


Dance On!



Happy Birthday Robbie & Take the Floor

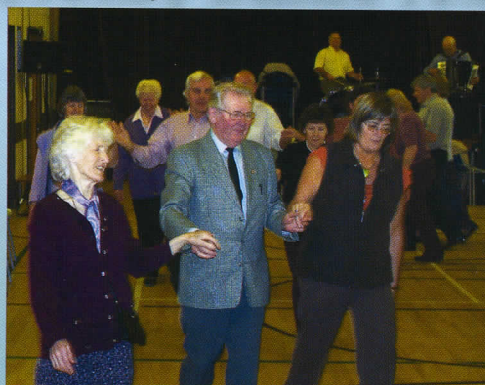
**Orkney Dance Festival 2006 • The Braes
of Breadalbane • The Dancie
Too Fast and Too Slow • The Stewartry Ball**

**R.R.P. £2.00
Issue 19 - May 2006**

Orkney Dance Festival 2006



Sheila Sutherland of Edinburgh sets sail for Orkney.



Wilma & Bryan Taylor (Orkney) and Rosemary Love (Glasgow)



Johnny Johnstone (Chairman) & Mabel Besant (Secretary) of the OTDA



Scottish Country Dance tutors Ken & Lavinia Morris



Country Dance workshop



Dancing in Hoy



Jock Thomson, Nicol McLaren, Judith Linton, Stuart Anderson and David Scott



Ian Thomson (Scottish Borders) and Jessie Stuart (Old Time Dance tutor)



Maria Leask (Shetland Dance tutor)



Dancing in the Harray Hall



The Maureen Findlay Highland Dancers



Arabic Dance



Storyteller Neil Leask from Orkney holds court.

Photographs courtesy of OTDA, Karin Besant, Rosemary Love, Nicol McLaren & Eoin Robertson

Editorial

Apologies for the lateness of this month's magazine. My Broadband connection was down for over a week. If any readers have e-mailed me and not received a reply, please could you contact me again, as your message may be hovering somewhere in cyberspace!

"Dance On!" would like to wish a Happy 70th Birthday to Robbie Shepherd, and to Scottish Dance Music on the Radio. On the back page you can see what a great time everyone had in Perth on April 19th.

Easter saw the second Orkney Dance Festival, which was a huge success. Read all about it on page 4. We have a report from the RSCDS conference in Dunblane and Finlay Forbes raises some questions as usual.

We are in the process of redeveloping the Dance On! Website and we would like to ask for your help. There is going to be a section on the site for clubs and dance groups to post their details and information. If you would like to have your club details listed, please could you contact us and we will ensure that you are listed for all to see. Please also indicate if you would like to become an "author" and add your own club news onto the site regularly.

Karin

Take The Floor

20th May Jim Lindsay SDB
(Feature about Jim's musical influences)

27th May Robert Lovie presents TTF
from Aviemore with The John Renton SDB
(Guests Charlie McKerron & James Graham)

3rd June Kenny Thomson & The Wardlaw SDB
(Feature: Jack Delaney)

10th June Craigowl SDB
(Feature: Jack Cooper)

17th June The Lothian Band
(Feature: Davie Flockhart)

Saturday Evenings 19.05-20.30
BBC Radio Scotland 92-95 FM 810MW Digital Satellite 866
www.bbc.co.uk/radioscotland

Dance On!

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Orkney Dance Festival 2006

The second Orkney Dance Festival – Is it really more than a month ago since I sailed away from my island home in Hoy to visit my roots on another of Orkney's beautiful islands – Rousay – for the first of the "Fringe Events" in the lead up to the "Core Festival"? Yes, it was Tuesday 11th April and what a place to start a fantastic week of dancing! There were quite a number of early arrivals for the Festival to enjoy the Rousay experience, along with many keen Orkney dancers. The welcome, from a lively set of tunes played by The Marwick Boys, is a precious memory and we were soon on the floor in good Orcadian tradition for the first dance, The Eva Three Step. From then on the dancing went at a cracking pace with a huge variety of dances – some new ones being called by local callers. Of course, in Orkney, supper is part of the event and a fantastic buffet was served up by Itha Flaws and helpers. All fuelled and ready to dance, the floor was soon at capacity again, this time to music from The Grieve Family. There was even a demonstration set of Jessie Stuart's "Orkney Reel". To round off the evening all the musicians took to the stage together, including Edwin Flaws from The Wyre Band. It was a beautiful night as we cast off from Rousay pier at 12.30am for the trip back to the Mainland. The hosts of this event were Rousay Music Group supported by Orkney Traditional Dance Association. Alas, I was not to go to Stenness for the second Fringe Event as I was needed back in Hoy to prepare for our own Fringe

Event on Thursday! How dare some of our committee go off on holiday or be sick at a time like this! Even without me Stenness was a great success too. The dance went at a cracking pace to the expert music from Jim Anderson's Band. Jim does a lot for dance in Orkney and is always available with his "box" for workshops, ceilidhs etc. Jim is producing a CD and we have its launch to look forward to in the near future. Some more dancers had arrived in Orkney for the Festival and joined this taster of what was to come for the rest of the week and weekend. A group of foreign students and their minders, who were only in Orkney for one day and night, came along and joined in the dancing with an abundance of energy – a new experience for them and one I am sure that will go with them through life. And the Orkney Supper – this was traditional fare prepared by Lillias Mathers who is famous for her suppers. The company of almost 100 folk danced the

*By Mabel Besant
(Orkney Traditional
Dance Association
Secretary)*

night away until 1am – time again for some rest before the next one! This was totally an OTDA event.

Thursday 13th April, and thank goodness it wasn't a Friday! Woke at 6am to a force 8 gale! What will we do if the ferry doesn't run? Island life depends on that ferry and more so today when we were expecting over 60 dancers, plus tutor Jessie Stuart (who was flying in to Kirkwall from Aberdeen on the early morning flight) and our bands for this Workshop, Dinner and Dance event. The other problem was that Lana Fotheringham had sold all the tickets we had given her plus more – only Lana can do that! No! No! don't get me wrong – there was no problem with Lana selling all



Rosemary Love & Mabel Besant



Everybody worships at Jessie Stuart's feet!

those tickets – the more the merrier – the problem was that the treasurer had already ordered the food, not believing me how many could turn up. We didn't have enough mince and on an island you can't just pop round to the shop and get another 10lbs! Not enough tatties for the clapsnot either! Easily solved – daughter is in town overnight, coming home on the 10.15am ferry. Perhaps the butcher can supply and yes he did, going out of his way to deliver the mince to Karin. The tatties – a long trek through Kirkwall to find a suitable "clapsnot" tattie. Secure in the knowledge that all the shopping was safely in her car, Karin arrives at the ferry next morning to come home and is told there is no passenger space for her as there is a lorry with dangerous cargo which reduced the passenger numbers – and there was no room for her car at *anytime* that day! There was a big influx of people due to some event that was on! Prayers were answered and someone came off the ferry at the last moment and let her on. Were the problems over?

NO, the skipper who was to do the midnight ferry back to Houton with the dancers hadn't got home from Peterhead with the regular ferry, which had been away on refit, due to the gales. Did we have a late ferry? A small detail like that wasn't going to get to me – we would dance all night and get the 7.10 ferry in the morning! There are some great people in this world – the skipper drove up from Peterhead specially to do the trip for us but no one actually told me this was happening. From there on it

was all plain sailing – food got cooked, Jessie, Jim Anderson's Band and 35 or so dancers arrived to join our local dance enthusiasts. Jessie delivered a fantastic workshop and the highlight was the dance she wrote for us on the flight up – "Men of Hoy" – thanks Jessie we will treasure "our" dance. Another group of about 30 dancers arrived on the last ferry with The Wyre Band to join everyone for dinner of mince and clapsnot followed by cloutie dumpling and cream. At 7.30pm prompt The Wyre Band struck up with a Grand March, which got everyone up on the floor and the floor was full for the rest of the night. Jim and Jessie did a recap on the afternoon dances. It seemed impossible that 11.30pm had arrived and it was time to say goodbye. Lots of cars and busses took everyone back to the ferry, just like Cinderella, before the clock struck midnight. All I can say now is that this was a thoroughly successful day – one of the best ever! The hosts were North Walls Centre supported by OTDA. NB: Clapsnot – a local dish of potatoes and turnips. To make the "Fringe Events" happen OTDA was awarded a grant from Awards for All



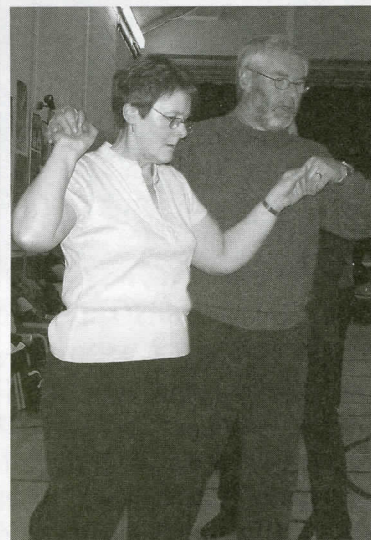
Dancers try out Jessie's new dance, Men of Hoy.



Orkney's local musicians are amongst the finest



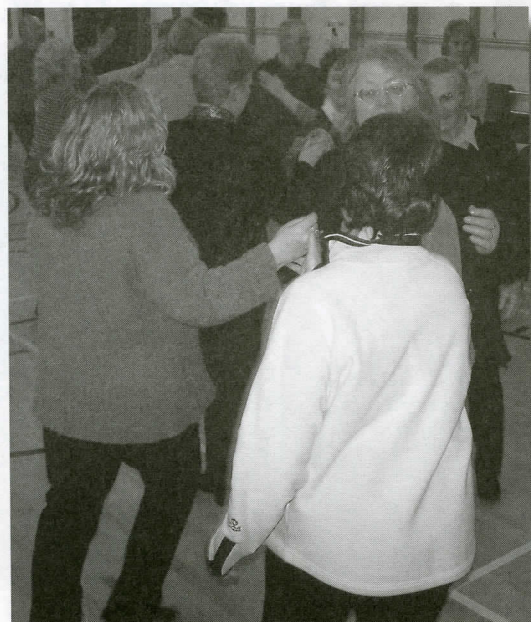
Dancing in Hoy



Rob sweeps Jessie off her feet



Jessie keeps her class under control





**Nicol
McLaren**

*The
dancers
enjoy a
Britannia
Two-Step*



*Ian & Brian
Thomson with
their dad,
Jock, and
fiddler Gordon
Howe*



Maria Leask teaches Shetland Dance



*Photographs courtesy
of Karin Besant,
Isobelle Hodgson,
Rosemary Love, Nicol
McLaren & OTDA*

*Dance On! sends
congratulations to Judith
Linton & David Scott, who are
getting married on June 10th*



Nicol McLaren & Isobelle Hodgson with music shop owner, Keith Rendal



Andrew & Sheena Webster enjoy the dance in Hoy

towards bands, busses and tutor costs.

Thank you to everyone who supported these fringe events, making them special and the great success they all were.

Had I had any rest before the actual Dance Festival began? Not sure on this one! It was over to Kirkwall in the company of Jessie on Friday afternoon with all the "glad rags" for the weekend. This year it was St Andrews Community Centre for the opening concert and dance, which was packed to capacity, for the opening by Mr Mike Drever (my geography teacher from school) on behalf of Orkney Islands Council. It was great to see Nicol, David, Judith and Stuart with supporting musicians back in Orkney as the Festival Band – quite unique and great to dance to. The Organiser, Rob Corcoran, compered the concert which gave us all a taster of what was available throughout the weekend, from Shetland Reel to Flamenco and from Highland to Step Dance. Throughout the weekend the

venues in Kirkwall were mostly packed to capacity with all the workshops going on. The Saturday ceilidh in the Harray Hall was a sell out! I was glad I was on door duty for half of this dance as I managed to have a rest – even if I did help fold the hundreds of raffle tickets. The two things that are a *must* for a successful Orkney dance – The Raffle and Supper, this one served up by the Harray

Hall Committee. At this point we are half way there... More workshops on Sunday and the evening Showcase Ceilidh in King Street Halls – and there was a great show of what was learnt over the weekend. I was a bit miffed that I was not involved in the Papa Stour Swords showcase as I had loved the workshop. Mixed feelings on Monday morning as those who had the stamina had the choice of a Jessie Stuart Old Time Dance workshop or a Scottish Country Dance workshop with Ken and Lavinia Morris before all the "goodbyes" were said.

Orkney's population had certainly increased for the weekend with lots of dancers, both kent faces and new faces. New friendships have been formed and I mustn't forget friends from the past who turn up, through the common interest in dance, after not hearing of them for over 30 years!

It was a fantastic week but it was back to Hoy to teach my own class on Monday night. See you all next year!



Elizabeth, Rob, Maria & Robin at Hoy

The Braes of Breadalbane

By Finlay Forbes



Ben Lawers, Breadalbane

A real craggy strathspey that makes no concessions to the drawing room – was how one fiddler of my acquaintance described the tune for The Braes of Breadalbane. Its cragginess undoubtedly comes from the key of A minor in which most of the tune is set. There is a brief leavening of C Major in the second measure but by the time it comes along, the cragginess of the minor mode is well established. It is worth remembering that A minor was the key chosen by Sibelius for that bleak but beautiful masterpiece that is his fourth symphony. The Finnish master clearly saw the combination of neutrality and the minor mode as the ideal medium through which to make the most pessimistic and some would argue the most profound of all his symphonic utterances.

The strathspey part of the fiddler's observation is more of a problem. "The Braes of Breadalbane" first appeared in print in Thomas Skillern's book of dances for the year 1795 under the slightly distorted but more phonetically accurate title of "The Braes of Braedalbane". It was probably Thomas Skillern's last act as a publisher before he sold his business and printing plates to Preston (another popular dance publisher of the time) the following year.

Whether or not Mr Skillern knew anything about The Braes of Breadalbane is debatable, given that his business was based in London and Breadalbane was one of a number of ancient Celtic earldoms making up the county of Perthshire. The earldom may have derived its name from the etymologically plausible but geographically fanciful "Braid Albyn" (as in broad Scotland or Scotland-wide) but this is not absolutely certain. Either way, it could partly vindicate Skillern's wayward spelling were it not for the fact that his collection is strewn fairly liberally with unorthodox

collections of letters purporting to be words. To be fair, spelling had not yet become standardised and a degree of what we would see as quaint or even wrong was perfectly acceptable back then.

After a brief tenure in the fashionable ballrooms of London, Edinburgh and assorted spa towns, our dance lay a mouldering in suspended animation until 1961 when it was given a new lease of life through being republished by The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society in Book 21. As with most of the Society's resurrections, resuscitation was impossible without alteration. In this case both the dance and the tune were changed although quite why they were changed so significantly is not that easy to work out merely by comparing the two versions of the dance.

The tune is perhaps the more interesting aspect of the affair. Skillern's original melody is essentially the same as the one printed by the RSCDS only it is in 2/4 time instead of common time and more significantly has no examples of Scots snap anywhere. All the snaps in Book 21 are editorial amendments to what started out as a very plain and somewhat stark melody. Strathspeys in 2/4 time were very rare although not totally unknown in the eighteenth century but virtually all strathspeys with that time signature were of the slow air variety. Dancing strathspeys were almost all in common time or barred common time. On paper, Skillern's tune looks like a reel in the loose modern sense of the word. Back in the eighteenth century it would probably have been classified as a country dance rather than a true reel, which means that it would have been taken at quite a brisk tempo similar to that adopted by historically informed conductors for the finales of symphonies by Haydn and Mozart. The tune certainly can be played effectively in modern reel time although to my ear at least, it works equally

well as a strathspey. It is also worth pointing out that the tasteful half cadence in the second measure, where the harmony hedges its bets between C Major and A minor before resolving on to E Major must be the work of the Society's music editor. It is a very pleasing and sensitive piece of invention but it does not come from Skillern. Once the melody is stripped of its twentieth century additions and alterations the balance of probability suggests that our dance was unlikely to have been a strathspey.

The unnamed alternative tune in Book 21, which is entirely different in character to the original, is not really a strathspey either. It is Nathaniel Gow's magnificent slow air "Miss Graham of Inchbrakie" which, from the minimalist reference at the foot of the page,



Nathaniel Gow

appears to have found its way into Book 21 from Joseph McFadyen's collection rather than straight from Gow. As an orthodox dancing strathspey "Miss Graham of Inchbrakie" works after a fashion but in that form it loses much of its melodic beauty and virtually all its emotional charge. (It sounds far better at half speed in sets for slow air strathspeys like "The Lea Rig"!)

But enough of the music, what about the dance?

Apart from the tempo, the RSCDS's version of the dance differs quite markedly from Skillern's simpler but more fluent original. Experienced country dancers will no doubt be familiar with the dance's current figures but for anyone interested in dancing The Braes of Breadalbane in its original "reel" form, here is an expanded version of Skillern's original somewhat sparse instructions.

Bars

1 – 8 First couple turn with right hands and cast off one place.

9 – 16 First couple turn using left hands then the lady casts up and the man casts down to finish with the lady between the second couple facing down and the man between the third couple facing up.

17 – 20 Set "three and three" twice. *

21 – 24 Lady casts down and man casts up so that the first couple finish in second place on their own sides of the dance. *

25 – 32 First and second couples dance a full rights and lefts.

* Skillern combines these two movements into a single phrase of eight bars. The split into two four bar phrases seems to work reasonably well although some bar stealing (or should that be reallocation?) might make the casting off a bit more comfortable for some dancers.

To give some idea of how dance instructions were laid out in the eighteenth century, these are Skillern's actual instructions complete with the original punctuation and capitalisation but

without the elongated "s" used whenever the letter "s" appeared inside a word.

Turn right hands and cast off one Cu.

Turn left hands the Gent cast off the Lady cast up

Foot 3&3 top & bottom the Gent: cast up Lady cast off

Right and Left at top.

Anyone who is familiar with the dance in its current form will note the absence of the second helping of setting and the two-handed turns. It is amazing how much more time there is to fill when a dance turns into a strathspey.

Once again, this raises the whole question of authenticity and on that point it is worthwhile comparing the way that we Scots have handled our dance tradition with the way in which the classical music world has handled its particular tradition, which goes back over an even longer period. Historically informed musical performances have done much to revitalise interest in music that had become overburdened with performing traditions that often showed very little regard for the composer's original intentions. There is one well-authenticated tale from the pre-authenticity era of a singer who asked her accompanist to omit a particularly lovely piano postlude to a song because "eet spoil my applause". Such ridiculous posturing would not be tolerated today (other than in the twilight zone of classical crossover, which is merely a pretentious branch of pop).

I should be the first to concede that some of the pioneers in the historically informed performance brigade should have been charged with crimes against the human hearing system but once the musicians took over from the academics, things improved dramatically. We still have those magnificent braying narrow bore brass instruments but we no longer have the ear mangling horrors of boy sopranos wrestling with Bach's florid solo vocal lines (Bach always won!). Artistic sense has

prevailed over rigid adherence to tradition. Soprano solos are now allocated to mature women with fully developed voices and a sure sense of pitch, two qualities not usually found in boy sopranos.

Once musical authenticity got its act together, audiences woke up to how much they had been sold short by a generation of performers and more particularly conductors who had been systematically denaturing the classical repertoire to render it suitable for consumption by largely imaginary audiences in leafy suburbia. Colin Davis's pioneering small band and small chorus version of The Messiah showed up Handel's counterpoint in all its intricate beauty. The choral writing no longer came across as a heaving mass of turgid harmonic treacle as it did in the days when members of the cast of thousands brigade were in charge. Far from producing ossified academically dry performances, conductors like Harnoncourt and Mackerras scraped the old darkened varnish off even such hard ridden war-horses as The New World Symphony to reveal aspects that had long been buried by traditions of interpretation that bore little relation to anything in the scores. Suddenly, performers discovered that if they played or sung what the composer wrote, it sounded quite good. Beethoven might just have known what he was about even if he was deaf, crabby and eccentric. Going back to the source breathed new life into an old jaded tradition. Paradoxically going back is sometimes the only way forward – especially when a tradition is beginning to get stuck in a rut or show signs of waning interest. The shock of the old can sometimes be more startling and stimulating than the shock of the new. If it can work for music it can surely work for dance so take your partners for The Braes of Breadalbane and prepare yourself for a big surprise. What is there to lose?

Scottish Country Dancing

The Ross Bandstand, Princes Street Gardens

Mondays and Tuesdays from 29th May – 15th August 2006

Except

26th, 27th June: 3rd, 4th, 10th, 11th July: Meadowbank Sports Centre

7.30 – 9.30 pm

Admission £2

Weather permitting

Contact Numbers

Margaret Burns 0131 661 1768
Bill Hamilton 0131 552 4968

Margaret Harris 0131 337 4197
Cathy Forman 0131 441 3965

Monday 29th May 2006	Band Iain MacPhail Carrick Knowe SCD	Monday 6th June 2006 Band Lathan SCD Band Attoll SCD	Monday 19th June 2006 Band Robin Hamilton West Lothian Independent Dancers
R The Highland Rambler	Goldring	J Joie de Vivre	J The Bees of Magdalenkrocker
J Lamb Skinet	14	R The Whistling Wind	R Braach Bana
S Wisp of Thistle	37	S Cherrybank Gardens	S Anna Holden's Strathspey
R The Sailor	24	J Jennifer's Jig	J Jennifer's Jig
J The Frisky	26	J Old Nick's Lumber Room	R J.B. Milne
S The Silver Tassie	RSCDS/L	S Belle of Bon Accord	S Neidpath Castle
R The Reel of the 51 st Division	13	R Round Reel of Eight	S Miss Stewart's Jig
J The Kellieholm Jig	L32	S The Royal Wedding	R The Sattire Society Reel
S The Rose of the North	Goldring	J St Andrew's Fair	R Gang the Same Gate
R Duke of Perth	1	R Swiss Lassie	J The White Heather Jig

Tuesday 30th May 2006	Band Marian Anderson Livinglow SCD	Monday 12th June 2006 Band Marian Anderson Dunedin SCD	Tuesday 20th June 2006 Band Bill Richardson RSCDS Stirling Branch
J The Jubilee Jig	RSCDS/L	J Hooper's Jig	R Nice to See You
R Blooms of Bon Accord	Drewry	R Inverneil House	R The Flowers of Edinburgh
S The Byron Strathspey	Drewry	S Cullins of Skye	S The Birks of Invermay
R West's Horrippe	51rad	J McLeod's Fancy	J The Hazel Tree
R Polharrow Burn	Foss	R General Stuart's Reel	R The Sailor
S The Robertson Rant	39	S The Wind on Loch Fyne	S Orrel Strathspey
J The Luckenbooth Brooch	Dickson	J The Duke of Atholl's Reel	J On, whistle and I'll come tae
J Glayva	Drewry	S The Gentleman	ye my lad
R The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh	39	J Joie de Vivre	J The Jubilee Jig
J Ian Powrie's Fairwell to Auchterarder	Hamilton	R The Highland Rambler	S Macdonald of the Isles

Monday 5th June 2006	Band Graeme Munro RSCDS Dunfermline Branch	Tuesday 13th June 2006 Band Alister Wood RSCDS Ayr Branch	Monday 26th June 2006 Band Graeme Munro Morningside SCD Club
J The Happy Meeting	29	J The Wild Geese	R College Hornpipe
S The Wild Geese	24	R West's Horrippe	J Joe MacDiarmid's Jig
S The Silver Tassie	RSCDS/L	S Butterscotch and Honey	S Neidpath Castle
R The Reel of the Royal Scots	RSCDS/L	J Mrs Stewart's Jig	J Cumberland Reel
S Margaret Parker's Strathspey	RSCDS/L	S Swiss Lassie	J Hooper's Jig
R The Deil among the Tailors	31	S The Castlereagh Strawl	S St Columba's Strathspey
S The Royal Wedding	14	J Miss Ailie Anderson	Gillian Sproule
J The Kellieholm Jig	5/82	R Blooms of Bon Accord	R Clutha
R Maxwell's Rant	L32	S Cherrybank Gardens	J Petrus Jack
	18	R Mair's Wedding	S The Moray Reel
			R Shiffrin Bobbins

No Dancing

Monday 17th July

Tuesday 18th July

Tuesday 27th June 2006	Band Iain MacPhail RSCDS West Lothian Branch	Monday 3rd July 2006 Band Gillian Wilson Queensferry SCD	Tuesday 25th July 2006 Band Bill Richardson Thinly SCD
J The Happy Meeting	29	J Glayva	R The Deil among the Tailors
R Peggy Dewar	36	R Miss Johnstone of Adrossan	J Jennifer's Jig
S The Garry Strathspey	Cosh	S The Duchess Tree	R The Balmoral Strathspey
J The Guzman of Balanigh	30	R Stantlight	R The Black Mountain Reel
R John of Bon Accord	33	J The Luckenbooth Brooch	J Knotwork
S Miss Migan's Strathspey		S Gang the Same Gate	R Neidpath Castle
R Blooms of Bon Accord		R Braach Bana	R Anniversary Reel
J Miss Mary Douglas	RSCDS/L	J Midnight Oil	S The Rose of the North
S Drumzeiler	Drewry	S Sugar Candle	J Joe MacDiarmid's Jig
R The Irish Rover	10	J The Bees of Magdalenkrocker	R Braach Bana
	Cosh		

Monday 10th July 2006	Band Roger Crook Harrison SCD	Monday 17th July 2006 Band Alan Ross RSCDS Edinburgh Social Class	Tuesday 1st August 2006 Band Alan Ross RSCDS East Lothian Branch
J The Wild Geese	24	J The Land of Milton's Daughter	R Nice to See You
R J.B. Milne	Foss	R The Cumbray Reel	J The Jubilee Jig
S Cullins of Skye	4/78	S Margaret Parker's Strathspey	S Cullins of Skye
J The Roselath Cross	41	J Jennifer's Jig	R The Reel of the Royal Scots
R Miss Johnstone of Adrossan	Goldring	R The Cinnamon	R The Luckenbooth Brooch
S Cherrybank Gardens	Drewry	S The Silver Tassie	R The Westminster Reel
R The Montgomerie's Rant	41	R The Black Mountain Reel	S Miss Gibson's Strathspey
S The Moray Rant	10	S Mrs Milne of Kinneil	R The Roselath Cross
R Rest and be Thankful	McConnachie	R The Deil among the Tailors	S Swiss Lassie
		J Follow me Home	S Bedrude
			R The Irish Rover

Monday 7th August 2006	Band Jim Mackay Broughton SCD	Monday 14th August 2006 Band Alister Wood Favourites Programme	Monday 21st August 2006 Band Alister Wood Favourites Programme
J The Bramble Bush	25	J Major Ian Stewart	J The Wind on Loch Fyne
R Kingstie Flower	21	R The Irish Rover	R The Earl of Mansfield
S Balmoral Strathspey	22	S The Wind on Loch Fyne	J It's Just for Fun
J The Roselath Cross	41	R Mrs Macpherson of Inveran	S Sugar Candle
R Ways in New Hell	42	J Hooper's Jig	S The New Scotland Strathspey
S The Braes of Breadalbane	21	S The Montgomerie's Rant	
J The Starry Eyed Lassie	23		
R The Fairy Dance	3		
S Maggie Lauder	10		
R The Irish Rover	Cosh		

Annual Meeting

Monday 4th September 2006

7.30 pm

Inverleith Church Hall

Scottish Country Dance Association

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 e-mail 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

This month I thought I would look at sites which have been created by smaller groups and consist of just a few pages.

<http://www.users.daelnet.co.uk/allinson/scottish.htm>

This is the Website for information on "Scottish Country Dancing in North West Craven, North Yorkshire, UK".

There are some pictures which are rather blurred, but this may have been done deliberately to disguise the identity of the people dancing. It says it was last updated on 16th December 2005, and while there are events listed for 2006, there is also a lot of old information farther down the page which could do to be updated or removed.

The event information is not very comprehensive but there are a couple of telephone numbers on the site, so there is a way of finding out more. There is also information about English Country Dancing, Morris Dancing, the local Accordion and Fiddle Club and more. None of it in much detail, but with links, most of which worked, but not all.



<http://www.wessex-scd.org.uk/Andover/index.html>

This appears to be the Website of a very small group, who only expect to get two or three sets. There is a friendly introduction on the Home Page, which explains how and when they started, and pictures of their latest events.

There is also, very usefully, a map of where they meet, something which other sites could do to adopt, especially for the benefit of visitors who may be in the area and want to find a night's dancing.

If you click on "Return to scd-wessex" you will find a list of other clubs in the area which all have

Websites in the same style, maintained by the same person. I usually find sites using Google, so I don't always begin at the most logical point, however if you are looking for a class in this part of the country, to have all the Websites linked together in this way is very helpful.



I did not find any list of events for this part of England, so I assume that either they don't have anything other than classes, or they are just not listed. There is however an e-mail contact on the Website, so at least you can find out.

<http://www.polaris.co.uk/snscdc.htm>

This is the one page Web presence of the St Neots Scottish Country Dance Club. There is a photograph of the dancers showing smiling faces, although the figure they are demonstrating looks tricky! I am also puzzled by the fact that they say there are only three basic steps to learn for Scottish Country Dancing, I wonder which ones they miss out.

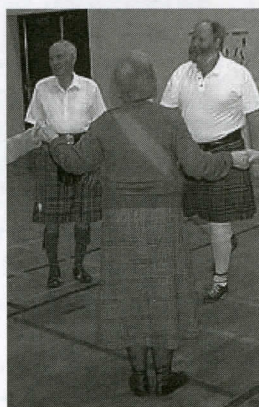
The site is welcoming and has a friendly feel to it, there is a telephone number to contact, and information on where classes are held. The poems at the end of the page are a nice touch too.



<http://home.interhop.net/milnes/index.html>

The Haliburton Highlands Scottish Country Dancers say that "you will exercise your body and your mind, and enjoy yourself with congenial people and colourful Scottish dress and music. Learn the steps and formations of new and traditional Scottish dances, such as jigs, strathspeys and reels."

I assume that this club is in Canada, by the links they have to other sites, but it doesn't actually say so anywhere. There is an events page, details of classes and some photographs of their annual events. Looking at the dates however, I don't think the site has been updated since last year as the 29th September 2006 is not a Saturday, so a potentially useful site is not being used, and would actually put people off as they may think the club is no longer in existence.



Merton Court Medley **(Medley Strathspey 32 Reel 32)**

A dance for 4 couples in a square set

This dance attempts to reflect some of the wildlife which visits Merton Court, where I live. The Strathspey reflects the pheasants with the males parading and showing off to the ladies, and the reel, the rabbits who scurry around the gardens.

Strathspey

1-2 Men dance right hand across half way, WHILE the ladies dance one place anti-clockwise.

3-4 All set, ladies and men all facing inwards.

5-6 Men dance right hand across half way WHILE the ladies dance one place anti-clockwise and finish first man facing third lady, second man facing fourth lady, third man facing first lady and fourth man facing second lady. (Men dance out of the right hand across to face the ladies [not pulling right shoulder back]).

7-8 All set.

9-16 All dance reel of four, giving right shoulder to the person facing you and giving left hands across half way in the centre. The ladies finish the reel in position as at bar 9, facing clockwise and the men dance more than a full reel to finish back to back with the lady, facing anticlockwise.

17-24 Dance left shoulder interlocking reel of four. (First man giving left shoulder to second lady, second man giving left shoulder to third lady, third man giving left shoulder to fourth lady, fourth man giving left shoulder to first lady).

25-26 First man and third lady, second man and fourth lady, third man and first lady, second man and fourth lady turn right hand half way.

27-30 All dance half a double men's chain giving left hands half way across in the middle. Finishing with partner, but opposite original place. (First couple in third couples place, second couple in fourth couples place, third couple in first couples place and fourth couple in second couples place).

31-32 All set

Reel

1-8 Second couple with first man and third lady, and fourth couple with third man and first lady, dance rights and lefts. Begin with first man and second lady, second man and third lady, third man and fourth lady, fourth man and first lady giving right hands. Omit polite turns and dance

into....

9-16 First couple with third couple, and second couple with fourth couple dance rights and lefts, first and third couples changing right hands with their partners to start, and second man and fourth lady, fourth man and second lady changing right hands to start.

17-20 First and third couples set and dance right hands across half way to original place.

21-24 Second and fourth couples set and dance right hands across half way to original place.

25-32 All circle round and back.

© Sue Petyt November 2003

Fisherman's Reel **(5x32 Reel)**

This is a square set with a fifth couple in the centre, man with his back to fourth couple, facing his partner who has her back to second couple.

Written for the Grimsby Scottish Country Dance Club

1-8 First, second, third and fourth couples circle round and back WHILE fifth couple turn with the right hand and back with the left.

9-12 Fifth man with second couple, fifth lady with fourth couple, three hands across (right hand).

13-16 Fifth couple pass left shoulder, fifth man with first couple, fifth lady with third couple, three hands across (left hand).

17-24 First, second, third and fourth couples take promenade hold.

Fifth man reel of three with first and second couple (right shoulder to second couple) WHILE fifth lady dances a reel of three with third and fourth couples (right shoulder to fourth couple).

Fifth couple meet their partner in the centre, facing first couple and take promenade hold.

25-26 Fifth couple change places with first couple passing right shoulder.

27-28 First couple change places with fourth couple passing right shoulders.

29-30 Fourth couple change places with third couple passing right shoulder.

31-32 Third couple change places with second couple passing right shoulder.

Repeat with a new fifth couple

© Sue Petyt

Hello Karin,

I am enjoying your magazine and, being the perpetrator of the Minicrib database of dance cribs, I am interested by the discussions about dances and am always looking at the new dances which you are including in the magazine. I originally devised a dance titled "The Kirrie Lads" for Ian Cruickshanks and his band, which was published on a leaflet. Unfortunately, the dance proved to be a difficult dance to dance through four times – it usually disintegrates on the third or fourth repeat! Consequently I devised a simpler version, which I called "The Kirrie Boys". This dance was not "published", but I included it in my database and Ian tells me that it now seems to be finding favour, as he has played for this dance on several occasions.

Yours,

Charles Upton

www.minicrib.care4free.net

The Kirrie Lads

A 32 Bar Jig for 4 couples

Devised by Charles Upton for Ian Cruickshanks and his Band during their visit to Magaluf, February 1998

Bars

1-4 All set, then 1s with 2s **also** 3s with 4s dance Right Hands Across half way.

5-8 Couples in 2nd & 4th places (1s & 3s) dance ½ figures of 8 round couples above them.

9-16 All dance ½ Four Couple Rights & Lefts:

9-10 All cross Right Hands (**Fig. 1**).

11-12 Dancers in 1M & 2M positions **also** 3L & 4L positions change places Left Hands on sides **while** dancers in 1st Lady position &

3rd Man position cross diagonally Left

Hands **also** dancers in 2nd Lady position and

4th Man position cross diagonally Left Hands

(**Fig 2**).

13-16 Repeat Bars 9-12 to end facing own partner in order 3,4,1,2 with 1s & 3s on opposite sides.

17-24 Bottom 3 couples (4s + 1s + 2s) set, cross Right Hand & chase clockwise ½ way round.

25-28 Couples in 2nd & 4th places (2s & 4s) dance ½ figures of 8 round couples above them.

29-32 Couples in 1st & 2nd places **also** couples in 3rd & 4th places dance half Rights & Lefts to end in order 2,3,4,1.

© Charles Upton

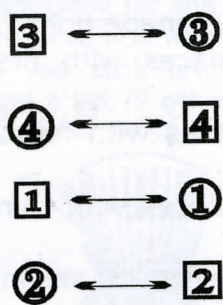
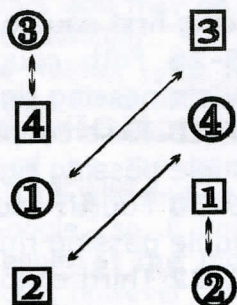


Fig 1



Top

Fig 2

The Kirrie Boys

A 32 Bar Jig for 4 couples

(A simpler version of The Kirrie Lads)

Devised by Charles Upton

For Ian Cruickshanks and his Band

Music – The Kirrie Lads, composed by Ian Cruickshanks

Bars

1-4 All set & cross Right Hand

5-8 1s with 2s **also** 3s with 4s dance Right Hands Across right round

9-16 All dance ½ Four Couple Rights & Lefts:

9-10 All cross Right Hands (**Fig. 1**).

11-12 Dancers in 1M & 2M positions **also**

3L & 4L positions change places Left

Hands on sides **while** dancers in 1st

Lady position & 3rd Man position

cross diagonally Left Hand **also** dancers in

2nd Lady position & 4th Man position

cross diagonally Left Hand (**Fig. 2**).

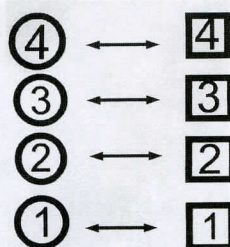
13-16 Repeat bars 9-12 to end facing own partner in order 4,3,2,1 on own sides.

17-24 Bottom 3 couples (3s + 2s + 1s) set, cross Right Hand & chase clockwise ½ way round.

25-32 All circle 8 hands round & back to end in order 4,1,2,3

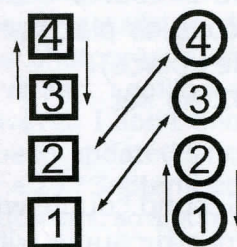
© Charles Upton

FOUR COUPLE RIGHTS & LEFTS



Top

Fig 1



Top

Fig 2

THE KIRRIE LADS ©

(4X32 JIG)

Composed by Ian Cruickshanks MCP/PRS

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of four systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 1 through 32 indicated below the staves. Chord symbols are provided for the bass line in many measures.

Measure numbers and chord symbols:

- 1: G
- 2: C
- 3: G
- 4: Am, D7
- 5: G
- 6: B \flat 7
- 7: C
- 8: D7
- 9: G
- 10: B \flat 7
- 11: Em
- 12: D
- 13: A7
- 14: D7
- 15: G
- 16: B \flat 7
- 17: C
- 18: C \sharp a7
- 19: D7
- 20: G
- 21: B \flat 7
- 22: C
- 23: C \sharp a7
- 24: D7
- 25: G
- 26: B \flat 7
- 27: C
- 28: C \sharp a7
- 29: D7
- 30: G
- 31: B \flat 7
- 32: C

The Orkney Reel

96 Bar Reel for 4 Couples in a Square Set

These dance instructions, along with the original music by Freeland Barbour, are available from the deviser, Jessie Stuart. All proceeds go to charity.

Bars

1-4 All change places with partners giving right hands, retain hold and joining left hands with next person all set.

5-8 Repeat 1-4 finishing back in places with ladies facing out.

9-24 All dance "Schiehallion Reels" to places, ladies finish facing out at end of reels.

25-28 Men dance half left hands across, while ladies dance another quarter clockwise, join right hands in wheel formation, then change places. (Ladies now in centre, men facing clockwise on outside.)

29-32 Men repeat left hands across, while ladies dance another quarter clockwise, join right hands in wheel formation then change places. (Ladies now in centre, men facing clockwise on outside.)

33-40 Repeat Bars 25-32

41-48 Repeat Bars 25-32

49-56 Repeat Bars 25-32, but men finish back to back in centre facing out towards partners who face in.

57-60 All set to partners, then men set, making a quarter turn to right, while ladies Petronella on one place to the right.

61-64 Repeat Bars 57-60, setting to person facing, then moving on to finish facing own partners in opposite places.

65-72 All turn partners right hands for four bars, then all promenade anti-clockwise back to places, dropping right hands and guiding partners into places with left hands.

73-80 1st and 3rd couples dance ladies' chain

81-88 2nd and 4th couples dance ladies' chain

89-96 Eight hands round and back

© Jessie Stuart

The Friendly Waltz

Couples Mixer – Waltz

Couples forming a large circle, all facing into the centre with the ladies on their partners' left.

This is a circle mixer dance – one of the few dances that begin with the lady on her partner's left. It appears to have been written by B.M. Edney and T. Edney in 1954, and involves changing partners with each round of the dance, hence the title.

Bars

1-2 All dancers hold hands with those on either side and take one step into the centre and out again, swinging their arms forward at the same time.

3-4 Each man lets go of the lady on his right, and passes his partner across in front of him from left to right. (Some ladies like to complete a full clockwise turn under the man's raised left hand while they are moving across.)

5-6 Bars 1-2 are repeated.

7-8 Each lady stands still, while her partner moves to stand facing her (his back is now to the centre of the circle). The ladies curtsey while the men bow.

9-12 Now in ballroom hold each couple takes two side-steps towards the line of dance, and two side-steps back again.

13-16 Couples waltz together for four bars, each lady finishing on her partner's right.

The above sixteen bars are repeated with the men dancing each time with the lady on their left. Thus the dancers change partners for each round of the dance.

*So far in "Dance On!" we've printed more than 130 dances. If you've written a dance and would like to see it in print, or if you come across an unusual dance that you'd like to share with our readers then please send us the instructions, by post to the address on page 3 or by e-mail to:
editor@danceon.co.uk*

The Malborough Reel

Devised by Drouthie Ruthie

Tune "Oh, sorry Nicholas, I thought you had the music ready!"

Bars

1 – 4 First couple and second lady dance three hands round with second man running around outside of circle (clockwise) desperately scrabbling for a place.

5 – 8 First couple and second man dance back, this time with second lady running around (anti-clockwise).

9 – 12 First couple cross over, man giving right hand, lady giving left. Fumble with hands for ½ bar of music. Repeat movement, this time lady gives right hand, man give left.

13 First couple leap quickly into place they would have been in had they cast off a place.

14 – 16 First man scowls at second man. First lady kicks second lady.

17 Second couple, grudgingly, move up one place.

18 – 24 First man sets to partner, who stares blankly up the set. Second couple shuffle guiltily (Highland Schottische setting without taking feet off the floor) in case they are supposed to be doing something. Third couple shrug shoulders. First man catches partner's eye.

25 – 28 Reel of 4 down one side, reel of 2 down the other.

29 Agitated whispering followed by:

30 – 32 Reel of 3 on whichever side seems least surprised to see you.

33 – 34 First man leads down the middle and back up again to collect partner – whom he forgot first time.

35 – 39 First couple lead down taking longer and longer steps and gaining speed.

40 First couple remember they should have turned back, but they are now going too fast to stop and hit wall at end of room.

41 – 42 First man scrapes splattered partner off wall and both limp back to top of the set.

43 On way back first couple discover that the fourth couple have died of boredom.

43 – 44 Meanwhile, second couple move down one place and bump into third couple who are moving up. Both couples collide with first couple who have now reached the top of the set.

44 – 48 First and second couples form nasty conglomeration in middle of set. (Advanced class pupils may substitute a Pousette.)

48½ First man holds third lady's right arm and partner's left arm, while partner twists her other arm around her back in an attempt to reach the second man. (Advanced pupils may substitute rights and lefts.)

Repeat, having passed a couple, but dancing couple stand still and gaze vacantly into space for first six bars. Top or "resting" couple leap into set above them on bars 1 – 2, then slink back into own set on bars 3 – 4.

Hobson's Choice

A Nasty Place to Have a Handle

**(Or – Papa Stour as you never saw him)
Am fear nach seall roimhe seallaidh e 'na
dheidh**

The secret of "Swords" is to know in which hand
Is the sword of my neighbour?

To be safe where you stand

When after much labour

From the "Overs" you land,

You may cry like a babe – or

Leave blood on the sand,

If you've "straddled the Sabre"

(Just pretend it was planned!)

"Tunnel" is chanted! But going which way?

Just follow that bottom but go to the right.

Who's "Backing?" We're twisted! This could take all day.

"Backing?" You're joking! We're now in a plight,

You should have gone left; now all Hell's to pay;

Unless you drop handles we'll be here all night.

With "Upping and Downing" and "Step in and Out"

You might call it "Looming", but it's more of a rout;

With oxters well padded the blade's not a prob –

We'll get through it easy by ignoring Rob.

Oh God no! A "Tunnel", – I'm on the wrong foot!

I'm stepping they're stamping; who's hissing "You mutt!"

Too many voices my poor brain's confused;

The circle's everted the "Out" word was used!

Some flamboyant waving can still save the day!

But why is Rob glowering? "Drop Swords" did he say?

Oh no! three have dropped them, it should only be one!

Our last chance of slickness is surely now gone.

Tempers are fraying, the circle ensues,

Going faster and faster, there's smoke from my shoes.

Now some silly sausage is pushing my sword

So hard in my buttocks I think I'll award

Him a Knighthood – or something! – with this other blade!

But why is it loose? Oh no! Someone has strayed!

So up with the Swords, Right Shoulders and Round,

We're all tight and cosy – No fault can be found!

Just take time and reach out, those handles are mine!

They're not! Get your hands off! You cack-handed swine!

Lock! Is the cry, and click, in it goes,

But who was wrong-handed? A loose handle shows!

Too late! It is lifted, and that horrid noise

Is a cascade of swords, but what perfect poise!

***Just stand to attention and show expectation,
Give them no choice but a standing ovation!***

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.	8pm -11pm No Bar	£3 (tea)	Door	Different bands each week.
Every Sunday	Fife, St Andrews	Holy Trinity Church Hall, Queens Gardens	Live Music	2pm-5pm	£3 (tea)	Door or tel 01334 472 375	Demonstrators: O & C Harrison
Most Sundays	(Venue Change)	From July venue back to:- The Boys Brigade Hall, Kinnessburn Road, St Andrews.					
	East Kilbride	Girl Guide Hall, Dundas Place	-	7.30 -10pm	£1.50 (tea)	Door or tel 01355 230 134	Ceilidh & Old Time Club
Every Monday	Kirkwall	St Magnus Centre	Live music	7.30pm	£2/£0.50	Door or Tel 01856 87 3534	Old Time, Ceilidh & Country
Every Tuesday	(July only) Glasgow	Student Union, University Avenue.	-	7.30-10pm	£4	0141 334 9869 or 07050 222 173	Dance Club
	University Humble, East Lothian	Village Hall	George Hood	Bar 7.30-10pm	£3 B.Y.O.B.	Door (Owen & Catherine Harrison)	Ceilidh, Old Time and Social Dance Club
Every Wednesday	Newtongrange	Morris Club	Live Music	7.30-10pm	£3/£1.50	Door (Karin Ingram)	Ceilidh & Old Time Club
	Glasgow	St Andrews in Square	Live Music	7.30-9.30	£4 Bar	Door (Tricia Matthews)	Ceilidh & Old Time Class

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances							
June 2006							
Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
3rd	Auchendinny	Glencorse Comm. Hall	Webster Craig	7.30-11.30	£5 No bar	01721 723 468	(Near Penicuik)
	Elgin	Bishopmill Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-12mn	£4 Bar/Tea	01343 543 655	Pay at Door - Jolly Dancers
4th	Angus	Tealing	Johnny Duncan	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
5th	Kirkwall	St Magnus Centre	Live music	7.30pm	£2/£0.50	Door	Old Time, Ceilidh & Country
7th	Ellon	Station Hotel	Wayne Robertson	8pm-11pm	£2 Bar	Door	Food available to buy
	Midlem	Village Hall	Live Music	8pm-10pm	£1.50 Tea	01835 870 244	Monthly Summer Class
9th	Dumbarton	St Patrick's Hall	Stuart McKeown	8pm-12.30	£5 Bar/raffle	01389 842 034	For CHAS
	Glencarse	Village Hall	George Rennie	7.30-11pm	£3.50	Door	Soft Drinks available
10th	Forfar	West End Social Club	Gordon Pattullo	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay ay Door
	Black Isle	North Kessock	Nicol McLaren	8pm-12mn	B.Y.O.B.	Door	Social Dancers
11th	Arbroath	Café Project	t.b.a.	7.30-10pm	£3 Door	01241 879 487	Old Time, Ceilidh & Set dances.
16th	Foulden	Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-12mn	£6 No bar	Ticket only	Tel:- 01289 386 400
	Inverurie	Town Hall	Garioch Blend	8pm-12mn	£6 No bar	01467 620 782	Tea & Raffle
	Elgin	Bishopmill Hall	Marian Anderson	8pm-12mn	£4 Bar/Tea	01343 543 655	Pay at Door - Jolly Dancers
17th	Forfar	West End Social Club	Mac Kinnear	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay ay Door
	Partick	Burgh Halls	Fraser McGlynn	8pm-11.30	£5 Bar	Door	Highlanders
	Blackford	Village Hall	Alan Ross	8pm-11.30	£4 No Bar	Door	Soft Drinks Available
18th	Arbroath	Café Project	Steven Carcary	7.30-10pm	£3 Door	01241 879 487	Old Time, Ceilidh & Set dances.
	Montrose	Park Hotel	Wayne Robertson	2pm-5pm	Door	01241 879 487	A & F Club ceilidh
21st	Ellon	Station Hotel	Charlie Esson	8pm-11pm	£2 Bar	Door	Food available to buy
	Blackford	Village Hall	Jimmy Lindsay	8pm-11.30	£4 No Bar	Door	Soft Drinks Available
24th	Elgin	Bishopmill Hall	Steven Carcary	8pm-12mn	£4 Bar/Tea	01343 543 655	Pay at Door - Jolly Dancers
	Monikie	Memorial Hall	Gavin Piper	7.45-11.45	£3.50 (Ticket)	01382 350 206	or 01382 370 471
	Forfar	West End Social Club	Deirdre Adamson	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay ay Door
	Black Isle	North Kessock	Colin Garvin	8pm-12mn	B.Y.O.B.	Door	Social Dancers
25th	Arbroath	Café Project	George Rennie	7.30-10pm	£3 Door	01241 879 487	Old Time, Ceilidh & Set dances.
26th	Kirkwall	St Magnus Centre	Live music	7.30pm	£2/£0.50	Door	Old Time, Ceilidh & Country
28th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	-	7.30-10.30	?	Door	Monthly Social
29th	Fife	Windygates Village Hall	Bruce Lindsay	8pm-11pm	£3 (supper)	Door	No Bar
30th	Newcastleton	Village Hall	Ian Hutson	9.30-1am	£5 Bar	Door	
	Helensburgh	Commodore Inn	Donnie & Diane	8pm-1am	Dance	01389 841 208	Highlanders £6/others £7

Scottish Country Dances							
June 2006							
Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
1st	Alva	Cochrane Hall	Colin Dewar	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
3rd	Pitlochry	Town Hall	Jim Berry	7.30pm	£5/£1.50	01796 473 488	Summer Dancing
	Darlington	Dolphin Centre	Lothian	7.30pm	£7.50	01748 823 371	Ticket only. (01325 286 181)
5th	Troon	Concert Hall	Lothian	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
6th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	-	7.30pm	?	Door	Summer Dancing
8th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	Sandy Nixon	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
9th	Troon	Concert Hall	Ross & Thomson	7.30pm	Door	01292 315 558	Charity -Dystonia Society
	Strathpeffer	The Pavilion	Colin Dewar	?	?	01997 423 373	Summer Gala Rally
10th	Dundee	St Andrews Church Hall	Maple Leaf	7.30pm	£3.50	01382 509 103	Charity Dance
	Dunblane	Victoria Hall	Ian Thomson	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Summer Dancing
11th	Culzean	Castle Garden	David Ross	2.30pm	NTSproperty	01655 884 455	Dancing on grass
12th	Troon	Concert Hall	Roy Hendrie	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
15th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	Marian Anderson	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
16th	Crieff	Academy Hall	Perth S & R Soc.	7.30pm	£10/£12	01738 620 895	Summer Assembly Dance
	Dumfries	Loreburn Hall	Andrew Knight	?	?	01387 265 815	Dumfries RSCDS
17th	Pitlochry	Town Hall	David Oswald	7.30pm	£5/£1.50	01796 473 488	Summer Dancing
	Strachur	Memorial Hall	David Ross	7.30pm	£7	01369 860 787	Charity - Advance Ticket
19th	Troon	Concert Hall	Lothian	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
21st	Tarbert	Village Hall	-	7.30pm	Door	01880 820 304	Summer Dancing
22nd	Alva	Cochrane Hall	Nicol McLaren	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
	Galashiels	Volunteer Hall	Marian Anderson	(Braw Lads Dance)	£5	01578 730 591	Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch
	Glasgow	City Halls	Colin Dewar	7.15pm	£21 (T)	0141 334 0694	Midsummer Ball
	Dunoon	(Summer Dance)	t.b.a.	7.30pm	?	01369 705 771	South Argyll RSCDS
24th	Dunblane	Victoria Hall	Nicol McLaren	7.30pm	£4.50	Door	Summer Dancing
26th	Troon	Concert Hall	Sandy Nixon	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
28th	Dunfermline	Glen Pavilion	Roger Crook	7.30pm	£4	01383 720 972	Summer Dancing with re-caps
29th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	David Anderson	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
30th	Ingleton	Community Centre	AGM	?	?	01524 241 451	North West Craven RSCDS

Ceilidh & Old Time Dances July 2006

Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
1 st	Forfar	West End Social Club	Joyce Ramsay	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay at Door
	Newcastleton	Village Hall	Clarty Clout	10pm-1.30	£5 Bar	Door	
2 nd	Angus	Tealing	Ken Stewart	7.30-10pm	£2.50	Door	
5 th	Linlithgow	Palace Courtyard	Nicky McMichan	7.30pm	£6/£5 Tea	Door	Indoors if wet
	Ellon	Station Hotel	Charlie Esson	8pm-11pm	£2 Bar	Door	Food available to buy
	Midlem	Village Hall	Live Music	8pm-10pm	£1.50 Tea	01835 870 244	Monthly Summer Class
7 th	Arbroath	Cliffburn Hotel	Lomond Ceilidh	7.30-1am	£8 (T) bar	01241 879 487	Arbroath A & F. Festival
	Arbroath	Viewfield Hotel	Steven Carcary	7.30-1am	£8 (T) bar	01241 879 487	Arbroath A & F. Festival
	Arbroath	Meadowbank Hotel	Sandy Leggett	7.30-1am	£8 (T) bar	01241 879 487	Arbroath A & F. Festival
	Glencarse	Village Hall	Alan Morrison	7.30-11pm	£3.50	Door	Soft Drinks available
8 th	Arbroath	Community Centre	6 Bands	7.30-1am	£11 (T)	01241 879 487	Arbroath A & F. Festival
	North Kessock	Village Hall	Mhairi Coutts	8pm-12mn	B.Y.O.B.	Door	Social Dancers
	Elgin	Bishopmill Hall	Fine Blend	8pm-12mn	£4 Bar/Tea	01343 543 655	Pay at Door - Jolly Dancers
	Forfar	West End Social Club	t.b.a.	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay at Door
12 th	Linlithgow	Palace Courtyard	Ian Cathcart	7.30pm	£6/£5 Tea	Door	Indoors if wet
15 th	Blackford	Village Hall	t.b.a.	8pm-11.30	£4 No Bar	Door	Soft Drinks Available
	Aviemore	Village Hall	Sheila Peters	8pm-12mn	£4	Door	Info:- 01479 810 933
	Keith	Longmore Hall	Jock Fraser	8pm-12mn	£5 (T)	01466 751 273	Charity Dance
	Forfar	West End Social Club	Thistle Duo	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay at Door
16 th	Arbroath	Café Project	Holly Duo	7.30-10pm	£3 Door	01241 879 487	Old Time, Ceilidh & Set dances.
	Montrose	Park Hotel	George Rennie	2pm-5pm	Door	01241 879 487	A & F Club ceilidh
19 th	Linlithgow	Palace Courtyard	John Carmichael	7.30pm	£6/£5 Tea	Door	Indoors if wet
	Ellon	Station Hotel	Scott Gordon	8pm-11pm	£2 Bar	Door	Food available to buy
21 st	Dunbar	Masonic Lodge	Da Fustra	7.30-12.30	£10 (T) Bar	01368 863 448	Buffet.
22 nd	North Kessock	Village Hall	Scott Nicol	8pm-12mn	B.Y.O.B.	Door	Social Dancers
	Elgin	Bishopmill Hall	Lindsay Weir	8pm-12mn	£4 Bar/Tea	01343 543 655	Pay at Door - Jolly Dancers
	Kinellar	Community Hall	Da Fustra	8pm-12mn	Charity Dance	(no other details meantime)	
	Forfar	West End Social Club	Ken Stewart	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay at Door
23 rd	Arbroath	Café Project	Scott Carnegie	7.30-10pm	£3 Door	01241 879 487	Old Time, Ceilidh & Set dances.
26 th	Linlithgow	Palace Courtyard	Smith, Gray &	7.30pm	£6/£5 Tea	Door	Indoors if wet
	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	-	7.30-10.30	?	Door	Monthly Social
28 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	Bill Black	8pm-12mn	?	Door	Old Time Dance
29 th	Blackford	Village Hall	Alan Daig	8pm-11.30	£4 No Bar	Door	Soft Drinks Available
	Forfar	West End Social Club	Scott Carnegie	8.30-11.30	£2 Bar	01307 462 935	Pay at Door
30 th	Arbroath	Café Project	t.b.a.	7.30-10pm	£3 Door	01241 879 487	Old Time, Ceilidh & Set dances.

Scottish Country Dances July 2006

Date	Town	Hall	Band	Time	Cost	Contact	Comments
1 st	Pitlochry	Town Hall	David Anderson	7.30pm	£5/£1.50	01796 473 488	Summer Dancing
3 rd	Troon	Concert Hall	Karyn McCulloch	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing - Charity Night
	Dumfries	Steele Avenue	Community Centre	C.D.'s	Door	01387 265 815	Summer Charity Event
4 th	Dufftown	Memorial Hall	-	7.30pm	?	Door	Summer Dancing
	Perth	Murray Royal	Marian Anderson	7.30pm	£5/£2	Door	Summer Dancing(Under 18yrs £2.50)
6 th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	David Oswald	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
10 th	Troon	Concert Hall	Liam Stewart	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
	Dumfries	Steele Avenue	Community Centre	C.D.'s	Door	01387 265 815	Summer Charity Event
11 th	Perth	Murray Royal	James Coutts	7.30pm	£5/£2	Door	Summer Dancing(Under 18yrs £2.50)
12 th	Dunfermline	Glen Pavilion	George Meikle	7.30pm	£4	01383 720 972	Summer Dancing with re-caps
13 th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	Colin Dewar	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
15 th	Pitlochry	Town Hall	Colin Dewar	7.30pm	£5/£1.50	01796 473 488	Summer Dancing
	Troon	Concert Hall	Colin Dewar	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
17 th	Dumfries	Steele Avenue	Community Centre	C.D.'s	Door	01387 265 815	Summer Charity Event
	Perth	Murray Royal	David Cunningham	7.30pm	£5/£2	Door	Summer Dancing(Under 18yrs £2.50)
19 th	Tarbert	Village Hall	(Loch Fyne Club)	7.30pm	Door	01880 820 304	Summer Dancing
20 th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	David Anderson	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
	Troon	Concert Hall	Kenny Thomson	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
24 th	Dumfries	Steele Avenue	Community Centre	C.D.'s	Door	01387 265 815	Summer Charity Event
25 th	Perth	Murray Royal	David Oswald	7.30pm	£5/£2	Door	Summer Dancing(Under 18yrs £2.50)
26 th	Dunfermline	Glen Pavilion	James Coutts	7.30pm	£4	01383 720 972	Summer Dancing with re-caps
27 th	Alva	Cochrane Hall	Nicol McLaren	7.30pm	£5	01324 559 793	Summer Dancing - No recaps
29 th	Pitlochry	Town Hall	David Oswald	7.30pm	£5/£1.50	01796 473 488	Summer Dancing
30 th	Culzean	Castle Garden	Roy Hendrie	2.30pm	NTSproperty	01655 884 455	Dancing on grass
	Troon	Concert Hall	Roy Hendrie	7.30pm	£3/£2	Door	Summer Dancing
31 st	Dumfries	Steele Avenue	Community Centre	C.D.'s	Door	01387 265 815	Summer Charity Event



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

Let's Dance Scottish

Dunblane Conference

Saturday 11th February 2006

The view of a delegate from the floor. Delegate responses are those that appeared to be the majority view.

Opening Session

Jimmie Hill, the RSCDS magazine Editor, spoke of the need to push information out to the media and not to expect the media to come to us, he felt the RSCDS must be more pro-active and raise its profile, seeking new members with new ideas. His feeling was that the RSCDS had allowed itself to be sidelined while other forms of dance have kept their profile high.

Delegates agreed, but felt that HQ had to do the National profile-raising by lobbying MSPs etc, the branches could then build on this locally. The total lack of response from HQ to the article in the Scotsman which denigrated SCD was felt not to be acceptable; HQ had to react quickly to such things. There was a need for a Public Relations professional.

Jimmie Hill – For classes in Scotland it is normal to use musicians; outside Scotland, classes don't usually have that luxury and have to use CDs. We need to ensure that dance and music do not become separated and that musicians are encouraged and treated as professionals.

Jimmie Hill – Some branches have lots of teachers and are lucky, others have only one and are struggling. All branches should encourage more teachers. Should we consider allowing non-qualified teachers to teach with an experienced teacher mentoring them?

Delegates – Agreed that more young teachers were needed and that more flexibility was needed to encourage teachers. Sometimes classes don't have teachers and experienced dancers take it in turns to take the class and this works well. Teaching qualification is not essential, enthusiasm is.

Schools and Young People

Irene Bennett – SCD in schools was variable, some areas were very strong, others had none. Fife ran an annual festival through the education authority and had 10,000 primary children dancing. Ayrshire Branch ran an annual festival which the branch organised and had 2,000 primary children dancing, so it was possible to get youngsters interested. Help

to get started could be available from Maureen Liddell in Fife. Why not invite teachers to a day's workshop in teaching dancing and offer ongoing support and mentoring? Should we have a Schools Development Officer on the staff at HQ?

Delegates – Liked the idea of a workshop for school teachers and felt it was within the ability of most branches to do (or several branches to get together). Experience showed that more consultation with teachers on the content of programmes produced better results. Children needed a goal, something to work for such as a festival or demonstration, and liked to dress up.

Several branches had run successful family events, although reservations were expressed about "dancing with your granny" particularly after primary school age. Generally felt that older children and teenagers did not want to dance with parents and grandparents.

Most thought the Schools Development Officer was a good idea but that a Public Relations Officer was more important; this could be done by consultants and should be someone who didn't dance (so they could bring an unbiased view) but they should be interested in Scottish traditions.

Irene Bennett – There is the possibility for branches to get sponsorship and grants. HQ has too much money to obtain any, but individual branches could be eligible. Each Council area has a co-ordinator for the Active Schools Project which would be a natural contact point for branches.

Delegates – Agreed grants and sponsorship should be tried but it was felt that HQ should do some of the legwork on identifying possible sources of funding, rather than every branch doing it. Most had not heard of Active Schools Project and thought HQ should be more pro-active in disseminating information.

Irene Bennett – Should we consider including Ceilidh Dancing to attract youngsters? Would youngsters be more interested if there was a younger teacher? The youngsters also need to be involved in trips, demonstrations etc to keep enthusiasm and interest.

Delegates – Generally agreed that teaching should be tailored to the class, e.g. don't worry too much about footwork and concentrate on rhythm and figures where dancers are not interested in precision and that some ceilidh dancing was a good idea. Should consider working with Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust.

Promotions and Marketing

Linda Gaul – Mentioned Public Relations Officer again, also idea of starter/welcome pack for new members and a press pack and the need to target MSPs. It is important to identify target groups for

marketing e.g. children, the newly retired, new housing developments (fliers through letter boxes). Think about how to get beginners involved by running a beginners' day or a short course to get them up to a standard where they can join a general class.

Delegates – Re-enforced agreement with Public Relations Officer, but stressed that some branches don't have enthusiastic committees/members who are willing to get involved. Stressed the need for there to be more young teachers to change the image of SCD and the use of the Internet, mobile phones, podcasts etc as the methods young people use to obtain information.

Linda Gaul – Do we need to change the name of the Society? Signs had to be removed during G8 as the word "Royal" had been defaced. Do we need something snappier?

Delegates – No desire to change the name, but we could have a snappier working version of the name such as "Dance Scottish". It was felt this needed more thought.

Possible Future Projects

Let's Dance Scottish Week September – Most delegates liked the idea but felt that 2006 was too soon as most branches book venues for dances at least a year in advance, so 2007 would be better. Also it was considered that October would be better than September as Universities would be back by then and could take part. HQ should do national publicity and branches would do the local publicity, all branches should try and hold at least one event.

A Charity Week – The Jig for Pudsey had been fairly successful last year with 15 branches taking part. Many delegates did not know about it (back to HQ and communication issues). It was thought it was a good idea for children but may be a bit close to the Dance Scottish week as it would probably involve the same people in organising.

Demonstration Team – Most delegates thought the white dresses were not suitable for most demonstrations, and that it could put people off. Agreed that in some instances own clothes were best especially if we were getting people up to participate as it made the atmosphere more relaxed and friendly. Some men perhaps not to wear kilts to show you can dance without having to wear special clothes. Children's demonstration teams should have special outfits as this appeals to children.

Saturday Workshops and other projects – Most delegates felt that Day Schools needed to be re-invented due to falling numbers and recycling of existing dancers (and most say not suitable for beginners). Other ideas need to be tried which will attract new people.

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The Dancie

My wife has been grumbling. It wisnae me, it was one o' thae ithers. To be specific, it was people who don't acknowledge the other people when performing the figure called balance in line.

Have a look as you dance the figure. You will see people who look at the ground somewhere just in front of them, those who look ahead (but don't seem to see anything), and a few, a very few, who look piously up at the ceiling. Perhaps they are looking for inspiration! Perhaps you have driven them to seek help from above!

If you were to do the figure with perfect curves (of the arms, as in March 06 issue), you would be so far in front of each other that looking at the people whose hand you held would be just an easy glance at about 45 degrees left or right, and the line would be a series of perfect curves from one end to the other.

The teachers used to say that you should set and look to the right, then set and look to the left, which is very effective, though one feels it is a trifle dictatorial – as spontaneous as "eyes right" is when on parade! However, it was effective in getting a bit of eye contact between the dancers in the line, and perhaps even a smile.

I think that "perfect curves" is the best way to regard the figure in normal dances, but there is one when I don't consider it the best solution. That is in The Reel of the 51st Division, because here we are dealing, at least originally, with soldiers dancing with each other and

making a St Andrew's cross. The acknowledgement to your partner was much less relevant, as they were all too aware of their close confinement, and the intention was to show a St Andrew's cross, in which the line would be as straight as possible.

If they had any visiting ladies to dance with, I bet they would have been looked at though! I fear that such frivolities were far beyond the thinking of their German captors.

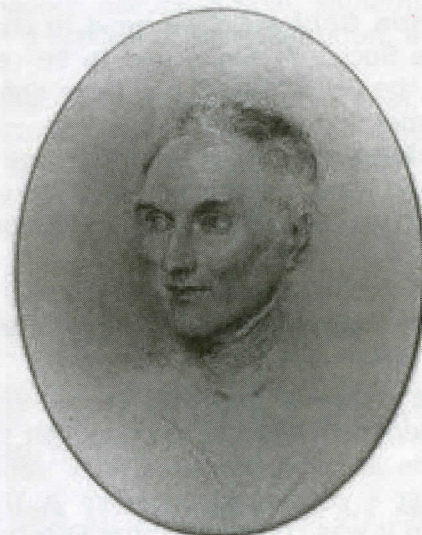
The RSCDS is now well past its youth. It is an old established organisation, and venerable too.

However, in its youth it did some foolish things, as indeed was its prerogative as a youthful being. Since then, we have found the answer to a lot of questions that were completely unanswerable in those heady days, and in some cases we have found out that there were some bits of information that were plain wrong.

The same applies to the sister organisation, the EFDSS (English Folk Dance and Song Society) and to the much less tightly organised groups who study the history of dance. But these have recognised their mistakes and are doing something to correct them. Let me quote an example to show what I mean.

There is a figure in Country Dancing that is called siding. It occurs a lot in the old

manuscripts, without any description because everyone knew how to do it. The EFDSS equivalent of "Auntie Jean", who was a chap called Cecil Sharp, made out what he could of this figure and taught a way of doing it. For many years that was how it was



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Cecil Sharp by Esther Blaikie Mackinnon

done. Then Pat Shaw found a description that meant the figure should be done in a slightly different way. Historical dancers, of course, aim at historical accuracy, so they changed fairly readily to the "new" style, but it was much more difficult to change the way that had become established throughout the world of English Country Dancing. Just as in Scottish dancing, new dances had been devised using the old figures, and they were not necessarily going to suit the revised way of siding. They effected a very English compromise, and there are now two ways of siding, called Pat Shaw siding and Cecil Sharp siding. This meant the dancers could choose which they thought the most appropriate for any given dance.



Now I would cite an example in the Scottish Dance field. The information was that all reels began with a right shoulder. As a very broad generalisation, this is true. That is the preferred way to start a reel in default of further information. But it became obvious years ago that it was frequently not the case, and the shoulder was often required to be the left one for choreographic reasons. But still the RSCDS refused to change the way that Cadgers in the Cannongate was danced – on the grounds that “it would cause too much confusion”. (That is a specific quote from Auntie Jean speaking off the record to Hugh Foss.)

Hey, have you danced Cadgers recently? We have now reached the point where so many people are so experienced in general dancing that the “official” way of doing it is regarded as crazy! “Why would anyone do it that way?” is the obvious question that is asked by the average dancer. If you really want to see confusion, have a look at the two versions of Jessie’s Hornpipe, the one in book 8 and the one in 101 Scottish Dances.

There are lots of dances that need urgent review, and I feel that the time has come to take the bull by the proverbials and form a committee for the purpose of reviewing the Society’s interpretations of their quoted sources.

It will need to be done at some time, even though persisting in error can, in the short term, be attractive. Now that the RSCDS is a grown up organisation, it should behave as one, and rectify its past mistakes.

I would suggest that co-operation with the EFDSS would be well worthwhile, as they have rather more expertise in translating the original documents, and it is obviously a shared heritage. Indeed, it is a trifle odd that to do the dances as Gow, Marshall, Scott Skinner and so on played for them to be done, one has to go to the Edinburgh Assembly and dance the EFDSS way. I gather that they could well do to perform the same reviewing exercise anyway, as their version of Red House is almost as wild as that of the RSCDS.



Cecil Sharp House, home of the EFDSS



**The 4th Angus Accordion & Fiddle Festival
Arbroath
7th, 8th & 9th July 2006
Programme of events**

Friday 7th July

Viewfield Hotel – Concert/Dance – 7.30pm – 1am
Artists appearing: Steven Carcary’s Young Accordionists; Bryce Johnstone on the mouth organ; Neil Dawson on the fiddle; Scott Gordon Trio; Ian Hutson Scottish Dance Band; compere and singer Ecky Hodgson. Dance to follow with The Steven Carcary Scottish Dance Band.

Meadowbank Inn – Concert/Dance – 7.30 – 1am
Artists appearing: Lynne Christie Scottish Dance Band; accordionist Wayne Robertson; young accordionist Craig Paton; Jennifer Forrest Scottish Dance Band; Karen Hannah on fiddle with Alan Small; compere and singer John Caskie. Dance to follow with Sandy Legget and The Carseloch Ceilidh Band.

Cliffburn Hotel – Concert/Dance – 7.30 – 1am
Artists appearing: Scott Nichol Scottish Dance Band; Luke Brady Trio; Karen Hannah on fiddle with Alan Small; Bryce Johnstone on the moothie; Wayne Robertson on accordion; compere and singer Robert Lovie. Dance to follow with The Lomond Ceilidh Band.

Saturday 8th July

Sessions throughout the afternoon in various pubs and also at the Brothock Bridge and the Harbour – weather permitting.

GRAND DANCE in the Community Centre, Arbroath 7.30pm – 1am. Dance to the Scottish Dance Bands of: Ian Hutson; Lynne Christie; Scott Nichol; Sandy Legget; Lomond Ceilidh Band and Jennifer Forrest.

Sunday 9th July

Another round of impromptu sessions in various pubs. All musicians welcome to join in.

THE FINAL CEILIDH – A host of top Scottish musicians will congregate in The Community Centre, Arbroath. All the artists that have appeared during the week-end are expected to be there for the final “thrash” with other artists including fiddler Paul Anderson, Accordion & Fiddle groups from the Blairgowrie Club, Forfar Club, Montrose Club and Arbroath Club, Colliston Sound, Young Accordionists, singer Kris Triggs and many more...

For further information and tickets please contact Ron Ramsay, 48 Hospitalfield Road, Arbroath, DD11 2LS Tel: 01241-879 487 or e-mail aaandff@btinternet.com

Concert/Dances £8 Grand Dance £11

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Too Fast and Too Slow

By Finlay Forbes

Scottish Country Dancing is not short of self-nominated experts who hold widely differing and often mutually exclusive opinions on just about everything that that impinges even remotely upon their chosen activity. Opinions may vary on subjects as wide ranging as the correct shoulder for wearing a tartan sash (not a big choice there), the rights and wrongs of hooching and for all I know the correct way to hang tea towels as hall decorations. On these weighty matters, our experts' opinions may diverge but there is one issue on which they have managed to achieve unanimity – tempo. When it comes to playing for proper Scottish Country Dancing all Scottish Country Dance Bands play at one of two speeds “too fast” or “too slow” with the former being much the more prevalent.

It was not until I went to live in New Zealand that I managed to work out how this wondrous unwritten system of tempo evaluation actually worked. The ground rules ran something like this.

Rule 1.

All bands led by accordionists or fiddlers play the music far too quickly.

Rule 2.

Bands led by pianists tend to play slightly faster than ideal.

Rule 3.

Solo pianists play more or less at the right speed most of the time.

Rule 4.

Solo pianists who played for Miss Milligan's classes always play at the right speed.

Rule 5.

Where an accordionist and a pianist play at exactly the same speed, the accordionist will be too quick, the pianist will be about right and the pianist from the approved list will be absolutely perfect.

It was also during my time down under that I first encountered the variable speed turntable in all its low tech and musically challenged awfulness (yes it really was as bad as that!). Up until then, my experience of dancing to records had mainly been in a group where my late father operated the turntable with all the dedication of the archetypal vinyl age hi-fi addict that he was. If you are familiar with the activities described in Flanders and Swann's “Song of Reproduction” (I had a little gramophone etc.) you will get the picture easily.

The turntable in question was a state of the art affair purchased on the “many are tried but only one is chosen” process that must have driven many hi-fi sales staff to question the value of prolonging their earthly existence. This said turntable (a Dual I seem to recall) had enough speed variation to adjust the rotation with the aid of a stroboscope to exactly 33.33 or 45 rpm. Speeds were checked regularly to make sure that they had not deviated from the ones necessary to reproduce the work of Messrs. Shand, MacLeod, Powrie et al as faithfully as the club's excellent sound system permitted.

After such luxury, the variable speed turntable was a brush too far with the horrors of the real world. Variable speed turntables were definitely what today's marketspeak types would describe, aptly for once, as bottom end products designed for dance clubs with minimal budgets and diminished musical sensitivities. No self-respecting turntable manufacturer would produce a piece of equipment that could allow its operator to inflict the unspeakable horrors that I heard in some country dance sessions. Jimmy Shand's “Machine without Horses” would start off in a lilting G Major only to lurch sluggishly but inexorably into the strange tonal world of G

flat as the speed control wrought its nefarious art with horrifying efficiency and effectiveness. Teachers who used this device seemed to have been permanently anaesthetised against the aural agonies and general depression that it inflicted on sensitive ears. When I raised this issue in a discussion, the response that I got was that people didn't notice these things. Apparently, all that I had succeeded in proving was that I fell outside the definition of people – no witticisms please! If I took the trouble to join the human race, I too could acquire immunity from suffering in these matters.

At this point I began to take what some might consider an obsessive interest in the arcane ritual of speed setting. Did all this fichering with the speed control really arise from a desire to create Utopian dancing conditions or was it merely designed to add to the carefully cultivated mystique of the dancing teacher? My suspicions were first aroused when I saw a teacher going through an elaborate ritual of three beat pas de Basquing and control fiddling to find the right speed for Mairi's Wedding. Why was this necessary when there is no pas de Basque in Mairi's Wedding?

In my observations of this phenomenon, which included some surreptitious experiments with a metronome (okay so I should get out more often), it became clear that the “pas de Basque and ficher” movement was little more than pedagogical posturing arising from some latent desire to exert control.

Musicians who were told that they were playing too fast would sometimes nod sympathetically, tell the emcee or teacher that they would take it more slowly, play it at the same speed as before and then be told that

their "new" speed was very much better. Oh well, 'tis better to have feigned control than not to have controlled at all.

One metronome experiment with The Glasgow Highlanders was particularly revealing because it was spread over two weeks and conducted using measured data. My starting speed was taken from Jimmy Shand's full length recording on "O'er the Border" which, as a dancer, I had found to be ideal. I launched into the original at a pretty decent approximation of Sir Jimmy's speed only to be told that it was too fast. Why was I not surprised? (Cynicism may be not rank as one of humanity's more endearing traits but its pursuit can give enormous satisfaction.) I duly slowed it down to something approaching the teacher's idea of perfection and took a careful note of the metronome setting. The following week I started off at the nearly perfect speed set the previous week. Clearly a week is a long time in Scottish Country Dancing – long enough for my carefully reset tempo to have deteriorated from near ideal to "far too slow". Being the obliging soul that I am, I dutifully cranked up the speed to a new ideal, which turned out to be startlingly close to the Laird of Auchtermuchty's original. The music went round and round and came out roughly where it began.

All of these musings raise the question of whether there really is such a thing as an ideal speed for dancing. Does putting a stopwatch on a musician add to the pleasure of dancing or does the musician's frustration at having to play at an unnatural speed rub off on the dancers? No tune worthy of the name is such a delicate flower that it has to be played at one immutable metronome setting. Good musicians feel the tune in a certain way and can only do their best for it if they are allowed to give that feeling free rein. Speaking as a dancer, I prefer to dance to musicians who are obviously enjoying themselves and are

comfortable with what they are doing than to metronomes incarnate plugging away at some supposedly ideal speed imposed on them from the outside.

Perhaps that places me somewhere between being mildly eccentric and irredeemably weird but I doubt it. Mind you, I should be loath to go as far as pleading absolute sanity. Our world would be a very dull place if it were to be dominated by total rationality and absolute values.

Part of my training as a dancer involved learning to cope with the whims of bandleaders. It was a very revealing experience and one that taught me more about the internal dynamics and phrasing of the dances in question than constantly dancing them at the same speed ever could. It also left me with the view that some dancing teachers had no desire to empower their students in this way. For some members of the teaching fraternity and sorority "teacher knows best" seemed to be the only way of preserving the supposedly oracular status of their pronouncements.

From the dancers' point of view, basing speeds on a few bars of pas de Basque or strathspey setting may work for a few bars taken out of context but may not work as well for a whole evening's dancing.

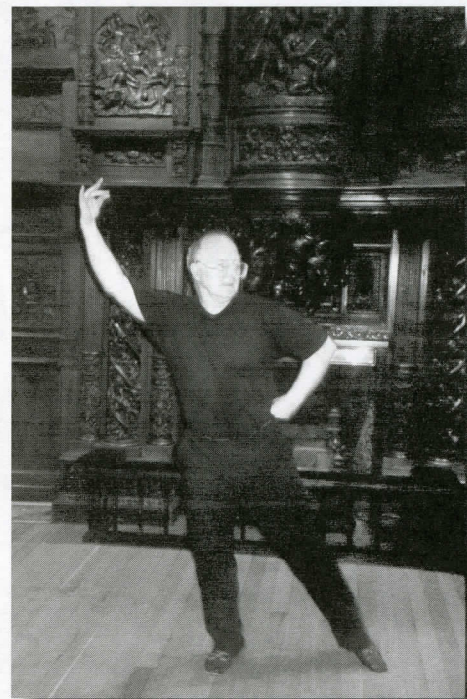
If dancers are out for an evening's enjoyment rather than an evening of perfect footwork, surely it is better to place pleasure before perfection. On the assumption that dancing is meant to be fun (and I am not convinced that the prevailing spirit in Scottish Country Dancing fully embraces such a notion) why not let the dancers decide? Most bandleaders, even those who cannot dance, are very good at judging whether dancers are enjoying themselves or toiling and are able to adjust the pace of their music naturally without feeling that they are being straitjacketed.

I remember dancing an impromptu Highland Fling to the accompaniment of Colin Dewar. (He and I were persuaded into

this particular escapade by a lady who had best remain nameless but whose ability to charm people into doing strange things is legendary in Scottish and Old Time Dance circles.)

His tempo was ideal. It gave me enough time to shape the steps without having to defy gravity or damage one of my more timeworn working components. When I asked Colin afterwards how he had managed to hit on the tempo, his answer was "I just watched your feet". Watching my feet is probably not something that Colin would number among his fondest memories but on this occasion it worked and may go a long way to explaining why his music is so easy to dance to.

Our dance bandleaders are talented musicians with a genuine feeling for the music and a deep-seated desire to communicate the glories of Scottish music to the dancers. Whether or not their musicianship is valued fully on the dance floors of the nation is open to doubt but it is not for want of insight and effort on their part. After all they want the dancers to enjoy their music and are prepared to go great lengths to achieve this. Apart from anything else, their survival depends upon it. Why not give them their heads? The most probable outcome will be that everybody wins.



Dannsa with First Harvest Tune Up Tour

Drawing from the many rich and varied music and dance traditions throughout Scotland, Dannsa will be touring with First Harvest from June 9th to 17th.

Celebrating the rich culture and infectious energy of Scottish dance, DANNSA's special brand of step, sword, quadrille and ceilidh dance is performed alongside the traditional music might of FIRST HARVEST, promising an evening of powerful and engaging music, song and dance, steeped in the Scottish and Gaelic traditions, but speaking to a modern Scotland.

Dannsa's four dancers – Donal Brown, Frank McConnell, Caroline Reagh, and Sandra Robertson, and musicians – Gabe McVarish, Fin Moore and singer Liz Maclean, have joined forces with First Harvest's Ross Martin, Iain MacDonald, Iain MacFarlane, and Gaelic singer Kathleen MacInnes for a night of traditional music, dance and song at its finest. It doesn't get better than this!

Fri 9 June North Edinburgh Arts Centre, 8.00pm.

Box office 0131-315 2151

Sat 10 June Craigmonie Centre, Drumnadrochit, 8.00pm.

Box office 01463-234 234

Sun 11 June Universal Hall, Findhorn, 7.30pm.

Box office 01309-691 170

Wed 14 June, 8.00pm.

Box office www.thebooth.co.uk

Thu 15 June Macphail Centre, Ullapool, 8.00pm.

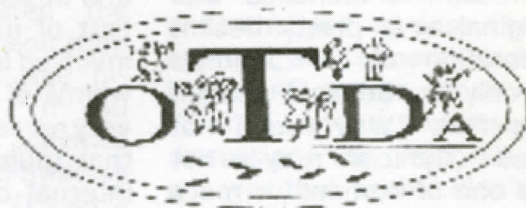
Box office 01854-613 336

Fri 16 June An Lanntair, Stornoway, 8.00pm.

Box office 01851-703 307

Sat 17 June Ardross Hall, Alness, 8.00pm.

Box office 01349-880 591



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www.glencraigfdb.co.uk**

The Stewartry Ball, Kirkcudbright



RSCDS Chairman Stewart Adam was among the dancers enjoying the music of Kenny Thomson & The Wardlaw SDB



Happy Birthday!



Mine Host, Robbie Shepherd



Moira Anderson & Gordon Cree



The Occasionals

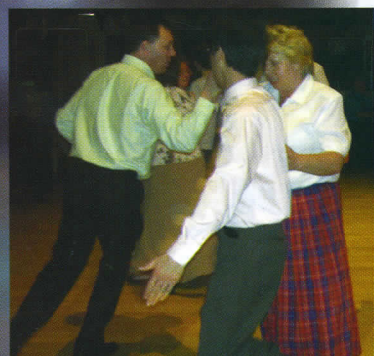


*Take The Floor celebrated
70 years of Scottish
Dance Music on the radio
in Perth Concert Hall on
April 19th.*

*Photographs © BBC Radio
Scotland or Dance On!*



Old Blind Dogs



David Cunningham SDB



Nicky McWichan SDB

*Robbie bids a
fond farewell to
long-time TTF
Producer, Ken
Mutch, who is
now working
on the Iain
Anderson Show*

