

Dance On!



No More Traditional Dancing in Our Schools?

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Editorial

This is a month of changes at Dance On!. We say goodbye to Rob Corcoran, who has done so much over the last year to make the magazine such a success. As those of you who know Rob will be aware, he has many other commitments in the dance world – in particular The Orkney Dance Festival and the Skydance project. We thank him for his hard work and dedication to Dance On! and wish him well for the future. You will no doubt be hearing all about what he's up to in the coming months.

Laura Ellis, who previously dealt with advertising, has made the momentous decision to go full time with Dance On! and will take over all aspects of marketing, finance and administration.

We are in the process of transferring bank accounts etc, so please do not be concerned if your payments are not presented immediately – you will still receive your magazine. The credit card facility belonged to Rob, and at present we cannot offer that facility. However we shall shortly have a Paypal account, which will allow you to pay by debit/credit card if preferred. All subscription renewals and articles should now be sent to my address, printed below.

We close by once again wishing Rob all the best and thanking him for all of his input into the magazine.

Karin

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Dance On!

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No More Scottish Dancing in our Schools?

This article was published in the "Scotland on Sunday" newspaper on January 1st, and we reproduce it here with the kind permission of Mr MacMillan.

50 Cent gives Gay Gordon a lesson in keeping pupils fit

One of the most feared aspects of physical education in Scottish schools is about to be consigned to oblivion.

Traditional Scottish country dancing is being replaced by lessons in hip hop and street dance. Floor routines in school PE time will be backed by the booming soundtracks of frequently controversial artists such as Public Enemy, LL Cool J and Outkast.

Madonna, The Black Eyed Peas, Girls Aloud and Beyoncé will also feature on playlists heard by pupils at schools in all 32 of Scotland's council areas.

The £1.2m Dance in Schools initiative by Scottish Youth Dance, the biggest ever school dance programme north of the Border, follows the completion of a successful pilot project in Edinburgh and Midlothian last month. The classes saw thousands of school pupils shed their inhibitions to take part.

Scottish Youth Dance's education director, Katy McKeown, a graduate of the Laban Centre for Dance in London, said: "The routines we are offering are much more physically challenging than traditional dancing and the music we use is what youngsters are listening to.

"Pupils have seen dancers do backspins in videos by artists like Madonna and 50 Cent, and that is the kind of dancing they relate to.



Schoolchildren dancing The Millennium Square at a recent Take the Floor special broadcast from The Rothes Halls. © BBC Radio Scotland

"They're interested because they think it's a challenge. Some of the boys are also opting to join the dance classes because they think it makes them more attractive to girls."

McKeown, 32, who has been involved in teaching dance in Scotland for the past five years, said: "The physical health of many Scottish schoolchildren is appalling.

"Kids are getting bigger, and traditional PE and dance options are not enough to get them active. A lot of kids don't want to play football or hockey, so this is another option for them." She added: "Most of our instructors are in their 20s and they listen to the same type of music as the pupils, and it makes it easier to get the kids interested."

In the next three years, 12 dance instructors are to visit Scottish primary and secondary schools, in five-week blocks, and teach them contemporary dance using the latest chart music.

After warm-up exercises, step and arm routines will combine with floor moves in PE sessions lasting from 45 minutes up to

an hour and a half. To ensure that the dance craze is sustained teachers are being allowed to use two of their in-service days to learn how to teach the new routines to pupils.

Girls who do no exercise at all, and boys who currently shun dance lessons, are being targeted in the scheme which is part of the Scottish Executive's attempt to combat child obesity.

Figures released by NHS Scotland last month showed that a fifth of Scotland's three-year-olds are already overweight with one in eight clinically obese. The situation is even worse among older children, with more than a third of 12-year-olds overweight.

The new dance classes will start at schools in Glasgow, Perth and Kinross, West Lothian, and Dumfries and Galloway this month. Pupils in Highland, Stirling, Fife, East Dunbartonshire, Dundee and Borders will get lessons after Easter, with other Scottish regions to follow over the next two years. Councils themselves will decide which schools are to receive dance coaching.

In August, Scotland on Sunday

revealed that only one in six Scottish schoolgirls and one in three boys is taking the minimum amount of daily exercise recommended by the government.

Edinburgh University researchers found that youngsters are instead spending their time listening to music, watching television, playing computer games and texting friends on mobile phones. Parents are also failing to act as role models, with children claiming their mothers and fathers don't encourage them to exercise or join in.

John Gillespie, a former PE teacher who helped organise dance classes for the pilot project run in Midlothian Council's schools between October and December last year, said more than 2,000 pupils took part.

He said: "It is not trendy to dance to old-fashioned traditional dance music, and if children don't think it's cool most won't do it. But singers like Madonna and Beyoncé are icons to the girls and using their music has a positive effect.

"They see that dancers are fit and look physically attractive. That is partly because they exercise. We are also getting more boys into dance because some of them think it gives them a better chance of being able to pull."

Gillespie added: "We have got to realise that youngsters have changed. A number of our schools still do country dancing, and there is nothing wrong with it, but it is less of a trend. Most children can't relate to the music and don't want to do it."

The Dance in Schools programme will be analysed by researchers at Edinburgh University's child and adolescent health unit, with children and teachers asked if dancing has helped them get fitter.

However, Sue Porter, the youth director of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, said that traditional dance was still important and would continue to be taught in some schools, although without Executive funding.

She said: "It is good aerobic exercise. We still work with schools and thousands of children have taken part in classes in the last year.

"Scottish country dancing is a social skill as well as physical exercise. It is something that people can use at school, university or during their professional life at ceilidhs and the like. It is a life skill."

ARTHUR MACMILLAN
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This has generated a flurry of response. What do YOU think about the £1.2m initiative?

Well, if this works the way such things often work, it's good news for SCD. It means that the kids will be put off by having hip hop forced on them in the lame classes at school, and will never want to do it again in their lives. But, since SCD was taken away from them, it'll have more of an adult image, and the kids will be fascinated by it. They'll start organizing SCD sessions whenever there aren't any adult eyes watching; the boys will take up fiddle and accordion to impress the girls, and the cool kids will all get RSCDS memberships!

John Chambers

Gosh.

Here's what I reckon....

As a civilisation, we have to accept individual responsibility for our own destiny, and if the parents and leaders of a nation allow that country to become the 51st State of Pop Culture America, then that's what it will become (Cause & Effect)!

It's inevitable that kids are not fired up about Scottish dance, because our crazy media contaminates them with only pop culture. How could they stand a chance? They're kids; Parents should spend time getting to know them and inspiring them.

John Sikorski

I could easily get into a rant about this, but the main feeling I have is that our "national newspaper" has been on the decline in terms of capacity to reflect our society for quite a few years, so this doesn't in any way surprise me.

In terms of content...

- Any kind of positive physical activity is probably good
- Is dancing PE or is it culture...is

it both? Is it better labelled culture/social?

- I have been persuaded through the years to be involved in all sorts of dancing - The Locomotion, Old Time, some Highland, Scottish Country Dancing, the Twist, The Pogo, that thing where you look as if you're jogging... there's room for all of it.

- There are some negative aspects to "break dancing" in that it seems also to involve, by necessity, a sort of misogynistic/sexist, anti-social, violent, backdrop, both in the music and in the behaviour of the folk involved - while parents might welcome the *exercise* for the weans, I'm not so sure they'll want the rest of it... (but you could have said the same about jazz, the blues, Teddy Boys, the Beatles... Shooglenifty?!)

- I have no idea who Arthur McMillan is... but he clearly doesn't go to any of the traditional/folk music gigs I've been at. The mix of ages involved is amazing... and... I've been to a few stand-up-and-dance gigs by fusion bands... Shooglenifty, Peatbog Faeries, Martyn Bennett, Mark Saul (Australian), Croft No 5... so "dance" music is there in our own tradition and culture, in *all* its forms. (Why not promote that instead/as well?)

- When Madonna wanted music for her wedding and her son's christening - what did she have? The clarsach of Jennifer Port from Golspie.

Other issues here are

- £1.2M

- Two teacher in-service days to learn about it

- Major promotion

When has that sort of approach ever been taken towards encouraging participation in traditional dance and music? And yet other countries are way ahead of us again on this - promoting the learning of their own traditions and culture. In this country, relative to arts and culture in schools and in the community at large, sport already gets much more support - funding and other resources.

Last year I took part in celebrations in Edinburgh for the 40th anniversary of Zambia's

independence. In The Pleasance there was a mixed crowd of Africans and Scots/English. All of them were grooving to the African band. When the Scots band came on half of the non-Africans left the floor. The African folk didn't. They stayed up and kept on grooving to the Scots music. That says it all for me.

For our own traditions, it is most often left to local commitment to make things happen. My ceilidh band has played regularly at Earlston High School's end of year dances (16 - 18 year olds). At Earlston, the young folk are encouraged to participate in Scottish Dancing. The dances are very well attended, the young folk know all the dances, there is no doubt it's great fun... AND a better-looking and fitter bunch of young folk you won't find. Arthur McMillan and the Scotsman could be consigned to oblivion. So much for not ranting!

Sandy Watson

Modern dance is changing all the time - from "slosh" to "Macarena" - don't ask me what all the different dancing styles are called - but Scottish traditional is something that, once learned, will always be with you for whatever social occasion you might find yourself in. The photograph in the "Courier" of the massed children doing Scottish Country Dancing in Bell's Sports Centre on St Andrew's Day was absolutely the embodiment of ENJOYMENT!!! (It was also the embodiment of EXERCISE!)

Joan Blue

Well, what can one say about this tendentious stuff! To be fair, I think the anti-trad spin has been put on by the reporter rather than the SYD people. The STDT is rolling its Traditional Dance Development Workers programme out across Scotland and the existing workers in Fife, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Clackmannan can't keep up with the demand for classes! So much for kids not being interested, eh?

Sheena Wellington

Re the "stopping" of traditional dancing in schools, I may be in

the minority but I am not fazed by it one bit; I always felt school children treated it as a joke anyway and as far as I am aware Scottish Country Dancing will still be available in some schools for those who are interested in participating as an extra curricular activity.

Traditional music and dancing in my opinion is something that people become interested in and it cannot and should not be rammed down the throats of school children. If they are interested they will find out how to become involved and if not, well there will always be someone else coming through.

Long live traditional music and dance for those who want to become involved, not for those who HAVE to be involved very much against their wish.

John Caskie

"One of the most feared aspects of physical education in Scottish schools is about to be consigned to oblivion. Traditional Scottish country dancing is being replaced by lessons in hip hop and street dance."

Well thanks for those opening sentences which seem to place A MacMillan, along with many others, clearly and unreservedly in the "I hate anything Scottish" bracket. Presumably it must serve as a constant irritation to Mac too that, for example, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a complete sell out every year, that the Cowal Highland Gathering is attended by tens of thousands every year, that we have the finest form of bagpipes in the world, that we have some of the finest drummers in the world (thanks to pipe bands), that we have some of the finest accordionist and violinists in the world (thanks to Scottish Dance Music), and some of the best Regiments in the world (or at least we did have until recently) and much more. Yep if it's tainted with tartan get rid of it.

Yet they are all surviving despite a sea of media apathy - although at least apathy is preferably to hostility. And furthermore all are thriving despite the lack of a £1.2m cash injection - how can that be?

Although if I were splitting hairs I would point out that Highland, Country and Ceilidh dancing are all different and have their own advocates. I assume MacScrooge will welcome the demise of the proper school dance at Christmas, many of which still feature "ceilidh" dancing? And I believe there's nothing more useful at English "public" schools and British Embassies abroad than a knowledge of the more common Scottish Country Dances for a good going "Reel Party".

It was none other than Lord McDonald (whom Mac must revere), who in a previous life as one of our TV bosses, promised us no more traditional entertainment on TV - no more Scottish Variety Shows as I think they were called - The White Heather Club and the like. Mac must be highly delighted with the results there - it's been totally eradicated from our screens, even on Hogmanay. I know a lot of our "culture" was somewhat "enhanced" by the Victorians but stand back for a minute and look at our poor feckless brethren south of the border (with apologies to our readers down there) who have nothing to offer except Morris Dancing - and by contrast look at the countries of Eastern Europe and the old Soviet block. Probably the only creditable thing the Russians did was to preserve the traditional dress, song, music, dance etc of their own and their vassal states.

Anyway I assume Mac looks forward expectantly to the day when we can all blend effortlessly into a bland, global village with no distinguishing features except perhaps the colour of our skin, when to be Scottish is no different from being anything else on the face of the planet.

Scots, as an identifiable race, have outlived their usefulness I assume?

Anyway wishing everyone a Happy New Year - damn, I suppose that will have to go as well - no point in singing *Auld Lang Syne* or *A Guid New Year* when we could be joining in a rousing chorus of *Shang-a-Lang* eh?

Charlie Todd

Remember When There Was a Country Called Scotland?

By Finlay Forbes

Scotland on Sunday recently reported, with more than a hint of triumphalist glee, that Scottish Country Dancing is about to yield its official place in the curricula of Scottish schools to modern popular dance. Some readers will react with anger and some with sadness to this move but many will see it as the inevitable outcome of what spin doctors call progress and less gullible souls call global dumbing down.

Needless to say, the decision has been announced to the accompaniment of the obligatory PR sound bites about offering challenges, encouraging participation in physical activity and the oh so trendy business of fighting obesity. Suddenly we are going to find that every rotund chip muncher north of the border will be performing perfect back flips instead of waddling painfully up anything vaguely resembling a gradient. Do people really believe such stuff? If we are going have this kind of waffle accompanying every "new and exciting initiative" could our overpaid PR consultants at least give us cynics and unbelievers some new phrases to dismember rather than boring us with the same old guff time and time again?

On its own, the sudden change of direction is unlikely to bring about the demise of Scottish Country Dancing. Scottish Country Dancers have been travelling the road to self-extinction for so long that a bureaucratic decision like this is unlikely to have any significant impact on either the speed or the destination of their journey.

In one sense, the departure of Scottish Country Dancing from the official school curriculum, is a very minor matter but in the greater scheme of things it is

symptomatic of a deep-seated attitude within the Scottish nation in general, and Scottish education in particular, towards Scotland's cultural heritage.

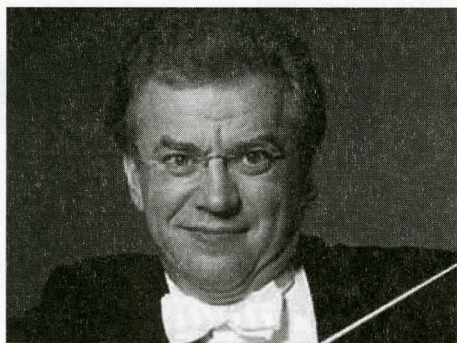
For some years now, Scotland has been hell-bent on turning itself from a distinctive and essentially free thinking nation into a cheap and tawdry version of its larger and more influential southern neighbour – a neighbour that is itself rapidly becoming a shabby imitation of the United States of America. Why the Scots on their native heath see the need to reinvent their country as a third hand, third class USA is a mystery but that seems to be what they are determined to do. It is no longer "cool" (or whatever other monosyllabic inanity is in vogue) for young Scots to like their own music or dance their own dances. Everyone must now pay homage to the vapid and puerile creations of global mass entertainment unless they wish to be ridiculed by their peers and excluded from today's astonishingly intolerant "youth culture".

This descent into global blandness has been helped along by an educational system that has gone from being a byword in excellence to something utterly bereft of any character or distinction.

A system that once used its academic rigour to produce some of the most original and creative minds that the world has ever known has degenerated into yet another unpaid lackey of the all-powerful market economy. Instead of developing minds honed to analyse and evaluate the sometimes subliminal and usually misleading propaganda of the marketing world, it is now numbing minds into accepting marketing hype, no matter how ridiculous, without question. Whatever became of that searing

iconoclasm that was hallmark of the Doric language? Is it any wonder that scams succeed when schools fail to prepare people's minds to deal with them? When will self-appointed educational experts catch up to hard realities of life? Children's expectations, likes and dislikes are manipulated ruthlessly by dubious techniques ranging from celebrity endorsement to threatened exclusion (if you don't have one of these you will be the laughing stock of the "in crowd"). Those who control the market economy have long seen children as a means of siphoning money out of their parents' pockets. If young people really are drawn naturally to mass market music as the Scottish educational establishment would have us believe, why do record companies need to spend so much time, money and effort plugging it? Surely the laws of natural selection should apply in way that allows the most appealing music to prevail without interference from advertising.

One of the more remarkable aspects of popular as distinct from mass market culture is that where a country is immunised against global marketing, popular taste tends to favour music that is a lot more serious and demanding than the banalities plied by the mass marketing mind benders. Finland (population 5.2 million) is probably the best and geographically closest example of this. In Finland there is enough popular (and political) interest in classical music to support thirty professional orchestras and keep the rest of the world supplied with conductors of outstanding quality. Scotland ought to know, given the achievements of the BBC Scottish



Osmo Vänskä

Symphony Orchestra under its recently departed Finnish maestro Osmo Vänskä.

In many ways, Scotland and Finland are surprisingly similar. Both are northern countries with fine scenery, a lot of natural water, little mineral wealth, low population density and larger, more influential and not always benign neighbours on their borders. Why then has one country managed to preserve and grow its cultural heritage while the other is well on the way to consigning its cultural heritage to oblivion? Perhaps Finland's complex and opaque Finno-Ugric language cannot assimilate the banalities of modern marketspeak with enough ease to make advertising slogans effective. Any language that declines its nouns into fourteen cases must require considerable intellectual prowess to master even as a native speaker. But language alone cannot explain the discrepancy. Apart from anything else, the citizens of Finland like those of most other Baltic countries learn to speak English (the *lingua franca* of mass marketing) in order to communicate with the outside world. They are not totally insulated from the incessant inanities of cola and burger culture.

What I suspect is that the Finns genuinely value high art and their nation's contribution towards it through such historical giants as Sibelius and living composers like Aho, Rautavaara and Sallinen. We Scots simply don't do this - or at least, not enough of us do it. Those of us who value our national heritage are too few and too thinly spread to create the critical mass necessary to keep it in the public eye. The prevalent

national mindset is to surrender to the barrage of mass-market propaganda and consign anything even vaguely intellectual or nationalistic to the margins of society. When a celebrity (in the current debased sense of the word) can dismiss those who dislike reality television shows as "pseudo-intellectuals" and not provoke any outrage from the self-appointed great and good, British intellectualism has indeed reached oxymoronic status. In these strange times it's chic to be thick!

That said, it is not just the decline of intellectualism that has led to our present sorry state of institutionalised mental somnolence and jelly kneed obeisance to our marketing masters.

It would be easy to blame the removing of Scottish Country Dancing from the school curriculum on Zeitgeist but that would be both unfair and unhelpful. General dumbing down should never be ignored or condoned but equally it should not be used as an excuse for every failure. Scottish Country Dancing has to some extent been the author of its own doom in this latest twist of history. If it is to be marketed as a social activity, then a social activity is what it has to be. Its pervasive atmosphere has to be one of friendliness and conviviality. There is no point in replacing the bland banality of so much modern dance with sour-faced starchiness.

In writing Scottish Country Dancing out of the school curriculum, the powers that be in Scottish education may well be guilty of muddled thinking and a supine attitude to the fashions of the moment but for all that, they may yet have done Scottish Country Dancing an enormous favour.

If only Scottish Country Dancing could see the change in education policy as a clear and urgent call to shed its complacency and start marketing itself on its strengths rather than trying to persuade the world outside to accept its weaknesses, it will be much the better for it.

Complacency, epitomised in such phrases as "we have our

little ways" has long been one of Scottish Country Dancing's more debilitating features. Quite often, it is these "little ways" that irritate newcomers beyond belief and eventually drive them to seek other forms of entertainment. If these ways really are so little, why not ditch them now?

If Scottish Country Dancing is to survive beyond the lives of its current practitioners it must market itself professionally and competently. The days of amateur idiosyncratic management and ham-handed marketing campaigns are over. One point that emerged with startling clarity from the article in Scotland on Sunday was the significance that music played in the decision. The scheme's proponents were shrewd enough to see that it was the music and not the dances that would appeal to the target audience. I've said it before but I'll say it again. We need another Jimmy Shand. Finding one may be easier than we care to admit. Even if all this fails, there is still hope. One of the most sure-fire ways of putting young people off anything is to turn it into a school subject. Our much-trumpeted scheme may yet explode in its proponents' faces. Perhaps we shall see our young people actively seeking out Scottish Country Dancing as an exotic alternative to the boring old stuff that they do in school. All we need to do is make sure that we are ready when that day comes.



© Streaming Pictures

The Case For The Defence

**By Ian Brockbank
& Robert Lambie**

Finlay Forbes is right in saying it takes time to change ("By Their Reputations Shall Ye Know Them", January 2006 issue). What he doesn't seem to have noticed is that the RSCDS *is* changing and *has* changed. However, it's far harder to lose a bad reputation than he seems to think.

People like to hear about things that are bad, and seldom bother to fact-check before passing the message on. When I started dancing at University, it was common knowledge in the group that "the RSCDS are killjoys who don't have fun, insist on everyone dancing precisely and perfectly, and will snub you if you're a fraction out of place or half a bar late." Of course, no-one went along to the RSCDS, because no-one wanted to be treated like that, but everyone happily spread the description and the warm glow of "we're better than that". A few years later I decided I wanted to learn to dance better and by then the fact that Edinburgh Branch taught classes to a very high standard attracted me, so I took the chance to go along. And yes, in the demonstration class we are expected to dance to a high standard. But that's the nature of the class. In other classes the emphasis is on learning enough to be able to enjoy oneself, and being in the wrong place is usually the cue for laughter rather than censure. (I still hear the same view as before from the University group, by the way, and they still don't go along to find out for themselves.)

Such bad perceptions are exacerbated by people who had a bad experience years ago and still quote it today. They have real anecdotes – it's fact. The Society may have changed radically in the meantime, but to those individuals it is still the Society that ill-treated them (in whatever way), and they take every opportunity to dig up old grudges.

Also, people notice the things which reinforce their viewpoint, and it just takes one bad example to colour how the whole group is perceived. I was at a ceilidh last year with a mixture of dancers of all levels of experience and ability, some RSCDS members, some not, mostly SCD dancers, but also a fair number who just dance at ceilidhs. Most dancers joined in with a will – RSCDS and others all together – but there were a couple of dancers who spent most of the evening sitting at their table in the corner looking dour. (I don't know how they managed it because the music and atmosphere were superb.) They happen to be RSCDS members, and when I spoke to non-RSCDS dancing friends at the end of the evening, they latched onto this pair as typical of the RSCDS, because they matched their image of what the RSCDS was. My friends discounted (or didn't recognise) the majority of RSCDS members who were having a good time. When I pointed out some older RSCDS dancers who were out-dancing the students, one person even replied, "Ah yes, but they also dance with Dunedin," as if they were fun despite being RSCDS members.

I'm not saying every Scottish Country Dancer is a paragon, or that you will never find an example of unwelcoming behaviour. Once hooked as an adult, we tend to keep dancing for a long time, and this is particularly true of those who get involved in the organisation and teaching of the dancing (hence the most visible and influential individuals). There will be a few who stick to old, inappropriate behaviours and values, even when the Society as a whole has moved on. Branches are also run by volunteers, many of whom may not have much experience of organising and marketing and are only doing it because someone has to (and if they don't there won't be any dancing). These people will do their best, but may not think about how to welcome



Ian Brockbank

a newcomer or outsider – they just want to do the minimum to keep the dancing going. Both these groups may be perceived as representative of the Society, but they *don't* reflect the values of the Society as a whole. The problem the Society has is how to guide such people towards more appropriate behaviour. There is no party whip, no retraining of teachers who qualified decades ago. If they don't attend events organised elsewhere they may never realise how out of date they are.

On the whole, though, my experience of Scottish Country Dancing, and of the RSCDS in particular, seems very different to Finlay's. I have had far more good experiences than bad during my time dancing, and I have actually felt far more disapproval from non-RSCDS dancers (when I choose to dance the dance as written, rather than spinning on every turn) than I ever have when I have chosen to spin and twirl at an RSCDS-hosted event. Which branch is giving Finlay the bad experiences he keeps referring to? They could probably do with a visit from their Chairman to bring them up to date. Alternatively, if Finlay no longer dances with the RSCDS, could he please stop knocking it until he can give current, balanced, concrete examples rather than vague statements (such as his comment about ballroom etiquette being a secret code). Whatever its faults, the RSCDS has achieved a huge amount in the last 80+ years – including spreading Scotland's music and dance across the globe and providing a consistent dance form which allows me to join in wherever I go, be it San Francisco, Vancouver, Germany, Sydney, Tokyo, Nairobi, or even Edinburgh.

If there are any readers out there who have considered joining the local SCD group but have been put off by Finlay's columns, please give us a try. We're quite nice really. You can find your local group at <http://www.scottishdance.net/groups/> or <http://www.rscds.org/branches/>.

Ian Brockbank

I read the article by Finlay Forbes about the Strathspey with great interest. The facts were well presented, but some of the conclusions that were drawn did not necessarily follow.

In the first place, it would seem that the strathspey movement is older than the music. The setting movement, albeit without the hops, is very clearly described in *Arbeau*, published in 1859 in the description of the *Branle de Ecosse*, or *Scotch Brawl*. This is the branle that the group I dance

with use to finish our suite of branles, as it is the most lively and also the most obviously Scottish, of all the branles that we do. Interestingly, the band who play for us have taken to gradually speeding up the *Branle de Ecosse* as we dance, so by the end we are going like the clappers!

If one allows an analogy with the *Ecosaise* and *Schottische*, it may be assumed to show some degree of our national style, as viewed by our continental neighbours.

The kilt also seems to date from the 16th century, and it too was significantly changed in the 18th century, even drastically, to become the *Phillabeg*, or kilt as we know it.



German Woodcut from 1631

Yes, I would love to know exactly how the dancing masters taught in the 18th century, but it would seem to be basic Baroque technique, with Highland footwork added as required. So the *pas de Basque* would still have a sideways movement, but strathspey setting would be unaltered from RSCDS practice.

If you take away the Baroque and the Highland, you end up with Country Dance, but lose the Scottish part. Country Dance is great fun anyway, but what bothers me is what has been lost in becoming Scottish. Our programmes are Reels, Jigs and Strathspeys, with no triple time dances, 3/4 or 3/2, no 9/8 (also known as slip jigs) except *Strip the Willow* (and then only if you can get the band to play the

original) and, worst of all, no minuet country dances.

Haggis, neeps and tatties are all very well, but a bit of variety makes life more interesting.

The comments on our fancy footwork being "late interlopers" and "if genuine" are difficult to understand. The Scots were known for their fancy footwork as far back as comments go, and that is the one point they all agree on.

The resemblance of the Strathspey travelling step to the *Fleuret* is hardly surprising. If you are an 18th century dancing master teaching in Scotland, you put the Baroque technique on to a basic travelling step, complete with rise and sink, and there is the step as we know it. Yes, the Highland version is a trifle more Scottish, with the round the leg movement, but are you seriously suggesting that we change to that?

The RSCDS have made some significant mistakes in reading 18th century instructions. Cadgers in the Canongate, *Jessie's Hornpipe*, and *The Duke of Atholl's Reel* spring to mind instantly, and I could well believe that some tempos were changed. Some new dances seem to me to be in the wrong tempo too!

Scottish Country Dancing has grown, as always, but it hasn't "killed off" its origins. It has developed them, and John Drewry has found that he has reinvented the wheel on more than one occasion, which very strongly suggests that the tradition is going along the same lines as ever. Looking at the past can be fruitful though.

Robert Lambie



Easter 2006

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Web Dancer

By Sue Petyt

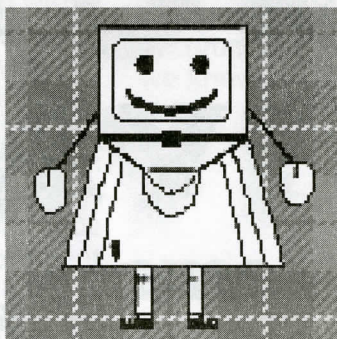
This column will appear each month and I will review a number of Websites associated with dancing. Due to publishing deadlines, I write this review about 5 weeks before the magazine is published so please be aware that Websites can change between my review and the publication of the magazine. These observations are based on my professional opinion and personal preferences, please email your views to me or write to the letters page.

If you would like your site reviewed please e-mail the link to me at sue@suepetyt.me.uk

www.strathspey.org

Reviewed 18th December 2005

Most people who are interested in Scottish Dancing and have access to the Web will have come across The Strathspey Server, so I thought it was about time it was reviewed.



The Home Page is well laid out and gives the definition of "strathspey", menu down the left and posting, search facility and events on the right. There is a lot packed into one page but, because it is well designed, there is no impression of it being cluttered.

The first item on the menu is the Mailing List Information. By joining this list you can participate in worldwide discussions on Scottish Country Dancing. This can fill up your inbox a bit sometimes, but there are often interesting discussions taking place as well. The rules for subscribing are well explained and easy to understand. The list archive page has all the discussions from September 1993, so if you feel you may have missed something important, and you have a couple of weeks to spare, you can read all the archives and get up to date! You can also add your photo, although that part of the Website is temporarily closed for renovations, and there is a Frequently Asked Questions page (FAQ).

Under the "General" section of the menu there are links to pages entitled "What is SCD?", "History", "Practice", "Useful Hints" and "FAQs". These all provide useful information with some duplication of information from other pages, and some external links on avoiding injury and how to stop shoes slipping on the dance floor.

The Library section of the menu has a link to Alan Paterson's Dance Database (as reviewed in a previous edition) and a page of links to sites which have dance instructions, and a page of CD reviews. There are only two CD reviews and, while they are comprehensive, there is no date to indicate how old they are, or when the next reviews might be posted. I get the impression that this page seemed like a good idea at the time but has never really taken off.

Under the "Links" heading there are three options, "Groups", "Music Links" and "Dance Links". The "Groups" links brings up a selection of clickable maps, with red dots for groups with a Website, and blue dots

for groups without Websites. I tried a lot of the red dots, and didn't find one that actually went to a group's Website, they all came up with the "page not found" error message. It would be really good if this could be made to work, although I appreciate that it will be a lot of work. "Dance Links" and "Music Links" both provide useful links to other pages and each tells you a bit about what you will find at the external site, which is a really good idea.

The "Miscellaneous" menu contains information about the history of the site, much of it technical, and a "Site News" page which gave me an error message and didn't work. I sent an e-mail to the Webmaster at the address given on the site, and that bounced back as undeliverable, so this area obviously needs some attention.

This is a very useful Website, which provides features and facilities that are of great benefit to the Scottish Country Dance world. I can't help but wonder why the RSCDS haven't taken the lead in this area but, in their absence, this is well worth having, congratulations to Anselm.

<http://www.bstk.hu/en.htm>

Reviewed 19th December 2005

Budapest Scottish Dance Club has a fairly simple Website which does not contain a great deal of future information, but does have details of past events. Judging by the pictures, they had a fantastic time at their International Weekend course, and their Annual Balls are always well supported.

One very useful feature is a dance search, based on the dances in Pilling – it doesn't say which version. This allows you to search for dances which either do or do not contain certain figures. For example you could search for a 3 couple dance which has a promenade, but no poussette. Although limited to the 695 dances in "The Little Green Book" it is very useful for teachers who want to practise certain figures, or want to exclude certain difficult figures for beginners. Well worth a visit to the Website just for the search page.



Amber's Reel

Written for my Granddaughter Amber.

8 x 32 Reel

A dance for 3 couples in a longways set of four

1-8 First couple set and cast one place, 2s step up on bars 3 and 4. First couple dance down for two steps and then dance up for two steps, finishing back to back, in second place, facing own sides. (As in double triangles.)

9-12 Second, first and third couples join hands and set. First and second ladies change places giving left hands, WHILE first and second men change places giving right hands. (Second couple finish back to back.)

13-16 First, second and third couples join hands and set. Second and third ladies change places giving right hands, WHILE second and third men change places giving left hands. (Third couple finish back to back.)

17-20 First, third and second couples, join hands and set. First and third ladies change places giving left hands, WHILE first and third men change places giving right hands. (first couple finish back to back)

21-24 Third, first and second couples dance half a reel of three on the sides, third couple dance in and down, first couple dance out and up, second couple dance in and up.

25-28 Second, first and third couple "Petronella" and set.

29-30 Second, first and third couples "Petronella" to opposite sides.

31-32 Second, first and third couples half turn with right hand to own sides.

Repeat having passed a couple.

© Sue Petyt, May 2002

Loch Ness Monster Reel

Written during a Furlongs holiday at Crieff, for Elizabeth Scott from Sevenoaks (Kent), whose husband requested that the word "monster" was included in the title!!!!

8 x 32 Reel

A dance for 3 couples in a longways set of four

1-2 First couple set.

3-14 First lady, followed by her partner, casts behind second lady, dances across the set, dances behind third man, dances across the set, dances up behind third lady, dances across the set, dances up behind second man and dances across the set to original place. First man finishes in original place.

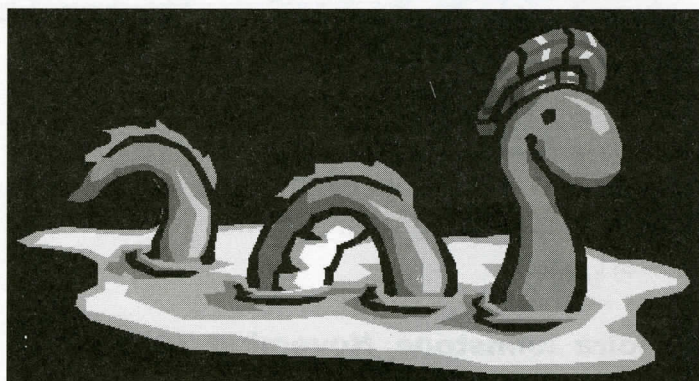
15-16 First, second and third couples set.

17-24 First, second and third couples dance right shoulder reels of three on the side.

25-32 First couple set, lead down the middle for two steps, turn right hand, cast up behind the third couple on own sides, and finish in second place. Second couple step up on bars 31 and 32.

Repeat having passed a couple

© Sue Petyt, June 2004



Side by Side Strathspey

For Cathy Currie and Jessie Crozier, two stalwarts of the dancing scene in and around Langholm who both died during 2005.

16 Bar Strathspey

Couples Dance

Side by side facing line of dance, nearer hand joined.

Man begins with left foot, Woman begins with right foot.

1-2 Forward for two steps, finishing back to back at the end of the second step (Man facing centre, Woman facing the wall).

3-4 Set, against line of dance, and line of dance, (M commencing left foot, W with right), finish facing against line of dance.

5-6 Forward, moving against line of dance, for two steps, finish facing each other, (M facing wall, W facing centre).

7-8 Set, line of dance and against line of dance, finish facing line of dance.

9-10 Two steps line of dance, M crosses W over on first step, finish M facing wall, and W facing wall directly behind M.

11-12 Set, M moving line of dance, W moving against line of dance on first step, and finishing back on own side both facing line of dance, nearer hands joined.

13-14 Two steps forward, line of dance, M commencing left foot, W commencing right foot.

15-16 Set away from each other, and towards each other, keeping nearer hands joined ready to start again.

© Moira Johnstone, November 2005

Nina's Waltz

For Nina Muirhead on her retirement, to the tune Waltz for Nina by Jean McConnachie

Couples Dance – Waltz

Ballroom hold, Man facing the line of dance, Lady back to line of dance. Man begins with his left foot, Lady with her right.

1-2 Balance forward and back

2-4 Forward for two steps

5-8 Two complete waltz turns, finishing side by side, nearer hand joined, facing line of dance

9-12 Man on the left foot, Lady on the right step forward, close (Man right foot to left, Lady left foot to right) Man with the left foot, Lady with the right, step forward for one step. Man takes two steps back commencing right foot, Lady back for two steps commencing left foot. Finish facing each other, Lady's right hand in Man's right

13-16 Cross over to change places, finish facing each other. Lady's right hand to Man's left. Man crosses over to own place, whilst the Lady turns under his left arm to finish in ballroom hold, Man facing line of dance.

© Moira Johnstone



**Send YOUR dance, with or without music to:
Dance On!, Filters House, Dodburn, By Hawick,
Scottish Borders TD9 0PG
editor@danceon.co.uk**

Waltz For Nina

Jean McConnachie

INTRO

Chords: F Bb Gm C7 Bb A/F C7 Bb m F

Chords: F Dm F Am Bb A/F G7 C D E

Chords: F Dm F Am Bb A/F C7 Bb m F F F7

Chords: Bb C7 Gm F Bb C7 G7 C D E

Chords: F A/F F# / D7 Gm Bb A/F C D E F F

Chords: F Dm F Am Bb A/F G7 C D E

Chords: F Dm F Am Bb A/F C7 Bb m F F G7

Chords: C C G7 G7 G7

Chords: G C G7 C C C

Chords: Dm Dm G G7 Fdim C C

Chords: F Dm F Am Bb A/F G7 C D E

Chords: F Dm F Am Bb A/F C7 Bb m F F

2. Rall.

© Jean McConnachie 2002

Owen and Catherine Harrison's Waltz

The dance was devised on the 29th of May 2005 by Anita Mackenzie and Alan Macpherson, at the request of Flora Selwyn, in appreciation of the talent, patience, and time given by Owen and Catherine to the St Andrews Ceilidh Club.

32 Bar Waltz

Music: Memories of Willie Snaith by J. Shand

Man and woman start by facing LOD with nearer hands joined: man with the woman on his right.

1-2 Man: step L point R; step R point L. Woman: step R point L; step L point R.

3-4 Man and woman dance a complete turn away from each other and finish facing LOD, side by side with nearer hands joined.

5-6 Man and woman change places, with the woman passing in front of the man, and rejoin nearer hands. Man dances: step R close L, step R close L. Woman dances: step L close R, step L close R.

7-8 Both change back as in bars 5 and 6 but finish in Allemande hold facing the LOD. Man dances: step L close R, step L close R. Woman dances: step R close L, step R close L.

9-10 Both walk forward two steps (LR).

11-12 Both dance two chassé steps to the left (close right without weight).

13-14 Both walk back two steps, right and left with an aerial point (R point L; L point R).

15-16 Both dance two chassé steps to the right and finish on the diagonal facing each other, man with his back to the centre. At the end of Bar 16 man and woman have both hands joined as follows: right hands raised above head height making an arch between them and left hands held at waist height.

17-20 Man walks forward two steps (LR) and woman walks back two steps (RL). Moving slightly forward man dances LRL as the woman turns to her right under her right arm RLR.

Note. As the turn progresses, both lower their right hands to waist height while, at the same time, raising the left hands above head height. At the end of this turn-under movement, both are facing each other but this time with left hands raised above head height forming an arch between them and right hands held at waist height.

21-24 Man walks back two steps (RL) as woman walks forward two steps (LR). Moving slightly back man dances RLR as the woman turns to her left under her left arm (LRL) in the same style as previously described except that both finish in a ballroom waltz hold.

25-28 Man walks forward two steps (LR) as the woman walks back two steps (RL). Man walks back two steps (LR) as the woman walks forward two steps (RL).

29-32 Dance four natural waltz turns.

© Anita Mackenzie

The Rifleman

Collected in Weardale, County Durham, from Miss Cole who first danced it at Alston in Cumberland where it was known as "The Galopade". In the north of England the "rant" step is often used throughout.

32 Bar Reels or Jigs

Full longways set of couple facing couple, ladies on their partners' right.

1-4 All holding hands in line, dancers advance and retire.

5-8 All advance again, each man takes his opposite lady in a ballroom hold and swings her back to his side of the set. (This means that the ladies have now changed places.)

9-16 Bars 1-8 are repeated, with the men bringing their partners "home".

17-24 Each group of four dances a "Ladies Chain" thus: each lady gives her right hand to the lady diagonally opposite her and passes right shoulders to change places. Each lady gives her left hand to her opposite man, who, putting his right arm round her waist, turns her once round anti-clockwise. She gives her right hand again to the other lady to change places, and this time gives her left hand to her own partner who turns her.

25-32 The two top couples take ballroom hold and dance down to the bottom of the set.

The above thirty-two bars are repeated for the duration of the music, with two new couples at the top of the set each time.

Dear Karin,
During the Christmas holiday period I made an attempt to watch on television that perennial Christmas favourite, *Gone With The Wind*. The scene being shown before I fell asleep featured dancing, and the dance that was announced was *The Virginia Reel*. To my delight, the dancers began dancing what we now know as *The Haymakers*. This was probably correct since it is known that *The Haymakers* was taken to America and eventually returned to Britain much changed as *The Virginia Reel* which we all dance in one of its various forms. Perhaps one of your readers could confirm the dates when these changes to the dance took place and therefore confirm my theory that the film makers had researched the form of the dance to make it historically correct.

Eoin Robertson



Willie McRobert provided some great music for the Dumfries RSCDS Branch children's Christmas party, where they were joined by some of the adults from the branch. We danced The Flying Scotsman, The Christmas Tree and The Dashing White Sergeant amongst others, and had crisps, sausage rolls and cakes. The children had loads of energy and were still eager to dance at the end of the evening, while some of the adults found it hard to believe that it only lasted one and a half hours!

All photos ©
Flash@Streaming Pictures



Alasdair's Dance Diary - February

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances							
Regular Weekly Classes							
Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
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	Boys Brigade Hall, Kinnessburn Road	Live Music	2pm-5pm	£3 (tea)	Door or tel 01334 472 375	Demonstrators: O & C Harrison
Most Sundays	East Kilbride	Girl Guide Hall, Dundas Place	-	7.30 - 10pm	£1.50 (tea)	Door or tel 01355 230 134	Ceilidh & Old Time Club
Every Tuesday	Glasgow University	Student Union, University Avenue.	-	7.30-10pm Bar	£4	0141 334 9869 or 07050 222 173	Dance Club
Every Wednesday	Newtongrange	Morris Club	Live Music	7.30-10pm	£3/£1.50	Door (Karin Ingram)	Ceilidh & Old Time Club
	Midlem	Village Hall	Live Music	8pm-10pm	£1.50 tea	Door (Gracie Belle Scott)	Old Time Dance Class
	Glasgow	St Andrews in Square	Live Music	7.30-9.30	£4 Bar	Door (Tricia Matthews)	Ceilidh & Old Time Class
Every Thursday	Penicuik	Town Hall	-	8pm-9.30	£2.70 or £1.40	Door (Annabel Oates) 01968 672 631	Ceilidh Dance Class

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances							
February 2006							
Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
3 rd	Towie	Village Hall	Lomond		Tickets from	01975 641 248	Haggis Dance
4 th	Newtongrange	Dean Tavern	George Hood	7.30-11.30	£6 (supper)	0131 663 6022	A & F Club Supper Dance
	Auchendinny	Glencorse Comm. Hall	Webster Craig	7.30-11.30	£5 No bar	01721 723 468	(Near Penicuik)
	Culter Mills	Social Club	3 M's	8.30-12mn		Door	North-East Scotland
5 th	Longside	Village Hall	Frank Thomson			Door	North-East Scotland
	Angus	Tealing	Johnny Duncan	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
6 th	Kirkwall	St Magnus Centre	Live music	7.30pm	£2/£0.50	Door	Old Time, Ceilidh & Country
10 th	Midlothian	Newtongrange Leisure Centre	Sandy Legget	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 (incl. Supper)	0131 660 1276 0131 663 6221	Wednesday Dance Club Soft Drinks on sale.
	Foulden	Village Hall	David Vernon	8pm-12mn	£4.50 No bar	Door	Info 01289 386 400
	Irvine	Volunteer Rooms	Colin Garvin	7.30-11.30	£5.50 (supper)	Door	Ayrshire Ceilidh Club
	Lockerbie	Town Hall	Ian Cathcart	8pm-12.30	£5 Bar	01576 610 272	Lockerbie A & F Club
	Culter Mills	Social Club	Steven Carcary	8pm-12mn	Valentine Dance	01467 671 394	Cystic Fibrosis Charity
11 th	Strathaven	Ballgreen Hall	Oran Mor	7.30-11.30	£6 (supper)	01357 520 900	Avondale Ceilidh Society
12 th	Longside	Village Hall	Johnny Duncan			Door	North-East Scotland
17 th	Carlisle	District Hall	Charlie Kirkpatrick	7.30-12.30	£5 (supper)	01555 773 327	Highlanders
	Glasgow	City Chambers	Billy Ferguson	7.30-12.30	£? Bar	01389 842 034	SYHA Annual Dance
	Hamilton	County buildings	Paul Johnstone	8pm-12mn	£10 (buffet) Bar	01698 427 504	Annual C.H.A.S. Dance
	East Kilbride	Calderwood Hall	Alan Doig	7.30-11.30	£5 (supper)	01698 818 339	Highlanders - B.Y.O.B.
18 th	Partick	Burgh Halls	Colin MacDonald	8pm-11.30	£5 Bar	Door	Highlanders
	Kirkhill, Inverness	Community Hall	Susie Simpson	8pm-12mn	B.Y.O.B.	Door	Social Dancers
	Montrose	Park Hotel	Marian Anderson	2pm-5pm		Door	A & F Club ceilidh
19 th	Glencarse	Village Hall	Garry Sutherland	7.30 - 10pm	£2.50 (tea)	Door	
	Longside	Village Hall	Tommy Newcomen			Door	North-East Scotland
20 th	Kirkwall	St Magnus Centre	Live music	7.30pm	£2/£0.50	Door	Old Time, Ceilidh & Country
22 nd	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	-	7.30-10.30		Door	Monthly Social
23 rd	Fife	Windygates Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-11pm	£3 (supper)	Door	No Bar
24 th	Helensburgh	Commodore Inn	Albany	8pm-1am	Caberet/Dance	01389 841 208	Highlanders £6/others £7
25 th	Pumphreston	Village Hall	Garry Sutherland	7.30-11.30	£? No Bar BYOB	01506 417 512	
	Blackford	Village Hall	t.b.a.	8pm-11.30	£4 No Bar	Door	Soft Drinks Available
26 th	Longside	Village Hall	Johnny Duncan			Door	North-East Scotland

Scottish Country Dances							
February 2006							
Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
3 rd	Oban	C of S Centre	Roy Hendrie	8 pm		01631 563 103	Kilmore Class Dance
	Peebles	Burgh Hall	Alan Ross	7.30pm	£4.50		Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch
	Kirkwall, Orkney	King Street Halls	-	7.30pm	£2	01856 873 534	Child 50p (under 8yrs with adult)
4 th	Stirling	St Mary's School	Nicol McLaren	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Stirling Castle Group
	Dalston	Caldew School	Day School	T only		01228 515 897	Carlisle RSCDS
	Dalston	Caldew School	David Cunningham	7pm	£7	01228 515 897	Evening Dance
9 th	Castle Douglas	High School	-	7.30pm	£2	01556 620 658	RSCDS Social Evening
10 th	Jedburgh	Kenmore Hall	Marian Anderson	7.30pm	£4.50	01853 830 267	Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch
11 th	Dundee	St Andrews Church	Maple Leaf	7.30pm	£3.50	01382 509 103	Charity Dance
	Freckleton	Village Hall	C.D.'s	7.30pm	Dance	01772 729 547	Preston & Dist Caledonian Soc.
	Helensburgh	Victoria Halls	Marian Anderson			01436 673 521	Charity Dance
17 th	Aberfoyle	Rob Roy Hotel	Donald MacLeod		£31	0141 570 1001	Dinner Dance & Overnight
	Hamilton	Eddlewood Hall	George Stirrat	7.30pm	£5	01357 521 953	Hamilton & Clydesdale RSCDS
	Duns	Volunteer Hall	Stuart Adamson	7.30pm	£5	01361 883 048	Duns & District RSCDS
	Dumfries	High School	Robert Whitehead	8pm		01387 265 815	Dumfries RSCDS
	Broughton	Village Hall	Jim Anderson	7.30pm	?		Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch
	Westhill, Aberdeen	Ashdale Hall	Alan Ross	8pm	£5	01224 319755	Alzheimer's Scotland Charity
18 th	Glasgow	Bearsden Burgh Hall	t.b.a.	7.30pm		(None Listed)	Glasgow University Ball
	Stirling	St Mary's School	Alan Ross	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Stirling Castle Group
	Dalbeattie	Town Hall	Kenny Thomson	7.30pm	£6	01556 611 784	Kippford S. C. D. Group
24 th	Lochwinnoch	McKillop Institute	Ian Muir Sound			01505 842 629	Charity Dance

Alasdair's Dance Diary - March

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances

March 2006

Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
4 th	Auchendinny	Glencorse Comm. Hall	Willie Simpson	7.30-11.30	£5 No bar	01721 723 468	(Near Penicuik)
	Kirkhill, Inverness	Community Hall	Bill Black	8pm-12mn	B.Y.O.B.	Door	Social Dancers
5 th	Angus	Tealing	Ken Stewart	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
	Longside	Village Hall	Wayne Robertson			Door	North-East Scotland
6 th	Kirkwall	St Magnus Centre	Live music	7.30pm	£2/£0.50	Door	Old Time, Ceilidh & Country
10 th	Midlothian	Newtongrange Leisure Centre	James Coutts	7.30-11.30 No Bar	£5 (incl. Supper)	0131 660 1276 0131 663 6221	Wednesday Dance Club. Soft Drinks on sale.
	Foulden	Village Hall	George King	8pm-12mn	£4.50 No Bar	01289 386 400	Supper Dance
11 th	Strathaven	Ballgreen Hall	Ian Cruickshanks	7.30-11.30	£6 (supper)	01357 520 900	Avondale Ceilidh Society
12 th	Glencarse	Village Hall	Ken Stewart	7.30-10pm	£2.50 (tea)	Door	
	Longside	Village Hall	Steven Carcary			Door	North-East Scotland
17 th	Cockburnspath	Village Hall	Neil hardie	8pm-12mn	£5 (supper)	01368 830 391	or 01289 368 400
	Carlisle	District Hall	Richard Smith	7.30-12.30	£5 (supper)	01555 773 327	Highlanders
18 th	Troon	Walker hall	Colin Dewar	T only	Tartan Ball	01292 289 234	or 0141 881 1295
	Partick	Burgh Halls	John Carmichael	8pm-11.30	£5 Bar	Door	Highlanders
	Blackford	Village Hall	t.b.a.	8pm-11.30	£4 No Bar	Door	Soft Drinks Available
	Kirkhill, Inverness	Community Hall	Lindsay Weir	8pm-12mn	B.Y.O.B.	Door	Social Dancers
19 th	Montrose	Park Hotel	Willie McHardie	2pm-5pm	Door	01241 879 487	A & F Club ceilidh
	Longside	Village Hall	George Rennie			Door	North-East Scotland
20 th	Kirkwall	St Magnus Centre	Live music	7.30pm	£2/£0.50	Door	Old Time, Ceilidh & Country
25 th	East Kilbride	Calderwood Hall	Lindsay Weir	7.30-11.30	£5 (supper)	01355 245 052	Highlanders - B.Y.O.B.
	Penicuik	Town Hall	Occasionals	7.30-11.30	£6/£3 BYOB	01968 672 631	Please reserve tickets
26 th	Glencarse	Village Hall	Johnnie Duncan	7.30-10pm	£2.50 (tea)	Door	
	Longside	Village Hall	Charlie Esson			Door	North-East Scotland
29 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	-	7.30-10.30		Door	Monthly Social
30 th	Fife	Windygates Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-11pm	£3 (supper)	Door	No Bar
31 st	Helensburgh	Commodore Inn	Ian MacCallum	7pm-1am	£7 (bar)	01389 841 208	Highlanders - Dance

Scottish Country Dances

March 2006

Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
2 nd	Castle Douglas	High School	-	7.30pm	£2	01556 620 658	RSCDS Social Evening
3 rd	Glasgow	Carmichael Hall	Kenny Thomson	7.30pm	£5	0141 956 2134	Glasgow Branch Dance
	Hawick Trinity	Old Parish Church Hall	Marian Anderson	7.30pm	£4.50	01450 373 009	Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch
	Kirkwall, Orkney	King Street Halls	-	7.30pm	£2	01856 873 534	Child 50p (under 8yrs with adult)
4 th	Stirling	St Mary's School	Ian Thomson	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Stirling Castle Group
	Longtown	Community Centre	George Meikle	7.30pm	£8	01228 674 698	Longtown - [supper]
	Whittington	Village Hall	A. Lyon			01524 241 451	North West Craven RSCDS
10 th	Oban	Corran Halls	George Meikle	Ticket	only	01631 563 103	Annual Dance
	Melrose	Corn Exchange	Marian Anderson	7.30pm	?		Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch (Jimmie Hill)
11 th	Oban	Corran Halls	Weekend Classes			01631 563 103	
	Oban	Corran Halls	David Cunningham	Ticket	only	01631 563 103	Annual Dance
	Helensburgh	Victoria Halls	Alan Ross			01436 673 521	Junior Dance
	Freckleton	Village Hall	C.D.'s	7.30pm	Dance	01772 729 547	Preston & Dist Caledonian Soc.
17 th	Innerleithen	St Ronans School	David Sturgeon	7.30pm	£4.50	01896 830 483	Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch
	Foulden	Village Hall	Marian Anderson	7.30pm	£5	01361 883 048	Duns & District RSCDS
	Troon	Concert Hall	Roy Hendrie	7.30pm	£5	01292 315 558	Ayr Branch Dance
	Annan	Victoria Hall	Colin Dewar	7.30pm		01461 500 250	Annan RSCDS
18 th	Stirling	St Mary's School	James Coutts	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Stirling Castle Group
	Braithwaite	Community Centre	J. McConnachie			01228 674 698	Derwent SCD Club
23 rd	Castle Douglas	High School	t.b.a.			01556 620 658	Castle Douglas RSCDS
24 th	Hawick Drumlanrig	Old Parish Hall	Stuart Adamson	7.30pm	£5	01450 379 680	Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch
	Greenock	Town Hall	Ian Muir Sound	7pm	£18	80 th Anniversary	West Renfrew RSCDS - Ball
25 th	Glasgow	New Kilpatrick Church	C.D.'s	7.30pm	£5	0141 942 6850	Glasgow Branch Club Night
29 th	Gartmore	Village Hall	David Anderson	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Aberfoyle Club Dance
31 st	Dunblane	Victoria Hall	Donald MacLeod	7.30pm	£4	Door	Stirling RSCDS - [Recaps]
	Helensburgh	Hermitage Academy	Colin Dewar			01436	Weekend Ball



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



In celebration of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, and steadfast support of the Glasgow Branch over the years, George & Nan Lawson were presented with a dance in their honour inscribed by John Johnston. "Compliments to the Lawsons" was demonstrated by the Wednesday Advanced Class and danced by the full house. Making the presentation on behalf of the Branch are Pam Gillies (left) and Fiona McDonald. Music for the dance, "The West School", was composed by Janie Barr. For many years, the George Fleming Band played for George Lawson's dance in the West School in Paisley. Janie Barr was the pianist in the band.



A happy group from New Kilpatrick SCD Club



Alasdair Graham didn't take the floor at the Ball – he fell on it!

Glasgow Branch Chairman, Hamish Gibb, and Secretary, Duncan Drummond, welcome Frances & David Williamson from New Zealand.



All photographs © RSCDS Glasgow and courtesy of Patrick Murray



Members of the Glasgow Branch Committee. L-R: Margaret Weir, Hamish Gibb, Duncan Drummond & Partner, Robert McColl.

Frances & David Williamson from New Zealand were delighted to meet Sue Petyt and her partner Iain Hale. Sue's dance "Fisherman's Reel" is extremely popular in New Zealand.



Nan & George Lawson's Table



Group of Ladies from the Bishopbriggs SCD Club



From Zimbabwe with Love



Dear All

A very Happy New year and all the best for 2006. For those living in Zimbabwe I hope that this is the year where we turn the corner and that the economy stabilizes and life starts to return to "normal", for those living outside Zim I wish you all the best and may your dreams and wishes for the year come true.

Herewith is the group photo - such a pity I am not a good photographer but it is still a record of the event. In all there were 29 of us at the party (28 in the photo plus one behind the lens). It has been a wet Christmas with rain virtually every day from just before Christmas so everything is lovely and green. Our Country Dance Christmas Party (a bring and share do) went well and we used the CDs you sent, which was really great. The party was on the Monday before Christmas, the 19th, and we are now on our annual shut down! We start again on Monday 9 January

so our "shut down" is actually only two weeks. Tonight a dozen of us from the dancing are going to someone's home to see the New Year in. It will be a bring and share again but probably with a slight difference from the norm as yesterday Dorothy (whose home we are going to) phoned to ask if I could bring a battery operated music machine as her electricity has gone off. This morning I received another call from one of the other dancers attending to say the poor Dorothy still had no power or WATER! So the bring and share includes candles and torches. Fortunately, although unfortunately for poor Dorothy, this happens to her often so she always has a bath full of water which we can use to flush toilets and she has containers with drinking water so we will still have a good evening. I shall let you know how it all goes!

Love
Mary-Ann

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- * Black Mountain Reel * Duke of Perth * Square Tango *
- * Lomond Waltz * Waltz of the Bells *



Enjoy a special 2 night Spring break at the Highlander Hotel in Newtonmore for those of you who enjoy Scottish Dancing. The hotel is renowned for its good food, friendly atmosphere and first class entertainment.

Situated within the Cairngorm National Park the hotel is the ideal base for exploring the area whilst you enjoy the spectacular scenery that featured in the popular BBC1 comedy drama - "Monarch of the Glen".

Song or Dance?

By Laura Jane Rintoul

As a member of Perth and Perthshire Branch RSCDS, my enthusiasm for Scottish Country Dancing has been re-kindled after twelve years and I enjoy immensely participating in such a wonderful activity again, my absence having been due to other passions – singing and Gaelic!

When attending functions I am often asked, "Do you sing for dancing?" In short, "Yes," and it is such which inspired this article.

I gained my Full Certificate at St Andrews Summer School in 1972, then taught the Saturday morning Branch Children's Class in the now defunct Guild Hall in High Street until work commitments dictated otherwise. This teaching offered an opportunity to "air my vocal chords", ably assisted by Isa Todd, the class pianist. I remember the dance very well – the reel, The White Cockade.

During subsequent years I attended summer school regularly, and on each occasion was fortunate to sing in the renowned "Friday Night Ceilidhs", but it wasn't until 1989, while on tour in Japan with fellow dancers and musicians that I again had the opportunity to put the technique into practice. I accompanied Billy Forsyth, a former World Champion, dancing The Highland Fling with Puirt-a-Beul, Gaelic mouth music.

This traditional art form has its origin in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite Uprising with the ensuing defeat at the Battle of Culloden, resulting in all musical instruments, including bagpipes, being banned. The Highlanders were regarded as being very musical, so to entertain themselves at home they sang Gaelic words to pipe tunes in strict dance rhythms. This technique has since passed down through generations.

Tunes which come to mind are: *I See Mull* and *Sweet Maid of Glendaruel* (4/4 marches), *Father John MacMillan of Barra* (2/4), *Castle Dangerous* (retreat march) and *Kenmure's On an' Awa* and *Stool of Repentance* – the original tune to *The Last of the Lairds* (6/8s). There are also strathspeys – *Lad Wi' the Plaidie*, *Orange and Blue* and *Stumpie*; and reels – *The Drunken Piper* (the original tune to *The Reel of the 51st*), *Soldier's Joy*, *The Fairy Dance* and *High Road to Linton*. The list is endless.

Gaelic music also has a wealth of haunting laments and poignant waltzes in its repertoire,

but it is to the latter I refer for a final dance in this section.

I had the great privilege of accompanying the Ladies Step Dancing Demonstration Team at Younger Hall, during St Andrews Summer School, singing two Gaelic songs in 3/4 time for the dance *The Rose of Benbecula* – namely *Ho, ree, Ho ro, My Little Wee Girl* and *In Praise of Islay*. My outfit on stage on that most memorable occasion was in Culloden tartan!

I cannot write an article such as this without a brief look at the influence of Lowland Scots song on our dancing. I mentioned *The White Cockade*, the tune of which is *A Highland Lad* with words by Robert Burns. Other reels include *Ha, Ha, The Woon' O't* to the tune *Duncan Gray*, with words also by Burns, and strathspeys such as *The Lea Rig*, *Green Grow the Rashes* and *Ca' the Yowes*, all of which have words by our national bard.

Other strathspeys to song tunes are *Glasgow Highlanders*, *There's Nae Luck About the Hoose*, *Doon the Burn Davie Lad* and *Castles in the Air* (*Wee Willie Winkie*). Finally, well-known reels such as *Petronella* and *The Dashing White Sergeant* may also be sung.

In conclusion, slow airs by James Scott Skinner have vocal arrangements which can be used for strathspeys – *The Cradle Song*, *Flower O' the Quern*, and *The Bonnie Lass O' Bon Accord*.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, please take your partners for the last song, *The Saturday Dance*. Ready? And the dance is the jig, *The New Rigged Ship*.

**Nicol
McLaren**

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Fax. 0044 (0)1250 876297
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CD Reviews

Scottish Dances Volume 12

Marian Anderson's Scottish Dance Band
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This CD has been issued as number 12 in Highlander Music's series, Scottish Dances. The dances recorded are all well known and popular and consist of the following titles:

The Duke of Athol's Reel (8X32 J), The Black Dance (8X32 R), The Dance Illustrator (4X32 S), Round Reel of Eight (1X88 R), New Ashludie Rant (8X32 J), The Queen's Bridge (4X40 R), Baldovan Square (3X32 S), The Rakish Highlandman (8X40 J), Sunlit Square (1X64 S), Pulling Bracken (8X32 R), Lady in Red (5X32 J), Longwise Eightsome (32S + 32R), Hogmanay Jig (8X32 J), Staffin Harvest (4X32 S), Father Connelly's Jig (8X32 J) and The Mason's Apron (8X32 R).

Scottish Dances Volume 12 is a magnificent CD for Scottish Country Dance teachers and dancing enthusiasts alike with excellent tempos throughout. Marian's choice of tunes and her arrangements set your feet tapping and all of you desperate to dance. At a time when it is becoming more difficult to engage musicians to play for weekly classes, CDs of this quality are of immense value. RSCDS (Falkirk Branch) will certainly be placing an order.

With Campbell Hunter 80 Years Of Dundee Dancing RSCDS Dundee Branch

This is a truly exciting collection of Country Dances, all of which were devised by Fiona Mackie and all the music was composed by Luke Brady. Luke plays for three branch classes, is the Musical Director of the Dundee Accordion Band and is a prominent member of the Dundee Strathspey and Reel Society. The collection was compiled to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Dundee Branch and what an exciting and varied set of dances comprising 3 Strathspeys, 3 Jigs and 4 Reels. Each dance is dedicated to a branch member with appropriate dedications.

The dances are of varied levels of difficulty from children's to experienced dancers', are quite innovatively devised and I am sure will be great fun to dance.

To accompany the book there is an excellent CD with the original tunes and a super set of matching tunes all played at excellent tempos. I would certainly recommend this book and CD to you and I feel sure that RSCDS Falkirk Branch will place an order.

Copies from: Harry Hall, Secretary, RSCDS Dundee Branch, Old Harbour, Tayport, Fife. 01382-552 239
Book £4.00 CD £10.00.

Review Copies to: Campbell Hunter, 37 Carronvale Road, Larbert, Stirlingshire FK5 3LG

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The Wrong Sort of Burns

These days we are all obliged to give people house rules before events start – making sure they know where the conveniences are, the exits they have just walked in from and what to do in the event of an emergency. If you just read them out, then you will probably have them ignore you, put on their shoes, talk to their neighbour or read the in flight magazine. So this year at Medway Caledonian Burns Night I gave them this:

Your fire safety instructions

In case there is a fire
I think you may desire
To listen to my simple instructions
If you follow my advice
We'll be through this in a trice
And we won't have anybody causing ructions

If the fire alarm should sound
Then the exits can be found
By the doors marked here, here and here
Walk in a calm way
Do not rush and do not stray
And leave behind your wine glass and your beer

The assembly point is where
Your cars are parked and there
You'll be safe away from any conflagration
Don't stop to get your coat
As you'll really get my goat
You'll be a service to your flag and to your nation

I'm sorry for the fuss
Do not curse, do not cuss
Take my logic through all its twists and turns
If you do not heed my word
And my warning you've not heard
Then you'll end up with the wrong sorts of Burns.

Alan Mills

Walter & Betty Rutherford



Walter and Betty Rutherford from Keith, two long-serving members of the Banffshire Branch of the RSCDS, were honoured recently at the annual dance. Chairman Anne McArthur presented them with a Branch Award (above) for their unstinted and dedicated service to the branch.

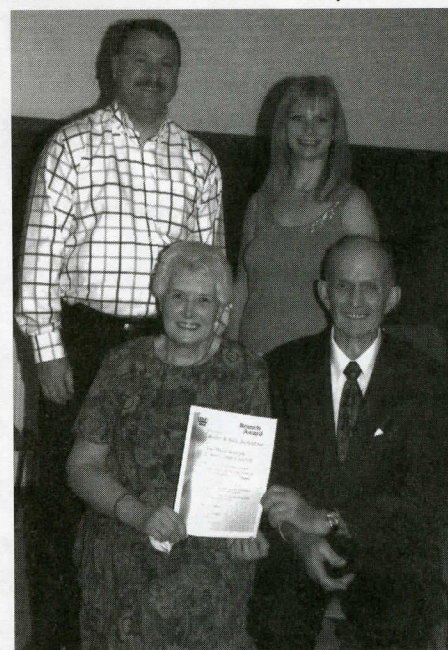
Walter and Betty have been associated with Scottish Country Dancing for nearly sixty years – Betty as a dance teacher and MC and Walter as an accomplished accordionist and composer. Their daughters, Maureen and Ann are also familiar faces on the Scottish Dance Music scene.

Walter is the longest-serving class musician in the RSCDS, having played for both the Keith and Buckie classes over the years. He has been playing professionally since he was about fourteen and travelled all over the country with his band – The Glenisla Scottish Dance Band.

Betty took over the Keith class in 1975. She took her preliminary teachers' certificate in 1981 and does a lot of work with young dancers in the area.

Branch member, Gary Coull, wrote a dance for Walter and Betty and named it "Moranbank" after their house. This dance was published in a book of dances produced by the branch last year to celebrate its 75th Anniversary.

**Betty & Walter
with daughter
Maureen & son-
in-law, dance
band leader Neil
Copland.**





32nd ANNUAL ACCORDION and FIDDLE CHAMPIONSHIPS

on SATURDAY 4 MARCH 2006 at 9.45 a.m. in BRUNTON HALL, MUSSELBURGH

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	Judi Nicolson:	Fiddle
	Neil MacMillan:	Rhythm

Composers are:	Robert Mackintosh:	Fiddle
	Sir Jimmy Shand:	Accordion

Happy Christmas from Kirkpatrick Fleming



Sue Petyt



All photographs © Flash @ Streaming Pictures



Willie McRobert

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The Lomond Ceilidh Band



*Robbie Shepherd with Alex Stuart of
Cairneyhill Primary School*



Collydean Primary School Choir



*Robbie with Kieren Elder of
Kirkcaldy West Primary School*

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Alastair McDonald



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