

Dance On!

Take The Floor



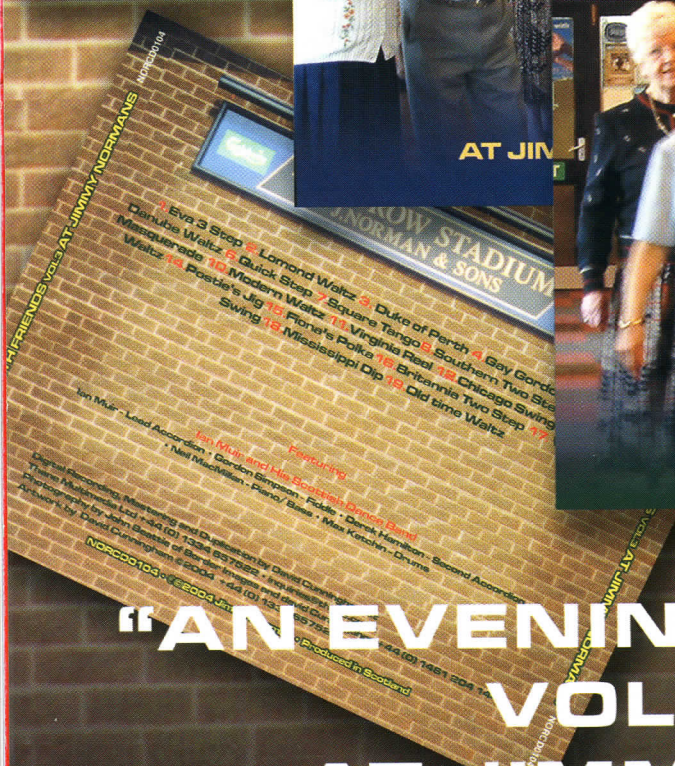
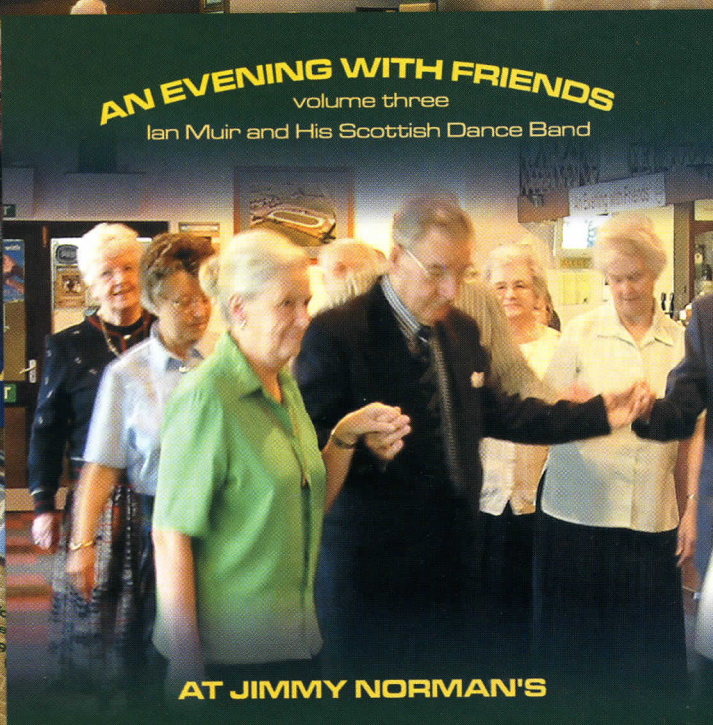
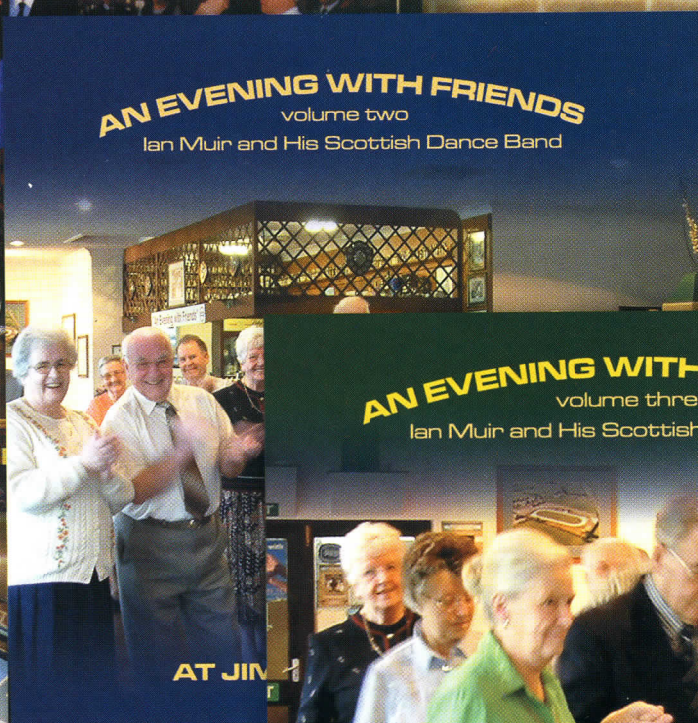
The History of the RSCDS • The Hebridean Weaving Lilt
The End of an Era - Farewell to the Caley Ceilidhs
The Ian Hutson Scottish Dance Band

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Issue 1 - November 2004



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Editorial

Welcome to **Dance On!** Each month this magazine will be solely dedicated to dancers and those who play for them. We will include articles, letters, CD reviews, Web page reviews, dance instructions, lots of photographs and a Dance Diary. If you are interested in any form of Scottish Traditional Dance, then this is the magazine for you. The annual subscription begins in January, and details of how to subscribe for a full year are on this page. You can order just the November and December issues for £5.40 (inc P&P) or the December issue only for £2.70 (inc P&P). Cheques should be sent to the address on the Subscription Form. Remember dance groups and clubs can order 4 or more magazines each month and will not have to pay postage. (You will also be invoiced on a monthly basis, rather than having to pay it all up front.)

If you enjoy this issue, please spread the word among your dancing friends. We need to hear from dance clubs and bands, so that we can add them to our indexes (which we will publish at a later date). If you would like to write an article for us, or send in letters, photographs or dance instructions then we will be delighted to hear from you. This is **your** magazine – help us to make it a success.

Karin

Take The Floor

6th November Ian Hutson SDB
(55th Perth All-Scotland Accordion & Fiddle Festival)

13th November Gordon Shand SDB
(Glenfiddich Fiddle Championships Part 1)

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Dance On!

To contact us
Tel/Fax: 01478-613 104
E-mail: editor@danceon.co.uk
Website: www.danceon.co.uk

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*Front cover photograph of Robbie Shepherd MBE
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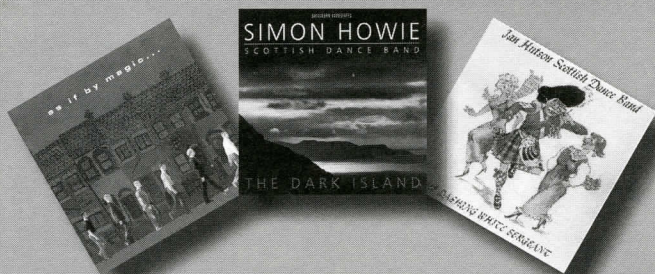
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Welcome to Dance On!

What's in a Name?

We pondered long and hard for about five minutes before naming this magazine, with cool ideas like "Dancing Gaily!", "The Prancer" and "Birling Times" in contention. Then some bright spark thought of his days as a "street performer" (the politically correct term for a Morris Dancer) when a performance always started with a dance-on – it introduced the whole team to the audience. And it gathered an enthusiastic crowd round too, something we hope this new venture will do.

The equivalent in Scottish Country Dance terms is the Grand March and I've got the Occasionals *Back in Step* track 1 playing said march as I type. It gets everyone warmed up nicely, introduced, and the first sets formed up. We hope *Dance On!* does that too!

But the title started another mental music track playing. And my feet started to do this funny little jig, reminiscent of some step dance routine. And an imaginary Fender Stratocaster appeared in my arms... Ahh if only I'd practised every day I could be, well, an old rocker by now!

So if you picked up this magazine in a doctor's waiting room you probably think it's a tribute comic for the Shadows and their 1966 hit *Dance On*. The Shads were the guitar group famous for being Cliff Richard's backing band through the sixties, seventies and other decades I can't remember. And if you made that mistake in the doc's waiting room you are probably a certain age. Lots of dancers are that age, have you noticed?

I remember when we first went Scottish Country dancing in 1990 down in Southport, Englandshire. We must have lowered the average age of the group by at least twenty years! There were a few things that went through revivals in the nineteen-forties and fifties – folk music, folk dance, Scottish Country Dance among others – and many of the post-war youngsters who started then are still at it! Old codgers are still standing on stages with one hand in their jeans pocket, the other cupping an ear, singing bothy songs. And Granddads are standing outside pubs in crossed baldrics, breeches, and beflowered straw hats clutching pewter tankards, as others, hankies a-flapping, leap about them.

Much the same on the Scottish Country Dance scene, bar the grubby jeans and baldrics etc. of course. The total average age of a dance set is likely to be close to the half-millennium mark (*apart from that lively set over there, leaping about and showing off – probably from the city you know*). Not that there's anything wrong with aged dancers. Dancing, after all, has been proved by numerous research projects to be good for the heart, lowering cholesterol levels and improving short-term memory faculties. But where are the young people?

All the revival interests have suffered from the same problem – not enough young people taking them up. And it's easy to blame the usual suspects (a useful term because it covers coffee bars, Dansette record players, discos, TV, video, computers, computer games – name your own from each decade) but is that all it is?

A recent day of dance on the Isle of Skye was quite well attended but it could have been better. Where, for example, where all the teenage girls for the modern dance classes? Surely they would be attracted by Street-dance or hip-hop? The answer in part came back via a parent whose daughter reported that the peer group leaders had declared dance "so uncool"! Well yes I always thought my Morris dances were unlikely to appeal to the fashionistas but *all* dance?

So the usual excuses of boy/girl friends, exams, hormones, apathy and sheer laziness are off target if you want to know why you lose or fail to even find your young dancers. Basically, we're uncool. And I suppose that the older the set gets, the *more* uncool our dance becomes – what a vicious reel!

Some groups have tried to remedy this, for example RSCDS branches throwing in a few ceilidh dances to lighten up the image. I hope that one works but be warned – some ceilidh bands on the west coast are finding empty dance floors and blank faces whatever dance they call whether it's a wedding or a village ceilidh. Yes, even ceilidh dance is on the wane in some places. Except for Strip the Willow of course, which induces daftness and drunkenness quicker than any alco-pop.

Which could be the answer – introduce elements of speed, bodily contact and danger and everyone wants a go! The Morris tradition discovered this a few years ago with the short sword Rapper dance style. Figures became more complex, the frantic speed got faster and bodies were flying everywhere. Bloodshed is common and finger-trapping hazards are worthy of a Health and Safety Executive report. I've even seen a domestic fridge (yes, that's a kitchen refrigerator) introduced into one dance! Scary!

Such show dances are spectacular but still rooted in history and tradition, with Rapper coming from the 19th century mining industry. But that didn't stop it being the star attraction at this year's Sidmouth Festival above all the singers and folk-bands. The twenty-somethings of Black Swan Rapper came on with neon flashing swords (apparently using *burning* swords got a bit dodgy) and rocked the capacity crowd in the Arena. And suddenly, rapper dance is *very* cool!

Be careful though, as bodily contact and danger is not the total answer. We were practising *Angus MacLeod* last night in class and the double diagonal reels led to some new reports in the Accident Book, broken noses and cracked ribs being the most common. Can some reader please



Rob Corcoran

explain how four dancers pass through the same point at the same time? It didn't feel very cool at the time but how we larked! Being sociable is important too because a night out at a class or a dance is meant to be fun after a hard day's work or retirement. Any new members or visitors have to be made to feel comfortable so that no matter how hard the session is, they want to come back for more next week. My favourite dance class is not the one next door, it's the one that takes an hour to drive to and involves a late-night finish. But the interval tea and biscuits is taken round the table and the craic is the best!

So we hope you also find *Dance On!* a sociable read but the craic is down to you. Let us know what's happening in your area, in your dance, in your head if it's a new dance you want us to comment on – whatever you think will appeal to your fellow dancers. It will be a great place to find out if there's a dance on in an area you are visiting (how often do you go somewhere and find there's been something on the night before you arrived!).

It will be a forum for discussion on particular dances, dance bands and music, historical facts and fancies, even recipes for interval teas (e.g. never serve chilli con carne!). We hope to put advertisers in front of you so you know where to find dance tutors, musicians, items of kit – in fact anything that's relevant to dance.

What you will not see is adverts for stair lifts, walk-in baths or dog-walkers (okay, maybe rheumatism ointments will be allowed) because the main theme of this magazine is – keep active, keep up your tradition, keep involving people of all ages – in other words: *Dance On!*

Rob Corcoran

Take The Floor

In the world of Traditional Dance the greats are frequently referred to by only one of their given names – Shand, Powrie, MacPhail are just three that spring to mind. Not all are musicians however – whenever we hear someone say “I was listening to Robbie this afternoon,” or, “Who’s Robbie got on the dance music next week?” we immediately know that they’re referring to Robbie Shepherd MBE. Such is the popularity of the man that we all feel that we are on first name terms with him – and this is just how he likes it. “I never forget that these people are inviting me into their homes each week.”

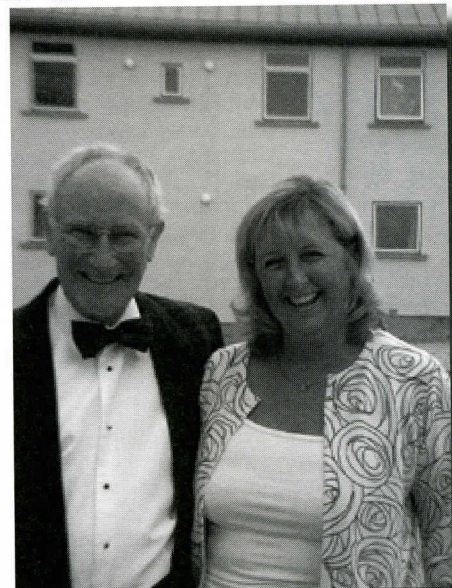
Robbie comes from Dunecht near Aberdeen. His first broadcasting role was with BBC Radio Aberdeen, where he presented “Meet You Monday”, a request programme for the North East of Scotland, Orkney and Shetland. Television followed, with the “Out and About” series for Grampian. He also did the commentary for the sheepdog trials and was the presenter and quizmaster for the early “Beech Grove Garden” roadshow. He decided to concentrate on his radio work, taking over the Scottish Dance Music slot in 1981 after the tragic death in a car accident of the presenter David Findlay.

Last year Radio Scotland celebrated twenty-five years of broadcasting in its current format, and of course Scottish Dance Music has been one of its staples over the years. Take the Floor consistently attracts some of the station’s largest listening figures and dance bands set their sights on one day broadcasting on the programme. A band cannot simply apply to be on the show – they have to go through a rigorous auditioning process, and if they pass they then have to put together varied and interesting sets of Dance Music. Robbie himself has nothing to do with the auditions, that job is left to Ken Mutch who has produced the show since 1984.

A whole week’s work goes into producing just 1½ hours of music and chat on Saturday evenings. About once a month

Take the Floor has an OB (Outside Broadcast) recorded with live dancing in various venues throughout the country. Often the broadcasting band has some connection to the place where the show is being recorded and can help out with ideas for guest artists, but sometimes it’s down to Ken and his Production Assistant, Jean Sharman, to find acts that their listeners and dancers will enjoy.

Usually an OB will involve just one overnight stay for the crew but two, or even three, nights are not unheard of if the show is coming from some far-flung outpost (one memorable show was even broadcast from on board the Queen Mary berthed at Longbeach, California!). Provided the broadcast is within driving distance the OB unit (BBC van) is loaded with all the paraphernalia and sets off to arrive at the chosen venue at around lunchtime of the day of recording. “Rigging” the equipment takes at least a couple of hours and it’s all hands on deck. Doug Maskew is the Senior Audio Supervisor, and also in the team are Audio Assistants Amelia MacDonald, Peter Elliot and Matt Johnson



**Robbie & his “Reel Blend”
Producer, Jennifer Cruickshank at
an OB in Skye**



**The Jim Johnstone SDB playing at an OB in Perth to mark BBC Radio
Scotland’s 25th anniversary**

and Engineer Keith Simpson. Everything must be set up and ready to go for the soundcheck at four o’clock.

It’s interesting to watch Robbie in “professional” mode. He moves easily among the crowd of dancers, shaking hands here, patting a back there. He has a naturally friendly way with people, and has time for everyone.

He admits to always being nervous before a broadcast, but nobody would ever know. On stage he chats with the band and gives a few words of encouragement to the guest artistes. Time for one or two funny asides to the audience, “In Bridge of Don they say that the MBE stands for ‘Man Behind Esma’” (his wife!), and the recording is about to begin. The band strikes up “Kate Dalrymple” and we prepare to “Take the Floor”...

Take the Floor



Ken Mutch



Matt Johnson



The Gay Gordons, Holyrood 2002



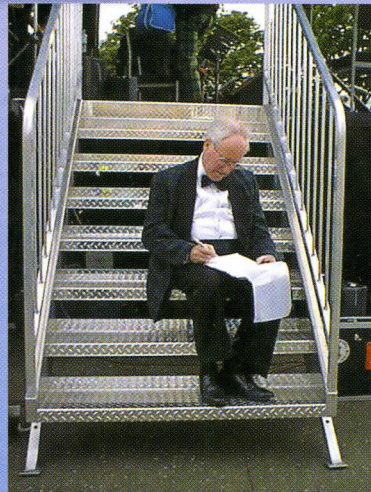
Robbie on stage



Doug Maskew



On the road!



Robbie prepares his notes



Dance Callers Pete Roberts & Annabel Oates do The St Bernard's Waltz



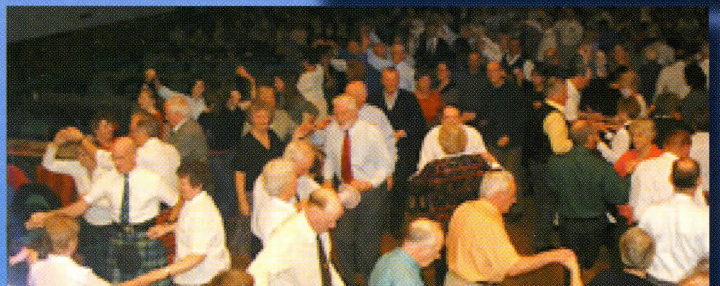
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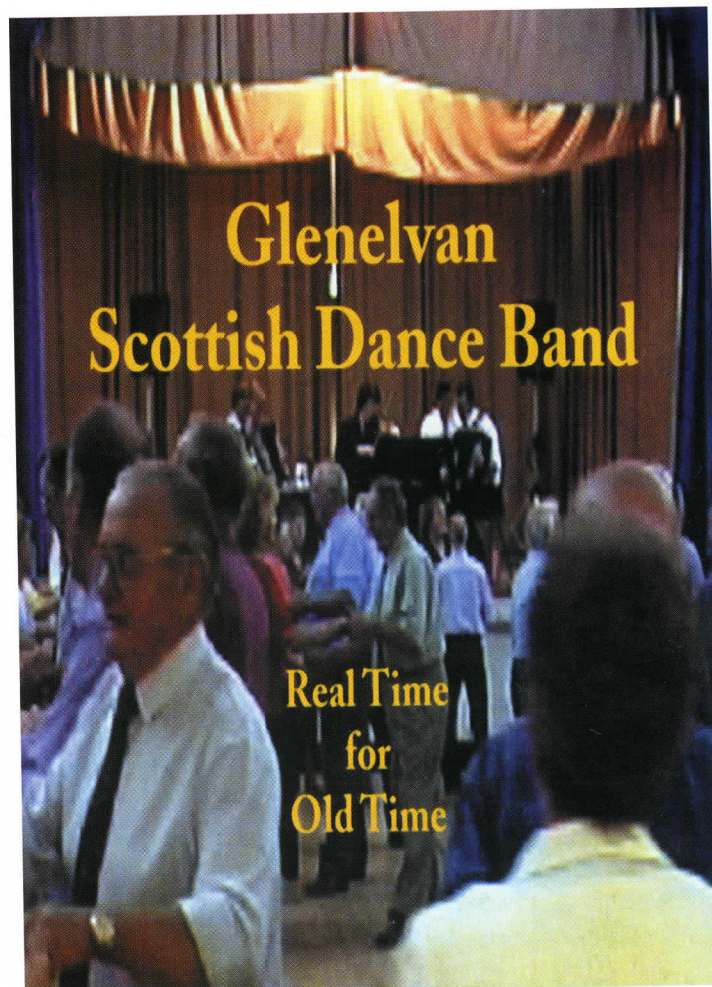
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The History of the RSCDS

The Scottish Country Dance Society was formed at a meeting in Glasgow on 26th November 1923, attended by twenty-seven people. From such a small beginning, the RSCDS (Royal since 1951) has grown into a worldwide organisation with a membership of many thousands. The principal initiators of the inaugural meeting were Ysobel Stewart of Fasnaclloch and Jean C. Milligan of Glasgow. These two ladies shared a concern for the fate of the longwise Scottish country dance, which was disappearing rapidly during the years following World War 1, especially from the urban ballroom, although its popularity had proved more lasting in the rural areas of Scotland. Precisely when the country dance was first danced in Scotland is still a matter of scholarly debate. However, it seems very likely that it was known in Scotland by the middle of the seventeenth century. It was certainly very well known in England where, in 1650, John Playford published, in London, his first edition of the English Dancing Master, the first publication in the British Isles to provide detailed descriptions of country dances. Although never displacing the truly indigenous dances of Scotland, the Reels, the country dance acquired

enthusiastic patrons in Scotland, as it did in several other European countries, and its universal popularity increased greatly. Although essentially part of an international repertoire of country dancing, the country dances which were danced in Scotland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did begin to develop their own distinctive Scottish characteristics. Often described as *Scotch dances*, they were principally identified by their accompanying tunes, which had Scottish titles and which, invariably, gave their names to the country dances. Examples of such dances are *Cadgers in the Canongate*, *Monymusk*, *Broun's Reel* and *Drops of Brandy (Strip the Willow)*.

Probably Scotland's most notable contribution to the tradition of country dancing is the strathspey rhythm, which emerged in Scotland about the middle of the eighteenth century. With its characteristic *Scottish snap*, the strathspey was uniquely Scottish. Strathspey country dances, usually described as *Strathspey Reels*, were popular during the second half of the eighteenth century. Their popularity declined during the next century and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, country dances danced to the strathspey tempo had disappeared almost entirely



from the Scottish ballroom, the one exception being *The Glasgow Highlanders*. The revival of the strathspey country dance, with many fine tunes, traditional and newly composed, to accompany them, is entirely due to the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

Thanks to the efforts of the RSCDS, country dancing was probably at the height of its popularity in Scotland during the years following World War 2. This post-war development, reflected in the rapid expansion of RSCDS membership at home and abroad, was also accompanied by a growing enthusiasm for Scottish country dance bands. Attracting a large following of enthusiastic dancers, as well as appreciative listeners, these bands, in addition to the older collections of traditional dance music, relied, as they still do, on the dance and music books published by the RSCDS.

The harmonious partnership of music and dance was the constant theme of the teaching and writing of Miss Jean C. Milligan (1886-1978), co-founder of the Society and its principal teacher and technical adviser for more than fifty years. She maintained that the enjoyment and fun engendered by country dancing owed as much to the spirit and stimulus of the music as it did to the choreography of the dance. When awarding an Honorary Doctorate of Laws to Miss Milligan in 1978, the University of Aberdeen cited the significant contribution which she and the RSCDS had made to Scotland's rich store of traditional music as well as to the promotion of traditional dance.



Dancing outside at St Andrews

At the time of its formation, the Society's objects included the following:

To practise and preserve country dances as danced in Scotland;

To publish from time to time descriptions of country dances, with diagrams and music in simple form, at a moderate price.

These aims have guided the work of the RSCDS since 1923.

Regularly, it has published collections of dances and music. Book 44 is available in 2004. Committed at first only to dances which had been collected orally or from pre-1923 manuscript and printed sources, since 1945, the Society has encouraged the publication of new compositions. The first newly devised dance to



Dancing to The Neil Copland SDB at the 2003 AGM



You're never too young to dance!

receive the RSCDS imprimatur was *The Reel of the 51st Division* (RSCDS Book 13), now universally popular. This was composed by some men and officers of the Highland Division who were imprisoned at Laufen in Bavaria following the defeat at St Valery in June 1940. A remarkable phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century was the prolific output of new compositions, which infused interesting and fresh ideas into the choreography of the country dance. Many of these new compositions have been absorbed

into the dance programmes of the Old Time and Ceilidh dancers, who, of course, dance them in their own particular style.

In order to achieve a universally acceptable style and standard of country dancing, the RSCDS has adopted a number of strategies. It arranges annual Summer, Winter, Music and Youth Schools, awards teaching qualifications and encourages its local Branches (currently 167) and Affiliated Groups (currently 437) to hold classes of instruction, as well as formal and informal social dancing events.

From the outset, the RSCDS has appreciated the necessity to engage the interest of youngsters in Scottish country dancing and it continues to provide supportive teaching packs. RSCDS Branches and teachers are encouraged to hold children's classes, offer medal tests, arrange local festivals and seek opportunities for teaching in schools.

Country dancing, like all other forms of dance, is subject to the inevitable process of evolution. The capacity to adapt explains the longevity of the country dance. The dilemma which confronted the RSCDS during the twentieth century was how to

accommodate the consequences of evolutionary change while at the same time remaining true to the spirit of the tradition. Recently, the RSCDS has carried out a major reorganisation of its management structure with the aim of being able to respond more sympathetically, more readily and more effectively to this and the other inevitable challenges of the twenty-first century, thus endeavouring to ensure that the Scottish country dance will continue to prosper for another one hundred years at least.

Further information about the RSCDS may be obtained from the Secretary/Administrator, Elspeth Gray, at RSCDS, 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7AF or on the website www.rscds.org.

Alastair MacFadyen

**Nicol
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Moving Forward with STDT

STDT is unique. We are THE national organisation which exists to promote, research, conserve and foster all of Scotland's dance traditions. STDT is the national advocate for the enjoyment of all forms of Scottish traditional dance.

Creating new initiatives....

STDT seeks to raise the profile of traditional dance nationally and internationally. STDT is about enjoyment, collaboration and partnership in the process and results of our events, activities and research. As part of this initiative we now have our web site: **www.stdt.org**.

Following on from a successful major conference in Stirling in March 2003, we organised and promoted Stirling's first Traditional Dance Festival in March 2004 with workshops, dance demonstrations, performances and choreography competitions. We intend to develop this as an annual event, building on the successful features of this inaugural festival.

In addition, STDT organises and supports various opportunities for demonstration of, and participation in, all our dance traditions through partnerships with other dance companies, individuals and organisations.

Dance development projects...

We have completed dance development projects in the Borders, Angus and Perth & Kinross regions. At present we are engaged in partnership with Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Arts Council in a dance development project throughout the city of Glasgow. Our Traditional Dance Development Officer, Katie Coull, is developing traditional dance in the city with a network of classes, events and activities. We are talking to local authorities throughout Scotland to establish traditional dance development activity in their areas.

On-going programme of activities and events...

All of the aforementioned run in parallel with our programme of activities across Scotland including workshops, ceilidhs, classes and dance demonstrations. STDT continues to develop collaborations with other organisations and festivals in Scotland, including: National Museums of Scotland, Historic Scotland, Edinburgh's Ceilidh Culture, Celtic Connections, Linlithgow Scotch Hop, Hairst Festival, Angus, The Blend Festival, Stirling, Traditional Arts Organisations.

Touring throughout Scotland with a Showcase of Traditional Dance...

STDT is keen to tour A Showcase of Traditional Dance Styles in dance venues throughout Scotland.

Commissioning new performance pieces...

STDT also commissions new performance pieces working with experienced professional dancers and choreographers – the first of these was "Generating Heat" which premiered to critical acclaim in March 2003. A new contemporary dance piece based on the traditions is also planned, with the working title "Funky Faeries", a taster of which was shown as part of the Dance Festival in March 2004. We are seeking funding to complete this commission and organise a tour, which would present the two new commissioned pieces together for the first time.



Campaigning for dance as part of the curriculum...

We are all now well aware of the problem of childhood obesity and the necessity to change Scotland's culture now to avoid real problems in the future. We are keen to promote traditional dance within our education system as a preventive health care measure. STDT is keen to see Traditional Dance Development Officers appointed in all Local Authorities in Scotland. Dance is not only a wonderful form of exercise, but it reaches into other parts of the curriculum such as history, culture, and social skills. Above all, it's **FUN!**

Develop a national resource centre...

The first stage of our formal resource centre is now in place in Stirling. STDT is in the process of applying for funding to enable us to develop a national archive and information centre.

You can become a member of STDT...

Contact us at the address below for a Membership Subscription Form. Individual Membership (1 Year) £15; Concession £12.50 for which you will receive a quarterly magazine and concession prices at all STDT events, classes and workshops. **Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust, 18b Broad St, STIRLING FK8 1EF Tel: 01786-849 247, Fax: 01786-849 248 info@stdt.org www.stdt.org**

Who's Who



Karin Ingram – Editor

Firstly let me introduce myself. I have been a Ceilidh and Old Time dance caller and teacher for about fourteen years. In that time I have been fortunate enough to have worked with some of the most talented musicians around.

I was dance co-ordinator for the BBC's Hogmanay Show in 1996, 1997 and 2001, and for the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra video "The Fiddler's Party". I have organised displays, dances and workshops for, amongst others, Northbeat, Dumfries & Galloway Arts Association, Tartan in the Park, Glasgow Fling, Mayfest, Beating the Retreat, Edinburgh Folk Festival, Cambridge Folk Festival, Scottish Youth Dance Festival and The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust.

Having spent six months as Traditional Dance Artist in Residence with Dumfries & Galloway Arts Association, I was involved in the creation of an education pack called "Sangs, Reels & High Jinks", and later provided dances for a similar one for the Scottish Borders Council.

I was employed by The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust for three years as the Traditional Dance Development Officer for the Scottish Borders. The STDT chose this part of the country as one of two (Angus being the other) recipients of a Scottish Arts Council Lottery Funding. The research undertaken in the area culminated in a touring Exhibition of Dance Traditions in the Borders in 2000.

I run a weekly Scottish Dance Group in The Morris Club, Newtongrange, Edinburgh. Musicians Stuart Anderson, Andrew Knight, Judith Linton, Nicol McLaren, David Scott and Charlie Todd provide the music, and dancers of all abilities are welcome.

Although I am not a musician, I am keen to promote and raise the profile of Traditional Music throughout Scotland and I am Editor of The Box and Fiddle Magazine and a member of the Executive Committee of The National Association of Accordion and Fiddle Clubs. I am also a member of the START Group – a cross-party Parliamentary group for the Traditional Arts.

I have a weekly Traditional Music radio show on Radio Borders called "The Sunday Getherin'" and I have guests in the studio each week. Very often I am joined by dance band leaders to have a chat and choose some music.

I look forward to making many new friends through this magazine – so spread the word and... Dance On!

Mats Melin – Dance Journalist

Mats Melin was born and brought up in Stockholm, Sweden. His dancing background began at the age of 11, when he took up Scottish Country Dancing - his interest stemming from a fascination in all things Celtic.

The first years concentrated on Scottish Country Dancing and Mats first performed with the RSCDS Stockholm Branch's demonstration team at the age of 12. However, Mats' interest quickly turned to solo dancing as well and he taught himself his first Highland Dances from books which he had borrowed.

In 1980 Mats joined the Stockholm Caledonian Dance Circle (SCDC), and ran their solo dance classes as well as becoming one of four Scottish Country Dance teachers.

Mats attended the RSCDS Summer School in St. Andrews where he met the late Mr Bobby Watson of Aberdeen, the Highland Dancer of world fame. This progressed to private tuition in Aberdeen. Mats also had classes from teachers such as the late Miss Elspeth Strathern, Mr. Charlie Mill (Dundee), Mr. Peter Daniels (New Zealand), Tui Downie, (New Zealand), and the late Mrs. Orma Smith MBE (New Zealand).

Since 1986 Mats has researched Scottish Solo Step-Dancing. The research led him to take a closer look at other European dance forms as well as North American and other related dance traditions. This work includes descriptions of all known versions of well-known and lesser-known solo step-dances, Hebridean dances, and Cape Breton step-dancing.

From 1985 to 1993 Mats acted as Teacher, Secretary and Treasurer of the SCDC. He organised the first Highland Games to be held in Stockholm in 1989, and he organised ten weekend workshops and courses with teachers and musicians from Scotland, England, Canada and New Zealand. Through his research, he got in touch with the Newcastle Cloggies (a group who also research various forms of Scottish Dancing) touring with them in 1991 in Nashville, USA, and in 1992 in St. Petersburg, Russia. In April 1993 Mats staged a Celtic Fire week in Stockholm with workshops and stage performances by the Newcastle Cloggies, his own team The Caledonian Dancers, Eken Morris Dancers, The Caledonian Pipe Band and The Pipes & Drums of the 1st Royal Engineers. Mats has also taught workshops in Scotland, England, Canada and New Zealand. Since 1992 Mats has taken up Scottish/Cape Breton style Step-Dancing under the tuition of Harvey Beaton, Willie Francis Fraser, Mary-Janet MacDonald, Alexander McDonnell and Jean MacNeil.

Mats became a professional dancer in 1995 when he took up the post as Traditional Dancer in Residence for Shetland together with Maria Leask. He has since worked either as freelance dancer or on projects round Scotland and beyond.

More details can be found at: www.matsmelin.com

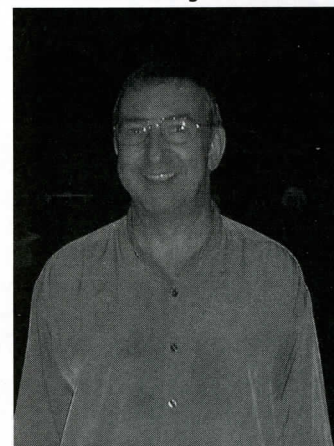
Alasdair Graham – Diary

Alasdair Graham is our "Dance Diary" contributor and this is how he became involved: I first came across dancing as a child in Argyll where I participated in the monthly Ceilidh Dance parties, held at the local residential outdoor centre catering for Glasgow schoolchildren. Scottish Country Dancing was also taught for a short time in the local village hall. This interest led to attendance at Ceilidh Dances in the 1960s and 70s in the period when Irish Show Bands were becoming fashionable and came over to play in Argyll. There then followed a period when attendance at dances was infrequent (work and marriage seems to pause this activity) until about fifteen years ago when Effie and I decided we would prefer dancing as a means of keeping fit, rather than attending a gymnasium. We enrolled in three Scottish Country Dance classes for a few years, to accelerate the learning process, and continued attended as many Ceilidh Dances as shift work permitted.

Finding out about dances surfaced as a problem encountered by many of our dancing friends and often we only heard about a good dance after it had taken place. Knowing that the bands playing and the likely programme of dances made all the difference between a "good and enjoyable" dance and an "if there is nothing else on then we'll go" dance, I decided to start a Dance Diary. Initially these were printed lists we shared at dances and were sourced from adverts and by word of mouth.

As more of our dance friends acquired computers I began circulating these lists by e-mail, having to make sure I sent the correct format of attachment for whichever programme the recipient had. Then I discovered how to put up a Web page and the dance lists went on-line with the address made known to all our friends. Local Scottish Country Dance programmes were gradually included as official Branch Websites and Newsletters were not publishing this information. Recently I have produced this Country Dance information in "pdf format", e-mailed to dancers who request it.

The biggest problem still, is obtaining details of events to include in the diary, and I depend on organisers or those who know of events sending details to me.



"Scottish" Step Dancing

Step dancing is the art of beating out the rhythm of the music with the balls of the feet, the heels and with brushing movements of the feet, complementing the music. It is an informal dance form – normal hard-soled shoes are worn – the feet are kept almost parallel throughout most steps, and the dancing is kept light and close to the floor, with the body held upright and the arms hanging loosely by the sides.

In the past, step dancing was used in dances such as The Scotch Reel and other similar dances. Out of the social dances grew a solo dance tradition in which solo dancing was performed to most time signatures, but commonly to jigs, reels, strathspeys, and hornpipes.

Today solo step-dancing is mainly performed to strathspeys and reels. Jig steps are generally performed in set dances, such as The Inverness County Square Set from Cape Breton Island.

A Living Tradition

Step dancing was, and still is to some extent, a living dance tradition in Scotland. It shares the same beating of feet and origin with the step-dancing styles found in Ireland, North England and France, and likewise with the clogging traditions of England, Wales, France and parts of Scotland.

As a pure dance form, step dancing has declined in Scotland to such an extent that many people regard it as Irish rather than Scottish. Many older people, when the subject of step-dancing comes up, can tell you that that is what they did when they were young, but they thought nothing of it, and eventually when nobody seemed interested, it tended to be forgotten as new dance forms came and went.

Today, step dancing still flourishes in the many Scottish communities in Canada, particularly in Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and New Brunswick. But it has also survived in many other parts of Canada where Scots settled, for example in the Glengarry district in Ontario. In other parts of North America, the Scottish style of step-dancing got assimilated with other forms of stepping, which led to the birth of other traditions, such as Appalachian flatfoot clogging, Buck dancing, and Cajun dancing.

From Scotch Reels to Solo Stepping

Solo step-dancing grew out of the Scotch Reels and other related dances, which all involved a two part dance pattern; a simple figure, a circle or later a figure of eight, and stepping on the spot. This can be seen as being related to the verses and chorus of a song, where the figure (the chorus) stays the same throughout the dance, while the stepping (the verse)

changes. A number of old solo step dances, such as old versions of The Highland Fling, used to involve a circling figure in between every step that was danced on the spot. A few modern Highland dances, for example Seann Triubhas and The Sailors' Hornpipe, still show the remains of this tradition in the circling movements, which begin each dance.

What is known as Highland Dancing in Scotland today can clearly be seen to have grown out of the step-dancing tradition. Many Highland dances still have an element of percussive footwork in them, which has, over the years, been softened up and changed, due to the influence of Dancing Masters and teachers with new ideas and concepts.

The solo dance tradition that remains today in South Uist and Barra clearly shows the percussive relationship, and so do the few remaining solo dances in hornpipe and reel time, from various parts of Scotland, that have retained a good proportion of stepping.

The Cape Breton Square Sets

In Cape Breton Island, step dancing was used in the Scottish communities in the old four and eight handed reels and as a solo piece. In the 1890s, however, a number of Square dances – Quadrilles, Lancers, Saratoga Lancers and The Caledonians

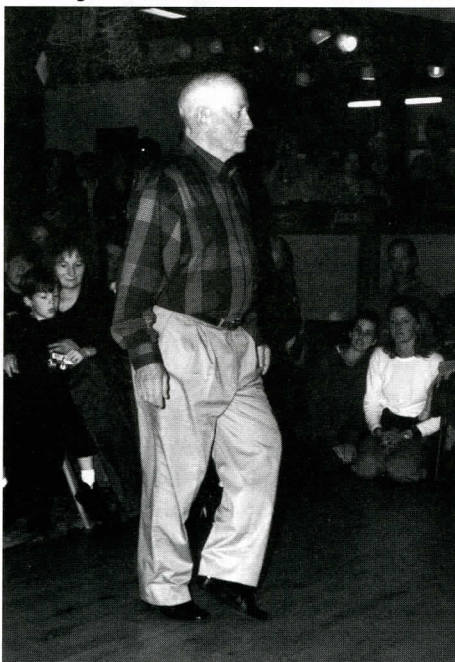
– appeared. These Square dances had to be danced in a "proper" way, using sedate walking steps as well as waltz and polka steps. The old people continued to dance the Reels in their homes for a while, but in the early 1900s the social dancing was transferred to the new public halls and the square sets took over from the Reel dancing and the interest in step-dancing began to decline. Over the years, however, step-dancing has crept back into the social dancing, and we now find a wide variety of Square Sets within Cape Breton Island, all involving a certain amount of step-dancing while retaining some of the figures from the original square dances.

Step-dancing Styles

There are now few set routines for step dances, but in the past certain steps were associated with particular tunes and would have been danced in a certain manner. Presently, most step-dancers respond directly to the music or songs provided and feel what steps are best suited to the tune being played. This asks for a great deal of musical awareness from the dancer, a fact that the generations of old took for granted.

There is no one way of performing the steps, as this is a highly individual form of dancing. It is not possible to fix a place where the feet should be, as this is a living, flexible and individual tradition that really and ideally should be passed on from person to person. There are some general guide lines though, that seem to be adhered to by most practitioners of this style of step-dancing and by which older generations will judge the quality of a dancer: The dancing should be light and neat, that is keeping close to the floor and dancing without much action above the knees or without too much sideways movement across the floor. Just like a modern Highland dancer, a good step-dancer should be able to dance exactly on the spot. The dancer should be able to follow the music closely and adjust his stepping to the environment, i.e. the type of floor, what shoes are worn and so forth.

The written word can never be a substitute for first hand experience. This is only an attempt to put down on paper the rhythm pattern involved in step dancing. Only the slightest indication as to where the feet should be is given, so as not to inhibit individual interpretation. If personal tuition can be sought this is recommended, as first hand information and demonstration as how the steps are performed is always preferable. The written word serves mainly as a memory aide. Step dancing is still very much an inherited tradition passed down by generations of dancers.



Willie Fraser from Inverness, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada. Aged over 80 yrs, he performed at the Ceolas Summer School in South Uist in 1996 and 97. He is still dancing to this day. One of the last of the old style step dancers. Gaelic speaker and very good singer too!

Mats Melin

Web Dancer

This column will appear each month and I will review two websites associated with dancing. If you would like your site reviewed please e-mail the link to me at sue@suepetyt.me.uk. These observations are based on my professional opinion and personal preferences, please e-mail your views or write to the letters page.

GLASGOW BRANCH

www.rscdsglasgow.org

As Glasgow was the first branch of the RSCDS I felt it was only right that it should be the first to have its website reviewed!

Some search engines did not find the site when I searched on Glasgow RSCDS, but all were successful when I searched RSCDS Glasgow, so the site was fairly easy to find.

The branch has used the Rennie Mackintosh theme for the site, which gives it uniqueness, although some may find the screen a bit "cluttered". Clicking on the welcome screen takes you to the home page where there is a picture of the main officials and links to eight further options.

The "History" option takes you to information about the formation of the branch. The "Classes" page is currently up to date but is unusual in that the information has been scanned in, the print is quite small, but is readable.

The "Dances" page is up to date and four of the dance programmes have been scanned in as one A4 sheet and have to be printed out in that format. As the last dance is on 18th February 2005, some of the information on the site will be out of date before then. The dances following this were in a more conventional format for the web.

The "Branch Committee" Page lists all the committee members with e-mails where available and dates of the committee meetings. This is very useful information for branch members and not easily available at all branches.

The "Schools and Youth Events" page has a list of events which look as though they will be exciting, however there is no detail as yet and no obvious contact, the sooner that could be made available the better that would be.

The "Events" page lists classes and dances in chronological order – very useful for branch members. There is also mention of the Glasgow Music Festival but there are no details or contacts given.

Clicking on "HQ" provides a link to the RSCDS Headquarters website.

The "Dem Team" page shows one picture that looks recent, but the rest of the page goes back into the mists of time. While this is interesting information I was left with the impression that the Dem Team had not done much recently! The history of the demonstration team should be included in the History section of the website.

www.scottishmist.com

This is a website which covers a great deal more than dancing, but has a section devoted to country dancing. There is a brief history of the RSCDS and description of steps and figures but the main attraction of the site is the country dance animations, however I would consider them to be more entertaining than educational. The figures are like string puppets without the strings and ladies and men are distinguished by colour! One word of warning, unless you have a fast Internet connection (e.g. Broadband) the animations take a long time to download.

Sue Petyt

Ibegan Scottish Country Dancing in Grimsby in 1990 and wished immediately that I had discovered it earlier in my life. I was soon dancing two or three nights a week and travelling quite long distances if there was a dance, especially if there was a band. The dance "Fisherman's Reel" was written for the Grimsby club and was the first dance I wrote.

I found myself unexpectedly being asked to teach the Scunthorpe dance class, and decided it was time to take my teaching certificates, and I owe a great debt of gratitude to Moira Stacey who patiently guided me successfully through both exams.

For professional reasons, I moved to North Hertfordshire. I had made all the necessary phone calls to find the dance classes to go to before I knew where I was going to stay, which shows what my priorities were. In 1998, on a Furlong's dance holiday I met my partner Iain Hale. We have danced from London to Helensburgh and even did a "guest spot" on the P&O Cruise Liner Aurora (ask us about that when you see us!). We have moved round the UK quite a lot but are now members of the Dumfries Branch of the RSCDS and I am currently teaching the Moffat class.

Professionally I have worked in Information Technology (IT) for over twenty years and currently work as an IT Auditor, examining the way organisations use IT and determining if it is giving value for money. Part of that involves evaluating websites to discover if they are providing what customers want, hence this column in **Dance On!**. I hope the magazine is a huge success; it would seem to me that it fills a gap.

Ian and Joan McKenzie's Strathspey

Ian and Joan McKenzie started dancing in 1952 and were founder members of the Teesside Branch of the RSCDS. Laurie Kemp wrote a dance for their wedding in 1955 and Sir Jimmy Shand wrote the tunes McKenzie's Rant and Laurie Kemp's Reel for the dance.

Ian and Joan McKenzie's Strathspey was written to celebrate their "significant" birthdays in 2003 with music written by Iain MacPhail.

3x40 Strathspey

(A dance for three couples in a longways set of three)

**Original tune, Ian and Joan McKenzie's Strathspey
by Iain MacPhail**

1-4 Second Couple cross over passing right shoulder. Second lady dances up behind first man and finishes between first couple, facing first lady, WHILE second man dances down behind third lady and finishes between third couple facing third man.

5-8 Half reels of three across the dance, second lady giving left shoulder to first lady to begin, second man giving left shoulder to third man to begin.

9-12 Second couple dance half reels of three on opposite sides of the dance second lady giving left shoulder to third lady (in third man's place) and second man giving left shoulder to first man (in first lady's place)

13-16 Second couple dance towards each other and turn left hands one and a quarter times to finish facing their partners first corner position (second lady facing first man who is in third lady's place, second man facing third lady, who is in first man's place).

17-28 Dance to corners and set.

17-18 First man and second lady change places passing by the right, WHILE second man and third lady change places passing by the right WHILE first lady and third man set to each other. On meeting in the middle, first man and third lady pass each other by the right, to finish first man facing third man, and third lady facing first lady.

19-20 Second couple set WHILE first man and third man change places passing by the right, WHILE third lady and first lady change places passing by the right. On meeting in the middle first lady and third man pass each other by the right, to finish first lady facing second lady and third man facing second man.

21-22 First man and third lady set, WHILE third man and second man change places passing by the right, WHILE first lady and second lady change places passing by the right. On meeting in the middle second couple pass each other by the right to finish second lady facing first man and second man facing third lady.

23-28 repeat **17-22** from new positions.

29-32 Second couple lead up and cast to second place on own sides.

33-36 First, second and third couples circle to the left half way.

37-40 First couple (in third place) cross over giving right hands WHILE third and second couples dance right hand across half way. All join hands on the side and set. (2,3,1)

Repeat from new positions

© Sue Petyt

Mideltone Silver

Written to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Milton Keynes Branch of the RSCDS

5x32 Jig

Five couples in a longways set

Original Tune – Jan's Jig by David Cunningham

1-2 First and second ladies and third and fourth ladies turn three quarters with the right hand, WHILE first and second men and third and fourth men turn three quarters with the left hand.

3-4 Retaining hold of hands, first, second, third and fourth couples set, (first and third couples back to back with their partners).

5-6 First and second ladies and third and fourth ladies turn three quarters with the right hand, WHILE first and second men and third and fourth men turn three quarters with the left hand to finish with second couple in first place, first couple in second place, fourth couple in third place and third couple in fourth place.

7-8 First and third couples pass their partners right shoulder and finish back to back facing opposite sides of the set.

9-16 All dance double triangles. First and third couples finish facing their first corners.

17-20 First and third couples dance corner pass and turn with their first corners. (First and third couples dance right shoulder round their corner position, while their corners turn Right hand and dance back to place). First and third couples pass right shoulders to face second corners.

21-24 First and third couples dance corners pass and turn with their second corners, finishing in second place on opposite sides.

25-26 First and third couples turn right hand and face up.

27-30 First couple dance up and cast round second couple, WHILE third couple dance up and cast round fourth couple.

31-32 First couple cross down to third place own sides, WHILE third couple cross down to fifth place own sides. Fourth and fifth couples step up on **bars 31 and 32**.

Repeat from new positions.

© Sue Petyt

The name "Milton Keynes" is not an amalgamation of the names of two former villages: "Milton" and "Keynes". It is not named after the poet (Milton) and the economist (Keynes). The town of "Milton" was recorded in the Domesday Book as "Mideltone" in 1086. In the 12th century, a manorial grant was given to the "de Cahaigues" family, who settled there. The name was anglicized into "Kaynes" by the 13th century. And from "Mideltone Kaynes" (recorded in 1227) the modern English name of "Milton Keynes" was derived

Waltz for Zoe

Devised on 15th July 1999 by David Cronie for his grand-daughter, Zoe Catherine McInnes.

Waltz Hold, gent facing line of dance

Bars

- 1-2** Dance a half reverse waltz turn, to finish facing against line of dance.
- 3-4** Balance forward and back.
- 5-6** Dance a half reverse waltz turn, to finish facing line of dance.
- 7-8** Balance forward and back.
- 9-12** Step forward, left foot then right foot, and chassé forward.
- 13-16** Step forward, right foot then left foot, and chassé forward. Finish with gent facing diagonal to wall (L.O.D) and lady diagonal to centre with hands crossed.
- 17-18** Step forward, left foot on line of dance; step right foot over left foot and dip.
- 19-20** Step forward, left foot on line of dance; step right foot behind and dip
- 21-22** Step forward, left foot on line of dance; step right foot over left foot and dip.
- 23-24** Step forward, left foot on line of dance; step right foot behind and dip.
- 25-26** Chassé line of dance.
- 27-28** Chassé against line of dance.
- 29-32** Two full rotary waltz turns

© David Cronie

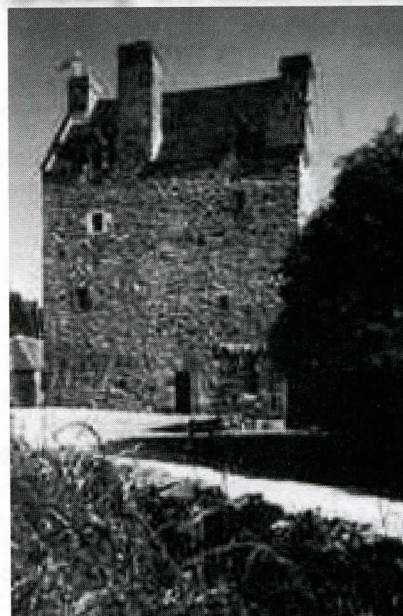
Did You Know?

The well-known dance, The Dashing White Sergeant, dates from the late nineteenth century. It's a mix between a threesome Scotch Reel and the progression used in Swedish Country Dances.

The original tune is older, dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century and was written by Henry Bishop (who also wrote "Home Sweet Home").

Even earlier, in the eighteenth century, General Burgoyne composed a theatrical lyric, "If an army of Amazons e'er came in play, As a dashing white sergeant I'd march away".

Judy of Aikwood



This dance and music were devised on the occasion of Lady Judy Steel's Birthday.

32 Bar Jigs

Formation: Longways set of four couples

- Bars 1 – 4** Leading Couple set to each other and cast off into second place while Couple 2 move up.
- Bars 5 – 8** Leading Couple swing in the centre of the set.
- Bars 9 – 10** Standing between Lady 2 and Lady 3, Leading Lady joins nearer hands with them and sets in line (two pas de basque steps). Leading man is doing the same with Men 2 & 3.
- Bars 11 – 12** Leading Couple give right hands to each other to change places.
- Bars 13 – 14** Standing between Man 2 and Man 3, Leading Lady joins nearer hands with them and sets in line. Leading man is doing the same with Ladies 2 & 3.

Bars 15 – 16 Leading Couple give right hands to each other to return to second place on own side.

Bars 17 – 24 Ladies 1, 2 & 3 dance reel of three on the side, as do Men 1, 2 & 3, (starting by passing right shoulders with left hand neighbour). Leading Couple finish in second place.

Bars 25 – 32 Couples 1, 2 & 3 dance six hands round and back.

Bars 1 – 32 are repeated from second place with the Leading Couple now dancing with Couples 3 & 4.

© Karin Ingram

Judy of Aikwood

Can be played in either key but I like to change up to A minor the second time!

© Ian Lowthian

Chords for Judy of Aikwood (first key):

Staff 1: Gm Eb F Dm Gm D7

Staff 2: Gm Eb F D7 Gm Dm

Staff 3: Eb Cm D7 (Cdim/F#) D7/A Gm Cm D7

Staff 4: Eb Cm D7 D7/F# Gm Eb F Gm

Judy of Aikwood (in Am)

Chords for Judy of Aikwood (in Am):

Staff 1: Am F G Em Am E7

Staff 2: Am F G E7 Am Em

Staff 3: F Dm E7 (Ddim/G#) E7/B Am Dm E7

Staff 4: F Dm E7 E7/G# Am F G Am

Chords in brackets are optional or may be used on the repeat

Circles Four

The origin of this dance is unknown, although the "Sicilian Circle" formation of couple facing couple around the room is fairly common in Ceilidh Dances.

Set Dance – 32 Bar Reels

Formation: Couple facing couple around the room, lady on man's right

Bars

- 1 – 4** With hands joined to form a circle, all four dancers circle left (clockwise) with eight side-steps.
5 – 8 All circle right for eight steps.
9 – 12 All four dancers put their right hands into the centre to make a right-hand star and dance round clockwise for a count of eight.
13 – 16 Dancers return to places with a left-hand star.
17 – 24 Each dancer swings with his/her opposite for eight bars (count of sixteen).
24 – 32 Still with opposites dancers promenade swing around the room and meet up with a new couple ready to begin again.

The above thirty-two bars are repeated for the duration of the music, with dancers changing both partners and sets each time.

© Dance On!

The Riverside Polka

A simple "Pat-a-Cake" Polka attributed to the popular accordionist John Carmichael

2/4 Polka

Formation: Couples around room, facing each other with men's backs to centre

- 1 – 2** Clap partner's right hand 3 times
3 – 4 Clap partner's left hand 3 times
5 – 6 Clap both partner's hands 3 times
7 – 8 Clap above own knees 3 times
9 – 12 Take partner in ballroom hold, side-step anti-clockwise twice (man's left) and back clockwise twice
13 – 16 Polka round together

© Peter Roberts

The Riverside

This dance was devised by Karin Ingram and Tricia Matthews, and named after the Riverside Club in Glasgow – scene of many a good night's dancing! The dance floor there is long and narrow, hence the full, long set. It was written primarily for children or beginners, and can be easily learned which is perhaps why it is growing in popularity at ceilidh dances.

Set Dance – 32 Bar Jigs

Formation: Any number of couples, forming two long lines, each lady on her partner's right. For the duration, each couple is dancing in a four with the couple opposite them in the set.

Bars

- 1 – 4** Each dancer joins nearer hands with his/her neighbours, so that two long lines are formed. All advance for four steps and retire for four steps.
5 – 8 Bars 1-4 are repeated.
9 – 12 Each couple joins right hands with the couple opposite to form a right-hand star, and all dance round clockwise for a count of eight.
13 – 16 Each group of four forms a left-hand star and all dance anti-clockwise for a count of eight.
17 – 20 Turning to face his/her partner, each dancer dances a "dos-e-dos". (Each dancer walks towards his/her partner, passes right shoulder, passes back to back, and walks backwards to return to original place.)
21 – 24 All dancers "dos-e-dos" with their opposite. (The person directly opposite them across the set.)

- 25 – 32** The two couples who are at the top of the set face down the set and join nearer hands. (They should be standing in a line of four, with each lady on her partner's right.) They raise their arms and dance to the bottom of the set. The man on the far left and the lady on the far right will be outside the set as they go, their raised arms forming arches over the two lines of dancers.

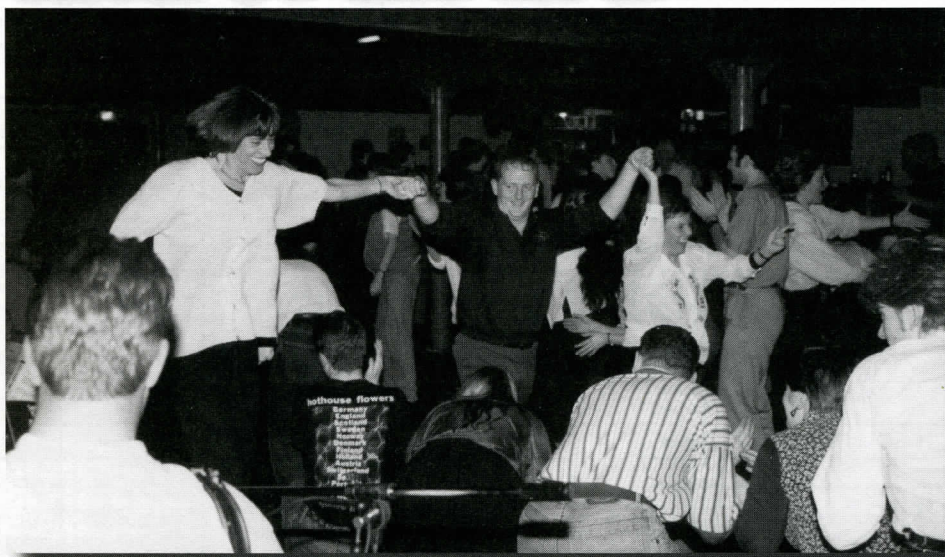
Dancers all move up to begin again with new leading couples.

The above thirty-two bars are repeated for the duration of the music.

© Dance On!

The End of an Era

Some loved them, some hated them, but whatever you thought of ceilidhs at The Caledonian Brewery in Edinburgh, they were *absolutely unique*. Nowhere else has the same magic combination of enthusiasm, energy and vibrant atmosphere, with willing participants from all corners of the globe dancing their hearts out whether they know the dances or not. But sadly, by the time you are reading this, the last ever ceilidh at "The Caley" on Saturday 23rd October 2004 will have come and gone. It will truly be the end of a dancing era, and sadly missed. It was only in February this year that Scottish & Newcastle announced the closure of its 150-year-old Fountain Brewery in Edinburgh and the acquisition of the much smaller Caledonian Brewery for local ale production. But this takeover didn't just affect the beer. It didn't take long for S&N to decide that they needed to build some storage vessels on the Caledonian Brewery site and that meant that The Festival Hall had to go, and with it the ceilidhs that took place there. Ceilidhs had been held at The Caley for many years, mostly on Saturday nights, becoming something of an Edinburgh institution. The Tourist Information Office sent along visitors to the city who were looking for an evening with a Scottish flavour. I'm sure many of them were expecting to sit back and watch a performance of some traditional folk dance by a company in bright tartan costumes. So imagine their delight when they discovered that this was a participation event, where people who had never even seen Scottish ceilidh dancing would be up on the floor in no time, joining in to the exciting pace of modern ceilidh bands. Over the past four or five years, the venue had become more and more popular. A ceilidh used to be held at The Caley every second Saturday but for the last year or



"The Riverside" at The Caley

two the Brewery had been holding them every week. The result was that they often sold out. That's no mean feat – it meant over 400 people were there and the majority of them were dancing. But the Caley became – at least to some people – a victim of its own success. With 450 bodies packed into the hall, the dance floor became far too crowded for many. Indeed you couldn't get near the huge bar for acres of people standing sipping drinks. And of course, they were standing on much needed dancing space! Fortunately the Brewery reduced the numbers that they allowed in, while also removing quite a number of tables. This had the effect of making it possible to dance even when the hall was crowded. Indeed regulars such as myself simply found some free floor away from the main dance area and danced with lots of room. Since so many were up on the dance floor, it left large spaces near the door and in front of the bar.

The Caley management's choices of modern "ceilidh rock" bands, such as Teannaich, The Picts, The Cutting Edge and Last Tram tae Auchenshuggle weren't everyone's cup of tea. The more traditional ceilidh enthusiasts preferred a slower pace, and a much-reduced volume so that they could hear themselves think. The bands, plus the concrete floor, were the nails in the coffin for many, who simply refused to attend ceilidhs there.

But to countless thousands of visitors to our country, a ceilidh at The Caley was an unforgettable experience. Before walking through the doors, they had not the least notion that what is essentially an evolution of folk dancing could be so much fun, so friendly, so sociable and so modern. As one of the regulars who attended every week, I witnessed on countless occasions the positive delight on the faces of those experiencing this uniquely Scottish event for the first time. Many of them were living here in Edinburgh and have gone on to become regulars themselves. Indeed, many of our finest ceilidh dancers hail from foreign lands such as France, Slovakia, Poland and Italy. But now they live here and they love our ceilidhs. Those who left to go back home after their visits here took with them memories which will last for a very long time. There cannot be many finer ambassadors for Scotland, its people and its life than a ceilidh at the Brewery.

The last ceilidh on October 23rd will be played by the Glasgow band Last Tram tae Auchenshuggle. Named after the last ever tram to run in Glasgow, they're also one of my favourite ceilidh bands and it's fitting that the last "Ceilidh at The Caley" will be played out by the Last Tram tae Auchenshuggle.

Goodbye Caley Brewery – we'll miss you.

Mike Scott



Karin Ingram & Tricia Matthews dancing "The Jacky Tar Two-Step" at The Caley circa 1993

Alasdair's Dance Diary

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances

November 2004

Every Saturday	Fife	Largo Ward Village Hall	t.b.c.	8.30-11.30 No Bar	£3 (tea)	Door	Different bands each week.
Every Sunday	Fife St Andrews	Scout Hall, East Scores	Live Music	2pm-5pm	£3 (tea)	Door or tel 01334 472 375	MC/Caller Charlie Todd
Every Tuesday	Glasgow University	Student Union, University Ave.		7.30-10pm Bar	£4	0141 334 9869 07050 222 173	Dance Club
	Edinburgh	Café Royal, 15 West Register St.	Café Royal Ceilidh Band	8pm - late Bar	£5/£4 Caller	0131 478 1845 or Door	East End of Princes St.
Every Wednesday	Newtongrange	Morris Club	Live Music	7.30-10pm	£3/£1.50	Door (Karin Ingram)	Ceilidh & Old Time Dance Club
6 th	Newtongrange	Dean Tavern	West Telferton	7.30-11.30 Bar	£5 (incl. supper)	0131 663 6022 to reserve table	Acc. & Fiddle Club Dance
	Auchendinny, Midlothian	Glencorse Comm Centre	Webster Craig	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 Sausage Roll supper	Door or 01721 723 468	(near Penicuik)
	Ayrshire	Sorn Village Hall	Jimmy Lindsay	7.30-11.30 B.Y.O.B.	£4.50 (Inc. Supper)	01292 220 344 01560 700 219	Tickets required
	Partick, Glasgow	Lesser Burgh Halls	Donnie & Diane	8pm-11.30 Bar	£5 membership	0141 339 9679	Highlanders Institute Club
7 th	Angus	Tealing	Ken Stewart	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
12 th	Ayrshire	Hansel Village	Donnie & Diane	7.30-12mn Bar	£5.50 Snack	Door or 01292 289 234	Charity
	Midlothian	Bilston Miners Club	Johnny Duncan	7.30-11.30 Bar	£4.50 (incl. Supper)	0131 660 1276 0131 663 6221	Wednesday Dance Club
13 th	Perthshire	Glencarse Village Hall	Nicol McLaren	8pm-11.30 No Bar	£3.50 Tea	Door	Charity
	Johnstone	Lynnhurst Hotel	t.b.a.	8pm-12mn	Phone for ticket	0141 887 9827 0141 849 7107	West Scotland Accordion Festival
	Edinburgh	St Brides Centre	Lismore	No other	details	Amnesty	International
18 th	Stirling	Albert Hall	Ian Anderson	8pm	Ticket only	BBC	Take the Floor
19 th	Glasgow	St Andrews in the Square	Freeland Barbour		£7	01786 849 247 0131 666 1024	S.T.D.T. event
20 th	Lanarkshire	Strathaven Ballgreen Hall	Oran Mor	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£6 (incl. supper)	01357 520 900 (Date change)	Avondale Ceilidh Society
	East Kilbride	Calderwood Hall	Johnny Duncan	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 (Tea)	Reserve Tickets 01563 539 308	Highlanders
	Perthshire	Blackford Village Hall	Jimmy Lindsay	8pm-11.30 No Bar	£4.	Door	Charity
	Glasgow	Partick Burgh Halls	Lex Keith	8pm-11.30 Bar	£5 membership	0141 339 9679	Highlanders
	Loch Fyne	Tarbert Village Hall	Ross MacPherson	8pm - ? B.Y.O.B.	£6 snack	01880 820 744 07766 187 304	Cancer Charities
	Beaulieu	Phipp's Hall	Graeme Mitchell	7.30-11.30	£5	Door	Old Time Dance
21 st	Perthshire	Glencarse Village Hall	Jimmy Lindsay	7.30-10pm No Bar	£2.50	Door	Charity
24 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall		7.30-10.30		Door	Monthly Social
25 th	Fife	Windygates Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-11pm No Bar	£3 (supper)	Door	
26 th	Helensburgh (Highlanders)	Commodore Hotel	Alan Ross	8pm-1am Bar	£5.50	01436 672 927 01389 841 208	Dance
	Newtongrange	Mining Museum	Stuart Adamson	8pm-12mn	£8 (inc. light supper)	0131 663 7519	St Andrews Night Ceilidh Dance
27 th	Pumpherston	Village Hall	Mairi Coutts	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£3.50	01506 417 512 01506 434 365	Ticket only
	Perthshire	Forteviot Village Hall	Gordon Pattullo	8pm-11.30 No Bar	£3.50	Door	Charity
	Dunbar	West Barns Village	Westwick	9pm - ? Bar	£4	Door	Old Time Dance
	Penicuik	Town Hall	Andrew Knight	7.30-11.30	£5/£2.50	01968 672 631	(B.Y.O.B.)

Scottish Country Dancing

November 2004

12 th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	Alan Ross	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Charity
	Glasgow	Clarkston Hall	Roy Hendrie	7.30pm	£5	0141 956 2134	Glasgow RSCDS
13 th	Castle Douglas	High School	Kenny Thomson			01556 620 658	Local RSCDS
19 th	Annan	Victoria Halls	Roy Hendrie			01461 500 250	Local RSCDS
	Carnoustie	Beach Hall	Maple Leaf	No other details			
	Irvine	Volunteer Rooms	Billy Gray			01294 823 865	Children's Dance
	Bridge of Weir	Cargill Hall	Colin Dewar	7.30pm	£6	01505 612 944	Club Dance
	Killlearn	Village Hall	David Oswald	7.30pm	£5	Door	Club Dance
	Helensburgh	Hermitage	John Renton	7.15pm - Meal	£16	01436 673 521	St Andrew's Dance
20 th	Carlisle	Dalton School	David Cunningham		£6	016973 51582	
26 th	Dunoon	Queen's Hall	Colin Dewar	7.30pm (Buffet)	£10	01369 705 771	Arthritis Charity
	Troon	Concert Hall	David Anderson	7.30pm	£5	01292 315 558	Branch Dance
	Forfar	Reid Hall	David Oswald	7.30pm		01307 462 045	Annual Dance
27 th	Blairstown	Town Hall		7.30pm		01738 828 510	No other details
	Milngavie	Town Hall	David Cunningham	Supper Dance (Ticket required)	£10	0141 634 2383	Alba Dance Group
	Darlington	Longfield School	Neil Copland	Afternoon Event		01748 823 371	Children's Festival

Alasdair's Dance Diary

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances

December 2004

Every Saturday	Fife	Largo Ward Village Hall	t.b.c.	8.30-11.30 No Bar	£3 (tea)	Door	Different bands each week.
Every Sunday	Fife St Andrews	Scout Hall, East Scores	Live Music	2pm-5pm	£3 (tea)	Door or tel 01334 472 375	MC/Caller Charlie Todd
Every Tuesday	Glasgow University	Student Union, University Ave.		7.30-10pm Bar	£4	0141 334 9869 07050 222 173	Dance Club
	Edinburgh	Café Royal, 15 West Register St.	Café Royal Ceilidh Band	8pm - late Bar	£5/£4 Caller	0131 478 1845 or Door	East End of Princes St.
Every Wednesday	Newtongrange	Morris Club	Live Music	7.30-10pm	£3/£1.50	Door (Karin Ingram)	Ceilidh & Old Time Dance Club
4 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	Graeme Mitchell	7.30-11.30	£?	Door	Tel. 01542 887 616
	Newtongrange	Dean Tavern	Waverley	7.30-11.30 Bar	£5	0131 663 6022 to reserve table	Acc. & Fiddle Club Dance
	Auchendinny, Midlothian	Glencorse Comm Centre	Jimmy Anderson	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 Sausage Roll supper	Door or 01721 723 468	(near Penicuik)
	Partick, Glasgow	Lesser Burgh Halls	t.b.c.	8pm-11.30 Bar	£5 membership	0141 339 9679	Highlanders Institute Club
	Ayrshire	Sorn Village Hall	Lindsay Weir	7.30-11.30 B.Y.O.B.	£4.50 (Inc. Supper)	01292 220 344 01560 700 219	Tickets required
5 th	Angus	Tealing	Johnny Duncan	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
10 th	Midlothian	Bilston Miners Club	Gordon Pattullo	7.30-11.30 Bar	£4.50 (incl. Supper)	0131 660 1276 0131 663 6221	Wednesday Dance Club
	Helensburgh (Highlanders)	Commodore Hotel	Charlie Kirkpatrick	8pm-1am Bar	£??	01436 672 927 01389 841 208	Supper Dance
11 th	Lanarkshire	Strathaven Ballgreen Hall	Roger Dobson	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£6 (incl. supper)	01357 520 900	Avondale Ceilidh Society
	Perthshire	Glencarse Village Hall	George Rennie	8-11.30pm No Bar	£3.50	Door	Charity
12 th	Perthshire	Glencarse Village Hall	Johnny Duncan	7.30-10pm No Bar	£2.50	Door	Charity
18 th	Ayrshire	Hansel Village	Jean McConnachie	7.30-12mn Bar & Raffle	£5.50 Snack	Door or 01292 289 234	Charity
	Perthshire	Blackford Village Hall	Dave Husband Sound	8pm-11.30 No Bar	£4.	Door	Charity
	Glasgow	Partick Burgh Halls	Donnie & Diane	8pm-11.30 Bar	£5 membership	0141 339 9679	Highlanders Club
30 th	Fife	Windygates Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-11pm No Bar	£3 (supper)	Door	
31 st	Cardross	Geilston Hall	Neil Sinclair	9pm-2am Bar	£? in advance	01436 672 927 01389 841 208	Highlanders Ticket only.
	Ayrshire	Sorn Hall	Blair Gardiner	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£?? Dinner Dance	01292 262 729 01292 570 145	Advance Ticket only
	West Lothian	Pumpherston Village Hall	t.b.a.	7.30-1am No Bar	£12.50 Buffet	01506 417 512 01506 434 365	Advance Ticket only
	Helensburgh	Victoria Halls	Voicebox	8pm-1am Bar	£25 buffet supper	Ticket only 01436 674 922	Tourist Assoc Fundraiser

Scottish Country Dancing

December 2004

3 rd	Stirling	Albert Halls	Lothian	7pm (Dinner)	£18	0141 942 5375	RSSPCA Charity
	Bearsden	Burgh Hall	Alan Ross	7.30pm	£5	0141 956 2134	Glasgow RSCDS
4 th	Gatehouse	School Hall	Kenny Thomson			01557 814 165	No other details
6 th	Dumfries	Marchmount High	John Douglas			01387 770 228	Dumfries Class
7 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall		7.30pm-11pm	£?	01542 887 616	Xmas Social
10 th	Helensburgh	Hermitage Academy	Sandy Nixon	7.45 - 11.30pm	£7.50	01436 673 521	Xmas Dance
	Dumfries	High School	David Cunningham				Supper Dance
11 th	Dundee	Fairmuir Church	Maple Leaf	7.30pm-10.30pm	£3.50		Charity
15 th	Stirling	Albert Halls	Iain MacPhail	7.30pm	£5	Pay at door	Xmas Dance
29 th	Scone	Robert Douglas Hall	Maple Leaf	7.30pm		01738 552 062	S.C.D. Club



The Dance Diary

Please send all information to:

Alasdair Graham, First House, 1 First Avenue, Dumbarton, Dunbartonshire G82 2PU
or e-mail: alasdair.graham@blueyonder.co.uk

The Hebridean Weaving Lilt

A Weaving Dance

When I grew up in Stockholm, Sweden, one of my first contacts with dance was during PE in Primary 2 or 3, so I would have been eight or nine years old at the time. I remember a dance involving a lot of stamping and patterns weaving in and out and around and a spiral pattern. The dance being taught was the Swedish weaving dance – Våva Vadmal (Lit: "weaving homespun"). Many years later, in the Scottish Country Dance class in Stockholm I was introduced to The Hebridean Weaving Lilt as presented by the RSCDS as part of the Mary Isdale MacNab collection of dances. In one publication it was claimed it came from Baleshare in North Uist via Nova Scotia in Canada. The figures of the "weaving lilt" portray the action of a loom, and are a simplified version of the figures of "Våva Vadmal". As the two dances are very similar, I asked myself what the origin of this dance was, and whether it was a Scandinavian dance as I thought. If it was a Scandinavian dance, how did it become a Hebridean one?

According to the Nordic Folk Dance Typology (RFF, 1997) there are twenty-six published forms of Våva Vadmal between the Nordic countries (two Danish, two Finnish, four Norwegian, eleven Swedish and eight from Swedish-speaking Finland).

Hugh Thurston, the famous writer on, and deviser of, Scottish dances, summarized three articles he wrote in the Folk Dancer Magazine (1955)



on the subject of "Weaving Dances" thus: "There was once a long and complicated dance, popular in Sweden and Norway or both, whose figures were intended to represent the hard work of a hand-loom. The precise figures and their order were not definitely laid down, but the main figure represented the winding of the warp alternately left and right round the pegs on a warping-board. Other figures in which dancers interwove either vertically or horizontally could occur – and such figures were sometimes common in other types of dance, especially the hilt-and-point long-sword dance. The first part of the dance was performed in two lines and was either progressive (whole-set) or made up of portions each of which could be progressive. The

dance ended with a coda in which the lines dissolved into a circle. In the Swedish version the coda consisted of two figures very common in all sorts of different types of dance. ... An off-shoot of this dance – drastically simplified for popularisation – became fashionable in Britain in the late nineteenth-century. When it went out of fashion, it is still remembered alive in the island of Foula, and today is known as 'The Foula Reel' ... The main figure of the dance* apparently became attached and gave rise to 'Kinkalliepakko' in Finland, 'Vira Extrapassado' in Portugal, and in a developed form, to 'Strip the Willow' in Scotland."

(*Commonly referred to as "Double Strip the Willow" turning today.)

Thurston's articles analyse a fair number of Scandinavian "weaving dances" and a few continental examples, which had migrated south from Scandinavia, and the characteristics that make them. The articles would be worthy of reproduction today as they are truly fascinating and they also give a description of Mrs MacNab's "Hebridean Weaving Lilt" as given in her original notes.

Thurston based his analysis on eighteen weaving dances: seven descriptions of Våva Vadmal (four Swedish, two German and one Dutch); the original notes of the Hebridean Weaving Lilt; six descriptions of "The Foula Reel" (aka The "Swedish" or "Norwegian" or "Scandinavian Country Dance") from various sources, including Anderson,



Dundee (1890) and MacLennan, Edinburgh (1950); "Strip the Willow"; Drops of Brandy"; the Finnish "Kinkalliepakko"; and the Portuguese "Vira Extrapassado". It is also pointed out that the characteristic "weaving" pattern can be found in some versions of the "Virginia Reel" but as it does not occur in the original "Haymakers" or "Sir Roger de Coverley", it is probable that it is a later addition to that dance.

The purest form of these weaving dances is in fact the "Strip the Willow" with three versions of the characteristic weaving figure. Originally, it was performed with a three-beat running step to the 9/8 tune "Drops of Brandy" – which is of Irish origin. Currently this dance is performed to 6/8 jigs and reels and even to Schottisches in some places round Scotland. The English version – "Drops of Brandy" – was originally also danced to the same tune, but it has now been abandoned in favour of other tunes, and step-hops in schottische time are now commonly used. The use of step-hops is unusual as most weaving dances use a running or walking step and involve accented foot stamps.

Reading all that has been written about the "Weaving Lilt", it seems clearly established that the dance is Scandinavian in origin. Mrs MacNab initially learned the dance from Leif Hansen, a Canadian born Norwegian, whose grandmother came from Iona. So did the dance come to Canada via the Hebrides? Or did it acquire the Hebridean connection along the way? Even with many of Mrs MacNab's original notes available it is not clear how the connection was made. What is certain though, is that Mrs MacNab originally set the dance to the puirt-a-beul – Caristiona Chaimbeul and that it was simply called "A Weaving Lilt" in her original notes. However, according to Hugh Thurston (1954) this was not the tune to which it was danced in Canada and he gives her collected tune in his book *Scotland's Dances*.

Later when the title had acquired the word "Hebridean", the choice of tune was given as "Orange and Blue" or "Brochan Lom". This is the tune suggested by the RSCDS in their published version of the dance.

On the subject of tunes, it is of interest to note that the music of the radically simplified version of "Väva Vadmal" became popular in the English and Scottish Ballrooms around 1900, under the name "Scandinavian" or "Swedish Country Dance" and the like. David Anderson of Dundee gives the music for the dance as "any mazurka 3/8 tune", but the tune usually given was that of



The Hebridean Weaving Lilt is performed by The Newcastle Cloggies in the early 1990s. This team performed it according to the original notes of Mrs MacNab. They are wearing traditional NE English fisher folk costumes and/or Newhaven Fishwives costumes (striped).

the "Väva Vadmal"! D.G. MacLennan gave the same tune in his 1950 publication "Highland and Traditional Scottish Dances". Later the dance acquired various country dance tunes and when it reached Shetland, it was naturally paired with local tunes and the dance is now commonly known as the "Foula Reel" after one of the tunes.

So to summarise this short glimpse into the world of weaving dances, it seems that some of the most popular dances on the Scottish dance scene, i.e. Strip the Willow, Drops of Brandy, Foula Reel and the Hebridean Weaving Lilt (as a performedance) all connect strongly with the original Scandinavian weaving dances, and in particular the dance – Väva Vadmal.

An after thought ... and why not, indeed, with so much of what is now firmly rooted in the Scottish dance traditions originating in other places and having been assimilated, to be enjoyed by all. This way of acquiring dances

from elsewhere and adapting them to local ways is by no means uncommon. Well, just look at the national dance of Sweden – "The Polska" – it came to Sweden from Poland in the 1500s, and there is nothing more Swedish than The Polska these days!

Mats Melin

Scottish Dance

Group

The Morris Club

Newtongrange

Every Wednesday
7.30-10.00pm

Live
Music

Bar

£3.00

Ian Hutson SDB

Ian was packed off to lessons aged six, with "My little red box in a McEwan's Export poly bag!". Carol Thorburn, now Wightman, was his teacher. She was an ex-pupil of John Leslie from Dunbar where Ian was brought up. He then went to John for lessons and played in his Accordion Orchestra for about seven or eight years. During that time Ian also competed in Perth and Musselburgh competitions. He recalls, "Highest I got was second in Junior Scottish. Iain Skinner always pipped me to the post." He began playing duets with Sandy Legget, moving on to trios and finally bands. They won the Bands Competitions in Perth and Musselburgh around 1990. (Ian's not too sure of the exact years.)

Ian's dad was also musical, playing double bass with "Riverside" – a country and western cabaret trio from Chirnside. Ian remembers, "One night Sandy and I were to do two twenty-minute spots at a concert in a wee hall in Berwickshire somewhere – and we got seven quid each. We were over the moon! We could only have been twelve or thirteen years old then. Dad used to take me regularly to Wooler Accordion Club. Aged sixteen, I was for giving it up. All my pals were out playin' fitba' and I was practising my box! My Dad must have sussed something was up. He took me along to West Barns Inn on a Sunday night. There's Scottish music on in there every Sunday in life. Here I learned that I could play my box for people, and in return they would pay me and buy me alcohol. Sandy and I played in there regularly for two years and it wasn't till we told the landlord it was our eighteenth birthday party that he realised we were under age! I have never looked back from those days. It was the start of a lot of fun nights playing my box and watching people enjoy what I do with it."

Ian's dad's record collection started to "get a serious using". Jim Johnstone, Max Houliston, Jimmy Blue, Ian Powrie, John Carmichael and the like were all listened to over and over again. Established bands began asking Ian to play second box – people like Alan Cockburn, Gordon Clark and Andrew Knight. It was around that time that he met Roger Dobson from Newcastleton, and so to Alistair McLeod, (Ian's second box player on his new CD). Alistair and Ian travelled many miles every weekend for about two years to go and play with Roger. "Roger was like a second Dad to me and Davina a second Mum. They really looked after the two of us. We always got the biggest steaks and I did like a wee drop of Roger's whisky. (Much to Roger's daughter Carol's annoyance!) Roger used to play at some great dances in the Borders. We had some fantastic nights."

It wasn't long afterwards that Ian came to the notice of Jim Johnstone. "I have always been heavily influenced by Jim Johnstone. Who hasn't? An incredible man in my eyes. I grew up with all his albums and I used to play along with them regularly. Imagine how I felt when he asked me to fill in for a few months on second box while his fiddler took a break for a while. It was in April of that year that I did my first BBC "Take the Floor" on second box with Jim in Tobermory. It was a tribute to Bobby MacLeod and all he had done for Scottish music. I was on cloud nine. Life had never been this good and I was as proud as Punch. The fiddler came back, much to my disappointment, and I only helped out in broadcasts and bigger gigs. Then the King James came along. Six nights a week playing piano with Jim. Issy Hodgson and I shared this job, which was fine for both of us. Gordon Robertson played the drums in the show and that's where I first met him. So we did this during the summer months and in the winter we went out to play for old time dances all over the country. Great times. This lasted for about four years. Jim taught me a great deal about music and bands and dancers and tempos. All that kind of stuff. I will be forever grateful. He is a wealth of knowledge and always had time to spend with me, teaching me new things or explaining things. He encouraged me and guided me."

Ian first met Issy at least twenty years ago when Sandy and he were playing with the East Lothian Fiddlers. Whenever he needs a piano player, he goes to her first. They have been friends for years through thick and thin, good and bad. "Issy encourages me, and supports me. She's been telling me for years to get a band of my own together."

Ian's band did their first broadcast in 1994 and have now recorded four in total, the most recent being in November 2003. On hearing that one, Ian decided it was time to make a CD and things have really taken off from there.

Ian introduces the rest of his band...

"Gordon Robertson (drums) – a great friend who is my sounding board when I get uptight! We travelled a lot together and think along the same lines."

"Mark McDougall (bass) – I met Mark during trips abroad with other bands and at festivals. He is always keen to help out whenever he can. He's a multi-instrumentalist. I like his playing style very much – clean and punchy."

"Neil Dawson (fiddle) – I first met Neil many years ago at Perth Festival. I had a couple of hours to spare before the dance. I can't remember who was

playing at it but I do remember I really wanted to hear them. I went across to The Kirkside for a 'coffee' and met Neil and Bill Black. Two hours later, I'm in my bed gutted and never seen the dance yet! He's a really nice canny bloke and a brilliant fiddler. He encourages me also. We seem to have an uncanny similarity playing-wise. Great minds think alike. It's so important that the box and fiddle sound as one. Jim Johnstone and Marie Fielding were the best ever in my opinion, and I'm hoping we might come close to that partnership."

"I like to keep things simple musically. Too much going on can sometimes cloud things I feel – simple but bouncy, and lots of light and shade, ups and downs. Dance tempos are very important obviously. I love to play at Old Time dances, there's such a variety tunes involved."

Having played with so many different bands over the years, Alasdair MacCuish, Bill Black, Gary Donaldson, I'm lucky that I've picked up on all the experience that goes along with that. These bands all have their own styles and a variety of dance styles that they cater for. I can now take all that experience and put it together into my own wee package."

Other musicians have also had a great influence on Ian and his playing, "Jim obviously, Andrew Knight – encouragement, advice on tunes, composers and publishers. He's so enthusiastic and very knowledgeable. He also helped me in the studio. He was my extra pair of ears in the control room. Along with Roger! Dennis Morrison – his musical knowledge is second to none and he gave me great advice on arrangements. Graeme Mitchell...just brilliant!

In this day and age it's very difficult to pin down regular players. Understandably they all seem to have work commitments. So I have a pool of drummers and pianists that I can call upon. Gus Miller has been out with us lately, and Gordon Smith – both excellent drummers.

Dennis Morrison has been taking a turn on the piano occasionally, when Issy can't manage. John Sinton on bass is a fantastic musician."

So what's next for this busy and popular band? By the time you read this they'll have returned from The Shetland Festival (hopefully!). They've got another "Take The Floor" Broadcast in the pipeline, lots of Accordion and Fiddle Clubs and back up to Shetland for Cullivoe Up Helly-Aa. If you don't get the chance to dance to them in a venue near you then buy their fantastic CD *The Dashing White Sergeant* and roll back the carpet!

Ian Hutson SDB



Ian was only six when he started playing accordion



John Leslie (centre, back row) with his orchestra. Ian is in the bottom row, third from the right. Also in the photo is Marian Anderson, middle row, second from right.



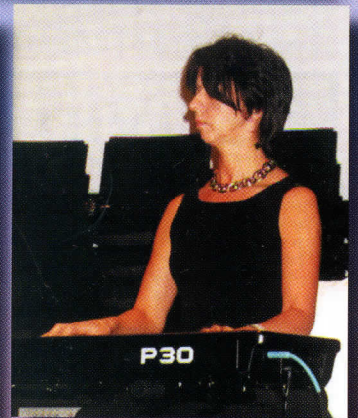
Mull Festival, April 1995



The partying takes its toll!



The Band at Castlesound Studios



Isobelle Hodgson



On stage at Langholm



Ian, Neil, Issy, Mark & Gus Millar at Langholm last month



Ian, Scott Gordon, Susan Gordon & Shirley Cathcart at Shetland last month

STRATHSPEY AWAY with Dannsa

Kingussie

12th 13th 14th November 2004

This dance festival enjoyed a highly successful launch last year, come and join us for classes, performances in dance, music and song and much, much more!

Amh, Alan Irvine, Alan MacDonald, Caroline Reagh, **Dannsa**, Fin Moore, Frank McConnell, Gabe MacVarish, Ian Hardie, **Incredible Fling Band**, Jim Barry, Johan MacLean, Karen Steven, Mary Ann Kennedy, Mats Melin, Pat Clark.

"...it was ten times better than just a 'really good weekend'; it was one of the best times I'd ever had in my life. The music and dance were just outstanding."

Joyce Cochrane

FURTHER INFORMATION

sandra@dannsa.com 01540-661594

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Strathspey Away with Dannsa

12-14 November 2004

Kingussie

This dance festival enjoyed a highly successful launch last year, with about eighty people coming from as far as away as Barra and Bristol! This year promises to be even better with even more first-class tuition, concerts and ceilidhs.

The festival opens with a ceilidh to the high-spirited music and song of the Incredible Fling Band who come from the Kyle of Lochalsh area in the North West Highlands... what better to kick off the weekend!

Tuition on Saturday and Sunday is available in Country dancing, Ceilidh dancing, Basic dance moves, Irish set dancing, Hip Hop, Highland dancing, Step dancing, and, for the first time ever, Dannsa Quadrilles. These quadrilles are new and have been created by Frank McConnell of Dannsa.

This year as well as dancing, classes are offered in Puirt-a-beul (mouth music), Fiddle and Mouth-organ tunes.

The line-up of tutors is just as outstanding, with many coming back for a second year: Allan Irvine, Allan MacDonald, Caroline Reagh, Frank McConnell, Gabe MacVarish, Ian Hardie, Jim Barry, Johan MacLean, Karen Steven, Mary Ann Kennedy, and Mats Melin.

The late afternoon session on Saturday gives the more enthusiastic participant a chance to catch their breath with a Lecture by Allan MacDonald (Glenuig) or sessions in Puirt-a-beul (mouth music) and Waulking songs on offer.

Dannsa performance on the Saturday night is sure to delight the audience with their unique performance style of uplifting percussive footwork and their natural vibrant energy as well as a chance for any toe-tappers to take part!

Lunchtime performances are by Amh on Saturday and Ian Hardie (with Caroline Reagh) on Sunday. Amh are Iseabail Mactaggart and Andrew Robertson. Singing traditional Gaelic songs, they have developed a style that, whilst modern and unique, respects the true essence of these songs. They've been called the future of Gaelic singing. Ian Hardie's *Highlands of Nairnshire* was composed four years ago on commission by the Highland Festival to represent Nairnshire at their millennium concert in Eden court, Inverness. The music was written for fiddle and for this festival Caroline Reagh has created dance to complement the music.

Sunday offers more classes as before. One highlight of the classes is the presence of live music. All of the dance classes will be accompanied by live music from Allan MacDonald, Fin Moore, Gabe MacVarish, Ian Hardie, Karen Steven, Mary Ann Kennedy, and Pat Clark. As dancers themselves they are able to give a unique insight into the dynamics between the music, Gaelic song and language and dance.

The inter-relationship of dance and the arts, a theme running through the weekend, is also evident at the art exhibition. The Society of Badenoch and Strathspey Artists have generously contributed to the art exhibition specific to the weekend entitled "Cearcal".

The weekend winds up with the **FINAL HO-RO GHEALLAIDH** where you can put a new date in your diary: 11-13 November 2005!

The festival is open to everyone 14 years and over, with events from lunchtime and some afternoon classes open to under 14's. It is open to those who may be selective in what they attend. The festival is not an "all-or-nothing" situation; why not regard it as a reason to come to Kingussie in the Central Highlands?

Further information is available from Sandra Robertson on 01540-661594 or sandra@dannsa.com

Dannsa kindly thank: Cairngorms "Communities in the National Park" Grant Scheme, Highland Council, VABS & Bowmore.

Scottish Hospitality

This year I managed to attend a few of the Scottish Country Dances held in Princes Street Gardens in the summer. The dance area in front of the Ross Band Stand was filled to capacity with dancers as usual. Most of them were very experienced locals, but there were a fair number of young visitors from abroad, particularly Italy.

I personally love to see visitors getting involved in our dancing. Indeed, dancing for me is something communal and sociable – an activity you do *with* other people, something that brings communities together. This holds whether the community is a local, or worldwide. So when someone from another country wants to join in with us in our dancing, I encourage it. We can literally put our hands across borders and do something together. There are few activities that can melt barriers as quickly as dance.

So I was somewhat saddened by what I witnessed in Princes Street Gardens this year. There were a number of young Italian visitors present, and they wanted to dance. At one point, a couple of them joined a set forming on the dance floor. But when the Scottish dancers at the head of the set saw that inexperienced Italians were joining *they immediately turned their backs and walked off to join other sets, leaving these poor Italians standing out on their own like sore thumbs!* It has to take a bit of courage for a foreigner to get up and try to do a Scottish Country Dance. I can only imagine how it felt to be so callously rejected and left standing there like pariahs. Surely Scottish dancers with many years of experience can behave with a bit more decorum.

I know it's difficult to pick up a Scottish Country Dance if you're there for the first time, but surely it's better to try and fail than to spurn our foreign guests. They've paid their £2 to get in just like everyone else. And so what if the set turns into chaos? Is it *really* the end of the world? At least you'll have some fun and maybe make some new friends, who will surely appreciate that you tried. Better still, do what we did and simply do another, much simpler dance such as Strip the Willow, the Flying Scotsman or the Virginia Reel. Hopefully next year more Scottish hospitality will be evident.

Above all, remember that dancing is meant to be FUN and don't take it TOO SERIOUSLY!

Mike Scott

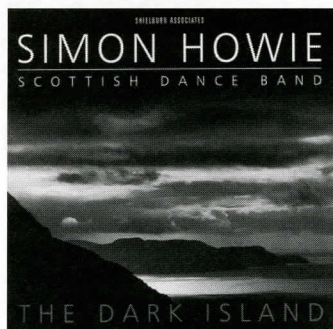
Mike Scott

Like so many Scots, Mike learned ceilidh dancing at school but went on in his teens actually to enjoy dancing at rural ceilidhs in and around his home village of Crook of Devon near Kinross. Moving to Edinburgh to go to university, Mike found other distractions and attended few ceilidhs before picking up the itch again years later in the Capital. He is a vociferous proponent of ceilidh dancing, and will happily dance anywhere he can find some space and some music. A well-known figure in the Edinburgh ceilidh scene, Mike also runs the well-known mikescommunity.com web site. He enjoys teaching ceilidh dancing, particularly abroad. Mike also loves other dance styles, such as Salsa and Ballroom Dancing and doesn't have to be asked twice to try his hand at any kind of dance.

Reviews

Campbell Hunter

I thought you might appreciate a short synopsis of my dancing pedigree. By the age of ten I was already dancing Old Time under the guardianship of an uncle who, as a young man, had been competing at National Championship Level however, much to his displeasure I took up Scottish Country Dancing at eleven and abandoned the competitive arena for the FUN of Scottish Country Dancing. I have danced with RSCDS (Falkirk Branch) formerly RSCDS (East Stirlingshire Branch) for the last fifty years and have been Branch Chairman for the last ten years. I have also been working as a Dance Caller for the past fourteen years and spend most weekends calling at functions for various bands. And now for my first reviews...



The Dark Island
Simon Howie Scottish
Dance Band
SHIEL CD 022

Contact:
Shielburn Associates
www.shielburn.co.uk

This is a very well compiled CD with sixteen great tracks. The tempos are super and the sleeve clearly indicates the specific dances and, for the set dances, the number of bars. Purely from the dance teacher's point of view, it is a pity that all the jigs and reels are 32 bars; a 40 or a 48 bar recording can be hard to find. But, with that observation, I would heartily endorse this excellent recording of dance music.

as if by magic...

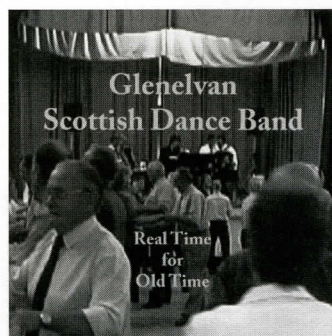
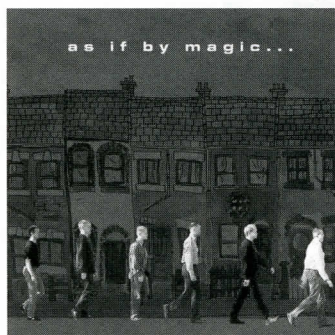
Iain Cathcart & his
Band
CONISB 01
CD is available to
purchase online at:
www.iaincathcart.com

I received my copy of "as if by magic..." on Tuesday and took it along to my regular Ceilidh Class that very evening.

Magic is in the title and the response from the dancers was equally magic. What a wonderful mix of tempos and catchy tunes with a great variety of old and new. This is a very useful CD for teachers and dance aficionados alike. I particularly liked the *Wartime Favourites* (Mississippi Dip) and *As if by Magic* (Military Two-Step) as did the class members (all fifty of them). The jigs and reels were excellent and a great boon to dance teachers.

From the dance teacher's point of view it is very helpful if the cover states how many bars and repetitions have been recorded e.g. 6X32 jig/reel and which dance it is meant for. This saves a lot of time in preparation and on the night. Please also remember, not all dancers have the magician's ear, as indeed not all musicians have dancers' feet.

Finally, to Iain, this is a great CD, which sets a very high standard for you and the boys to maintain. Well done and best wishes to the boys in the band.

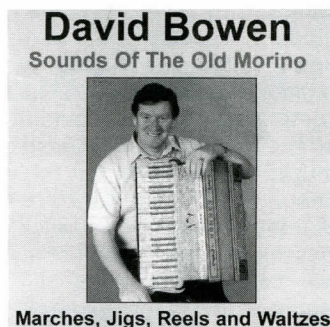


Real Time for Old Time
Glenelvan Scottish
Dance Band
GLEN CD 01

If ever a CD lived up to its title then this one by David Scott and his band surely does. I purchased a copy at the Island Fling on Skye in the summer of 2003 and use it every week at my Ceilidh Class. In all of the Old Time tracks the timing is excellent and the tunes fairly invite the dancers on to the floor. To me the big attraction of ceilidh dancing is the subtle way Scottish set dances, progressive round the room dances and partner dances can be massaged into an attractive programme which can be weighted to suit the dancers. On this CD this balance has been achieved with great aplomb and although with my country dancer's hat on I found the four set dances a trifle fast, my Ceilidh Dancers find them excellent. All in all an excellent dancers' CD which I have been delighted to use on a weekly basis and is currently in the auto-changer in the car. To David and his band thank you for a very useful CD where all of the tracks have been of great use.

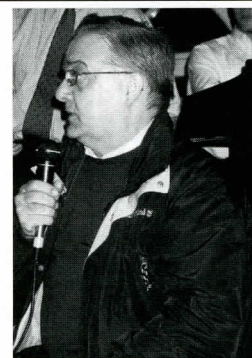
Sounds Of The Old Morino
David Bowen
DABO 001
CONTACT
bowenplant@aol.com
or 01463-239 575

This is a good clean recording with appropriate dances named or tempos stated, which is of great help to the dancers and teachers. The non-dancing tracks are listed as medleys and make very entertaining listening. The tempos throughout this CD are perfect to dance to. David, this is an excellent CD for both dancing and listening to and I look forward to your next one.



Marches, Jigs, Reels and Waltzes

All items for review
should be sent to:
Campbell Hunter,
37 Carronvale Road,
Larbert, Stirlingshire
FK5 3LG



The Story of the Dance

G.W. Lockhart

One of the most enjoyable things about working in the Traditional Dance and Music scene is meeting so many interesting and knowledgeable people. One such gentleman is Wallace Lockhart – a charming man, and a well-respected author. Here we have printed a chapter from his book Highland Balls and Village Halls...

*He blew them rants see lively, schottisches,
reels an' jigs,
The foalie flung his muckle legs an' capered
ower the rigs,
The grey-tailed futtrat bobbit oot to hear his
ain strathspey,
**The bawd cam' loupin' through the corn
to "Clean Pease Strae"***

The Whistle – Charles Murray (1864-1941)

There is little doubt that in Scotland, dancing is in the blood. Whatever the occasion, it seems the Scot can find an excuse to get his feet moving. Even the least gregarious need little urging to make up a set, while shy, introverted characters develop lion-like presences when performing their solo-setting in the middle of an *Eightsome Reel*. As reference to the world-wide list of clubs in the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society's year book indicates, the Scot does not leave his native dances behind him when settling or journeying overseas. Indeed, his nationalism expands, and he dances more than ever, showing no surprise that the local population, whatever their race, creed or colour, seek to join his frolics with an almost equal vigour. It appears completely natural to him that the Ghurkhas, Sikhs, Malays and Arabs should want to learn how to play the pipes. The Scot has danced in prisoner of war camps, in castles and cottage kitchens, in night schools and day schools, in defeat and in victory. And it can be the same people who dance in a chandelier lit ballroom as dance in a remote corrugated iron hut designated community centre. Dancing at christenings and weddings is common enough, but Fergusson reminds us that at one time funerals, too, were an excuse to get into action:

*I dwell among the caller springs
That weet the Land O'Cakes,
And aften tune my canty strings
At bridals and late-wakes.*

Why should Scottish Country Dancing be probably the most popular and most taken up form of traditional dancing throughout the world? It is an interesting question. No doubt the fact that it is performed in social groups, or sets, is a factor, but this is not unique. Portuguese dancing follows this pattern but has never gained much acceptance outwith that country. American Square Dancing had a vibrancy and exudes bonhomie; yet prevalent as the Americans are today, all over the globe, and much as the free world is influenced by things American, from chewing-gum to jeans, a ho-down would still be something for a

European to regard as a tourist attraction. To explain the commitment of races from Japan to Venezuela to Scottish Country Dancing demands, at least, some analysis.

It was probably in the fourteenth century that set dancing of some form originated in Scotland, but reference to it is scant until the sixteen hundreds. From then on its growth was documented, and it is interesting to note that many dances, such as *The Gates of Edinburgh* and *The Red House*, devised quite early in the eighteenth century, are still danced today, although little dance music was published before 1750.

In 1746, the Act of Proscription was passed, aimed at eliminating Highland culture. As a by-product, it opened the door for the fiddle to become the national instrument of Scotland. While no-one would ever deny the excellence of the marriage of the pipes with some of the great dances, such as *Bonnie Anne*, equally, no-one would gainsay that the fiddle is the ideal musical instrument for indoor country dancing. The popularity of fiddling and dancing grew cheek by jowl in the second half of the eighteenth century, as Scotland entered her golden age. And it was at this time that the population of the towns began to express their increasing sophistication at dance assemblies. Mrs Cockburn, poetess, inveterate letter writer and the most famous hostess of her day, recorded, around 1760:

Next day I went to the assembly. Never was so handsome an assembly.

There were seven sets – one all quality ladies and all handsome; one called the maiden set, for they admitted no married women; one called the Heartsome Set, which was led off by Lady Christian Erskine, in which danced Mrs. Horn, Suff Johnston, Anne Keith; Bess St. Clair and Lady Dunmore humbly begged to stand at the foot, which was granted. Suff was my bed-fellow all night, and is just gone.

And later, in a letter expressing her pleasure at the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, she writes that:

The town is at present agog with ploughman poet. The man will be spoiled, if he can spoil; but he keeps his simple manners, and is quite sober. No doubt he will be at the Hunters' Ball tomorrow, which has made all women and milliners mad. Not a gauze cap under two guineas – many ten, twelve, etc.

The nineteenth century gave Scottish dances the opportunity to test their mettle and resilience against the ballroom products of Europe. The *Quadrilles*, *Waltz* and *Polka* captured a dancing public's imagination, and, at least, for a while, *Reels* and *Jigs* suffered relegation, although the *Strathspey*, especially in its foursome reel form managed to hold its popularity, particularly

in the country areas. The Scots at first accepted these continental introductions, before either discarding them or absorbing them into their own mode of dancing. The *Quadrilles*, of course, along with the *Lancers* is presently enjoying something of a revival, the *Waltz* has produced its derivations such as *Waltz Country Dance*, and the *Polka*, overtaken by the *Poussette* as a progression, steadfastly refuses to die. Not everyone, however, welcomed the innovations. Lady Nairne animatedly defends the old dances in her rumbustious poem *County Meeting*:

*But ne'er ye fash, gang thro' the reel,
The country-dance, ye dance sae weel,
An' ne'er let waltz or dull quadrille
Spoil our County Meeting.*

The word "*Quadrilles*" naturally conjures up the word "*Lancers*" for these two rather similar dances are inexorably linked together. But be warned! Because there are so many local variations, to get up to the *Lancers* today is to put oneself at considerable risk. Attending a Sheepdog Trial Dance in a remote glen (it started after eleven o'clock when the beer tent closed), the *Lancers* was demanded and I found myself in a set with three enormous shepherds, partnered by wives only marginally inferior in physique, from different but neighbouring glens. Each had his own version of the dance; each was convinced his version was the only true one; each intended the set would conform. It was not an experience I would like to relive. But such behaviour, of course, is most uncommon. Scottish Country Dancing is fundamentally Ballroom Dancing and it implies elegance as well as enjoyment:

*The room whirled and coloured
and figured itself with dancers.*

As Norman MacCaig sallies in his *Country Dance*. There is a completeness about a Scottish Country Dance programme that produces a feeling of achievement as well as satisfaction. It changes from the fast movement of the *Reel* or the more moderately phased *Jig* to the stately *Strathspey*. There is an appeal to both sexes; the men can be masculine and the ladies feminine. It is easy to start country dancing because there are few basic steps, but just as the competent golfer gets drugged on lowering his handicap, so does the country dancer get hooked on learning more movements and progressions, not to mention more dances, while all the time seeking to polish the performance.

There is one further aspect of Scottish Country Dancing to be identified at this point. And it is an important aspect, as it explains, to at least some extent, the emotional attachment the Scot has to his native dances. The dances, be they *Reels*, *Jigs*, *Hornpipes* or *Strathspeys*, are enjoyed at all levels of society. Whilst not a classless society, the divisions that can be found in Scotland are not so significant as in many other countries. The clan system had something to do with this, as had, and has, the natural independence of the Scot.

The above remarks have been made with our set dances in mind, but of course there are a large number of couple or round-the-room dances that have been for a long number of years part of the traditional scene. While it may be dances such as the *Highland Schottische* that jump first to mind, we should remember that *couple basse* dances and *pavanes* for example, were being danced away back in the 16th century.

But for those of us who cut our teeth on barn dances and *Friday Jiggings* and who warm to the explosion today of the ceilidh dances that are returning so many old favourite couple dances to the dance floor, the interesting question is not just, what is happening, but where are we going?

Scots have never been slow to experiment with new dances, discarding those that do not match up to the needed enjoyment, moulding others, often with local variations, where they had something to offer. For proof of that, look no further than the scores, if not hundreds of set dances composed within the past few years. In the ceilidh scene we have welcomed dances like the *Cumberland Square Eight* and the *Blaydon Reel* from south of the Border and we can expect an increase in the number of new round the room dances being devised. And to what extent, one wonders, are the different dancing populations, that is ceilidh and RSCDS types, going to integrate? And how many of the new ceilidh bands are going to develop the musical empathy with dancers as that possessed by, say, Jimmy Shand or the late Bobby MacLeod who played with at least one eye on the dancers' feet?

A final and intriguing thought on today's scene is the welcome revival of step dancing. While it has always lingered to an extent in places like Shetland, its appearance in our industrial heartland is unexpected. Canadian involvement here is worthy of note. The emigrants, like the two hundred who left Loch Broom in 1775 bound for Pictou, Nova Scotia, took with them their music, song and dance in addition to their Gaelic speech. Today, the Gaelic College on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, keeps the culture of the Gaels alive, running courses in music, song and dance. In Cape Breton, step dancing is to the fore, the fiddle being the natural provider of the music, and just as forty years ago Cape Breton fiddle music, based on the tunes and playing style originally taken there by emigrants to our shores to complement the expanding interest in it in Scotland. A two-way traffic in teachers is growing. Our own Gaelic College in Skye has responded to a suggestion put forward some years ago by Alasdair Fraser who, spending so much of his time in North America, after America fully appreciates the affinity of step dancing with fiddle music. Since 1992, Cape Breton's famous fiddling son, Buddy MacMaster and step dancer Harvey Beaton have been teaching at the college, with applications to attend their classes rising every year. Some see this growing interest in what is after all a very energetic form of dancing as being due to a fitness fad, a replacement for aerobics. But does it really matter why people are step dancing? Is it not another, to quote, "Darling Diversion"?

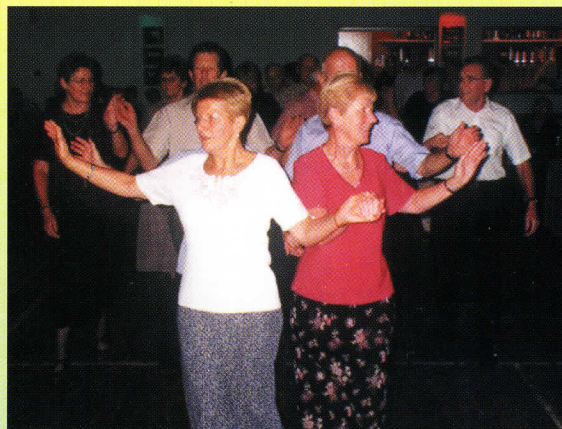
There is thus something important to record and keep alive and just as, last century, the Scottish dances had to withstand the introduction and challenge of dances from the Continent, so one expects that our native dances will not be overwhelmed this century by the new styles which have made their mark, but that they will continue in the years ahead to provide pleasure for all who respond to the strains of our traditional music by wanting to dance.

"Highland Balls and Village Halls" is about to be republished by Luath Press with some additional material included. We shall let you know as soon as it becomes available. In the meantime visit their Website at www.luath.co.uk

Langholm A&F Club Dance



Club Chairman, Adam Grant with his wife, Mabel



Shiftin' Bobbins



Moira Johnstone (who wrote The Millennium March) dancing with her pal, Sheila



Evelyn McLean & Stuart Adamson



Robin Hamilton & Stuart Adamson



Jessie Crozier



The Dashing White Sergeant



The Virginia Reel



The Ian Hutson SDB

All photographs courtesy of Heather McLean and Tom Riddell

Take The Floor



The Queen Mary



Blazin' Fiddles guest at Radio Scotland's 25th Anniversary



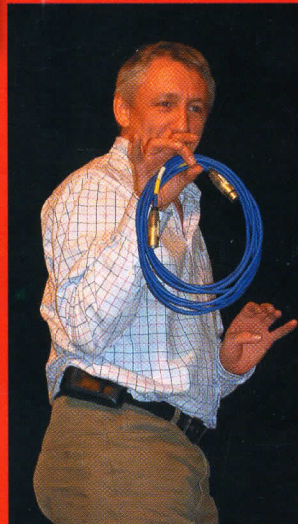
Robbie meets a Clan Chief at the Highland Games in Longbeach, California



One of the country dance groups at Holyrood 2002



The Glencraig SDB at Blairgowrie



Doug Maskew



The Iain MacPhail SDB on stage at Holyrood



The John Ellis Band at Perth



Amelia MacDonald



Robbie Shepherd MBE



Gordon Shand & his band at Perth



Ken Mutch & Doug Maskew