but also work out who was dancing with whom and on which night! Our worst problem was that Moira wanted the grand piano closer to the front of the stage, so every day she had it moved forward. This encroached on our dancing space, so every day we just moved it back!



Early "Dem"

Ceilidhs

At one of our first committee meetings it was suggested that we hold a ceilidh, but it was decided that we had so much planned that we would wait – so the following year we held our first! Over the years we had many members come forward and surprise us with their talents – and although I was the MC I was usually told very little about what was going to happen. I seem to remember a South Seas island item (with grass skirts), and who can forget the sketch when as the hero I was surrounded by native girls in tennis skirts? The following year I seem to recollect being St George and having to fight the Turkish Knight. Many of these early ceilidhs were held in Woodmansey Village Hall, but in later years we moved to Stockton on Forest, where we had tap dancers, as well as some ballroom dancing (Rita even made me a special dress - not so sure about the tights!). At one time we could persuade the different groups to come up with their own items, such as the Scarborough pantomime with Bill Bishop as the villain, and who can forget George Edwards in his role as the “handsome prince”? We have had ladies step dancing (performed in wellies), medieval dancing, line dancing, as well as 3 couples dancing Moulin Dhu, where all three men were in white dresses. We had singing and instrumentals, and even some “Diddy Men” marching to Colonel Bogey.

For all those people who entertained us – many thanks – you have left us with some wonderful memories.



Native Girls

Latin American Dancing

Memories of the Branch - From Branch Members

Margaret Savage

At first I was a Headquarters member of RSCDS. In the early 1960s the local Education Authority ran evening classes at the Marygate Centre in York. One of these was Scottish Country Dancing. We had a paid RSCDS teacher, Miss Joanna Fogden and a professional pianist Mrs Mary Stockdale. Joanna encouraged some of us to go to the summer school at St Andrews, but to do so one had to be an RSCDS member, so we applied to Headquarters.

Later we met Laurie and Bessie Kemp who ran the Teeside Branch and they invited us to join them. We felt a little sad to leave them after they had made us so welcome.

A group of us went to Pocklington to discuss the formation of a York and North Humberside Branch, which was formed soon after.

The first branch event was a Day School at Bridlington – the teachers were Joanna Fogden and Don Briggs from Leeds and the pianist was Mrs Stockdale.

Many events stand out in my memory –

The Tenth Anniversary Ball at the Milton Rooms in Malton (this was a regular Branch venue in the early days) – the 21st Anniversary Ball at Beverley and the spectacular Ball at the Dome in Doncaster in 1998 hosted by the joint Yorkshire Branches (including York and North Humberside) to celebrate 75 years of RSCDS; 450 dancers enjoyed the music of Muriel Johnstone's band (which included Marian Anderson).

Another highlight was the hilarious annual ceilidh at Stockton-on-Forest when we were entertained by a troupe of Tap dancers comprising Branch members, Josie Clampitt, Jennifer Hignell, Enid Nunns, Wendy Lyons, and their friends.

I have many happy memories of Branch Day Schools and Step Day Schools, dancing morning, afternoon and evening. When my husband retired I was able to go to the weekend schools at the Cairn Hotel in Harrogate and also to Cober Hill.

Thanks to the Branch I have enjoyed many happy hours of Scottish Country Dancing, including dancing under umbrellas in the rain at Burnby Hall Gardens in Pocklington. Footnote: I became a Member of RSCDS in 1964, and a Life Member in December 1968

Margaret Savage - York



(Editor's note: despite being a Life Member, Margaret regularly supports the Branch by giving a donation!)

White Rose Festival - 30 years of Happy Memories.

Margaret Highet

Looking through old photo albums recently, I found a lovely photo of my mother in 1984 with our 2 year old son Douglas on her knee. They were sitting in the sunshine at Beckett Park in Leeds watching the dancing. It really was a family occasion and my mother enjoyed visiting us in July to watch the dancing. To me the photos from 1985 of our little girls dancing at the festival are a very precious memory.

Helen Brown ran a children's class at Dunnington and Sarah, Lesley Digby's daughter, Penny, Jane Birch's daughter and our daughter Lorna and her friend Rachel were enthusiastic dancers, kept in order by the Brown boys!



Teacher and Children's Team



Children's Team in Action



Triumph

The White Rose festival provides a great opportunity to enjoy dancing, meet with old friends and catch up. We have had some marvellous sunny days and tend to forget the times when we had to dance inside due to rain. However we will not forget our car getting stuck in the mud during the evening dance in 2012!

A huge amount of work goes into organising the Festival and it is a tribute to the organisers that things run so smoothly. Or not! We remember the cloudburst after the Grand March in York when we all had to move indoors, and then another time when we had a power cut in the middle of the evening dance. What is so noticeable is the spirit of good will with everyone helping to make the Festival a success.

As for the venues, Beckett Park was great with plenty of space. St. Peter's school in York with the Minster as a backdrop was a superb setting. Dancing in the Assembly Room in York in 1998 was superb, and a great opportunity for beautiful photos. Nowadays what could be more impressive than Gateways school at Harewood looking down on the dancers from the raised bank and seeing the red kites circling overhead?

For years we did not attend the evening dance due to family commitments. Later, when we did attend the dance, we were surprised at how much we enjoyed the dance and the superb music. Also having a picnic after the afternoon dance is a lovely opportunity to chat socially. Continuing the social theme the practices for the festival are always good fun. Although sometimes trying to work out the solos can be mentally taxing. Remember Haunt of the Gnomes!

Whereas I remember the happy times we had practising the White Rose festival as fun. The friendly teamwork which embodies Scottish dancing is evident. People can talk during the dances and help each other with quick reminders. To see all these teams dancing on the field is a beautiful sight and the bands have been great. Dancing at the White Rose festival has certainly given us many happy memories.

Margaret Highet - York February 2014

Examinations in Wetwang

Barbara Douglas

A group of us from the Branch had religiously attended Malcolm's teaching classes held in Wetwang Village Hall. On the day of the examination it was discovered that a piano was needed and we could use the one from the pub up the road. A group of male dancers trotted up the road (did they stop to imbibe?) and brought the instrument back to the Hall. They then changed into the kilt.

Following the examination, still in the kilt, the said group pushed the piano back to the pub. As Bill Bishop and my husband Sid commented "Why did the whole population of Scarborough decide to pick Wetwang for their afternoon out that day?"

I believe the catcalls were not often complimentary.



Barbara Douglas - Scarborough
2014

Warm Thoughts of York Branch

Pat Clark

When Peter and I moved to Thormanby, the branch to join was York. We found Malcolm's class at Priory Street. The folk were very welcoming, and it was fun. After a busy week, I was often in a mischievous mood, and on one occasion, when we were practicing slip step, I ended up on a chair at the side, Malcolm taking this in good part, thank goodness!

When playing for a certificate class at Dunnington, I was given a task that sticks in the mind. Malcolm wished to impress on the candidates the differences between reel and jig, and also the need to consult the musician beforehand. I was asked to play two bars of each rhythm in an eight bar phrase. It was a challenge I enjoyed, and the execution of the task caused

much merriment. I might say, I have since been asked to play one-bar sequences!

Peter and I have been delighted to have been involved in the York Weekend at Harrogate. To us, it is still one of the most successful Scottish Dance weekends, and many will testify to this.

"Brouns Reel" – what would we do without it and its information? The dances, too, are friendly affairs, with a chance to meet folk from "a' the pairts".

All good wishes to York Branch. Congratulations to those who've been involved for so long and so faithfully. May you continue to flourish.

Pat Clark, Dumfries

More Memories

Brenda George

It was September 1977. We had been married 22 years. Number One son had left home, and we expected the other two to follow in the next few years. How to fill the years ahead? Night School brochures appeared – after heated arguments or discussion we finally settled on SCD at the local school. Two hours a night on Thursdays (so it didn't clash with Bridge or Scouts). We paid up front for a term and that was it. We had no idea that first night how our life would change.

We have enjoyed holidays in St Andrews, Borrowdale, Kinfauns, Benidorm and Magaluf. We have danced in Broughty Ferry, Glasgow, Leeds, Scarborough, Doncaster, Grimsby, Wetwang, Lincoln, Retford and in a beautiful school hall in Auckland New Zealand. Everywhere we were made welcome and spent a lovely evening for a very reasonable price. The years dancing gave us so much pleasure, - we met really friendly people who in the beginning were so helpful.

Now when old age is making it harder I can still enjoy Strathspeys and really do the footwork, but reels and jigs are so tiring. The trouble is I hear the music and get up to dance – tough about the aches and pains the next morning.

Long may the Branch continue. Thanks to Malcolm and Helen for all their hard work

Brenda George, Hull

Committee Members & the Three Year Rule

We were lucky! When I suggested the three year limit for committee members to the first committee it received overwhelming support from everyone – they had obviously found themselves serving on committees and unable to relinquish their jobs when nobody else would step forward. By writing it into the Constitution, it meant that replacement members knew it would not be a lifetime commitment, and hopefully members would be more prepared to serve.

I think we were proved correct, in that over the forty years a total of 61 different people have come forward!

The following people have served on the branch committee for one or more years

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Mary Ashworth | Philip Ashworth | John Atkinson | Peggy Batchelor |
| Nigel Bell | Bill Bishop | Lynne Brooks | Alasdair Brown |
| Duncan Brown | Helen Brown | Malcolm Brown | Clare Bunton |
| Gordon Campbell | Josie Clampitt | Joyce Cochrane | Ken Cole |
| George Crosbie | Jessie Dawson | Barbara Douglas | Flo Dubovsky |
| Rita Eastwood | George Edwards | Ken Fletcher | Mike George |
| Chris Hare | John Harvey | Allan Highet | Margaret Highet |
| Alex Hodgson | Dorothy Hounam | Arthur Keech | Diana Keech |
| Iain Keegan | George Main | Millie Main | Len Marinovich |
| Jean McInnes | Alick McTurk | Jock McVey | Margaret Metcalfe |
| Yvonne Mortier | Pat O'Neil | Helen Penrose | Ann Pinder |
| Ken Poskitt | Ann Robertson | Ken Robertson | Rosemary Robins |
| Fiona Rudd | Christine Rush | Helen Russell | Don Sayers |
| Keith Scott | Eric Taylor | Marion Thomas | Trevor Tillotson |
| Bernard Trever | Ken Wallace | Norma Wheeler | Heather Whitaker |
| Ken Wright | | | |

Branch Officers

Of the 61 people who have served on the committee, 25 people have served as Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer, and 3 people have served as all three. At the time of writing, we have had 21 different Chairmen, 9 different Secretaries and 11 different Treasurers.

While emphasising that so many people have come forward to play their part in the branch organisation, it is also worth pointing out that some people have made outstanding contributions –

Helen Brown who has been Secretary for a total of 20 years (and who was also our very first Secretary).

Rita Eastwood is one of the three people to have served as Chairman and Secretary, and perhaps more importantly, as the Treasurer for a total of 19 years, taking the accounts from handwritten notebooks into the computer age.

Trevor Tillotson was another of the three people to have been Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as being one of the very first committee members.

For completeness, Malcolm Brown served as Chairman (10 years), Secretary (6 years), Treasurer (2 years) and committee member (7 years).

Teacher Training

When the branch was formed, the application form for a branch requested the names of two RSCDS qualified teachers, and the names on our form were Helen Brown and Malcolm Brown. Almost as soon as the branch came into existence we started to run teacher training classes and hold exams. As demand for the classes dropped off, members began attending St Andrews to undertake the training and exams. The following people have been successful in passing either the Preliminary Test or the Full Certificate since the branch was formed.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Elizabeth Ankers | Susan Ankers | Joyce Beattie |
| Bill Bishop* | Maureen Bishop | Alasdair Brown* |
| Duncan Brown* | Joyce Cochrane* | George Crosbie* |
| Anne Dawson* | Jessie Dawson* | Lesley Digby |
| Barbara Douglas | Sid Douglas | Rita Eastwood |
| George Edwards* | Pauline Garrod* | Mike George* |
| Elizabeth Heaps | Jennifer Hignell | Iain Keegan |
| Wendy Lyons* | George Main* | Morag Morgan* |
| Yvonne Mortier* | Helen Penrose | Patricia Randall |
| Christine Rush | Diana Hastie (Russell)* | Ian Russell* |
| Bill Smith | Moira Stacey* | Patricia Tillotson |
| Trevor Tillotson* | Bernard Trever | Sally Wright |
| Anna Abramova# | | |

* indicates Full Certificate or Part 2

Anna is a dance teacher who lives in Novosibirsk, Siberia, but joined our branch at the end of last year, when we put her name forward for a teaching scholarship.

She was given a scholarship from the Society for one week, and she received a scholarship from the International Branch to cover the second week..

She has just returned from St Andrews, having passed Units 2 & 3.

Day Schools

So, now we have a branch, what are we going to do other than hold dances? How about holding a Day School? So at the beginning of October 1976 we held our first School in Bridlington, with Joanna Fogden and Don Briggs as the teachers. We have moved the school several times since then, first to Drifffield, then to the gymnasium at St John's College in York, and finally to Stockton on Forest, when we reduced our teachers from two to one. And then as the people attending became older, we reduced it from a full day to just an afternoon class. As with our band policy, the committee have tried to obtain a variety of different teachers so that members can experience the full range of both well known established teachers as well as relatively new ones. It is certainly a long list! I wonder how many of them you remember.

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Stuart Adam | Don Briggs | Alasdair Brown | Duncan Brown |
| Malcolm Brown | Peter Cass | Patricia Clark | Peter Clark |
| Graham Donald | John Drewry | Joanna Fogden | Alex Gray |
| Jenny Greene | Bill Hamilton | Derek Haynes | Maureen Haynes |
| Jeremy Hill | Craig Houston | Bill Ireland | Margaret Jepson |
| Jackie Johnstone | Janet Johnstone | Les Lambert | Deb Lees |
| Bill Little | Johan MacLean | Anita Mackenzie | Duncan Macleod |
| Marjorie MacRae | Andrew McConnel | Wendy Mumford | Paul Plummer |
| Margo Priestly | Jim Rae | Helen Russell | Rachel Shankland |

We also held a "one-off" special Day School, when we took advantage of a teacher from New Zealand being in the UK, and held our "Downey Day of Dance" with Rod Downey.

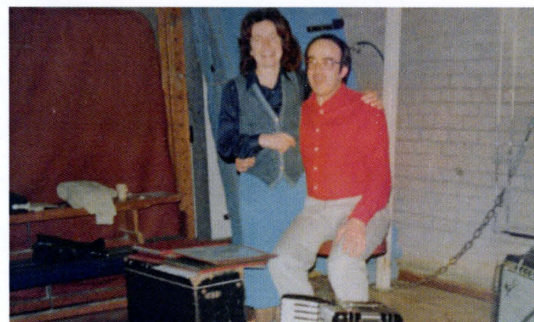
Ladies Step & Highland Schools

We held an annual Ladies Step School for a number of years, and even the occasional Highland day school. Our first teacher for Ladies Step was Jenny Greene from London. She was followed by Janet Johnstone from Scotland, Helen Russell who came over from Hull, and Kathy Lawmon who came up from the South coast. Laura Brown came up from Exeter to take a Highland class, showing that we searched the UK to find suitable teachers. Other Highland classes were sometimes incorporated into our Day Schools in the early years.

Day Schools



Day School Dancers



Johan MacLean and Robert Baird



Bill Ireland

Harrogate Weekends

If the Branch was going to organise a weekend school, where would we want it to be? Outside the branch area, but not too far so that people could get here easily. So Helen & I went off to see what there was in Harrogate. The Grand looked very fine from the outside, but their ballroom had been carpeted to such an extent that it was obviously unsuitable. So then we looked at the Cairn where we remembered dancing many years previously – absolutely ideal. And before we knew it Helen was busy organising the Harrogate Weekend. Pat Clark suggested that Ann Dix would be a suitable teacher (which she was), and Pat agreed to be our pianist for the weekend, something she has done ever since! On the Friday night Pat played for us, and on the Saturday night we had Scottish Measure.

What can I remember of this first weekend? Well first there was the problem with going to a new venue and not being sure where to put the top of the set (we tried three out of the four possible places during the weekend!).

And then there were the dining arrangements – we had two long tables, and after ensuring that everyone had a seat, I realised that I didn't! I started off sitting alone, but the other two guests who were dining that night invited me to join them. (And as further compensation, I finished my dinner before everyone else.)



Eric Finlay & Pat Clark

As with our day schools, we had a deliberate policy of using different teachers, nobody more than twice, which explains the long list of teachers who have taught during the last 21 years

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Alasdair Brown | Duncan Brown | Ann Dix | Eric Finlay |
| Jenny Greene | David Hall | Janet Johnstone | Deb Lees |
| Christine Mair | Andrew McConnell | Helen Russell | Jim Stott |

In 2012 the Society Chairman Ruth Beattie and Chairman-Elect John Wilkinson joined us for the weekend. On the Saturday afternoon they gave a talk about the Society and its organisation to people attending the course and representatives from nearby branches.



John Wilkinson, Ruth Beattie,

Malcolm Brown

As time went by we gradually incorporated new ideas into the weekend, such as pre-dinner drinks on the Friday night, to give everyone an opportunity to mix, and soup and sandwiches for Sunday lunch. And we solved the problem of name badges with pins when we started to use re-useable magnetic badges - so much more dress friendly!

Where Have We Danced?

At the start of the branch a decision was made to have dances in different locations throughout the area, so that the catering requirements would be shared out amongst the various groups. This was before Bill Bishop introduced us to the idea of "faith suppers". With the branch being based on the triangle formed by York, Scarborough and Hull, and with larger numbers attending our dances, we used large halls - based in Scarborough, York, Woodmansey, the Milton Rooms in Malton and of course the Driffield Town Hall.

As numbers attending reduced we found smaller and less expensive halls for our dances, such as North Ferriby, and the Dunnington Reading Room. (Dunnington has served as both a dance venue and somewhere to hold special classes) In recent years we have made use of the Memorial Hall in Pickering for the May Dance, and our most recent find, the community hall in Market Weighton for the AGM dance in April. Part of the philosophy behind moving the dances was that people would not have to travel large distances every time, so Market Weighton is ideally placed in many ways, being halfway between York & Hull. (Not quite as good as Driffield Town Hall, which was centrally placed, but this is no longer available for dancing!)

We have held our anniversary dances in a variety of places, starting with Malton, and including Beverley, Woodmansey and Howden. While for York based larger dances we have usually used the hall in Stockton-on-Forest, there was one occasion we used Askham Bryan. For our joint balls with Leeds we decided to use the Riley Smith Hall in Tadcaster, partly because it was halfway between York & Leeds, and partly because of the sprung floor.

In the Hull area we have used Woodmansey, Cottingham Civic hall, and even the University, as well as halls in North Ferriby, Swanland, and Willerby. We did even consider Hull City Hall for one major dance, but the costs (and hard floor) made its rejection inevitable.

I hope you agree that this list of halls we have used for dances shows that we have been true to the initial decision, despite the problems caused by continually moving to new places.



Swanland



Howden



Pickering



Dunnington



Stockton - on - Forest



Askham Bryan



Scarborough

Dance Bands

We held our Inaugural Ball on 20 November to the music of the Rattray Band. Since then we have used many bands and individuals to play for us at Balls and dances, some only once and some many times. I remember somebody saying that while a recording might be wonderful, you lose the surprises which come from using live music - so here is a list of the people who provided us with surprises!

Alan Coulson & the Border Band
Alan Gardiner
Alan Ross
Border Reivers (Robert Baird)
Callum Wilson
Chris Dewhurst
Danelaw (Robert Whitehead)
David Oswald
George Stirrat
Green Ginger
Ian Morrison
Ian Reid's SCDB
Ian Slater
Ian Thomson
John Dagg & the Tillside Trio
Lindsay Weir
Lothan Band (George Meikle)
Luke Brady
Lyne Valley
Manchester Band (David Hall)
Marian Anderson
Mairtainn Skene
McBains
Neil Barron
Phill Jones
Rattray Band
Sandy Nixon
Scottish Measure (Andrew Lyon)
Sound Company
The Cairns (Pat & Peter Clark)
West Telferton (Andrew Knight)

St Andrews

Over the years many members of the branch have attended the Society Summer School in St Andrews, and some of them have danced in displays or been on the teaching staff.

Country Dance Displays

Elizabeth Heaps
Alasdair Brown
Duncan Brown
Peter Clark
Helen Russell
Ian Russell
Diana Russell
Malcolm Brown
Allan Highet

Ladies Step

Helen Russell
Clare Bunton
Diana Russell

Men's Highland

Peter Clark
Malcolm Brown
Alasdair Brown
Duncan Brown
Ian Russell
Diana Russell

Diana Russell has partnered all three Browns in the Country Dance Display Team at one time or other. She was also in the Broadswords team of Malcolm Brown, Duncan Brown, Ian Russell and Diana Russell (father and son, father and daughter)

The Following Members have taught at St Andrews

Peter Clark, Pat Clark, Helen Russell, Alasdair Brown, Duncan Brown.

Society Awards

Many years ago the Society introduced the "Scroll" award which was given to people who had served the Society in some outstanding way, usually over many years, and often outside their local area. In more recent times the "Branch Award" became available, to recognise the valuable service of individuals who had confined their efforts mainly within the Branch area, but whose efforts the Society wanted to acknowledge.

The Society has awarded **Scrolls** to three of our branch members

Pat Clark

Pat has played for all types of classes both locally, at St Andrews, at Day Schools and Schools both in the UK and all over the world. And just as a break from playing, she sometimes teaches both Country and Ladies Step.

Malcolm Brown

Malcolm served on the Executive Council for many years, the Management Board for a total of eight years, and the Education & Training Committee for two years. He was also a member of the Technique Panel for many years.

Helen Russell

Helen served as a member of the Education & Training Committee, taking over as Convenor of the committee when the previous Convenor died. She is currently a member of the Management Board, and also Chairman-Elect, meaning that she will become Chairman of the Society in November 2016. She is also an examiner.

Branch Awards

The following members have received **Branch Awards**, to recognise their outstanding service to the Branch over many years.

George Main
Michael George
Brenda George
Alex Hodgson
Helen Brown
Rita Eastwood
George Edwards
Diana Edwards
Joyce Cochrane
Rosemary Robins



Presentation of Branch Awards to
Brenda and Mike George
(and flowers)

PHOTOS



Foursome Reel at Leeds Festival - 1991



Dancing in Dunnington



Dance with Japanese Visitors

Epilogue

I would like to acknowledge the assistance I have been given during the production of this booklet, and would especially like to thank those people who have sent in contributions.

Obviously all mistakes of any sort are mine, and I am more than happy to apologise for them.

However, while I will be delighted to accept any plaudits, all complaints should be sent directly to the committee, where they can share the blame out amongst themselves!

Malcolm Brown - September 2015