

# SCOTTISH country dancer

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 1 Autumn 2005

News from Coates Crescent  
News from around the world  
Interview with Muriel Johnstone  
Favourite dances  
The Spring Fling 2005  
Fashions in men's kilt hose  
The Society on camera  
Tribute to Derek Haynes  
Opinion piece  
Ayr Branch Profile  
Club Profile  
Technique doctor  
How to do Set and Rotate  
Who's who?  
Beginners in Inverness  
Letters to the editor  
The new Manual  
New CDs / Books  
Reviews  
Day school diary  
From Aberdeen to Adelaide







# SEMPLERTRAVEL

## Dancing Holidays

Dance Group		Destination	Date	
Robert Whitehead	Old Time & Ceilidh	Levante Club Hotel Benidorm <a href="http://www.hotellevante.com">www.hotellevante.com</a>	17 Sep 05	AVAILABLE
Macenmuir	Scottish country dance	4* Crowne Plaza Hotel Prague <a href="http://www.crowneplaza.ca">www.crowneplaza.ca</a>	07 Nov 05 4 nights	LIMITED
Mary & Trevor Howard	Scottish country dance	5* Pestana Carlton hotel Madeira <a href="http://www.pestana.com">www.pestana.com</a>	14 Nov 05	LIMITED
Macenmuir	Scottish country dance	5* Algarve Casino hotel Algarve <a href="http://www.solveverde.pt">www.solveverde.pt</a>	13 Mar 06	LIMITED
Barry Steele	Scottish country dance	4* Confortel Hotel Fuengirola <a href="http://www.confortelhotels.com">www.confortelhotels.com</a>	26 Feb 06	LIMITED
Robert Whitehead	Scottish country dance	4* Las Palmeras Hotel Fuengirola <a href="http://www.hotel-laspalmeras.com">www.hotel-laspalmeras.com</a>	05 Mar 06	AVAILABLE
Margaret Harris & Margaret Masterson	Scottish country dance	Tunisia	12 March 06	AVAILABLE
Lizzie Clark	Line dancing	4* Avanti Hotel Paphos <a href="http://www.avantihotel.com">www.avantihotel.com</a>	28 Mar 06 04 Apr 06	FULL
Marian Anderson	Scottish country dance	Austria	May 2006	AVAILABLE
Iain Macphail	Scottish country dance	Costa Brava	02 May 06	AVAILABLE

For more information or to book please call  
0141 762 3939 or 0141 762 5565





# News from Coates Crescent

**RSCDS Secretary, Elspeth Gray, and Chairman Elect, Irene Bennett, outline some of the issues which the Management Board currently has on its agenda.**

Welcome to the first edition of *Scottish Country Dancer*. Our aim is to highlight the most important current issues from Headquarters. This is not the *Annual Report* that you are used to, but a more informal update of what's going on.

## Staff changes

As many of you know, Eileen Watt retired from her post of Office Manager on 14 August 2005. Eileen started with the Society in 1988, and was very well-known to those who placed orders, organised examinations, attended Summer School, or met her on the dance floor! She will be greatly missed, and everyone wishes her a very long and happy retirement. Read more about Eileen on page 25.

We have also welcomed a new member of staff in Jill Henderson. Jill was employed on a 6-month contract in November 2004, and has made such a positive impact that she has been employed permanently. Her role is still being defined, but her duties will include administration of Summer and Winter Schools once June Dick retires in March 2006, and acting as secretary to the Membership Services Committee.



Jill at Summer School

## Publications and recordings

Many of you have been eagerly anticipating the arrival of the second edition of the *Manual* – see Alastair MacFadyen's piece on p26 for more details. The *Index of Dances* has been updated and is available as an A4 booklet to fit in the *Manual* folder. Other

supplementary publications that are being worked on, such as the *Index to Formations* and the *Glossary of Terminology*, will also be produced in A4. Also available this summer is the re-master of Bobby Crowe's recording of *Book 16*. *Book 15* has been re-recorded by Neil Barron and his band and the CD should be ready for the AGM in November.

For this year's subscription copy, *Book 45*, branches were asked to nominate a dance that had already appeared in a branch publication and had proved popular. 30 dances were submitted, and once again the task of evaluating them was spread amongst branches and groups throughout the world. 10 dances were finally selected for the book, whose cover features illustrations from the locations of the branch associated with each dance. The CD was recorded by George Meikle and the Lothian Band. George has also been involved in another major publication for the Society this year. For some time, he had been preparing, for his own use, a book containing the tunes for the dances in all the RSCDS books. He offered this to the Society for publication. A questionnaire was sent out to musicians to identify if they felt this would be useful, and the formats they preferred. The final publication, *Originally Ours*, was also ready for Summer School 2005.

## House style

Membership Services Committee are considering revamping the Society's 'house style', to create a fresher, more up-to-date design that can be used on letterhead, formal documents, the website, etc. They recognise that the 'crown of ghillies' logo is well known and loved, and it will not be completely abandoned! Once a new design has been agreed, logos and templates will be made available to all branches, either via the website or on CD.

## Thinking of qualifying?

The new examination system has now been introduced. The exams have been revised to incorporate several important changes: to allow the re-sitting of elements of the exams; to include input from tutors in the assessment process; and to institute an appeals procedure. There are still two stages to achieving the status of a fully qualified RSCDS teacher:

### Teaching Certificate Part 1

- Unit 1: Written Paper
- Unit 2: Practical Dancing
- Unit 3: Teaching Level 1

### Teaching Certificate Part 2

- Unit 4: Teaching Practice
- Unit 5: Teaching Level 2

Unit 1, the written paper, can be undertaken by home study and can be sat by a sole individual, or a group of people within a branch, at their home base. We plan to offer 3 opportunities to sit Unit 1 each year, in March, May and October.

All new candidates are now taking Part 1. The former *Teaching Certificate* is being offered until the Summer School 2006, during which and thereafter, the new system will be fully implemented.

This means that members, currently holding the *Preliminary Certificate* and intending to take the second stage at St Andrews 2006 or later, must take Units 4 and 5.

To meet the requirements of Unit 4 a candidate must undertake at least 6 hours of teaching in the coming year and prepare a *Record of Teaching Practice*. It is important that candidates start preparing for Unit 4 as soon as they have gained their Teaching Certificate Part 1. Fuller details of the syllabus and all regulations can be obtained from Headquarters, or can be downloaded from the website.

## Examiners

A revised procedure for the appointment of examiners has been put in place. Names of nominees can now be submitted by: a branch committee; two examiners; any two members of the Society; or the Education and Training Committee.

## Medal Tests

Interest in our Medal Tests for young dancers is growing. Tests have been held at 9 centres to date, with 334 candidates in total. There is an Introductory Award, followed by five grades of test. Successful Introductory candidates receive a certificate and a badge, and those who achieve a successful grade receive a certificate and medal, with a plaque on which to display them. We are planning to produce a CD of the music for all the medal test dances in the short form needed for the tests. The syllabus for all tests is available from Headquarters, and Sue Porter, the Youth Director, would be happy to give guidance to anyone thinking of holding tests in their area.

## HQ members and the IB

You will have read in the May 2005 *Newsbrief* about the establishment of the International Branch (IB). The IB was set



up in 2004 to represent the interests of those members who, usually as a result of where they lived, could not join an existing branch and so had no means of expressing their views on Society matters. HQ members are not technically members of a branch and, consequently, are not represented at the AGM.

Existing HQ members can, if they wish, transfer their membership to the IB or remain HQ members. New applicants for Society membership will be encouraged to join either a local branch or the IB, but may still join as HQ members. Anyone interested in joining or transferring their HQ membership to the IB should contact the membership secretary, Pia Walker:

RSCDSIB@netscape.net or  
pia@intamail.com

For anyone without email, Pia's address can be obtained from HQ.

## Membership database

We wrote to all branch secretaries in September 2004 to inform them that the Management Board were committed to improving communication links with members, and to that end, would put steps in motion to allow direct communication from Headquarters with members. Branches have been asked to provide Headquarters with members' details and, in turn, they benefit from not having to distribute publications, whether that involved actual costs or not. We have now received data from approximately two-thirds of branches and this magazine has been delivered direct to all those whose details are now held on the database at Headquarters. If you did not receive your magazine to your home address, and would prefer to do so, please contact your Branch committee and let them know! We will not make any personal data available to any third party for any other purpose.

## Branch Awards

The Branch Awards were instituted in 2004, as a means for branches to recognise those members who have given outstanding service to a branch or to Scottish country dancing generally in the branch locality.

To date, 52 awards have been issued. A list of recipients was included in the May 2005 Newsbrief, and future updates will appear in this magazine.

The January magazine will have a list of all awards since May. Congratulations to all those who have been honoured with an award.



Stewart Adam at the 75th Anniversary Ball of the Banffshire Branch presenting Mrs Jean Mair with her Branch Award.

## Membership

A constant concern for the Management Board is the Society's falling membership – there has been much discussion of reasons for this, and consideration of possible strategies for reversing the decline.

One thing that has become clear is the lack of a set of policies specifically for Scotland, or indeed for all branches – there is an acknowledgement that 'one size fits all' cannot work, and that we have to be sensitive to the circumstances and needs in different parts of the world. The health of Scottish country dancing in Scotland, as home of the dancing we love, is crucial. Working groups have been set up to consider: issues relevant to Scotland; issues of concern to members outwith Scotland; and how we can work in partnership with other traditional arts organisations.

It is important to raise the profile of Scottish country dancing in Scotland and help branches grow. Some suggestions being considered include: consulting Scottish branches to see if they would like a quarterly newsletter or event focussing on Scotland; creating a Scottish national demonstration team of under 25's; offering short workshops for non RSCDS-qualified teachers; arranging a national event involving both Scottish country dancing and ceilidh dancing; subsidising beginners' classes; running courses for young musicians to encourage them to play for Scottish country dancing.

The main issues that the group looking outwith Scotland identified were: the

importance of keeping information on the website up-to-date and relevant; encouraging affiliated groups to become branches; getting more groups to affiliate; encouraging enthusiastic younger people, even if their dancing is not strictly in the 'traditional form'; and the need to try to eliminate the perceived 'elitist' reputation of the Society.

## Website

The Management Board and the committees recognise the importance of the website as a 'shop window' for the Society. It was revamped over a year ago, but we now have a working group preparing for major changes. These changes will enable the site to be more easily managed and updated. The plan to make dance descriptions and associated details available online is progressing, but is a longer-term project, so don't look for them in the next few months! The overall design of the site will be updated with a fresher style, and provision of both online purchasing and online completion of forms (for events such as Summer School, and for Branch Secretaries returning branch data) is being organised. Above all, we do recognise the need to keep the website up to date.

## And finally, the title!

Thank you to everyone who took the trouble to write in with ideas for the title of this new magazine. We decided that the title had to speak to members, potential members, and non-dancers. It had to be clear and encapsulate what we are about – as well as having to stand the test of time. After deciding on *Scottish Country Dancer*, we realised that some branch newsletters have the same name! We are pleased to say that the branches concerned are quite happy for us to use it as well!

Titles which did not make it included *The 1923 Revival*, *Top of the Set*, *The Allemande*, *Dancers' Digest*, *Reels around the world*, *The Tartan Rag*, *Kiltie Capers*, *The Birl*, *The Fling*, *The Pas de Basque*, *The Skean Dhu* and many more. We hope *Scottish Country Dancer* will grow on you! It's your magazine. Please contribute to it via [mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org)



# From around the world

The membership of the RSCDS is worldwide. One of our greatest – and unsung – strengths is the network of friendships which exists among members worldwide. We hope *Scottish Country Dancer* will act as a focus and a forum for all members wherever they are. We have appointed correspondents to report from outside the UK. These people are not representatives of branches, but will report on branches, affiliated groups and, indeed anything of significance from their areas. The correspondents are appointed for 4 issues initially. Please get in touch with your correspondent. So far, we have 6 areas covered and here are the first reports. We recognize that there are other areas and we are looking for a correspondent in the biggest of them – The Rest of the World! If you live somewhere not covered by the following reports, and would like to volunteer, please get in touch with the editor ([mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org)). Fame (but not fortune) awaits!

## North America – West Coast

**Correspondent: Rosemary Coupe**  
[rcoupe@rscdsvancouver.org](mailto:rcoupe@rscdsvancouver.org)

Three west coast branches are celebrating significant anniversaries in 2005. The San Francisco Branch marked its 40th anniversary on Saturday June 25th with 'The Dance of the Decade', featuring the UK band, *Green Ginger*, in their North American debut. One third of the dances on the programme were locally devised; one third came from programmes of 40 years ago; and one third were current Branch favourites. Also making their North American debut to help celebrate a 40th anniversary are the *Marian Anderson Band*, who played at the first Thistle Ball in Vancouver on 14 May, and kept 300 dancers calling for encore after encore. Finally, the San Diego Branch celebrate its 30th anniversary with a ball on Saturday 8 October.

The Thistle Ball will rotate among three neighbouring Branches, Seattle, Victoria, and Vancouver, and may mark a trend towards major dance events shared by two or more Branches. Successful collaboration also led to the second Southern California InterBranch Weekend Workshop, co-sponsored by the San Diego, Orange County, and Los Angeles Branches in April. Ellen Ewing writes, 'A springtime drive into the lovely mountain area of Julian, California, an old gold-mining town, brought dancers to the workshop site. Outstanding music was provided by Muriel Johnstone on piano, with Keith Smith on fiddle, in from London just for our weekend event. Alex Jappy also played his accordion for classes and jammed into the wee hours of the morning. Teachers Ruth Jappy, Bill Zobel, and Elaine Brunken exercised not only our feet, but our minds, with marvellous teaching technique and good-natured humor.'

A new and exciting event this year was the Scottish Dance Masters' Conference at Sonoma State University, California, June 15 to 19. Scottish country dance teachers and musicians converged for

four intense days of learning and sharing. Coinciding with the Conference was the Santa Rosa class Beginners' Ball, held to honour the new dancers of the past year. Later in the summer, the SCD capital of North America was Shawnigan Lake, a small town on Vancouver Island and site of the second TAC Summer School held on the west coast.

## North America – East Coast

**Correspondent: John Middleton**  
[jiceilidh@sympatico.ca](mailto:jiceilidh@sympatico.ca)

Greetings from the eastern regions of the RSCDS domain in North America. Scottish country dancing continues to thrive throughout our area. The 2004-2005 dancing season was extremely busy with classes, balls, workshops, and week-long schools all serving to reflect the energy and enthusiasm of the area's dancers.

Several branches have been celebrating significant milestones. Boston Branch, the oldest in North America, marked its 50th year a short time ago; Hamilton Branch, the 2nd oldest, has just finished celebrating its 50th. Toronto is gearing up for its 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2007. The Oakville (Ont) SCD group is also celebrating its 50th this year.

Thistle School of Scottish Country Dance at Banner Elk in North Carolina celebrated its 25 years of very valuable service to dancers in the more isolated regions of North America in July 2005. TAC ran a very successful Summer School on Vancouver Island this year – far removed from its usual venue in Ontario.

Some of the highly successful weekend workshops in the area have been run by: Atlanta Branch; New York Branch; Toronto Branch; and Kingston (Ont) Branch. A significant highlight of the Kingston Branch Weekend was the presentation of the Society's Scroll of Honour to Bobby Brown, musician extraordinaire and leader of the Scottish Accent Band. The brand of music that this band has produced over the years has done much to inspire the best of dancing in the area.

## New Zealand

**Correspondent: Marjorie M. Crawford**  
[jaymarcrawford@actrix.co.nz](mailto:jaymarcrawford@actrix.co.nz)

New Zealand Branch boasts of being the only 'nationwide' branch of the Society; and also of being the largest branch (with 973 members as at May 2005) which, based on a population here of something around 3.6 million, is not a bad effort.

The Branch underwent major changes to its structure in January 2003 and we now have a Management Committee of only eight persons – four of whom form the Standing Committee (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) and four others who have clearly-defined portfolios of responsibility: Training, Communication and Publicity, Youth and Membership. This was an enormous change in direction from a Council of sometimes up to 20 persons, eleven of whom were elected at 'region level' to serve on Council.

The Management Committee has streamlined the administration of the Branch and now, into its third year of existence, we are benefiting from the decisions taken since early 2003. I intend to include some information on these new directions (Youth and Membership in particular) in future issues of this new magazine, because I think they will be of interest to other members around the world.

## Australia

**Correspondent: Sam Heron**  
[sususe@powerup.com.au](mailto:sususe@powerup.com.au)

Australia has 8 RSCDS Branches and our membership exceeds 1100.

Featuring prominently in our annual Australian calendar is a weeklong Winter School of dancing, hosted in turn by one of seven of the Branches. Each year the School venue differs. Travelling to the School can be interesting. It is a five-hour flight from Brisbane, Queensland to get to Perth WA (4700 klms by road). Many New Zealanders attend our Schools as usually it involves only a three-hour





Tokyo Branch  
20th Anniversary Ball

flight. Lifelong friendships flourish as a result of these Schools. For example, within Queensland, it is a three-day trip by car from a class on the Gold Coast to Atherton in the north – 2700 kms.

Queensland Branch Children's SC dance classes encourage youngsters to learn about Scottish country dancing ensuring the future of the Society. The classes also incorporate a craft segment with a Scottish influence including Scottish customs and culture. It is the only Scottish activity in Brisbane for youngsters with a desire to learn about Scotland. New young friendships are being formed.

SCD display teams are always in demand to appear at community events, being seen to represent a touch of Scotland.

## Europe

**Correspondent: Tess Edelman**  
**info@ceilidhdance.org**

Some patterns have emerged over the last 25 years in the SCD dance scene in Continental Europe. The first is that SCD is often one part of other traditional dance interests in groups. Most of them see it as just another 'species' in the family of ethnic dance. Luckily, there are some purely Scottish groups, and they maintain standards, but, above all, appeal to younger dancers.

The second point is that the founding of a group usually depends on the enthusiasm of one person – usually the teacher or whoever started it up – without any sponsorship from outside. When that person leaves, the group often slows down or folds. SCD has to compete with other forms of dance such as tango and salsa, Irish dance, and gyms offering a wide variety of physical activities.

Over the last few years, interest has grown in Eastern Europe. New venues are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia – all thanks to the efforts of individuals.

Within the well established SCD countries of Europe (France, Germany etc) many weekend balls and workshops have become permanent fixtures throughout the year, increasing their popularity by inviting well-known bands and teachers from Scotland or elsewhere.

Dancing holidays on the Continent are often cheaper than St Andrews, and it can be more interesting for UK participants to combine dancing with a holiday. Good examples are the Easter workshops and the Rechberg weekend. It is still quite difficult to encourage Europeans to go to St. Andrews. This is basically a language problem, fear of the unknown and, for the men, the perceived need to wear a kilt. Until recently, the RSCDS was the only traditional dance organisation to make it compulsory to wear a special costume! The publicity for the above events, and the ensuing participation of dancers from all over Europe, owes much to free and voluntary websites such as the Celtic Circle.

So, most of the growth is due to the efforts of individuals. Teachers are invited over on the basis of friendship and costs are borne by the local group. The excellent recordings and videos of the RSCDS have made life easier for Continental teachers, while the RSCDS home page has greatly improved communication.

A step towards the future is the International Branch which will help those groups trying to establish an image which appeals to local dancers.

## Japan

**Correspondent: Tom Toriyama**  
**Tomtori@aol.com**

Tokyo Branch celebrated its 20th Anniversary during 2004/05. In Japanese customs a 20th Anniversary is as important as a Silver Jubilee in Western societies. The real highlight was the

International Weekend held at the splendid Kamakura Prince Hotel, during 28th–30th January 2005. The Branch invited Ann Dix and Rachel Wilton as teachers and Dave Hall and Judith Smith as musicians for 130 participants with just 2 Western people.



Rachel, Tom and Ann

The classes were run in English by teachers whose clear and slow use of language as well as ample demonstration was greatly appreciated. Everyone easily understood the teachers' intentions. The dancers very much enjoyed the dance evenings with excellent live music. Ann gave her new reel, *Shinkansen (the Bullet Train)* to the Branch to celebrate the event, and it is proving popular in Japan.

The death of Mr Yukio Naitoh, aged 62, on 2 February 2005, has deprived the Society, and particularly Tokai Branch, of a much-loved friend, dancer and piper. He was one of the co-founders of Tokai Branch and was chairman for some years. He especially devoted his major energies to teach young dancers with Marchan, his wife. Sincere condolences are extended to his family and to Tokai Branch.

The 2005 Summer Schools in St Andrews and Shawnigan Lake, Canada were invaded by the ladies' army from Japan – as usual!



Muriel Johnstone, the most prolific composer of Scottish country dance music ever, and one of the Society's best-loved musicians, grew up in the Ayrshire port of Ardrossan in a family steeped in country dancing and country dance music. Both her parents were dancers. Her mother, Dorothy Johnstone, the well-known class musician, played at Summer School for many years. Muriel started ballet at the age of 3, but from the age of 8 till she went to university, she attended the branch children's class, taught by Ann Hughes. Her branch was North West Ayrshire, founded by Alastair Aitkenhead as a young man straight out of Jordanhill. Muriel then studied music at Edinburgh University, dancing with New Scotland. She then trained as a teacher at Moray House College of Education. While there, she took her Preliminary Certificate, but it was not till 1990 that she took her Full Certificate. From 1977 till 2002 Muriel was responsible for arranging the Society's music. After living in the States for some years, she and her husband and fellow teacher, Bill Zobel, have recently moved to Canada.



# Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan

Interview with pianist, composer, and teacher, Muriel Johnstone

**So, Muriel, when did you first start playing for country dancing?**

First in NW Ayrshire when my mother was ill. I was still at school and one night my mother couldn't play. But she didn't want me to concentrate on country dance music. I was headed for university and a future in classical music, and she wanted me to 'forget all this rubbish', but I went and the class liked it! Later I played in Edinburgh for the Branch teenage class.

**And what about summer school?**

Well, I was playing for exams in Edinburgh and the examiner was Miss Milligan. At the end of the day, she came up to me and said, 'Miss Johnstone, you'll play for me at summer school!' There was no choice! That was 1975, my first year. It was pretty daunting, but I got a lot of help from my mother and her musician friends. Every afternoon they got together – my mother, Winnie Carnie, Nan Main, Nancy Dickson and Susan Inglis – and would sit with manuscript books and exchange tunes, writing them out by hand. So, I got all this stuff from them – and then when Margaret (Peg) Rae died, I was asked to arrange the music for the books. Apparently, Peg had said to Miss Milligan that when she went, I was 'the one you want to do the books.' They were all very generous about sharing things, unlike some of the others. Peg Rae was full of stories. She invented the phrase BBP! She used to say, 'Playing for exams! It's great fun up to the exam, but if anything goes wrong – BBP – blame the bloody pianist!'

**That means you were fairly young when you started at St Andrews.**

Yes, that was one of the gifts Miss Milligan had. She encouraged young people. People like Jim Rae and Margaret Church were on the

staff the year after they passed their full certificates. She gave young people a chance. After her, the whole thing became more committee-run and that feeling of generosity to younger people disappeared for a while.

**What do you mean 'committee-run'?**

Well, everyone knows that while Miss Milligan was around, the Society was a kind of benign dictatorship – and it worked, on the whole. I think all the jealousies and confusion about direction came around 6–10 years after she died. I think people had this idea there was power to be had once she went. But maybe I was young and just hadn't noticed it before. In 1975 I was more concerned about not making a mistake when I was playing for social dancing in the evening because all the older musicians would come and line up at the door to listen. I was terrified. I remember one evening, looking up and seeing Miss Milligan and then hearing her famous stage whisper, 'What's that she's playing?' – some tune she hadn't heard before!

**So, what were the main musical influences on you?**

My mother. She wasn't the most accurate pianist, but she was absolutely wonderful to dance to. She developed little tricks that helped people to dance better. For example, if children were doing a poussette, she would speed up a little just for those 8 bars because she knew that during a poussette children sometimes race and get out of time with the music, but she would use a style of accompaniment in her left hand that was very insistent on the rhythm so that they could hear the three beats for the pas de basque. If she was playing for *down the middle and up*, she would have a very open left hand and she often just pulled it back a fraction because everyone can do skip



change of step. She would put such an emphasis on the first beat of the bar for strathspeys – to get people to sit down into the step because she was a dancer herself. So I just absorbed all that, and when I finished playing that first night for the branch class, they all said, ‘You played just like your mother.’ Who else would I play like? She was all I ever heard. She had modelled herself on Muriel Assur from Ayr, a classical musician as well as dance pianist. Her playing had inner voicing and lovely chords. Years later I met the bandleader, Stan Hamilton, and he told me Mrs Assur had been a big influence on his playing. Both of them had what I call a rolled left hand for strathspey and they used tenths and had lots of interesting-sounding chords. And of course I listened to all the pianists who played at St Andrews. So my style was basically my mother’s to begin with – but she made all these fistfuls of wrong notes! – so I thought I needed to take more interest in the chording and the bass notes.

**The thing that strikes me when I listen to some of the older recordings is they seem faster than today’s – yet we’re constantly being told that the dancing was better. Isn’t there a contradiction there?**

I think social dancing was faster, yes. I remember dancing to Jimmy Shand at a children’s ball in Ardrossan in 1958 and I know that some of the adults thought he was too fast, but the local band, a precursor of George Fleming’s, had super tempos. I think there was a variation across the country. Shand was too fast for NW Ayrshire, which was full of super dancers who liked to demonstrate. Edinburgh liked it slower, as did Glasgow, for demonstrations, but they liked it quicker than Edinburgh for social dancing. I think, in general, speeds were faster, but let’s face it, we’ve created a style in the RSCDS. It’s derived from the original, but it is a creation. The strathspey is something different now, however. It’s very elegant and needs a tremendous amount of strength – all very well for agile young people trained in PE! We like to achieve it, but it IS difficult! There’s been more and more emphasis on smoothing out the strathspey.

**What do you think of bands who play strathspey sets which start with a strathspey, go on to a couple of slow airs then back to a strathspey?**

It just fills me with horror! I think of a dance as a story with characters. Two might dance alone, then interact, might go off again in chapter 2 and they’ll get a different tune for that. In the old days, they wouldn’t get 4 or even 7 different tunes. They’d get

the same one over and over again as in the English style. We’ve become very accustomed to hearing different tunes, but if you change the character of the tune from a strathspey to a slow air, you’re in a different story altogether! To me, it’s just a development and back home at the end. This is why I like the original tune at the end – it kind of ties the whole thing up!

**But some bands refuse to do that, don’t they?**

Yes, I can’t understand that. My first band experience was with Bobby Crowe, who taught me everything about playing in a band, and he had no quibbles with what the dancers wanted. He would play at whatever speed was necessary for the area; he would come back to the original tune, especially if it was an RSCDS dance. He really was a true servant of the dance and the dancers. His recordings are classics, exciting, never dull, but I don’t think he ever felt he recorded as well as he played live.

**Is our music still Scottish?**

I think it is in Scotland, yes. There’s a trend towards tunes in the style of Shiftin Bobbins – which to me are not Scottish tunes. I mean, you can do Scottish steps to them – just as you can do strathspey steps to almost anything. Just as the dancing has moved on, so has the music – and some of the older people might say that it’s not Scottish any more.

**But if a band is playing ‘Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag’, is that moving on or is that regressing?**

That’s regressing because that wasn’t a dance tune in the first place. The bottom line for me is – can you dance to it and what kind of dancing are you doing? A lot of the tunes that are used now are very good for old time dancing and ceilidh dancing, but if you think of things like the Eva Three Step or the Boston Two Step, they’re basically walking and that kind of tune is great for that.

**Now you’re very well known as a composer of tunes. Where do your ideas come from?**

Well, mostly I compose at the piano. I might have been playing some Scottish tunes and there might be one particular phrase I really like, so I play it over and over again and I think – Ah, I like that. I can’t use it as it is so how can I develop it? So that might be the kernel for a tune to be built round. Other times I have almost the whole melody in a flash and that might be when I’m in the kitchen boiling potatoes! Once, famously, Bill and I were renovating the house. We were putting some plasterboards

up on the ceiling and I took the pencil from behind my ear and drew a stave and wrote three or four bars of music up there on the ceiling! I forgot about it and a week later the plasterers came and now it’s gone for ever! I’m also very affected by the sea and a lot of my music has been inspired on a beach or thinking about the water up near Lochinver. The slow air, *Eyemouth Harbour*, was composed on the beach at Eyemouth just watching the waves come in. It all goes back to Higher Music at school. You would be given two bars of music and had to complete the tune. It could be there’s a question and here’s an answer or a conclusion.

**What about living in the States? Has that had an influence on you?**

Not on my playing! There’s a great need over there for the Scottish influence. The people who are playing are mostly American and they come from completely different backgrounds. They haven’t grown up with it. It’s not in their psyche. They’re just not surrounded by the culture, so they take it up with a vengeance and want to absorb everything and want to do all these things that you can really only learn in a lifetime. I think for some of them it’s more of a performance thing, rather than giving music to the dancers. They put together these huge bands where everybody has a free-for-all. It all gets too complicated and I keep saying ‘simplify’. The dancers have to hear the melody which has the beat in it, but if you clutter it up with all this stuff, people can’t dance to it.

**If you had one pet hate about dance music, what would it be?**

Dullness. Dance music must be exciting. I can’t stand music that drives you into the floor. It has to get you out of the floor!

**So does that mean it has to be faster?**

No, speed has nothing to do with dullness. It can be tremendously exciting at a slower speed. A lot of the young accordion players who are technically brilliant often think that excitement means speed, and it doesn’t. You’ve got to let the tune be heard. I once heard an old man in the Borders play the mouth organ. It was an eye opener! I’d never heard anything swing as much. I accompanied him for a few tunes and I always remember him saying, ‘Aye if ye cannae tap your foot tae it, there’s nae music in it.’

**Are you a stickler for original tunes?**

I was for a long time. Let’s face it, when I first played for country dancing, we were on Book 18 and there weren’t thousands of other dances out there. Now we’re at Book



45 and there are many more thousands of dances published. I think there is a case for insisting on the original tune for certain dances which have become so tied up with the tune. It is a shock to me to have to dance, for example, *General Stuart's Reel*, to a different tune. On the other hand, you could argue that the original might only be played first time through and every other couple has then to dance it to other tunes! I appreciate there are people who don't recognise the original for *General Stuart* for various reasons: they might not have live music; or maybe their teacher isn't interested in the music. Nowadays, I would say you cannot insist all the time – especially for the more obscure dances. But there's no excuse in a branch class now that we have recordings for all the Society dances. But if you're in a club in a remote area, or if your teacher is newly qualified, you can't expect them to buy all 45 books and hundreds of CDs! It's more important to get more people dancing! Eventually they will get the right music.

I think one thing the music sub-committee could do is make a list of core dances and say these are the ones we should always dance to the original tune. Traditionally, not all dances had tunes associated with them. Today there are so many dances out there and so much music that I don't think we can insist on original tunes all the time. It's far too tall an order especially for newish musicians. But we should insist on the core of the tradition being danced to the originals.

#### **What's your all-time favourite tune?**

It's got to be *Sir George Clark of Penicuik* - the tune for *Up in the Air* – a beautiful, beautiful tune – just a classic.

#### **What do you listen to when you're doing the ironing?**

Radio 1, Radio 2, Radio 3 or Classic FM! Funnily enough, musicians who play don't do a lot of listening. I always buy other people's CD's, but if we settle down on a Saturday night and open a bottle of wine, I do not put on a country dance CD!

#### **Is there a band you like listening to?**

Oh, I like David Cunningham. I think his style is in the old tradition – he's got a real swing and his band's been together for a while. It's not rent-a-band! I still like listening to the old Stan Hamilton recordings. He was ahead of his time. Stan led the way into thinking that something different could happen with this music, and he could break the mould. His recordings really are exciting, but the members of his

band were absolute sticklers for what they saw as the tradition of the Scottish dance band.

#### **Moving on from music, what was your experience of Miss Milligan?**

Well, I never played for her – just that once for the exams. Kitty Maclachlan was her pianist at Summer School, and I never worked in Glasgow. But I met her every year when we chose the tunes for the new book in her flat in Saltoun Street. There was Winnie Carnie, Susie Inglis and myself. She put us in her front room while she went about her business for the day. She cooked



us lunch and dinner. I remember the first time I turned up – in fear and trepidation! This person opened the door and she was completely dressed in white. She was baking, in her white overall and apron, flour all over her hands. She took me into the kitchen where she was baking scones. We just sat chatting and that was my first inkling that this was a human being as well as Miss Milligan! The other ladies arrived and we spent the day poring over old tunes and doing our best to fit the tune to the dance. Then at a certain time in the afternoon we had to stop so that Miss Milligan could get the racing results. She enjoyed putting on a bet.

#### **This is certainly a more interesting Miss Milligan!**

Yes, and then we stopped for sherry before dinner. It was always great fun going to see her. She was so hospitable. I saw another side to her and realised you didn't need to walk around shaking or agreeing with everything she said. I think she had most respect for people who had an opinion and were prepared to voice it. You only needed

to look into her eyes to see there was a twinkle in there and you never knew whether she was joking or not. I remember coming home late from a party at St Andrews. As I passed her room, she came out to go to the ablutions. "Miss Johnstone, a bit late on the go!" So I replied, "You too, Miss Milligan!" She just laughed. I knew she was just back from another party!

#### **How do you think she'll be seen in 30 or 40 years time?**

Well, I think first we have to dispel a few myths. Some people have this idea of a formidable harridan, but she wasn't – at least not all of the time! She could be formidable and you could be very unlucky with her. I know some people who couldn't stand her. But like everyone who is a dictator, you're going to upset people, but the point about her was that the buck stopped with her. She didn't have Mrs Stewart around to share the responsibility with. She was on her own and could do what she liked – and frequently did. We have to remember that she was a very old lady at the end. She made mistakes. There are mistakes throughout the books – in terms of missed opportunities to match dances to tunes which have since been discovered and misinterpretations of dances. But at the end of the day it is just such a fantastic body of work. I don't know anybody else who would have had the energy to do it. So, she wasn't without fault, but she was great fun. I don't think people should have her stuck up on a pedestal and talk about her in hushed tones, but if we don't talk about her at all, then in 50 years time people won't know her. I mean, how did she get people from 33 countries to St Andrews?

#### **Would it be unfair to see her as a cultural imperialist?**

No, I think that's fair comment. What she could have done was specify people to whom she could entrust this thing she had built up – to be ambassadors on her behalf – younger people. My mother used to say that it was her baby and she didn't want a successor. But she didn't put it as politely as that!

#### **Getting back to musicians, how do we encourage more young people to play for country dancing?**

I think we have to stress that it's fun to play for classes. There are not many of us left who find it fun to play for classes. I wouldn't be the musician I am today had I not played for classes week in week out. How else do you develop techniques to give the dancers what they need if you're not listening to a



# Favourite dances

teacher trying to encourage those movements from them? If you look out onto the floor and see it's a shambles, you can pull back the tempo a bit and maybe emphasise the rhythm, maybe go quiet for a bit because the noise on the floor is horrendous and the only way to reduce it is to make them listen. You learn so much by playing weekly for classes. But as long as some teachers prefer to use CDs and not give musicians a chance, I'm not sure what we do to encourage new people. The fact is there aren't experienced people out there. We have to train them. We have to make it inexpensive enough for them to afford it. Somehow we must make contact with the young fiddlers and accordionists all over Scotland. We know we have very few new musicians coming through. We need to put it on a semi-professional footing. My idea with the musicians' courses was that we would bring professionals in and pay them.

## Is payment an issue?

I don't think anyone should be out of pocket. If someone is giving up a week of their summer holiday, there's loss of income to consider. They're probably going to have to take another week or two for a proper summer holiday. Yes, I do think that a music instructor, in fact, all summer school staff, should be paid. Summer School is the only school in the world that doesn't pay their staff. It may be our hobby, but times have changed. After all, you wouldn't ask your Pilates teacher to teach you for nothing.

## So are you optimistic about our future?

Well, I go up and down about it! I don't want the whole thing to go down the tubes because it is a valuable part of our culture. We do have a problem as a Society – we are ageing. We seem to have a great ability to draw in people to take part in what is actually a very demanding physical activity who have just retired, and who may never have moved to music in their life before! The teaching is not so rigorous as it used to be. Dancers don't have the commitment they used to have. People just want to be friendly and have a good time. If they took up skiing, their attitudes would be very different. So, did we let standards slip and now people don't want the rigour or is the world just a different place today? But with the huge enthusiasm in Scotland for traditional music, I do believe it is the music which will bring young people in. I think the key to the future lies in the music. Get the music right with young enthusiastic musicians and they will drag in the next generation of dancers.

## Competition results

**In the last Bulletin, we asked you to tell us what your favourite dance was. The question has provoked much tearing of hair and lengthy deliberations, but 165 of you stuck with it and sent in a vote. A total of 80 different dances got a mention, with a mixture reels, jigs and strathspeys, RSCDS and non-RSCDS.**

One very common reason for choosing a particular dance was that it was a 'first' of some kind. For example: the first dance learned – J B Milne, *Duke of Perth*, *The Irish Rover*; the first visit to Summer School – *Autumn in Appin*; the first dance someone learned how to show off – *Mairi's Wedding*; or the first dance learned with maximum opportunities to flirt – *My Jo!*

For some of you, a dance generated memories or thoughts of individuals – several dancers from Japan associated a particular dance with Junko Matsuhashi who sadly died last year (*Miss Milligan's Strathspey*, *Shiftin' Bobbins*, *Tam O'Shanter*). Others chose *Miss Gibson's Strathspey* or *Miss Milligan's Strathspey* because of memories of those ladies.

*The Reel of the 51st Division*, was the favourite that generated the most interesting comments. For one dancer, it was the first dance he learned, and he was inspired by the background story of the dance. Someone else had particular connections with the dance, as his brother was in that division. Yet another dancer had a personal connection with the dance as her husband worked with Jimmy Atkinson. The history of the dance, and the fact that it opened the floodgates for acceptance of newly devised dances, was what made it favourite for one particular dancer.

For many of you, it was the combination of dance and music that inspired you, but there were many other comments about favourite dances. Here are some of them:

**Rob Roy:** It reminds me of when I made a mistake almost every time I danced it!

**Royal Deeside Railway:** I love trains. I feel as if I am on one when dancing it!

**Joie de Vivre:** It really does give me 'joy of living'.

**Australian Ladies:** It's the nearest thing to flying without an aeroplane!

**Tullynessle:** Complicated, but flows wonderfully when learned, and the music is a dream.

**The Montgomerie Rant:** Longevity and enduring popularity, never tire of the tune, it's fun!

**The Reel of the Royal Scots:** Is there a dance that is more Scottish?

Prizes of CDs are on their way to the following individuals. It was felt that their comments were the most interesting, entertaining and original:

- 1 Matthias Lang from Mainz
- 2 Jack Pollack from Waynesville, USA
- 3 Asako Shimayama from Tokyo

Special congratulations to Matthias as he will be attending Marie's Wedding in September – as the groom!

And so to the result! 165 members voted. 59 dances received just one vote, 9 had two votes, and those with more than that were:

- No 1 Pelorus Jack
- No 2 The Irish Rover
- No 3 Mairi's Wedding  
Miss Milligan's Strathspey  
The Reel of the 51st  
The Reel of the Royal Scots
- No 4 The Montgomerie Rant
- No 5 J B Milne  
Miss Gibson's Strathspey  
Sugar Candie
- No 6 Autumn in Appin
- No 7 The Glasgow Highlanders

Many of you spoke of enjoying the history of *Pelorus Jack*; of how the dance captures the graceful movements of dolphins swimming in harmony; and of how the music matches the dance perfectly.

## From another perspective

We have received some interesting information from Michael East of York who has been monitoring the frequency with which dances are done in his area. In the past year he has attended 100 dancing sessions. The top five dances were:

- Bratach Bana
- Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan
- Pelorus Jack
- The Laird of Milton's Daughter
- The Montgomerie Rant

Interestingly, in the 100 dancing sessions, he danced 466 different dances!

### Sheffield's 50th

Congratulations to Sheffield Branch who will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary with a ball on 3rd December. As part of their celebrations, Sheffield Branch are producing a book of dances with a CD.





Heather Carmichael, Director of Spring Fling 2005, reports on this highly successful weekend for young dancers, held in Edinburgh in April.

***They cam' frae a' the airts .... and a' the pairs.***

From Oban to Cardiff, Inverurie to London, Newcastle to Castle Douglas, the dancers at Easter School spanned virtually the whole country. Some were from even further afield, coming originally from France and Australia. A total of 51 young dancers, ranging from 16 to 35 came to James Gillespie's School in Edinburgh to take part in this year's Spring Fling. Accommodation was provided for residential students at the Youth Hostel nearby, where the Easter School took over three dormitories.

***So here's to strip the willow, the polka and the reel!***

The weekend got off to a rousing start, with a ceilidh called by Neil Wignall of Edinburgh, with music from Lyndsay Weir. The ceilidh was accessible to all, with a mix of traditional Scottish ceilidh dances, and some country dances. After the ceilidh, there was an opportunity for those who wished to continue socialising in the Bruntsfield Hotel – this last was a nice opportunity to mix and get to know the other dancers.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny, and got under way with classes in Scottish country dancing. Beginners were taught by Caroline Brockbank, and Alan Rintoul took on the more advanced dancers, in classes which were both interesting and challenging. Music for these classes was provided by Peter Shand on piano, and Judith Smith on the fiddle, which provided additional interest to some of the attendees, who were principally used to dancing to CDs or accordion.

***Here's to country dances, the lancers and quadrille!***

Following an adjournment for lunch, Saturday afternoon was devoted to a number of optional classes – including the lancers and quadrilles. Jimmie Hill came along and gave one of his popular workshops on quadrilles. This was a chance to learn something new, and a bit different, including new steps – the jeté assemblé. The class included a fascinating lesson in the history and development of this form of dance throughout the nineteenth century, as well as the chance to learn a bit more about the construction of some very familiar dances: including the fact that the Eightsome Reel is a typical example of quadrille structure! A special mention must also go to the music for this class, provided by Peter Shand. While a forte-piano was not available, Peter's playing of a pianoforte added to the atmosphere of elegance in this class. The other optional classes were classes in highland dancing, taught by Catherine Coutts – first, for the novices, a class on highland steps to use in country dances, and then a more challenging class for the more advanced dancer.

Caroline Brockbank (who had spent the morning teaching the beginners country dance class) tirelessly provided music on the accordion for Catherine's students. A walk-through was also provided for anyone who wanted to brush up the dances for the Saturday evening dance.

***What's the use of jazz to folks that's fed on brose and meal?***

Jazz was perhaps the one thing that did not feature at Spring Fling. However the 'brose and meal', was

provided in the form of very appetizing dishes prepared by Chris Adam, wife of Society Chairman, Stewart, for those who were resident in the Youth Hostel. The non-residents did, however, get a chance to sample the cooking of Chris and her team on Sunday with a lunch of baked potatoes with lots of interesting fillings.

***So put a bit of pith in't lads wi' a' your soul and heel!***

And that is exactly what happened on the Saturday evening, which featured a Scottish country dance to the wonderful music of Iain Macphail and his band. This dance was open to dancers of all ages, and received strong support from dancers in Edinburgh, the surrounding areas, and even from across in the west of Scotland. The programme was varied, and included a selection of popular dances.

Once again, after the Saturday dance, there was an opportunity for the dancers to mix off the dance floor, and as the evening had proved to be beautifully warm, a number of attendees and local dancers rounded off the evening sitting outside at the Golf Hotel on Bruntsfield Links.

Sunday morning gave yet more opportunity for dancing, with classes in Scottish country dancing for beginners, this time taught by Jimmie Hill, and for the more advanced dancer, Stewart Adam ran a class in 'Choreography'. For those readers who do not know Stewart personally, he is well known for the medleys which he arranges for displays, trips, and competitions, for the Dunedin and New Scotland groups, as well as for the 'Dancing Forth' show run by Edinburgh Branch as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This class





was very well attended, and included a number of dancers who had taken part in some of Stewart's displays in the past, and had come along to find out 'how he does it'. Stewart's class certainly offered food for thought on how to create 'links' between different dances, so that patterns would change throughout the medley, while making the minimum alteration to the dances themselves. Music for this class was provided by Iain Macphail, who gave an additional, thought-provoking tutorial in the middle of the class on the importance of selecting appropriate tunes for dances, both in the context of medleys and social dances.

The final session of Spring Fling was 'dancing for all' to the music of James Gray. This session was a fun social dance for everyone. It included a number of traditional dances, as well as at least one not-so-familiar dance, *Hurlygush*, billed as a 'typical Dunedin dance'. Finally, with the *Reel of the Royal Scots*, the dancing at Easter School came to a close.

But Easter School did not quite end there. Over the final lunch, speculation had already started over where next year's Spring Fling would be (as well as one or two people wondering if there was any chance that the age rules could be bent next year to allow people who were currently 35 in!)

That last question is one for next year's Spring Fling committee. However, if people are wanting to come back that much, then the RSCDS must be doing 'something right' with Spring Fling.

Spring Fling is a great opportunity for dancers from across the UK and beyond, from RSCDS and non-RSCDS backgrounds, to meet, get to know each other, mix and enjoy each other's company, and, of course, dance together. Judging by comments received, and the amount of socialising

which went on after the Friday ceilidh and the Saturday dance, this year's Spring Fling achieved this.

As a final comment on Spring Fling, this is an e-mail received from a participant:

*I came over from France. I attended all the beginner classes. I really enjoyed this weekend where people from all over the UK and beyond came to have fun, improve their steps, meet other dancers, discover other aspects of country dancing – like quadrilles or highland steps, and dance, dance and dance. By the end of the weekend my feet were like porridge but had there been dancing on Sunday night, I would have come and danced all night! For me, getting to know and dance with country dancers from the UK is an honour and it really gave me the will to do more country dancing in the years to come, difficult as it may be when back in France.*

**Spring Fling 2006  
Newcastle  
31 March – 2 April  
Put it in your diary now!**

- Organised by young people for young people!
- Classes for beginners and for experienced dancers
- Optional classes
- Social dancing in the evenings

Look out for confirmation of all details on the website:

[www.rscds.org](http://www.rscds.org)

Come and have fun!

Director: John McCann

### Youth Weekend West

Frankie Chao of Victoria BC, Canada, wants you all to mark your calendars for May 26th–28th 2006. That's when the Youth Weekend West comes to Victoria. The weekend is aimed at dancers from the age of 12 up to the thirty-somethings. The teachers will be Mairi Hand, Fred de Marse and Ruth Jappy. Contact Frankie, Director of YWW, at [tubafrank@yahoo.com](mailto:tubafrank@yahoo.com)

### Nothing new under the sun!

In 1931 the SCDS (Scottish Country Dance Society) decided that more publicity was needed and a sub-Committee of the Executive Council was set up to make recommendations. In January 1932 it reported and the minutes of the Executive Council record 'that a magazine be issued bi-annually giving notes of interest to members and including three new dances in each issue. It was agreed by the Council that a magazine should be issued in March, containing notices of the Summer School and other items of interest to members, but with no dances.'

Things moved quicker then. The first edition of what we now call *The Bulletin* was published in March 1932. Sadly, we do not have a copy of this first issue in the archives, but we do have the subsequent issues.

It must have been well received because the Executive Council, at a meeting in April 1932 decided that a second issue should be published in October. At that meeting it was decided that two of the most popular dances be incorporated in each issue of the Bulletin. The first two dances to be included were *Petronella* and *The Duke of Perth*.

### Tsunami appeal

In February 2005 Ayr Branch's Charity Dance raised £605 for the Tsunami Appeal. Well done, Ayr!





## Diced, tartan or cream, Sir?

In this first article on the clothes we wear for country dancing, Robert Lachlan writes about fashions in kilt hose. Robert used to be a keen country dancer. He is a long-time student of men's highland dress with a fascinating collection of historical postcards, prints and books.

It was Trollope who said that I *hold that gentleman to be the best-dressed whose dress no one observes*. This would seem to be a good rule when it comes to deciding which hose to wear with the kilt, and one which the chap in picture 1 had obviously never heard of! Where DID he get those socks! Women have no idea the choices open to men when it comes to hose today. They have danced with men in tartan hose, diced hose, plain dark hose and cream hose. Have they ever wondered why men choose the hose they wear?

### Most important consideration

The most important thing about a man's hose is where they are in relation to the kilt. Far too many dancers wear them like football players, too high, right up almost over the knee, and you can't see any flesh between the bottom of their kilt and the top of their socks. Sir Compton Mackenzie summed up the problem in his article *Wearing the kilt* in *The Saltire Review* in 1960:

*'Another widely-spread bad habit is to wear stockings that are too long and have to be rolled over twice or even three times. The turn-over of the stockings should just cover the garter, or if you can get a girlfriend to knit you the right top for your hose, the right kind of garter should be exposed.'*

Hose shouldn't come up to your knee. They stop below the knee. The kilt just breaks the knee so you can see a bit of leg. Even the two magnificent gentlemen in picture 3 are showing several inches of

bare leg. Earlier this year *Scotland on Sunday* published an article on the kilt with a picture of a guy showing about half an inch of leg! He looked like a football player in a skirt! You have got to be able to see the knee and a little bit below it. It doesn't need to be much below the knee, but there should be something.

Loudon Macqueen Douglas in his *Manual of Scottish National Dress* of 1924 writes that stockings should 'come right up to under the knee-cap'. He would not have approved of the highland dancer in picture 2 with no leg showing at all!

### Mid-calf and higher

One of the things that amazes me about many of the pictures I have collected is that the hose are even lower than I would think of as normal. Many seem to be somewhere between mid-calf and the knee and as anyone knows who has worn hose which were too short, there comes a point where they fall down! Of course, fashions change and it is clear from many paintings and prints that men were not afraid to show a lot more bare leg than we would be happy with today.

### Fashions

One of the interesting things about collecting historical pictures of highland dress is that there is no pattern to different fashions. Men seem to have been very individual in the way they wore it. The rather uncomfortable chap in picture 4

looks as if he has just walked into a photographer's studio and been dressed up in the kilt specially. His kilt is badly creased and the hose look too small. There seems to be too much bare leg and the overall impression is odd, to say the least.



### Plain-coloured

When I was a boy growing up in Carlisle, I always wore plain socks knitted by my Gran or bought locally. The colour was usually lovat or blue. When I started dancing, my mother tells me that it was cream socks she knitted for me. This was in the early 80's, so the fashion for cream socks had been established by then.

Picture 5 shows typical day dress from the catalogue of the now defunct Stewart Christie of George St, Edinburgh. The man is wearing plain-coloured hose. That seems to me still to be the kind of hose to wear with day dress.

### Tartan hose

The reason for tartan hose is historical. Originally hose were never knitted. They were just made up from remnants of the





kilt or waistcoat fabric – just cloth. That's why when you look at old prints or paintings, the hose are the same as the kilt. And with hose made like that, you needed a garter to keep them up, and in most historical paintings the garter is on the outside of the hose. The garter would be tied round the material covering the leg and the end would just hang loose. This is believed to be the origin of the 'flashes'. In the Highland Regiments men would make their own hose out of old flannel waistcoats or even old hose! Knitted hose really didn't arrive until the 19th century.

Picture 6 shows evening dress from Christie's catalogue. The man is wearing knitted tartan hose to match his kilt. Notice the amount of bare leg – a good six inches! Tartan hose are not exclusively for evening wear, however. They may also be worn with day-dress.

The problem today with tartan hose is the cost. Gone are the days when everybody had a granny who could knit them for you. A pair today would set you back well over £100! In Christie's post-war catalogue plain knitted hose cost £1.9.6d (£1.47p) while tartan hose to match your kilt cost £3.12.6d (£3.65p).

### Cream hose

When I started country dancing in the late 1970's, cream hose were the norm. Only at more formal balls did you find tartan or diced hose being worn. You don't find cream hose in pictures or catalogues before the 1950's or 60's. Some people think they were an invention of kilt hire companies, who probably found it easier to stock hose in one colour than in a variety. I certainly have no memory of anyone wearing cream when I was

growing up. And white hose are out of the question! But if you look at a wedding photograph today, they're all wearing cream! You could almost say that if you're wearing cream hose, the chances are you're a country dancer or you've hired your kilt! I heard of one teacher who boasted that he wore cream hose to teach so that his class could see the position of his feet – while another admitted he wore dark hose so that his class *couldnae see his feet!*

### Diced hose

Diced hose originated in the army with different regiments wearing different colours for different purposes. Today some people wear them as an alternative to tartan hose with evening dress. Some people think they can be a wee bit flamboyant, but then it's up to the individual.

### Garters and flashes

Today we call them flashes, but originally they were garters and simply a way of keeping your socks up. There's nothing worse in the middle of a dance than that sinking feeling and you know your socks are on the way down! As garters were originally worn outside, they became decorative as well as practical. When knitted hose came in, the garter was then hidden under the turn-over. Today you choose your flashes to complement your kilt. I don't really care what colour flashes are – as long as the socks aren't too long! When I was a boy, I didn't wear flashes. My mother made garters out of elastic she bought at the local drapers! But then we wore short trousers to school with knee-length socks, so boys were used to wearing garters! If I was wearing tartan

hose, I would probably wear plain flashes or none at all – just garters to keep them up. But again, this is an individual thing. I've heard people say you shouldn't wear tartan flashes with tartan hose, but I don't know if there's any historical basis for that.

### Washing your hose

The main thing to remember is always to hand-wash them, wring them out and dry them flat in the open air. Never put them in a machine! Machine wash a pair of tartan hose and you've just wasted £100! They will shrink and be unwearable. And never wear them twice without washing them! Any man who spends a week at Summer School knows that he needs half a dozen pairs – at least!

### Don't hide your knees!

I suppose I grew up wearing the kilt, so I've learned what works and what doesn't, what looks natural to a Scot, and what looks peculiar. The most important thing about hose, however, is that they shouldn't be too high. I've got a thing against very narrow turn-overs, but that is personal. I know that some people are allergic to cream hose, but I don't mind them – as long as they are cream and not white. Personally, I prefer not to wear cream with evening dress, but needs must, and the height of the hose is the most critical factor. Remember you're a dancer – not a football player! So, men, the next time you get dressed for dancing, ask your partner, 'Can you see my knees – and a wee bit more!'





# The Society



Clockwise from top left: Young dancers from Dancing Forth • Winnie Urquhart and Ethel Carlyle at Summer School • Edinburgh Branch Dem Team at the Palace of Holyrood House • Marian Anderson and her band in Vancouver • Caroline Brockbank and Catherine Coutts at the Spring Fling • James Gray





# On Camera



**CAPTION COMPETITION**  
What is Janet saying to Ann at Winter School? All answers by email to [mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org) by Nov 30th. Prize for the best caption in next issue.



Dancing in the rain in Princes St Gardens • Up in the air in Seattle • Jon Bews, fiddler, and Dan Houghton, piper • Irene Edgar and the Reigate club at the Brighton Summer Ball • Two happy St Andrews dancers in the Younger Hall • Malcolm Brown and friends pointing their toes at the White Rose Festival, Leeds



# Derek Haynes

The whole Society was shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Derek Haynes on 4 April this year at the age of 72. Derek's contribution to Scottish country dancing and to the RSCDS was immense.

Derek, originally from Liverpool, started dancing when he was 20 years old. His own dancing was nimble, accurate, but above all, stylish. He taught our dancing for around 50 years in a way which was enthusiastic, memorable and inimitable. He devised some of our best known dances.

Derek spent his working life as a telephone engineer, first with the Post Office and then with British Telecom. He was a keen cyclist and, together with Maureen, an enthusiastic fell-walker. As a Society we extend our sympathy to Maureen.

## Memories of Derek

by Jennifer Wilson of Elgin

The Scottish country dance world has lost a wonderful exponent, gifted teacher and ambassador in the recent passing of Derek Haynes. Derek will live in the memory of his friends as one who enjoyed life to the full and, although there was a life outside of dancing, his passion was for the dance and its music.

Derek and I first met at summer school in St Andrews some four decades ago, I as a shy teenager, whilst Derek had that air of confidence in his dancing even then. Derek was, as I recall, probably the only non-Scot in the demonstration teams at that time, along with memorable characters such as Duncan McLeod, Bill Ireland and Bobby Watson, all 'dancing from the heart' as was expected of them by Miss Milligan.

Derek's dancing ability shone in other roles, notably that of prima ballerina partnering Alex McPhillips, and what poor Derek was subjected to in rehearsal can only be left to the imagination! All I can say is I could hardly focus on the music for tears of laughter. It didn't help either when the corps de ballet included such stalwarts as Alastair MacFadyen, Hugh Foss and Cecil McCausland, complete with frills, string vests, crash helmets, hairy legs and all! There has seldom been a ceilidh where Derek didn't contribute to the fun.

As a late starter to the intricacies of Highland dancing, Derek worked relentlessly to perfect his footwork. There were several occasions when I found myself not only playing for the men's highland class but teaching it as well, where Derek would accuse me of working them harder than anyone else. In later years, I can remember him

showing little mercy to *his* highland class, as many of you out there will have experienced! On saying that, he never spared himself, always prepared to work as hard as was expected of the class, both in highland and country.

Our first opportunity to work together came when Derek was invited to teach in Holland and to bring a musician with him. This proved to be the beginning of many more opportunities to team up, throughout Europe, the UK and at St Andrews. Once again, Derek was

found it quite a thrill to watch a class achieve the cadence or rise and fall of the step in unison, driven on by what can only be described as Derek's almost aggressive enthusiasm! It was obvious every time this happened that even the students surprised themselves, resulting in applause from the piano.

We musicians who were fortunate to have worked with Derek will miss the rapport he was able to have with us, never forgetting or letting a class forget that we were such an important part of

the team. To hear *Did you see that, Jennifer? What a load of rubbish! or Jennifer, give them a few more bars.* The delight to the musician when he had them dancing every bar of the music, the quizzical looks when told *if you are a fraction late, you will be right.* There were times when I would be giving Derek the 'whatever are you doing?' look, and on one such occasion on seeing my expression he simply said 'Trust me, it works' and of course it always did, such was the man! Derek's approach to teaching would not have suited everyone,

but no-one was ever left in any doubt that good technique and phrasing made for easier and more elegant dancing.

Bill Ireland's words '*Could you two throw something together for the Younger Hall tonight? We are a demonstration short.*' was how we came to dance together, accompanied by Bill's mouth music. The 'throwing together' took about twenty minutes, five minutes before dinner to liaise with Bill, and to say the prospect of it all was an ordeal would be an understatement. I can remember Derek saying before we went on 'let's not make a sound' and sure enough you could have heard a pin drop save for the occasional squeak of Derek's pumps, which started off the giggles, highly infectious to the audience as well.



Derek and Maureen with friends at Winter School, February 2005

relentless in his preparation (subject to alteration on seeing the 'customers', mind you) and deserved no less from his musician. His first aim – that a class move to the music and enjoy themselves.

Only Derek could get away with asking a class to 'raise the right eyebrow, raise the left eyebrow' during a warm-up routine.

Derek always professed to 'not being a musician' but his ability to improve technique with the use of carefully chosen music was a class act, especially when teaching the *pas de basque*, difficult to teach and to master. I kid you not, I





Neidpath Castle

It almost became an annual turn after that – which gave us a huge amount of fun, especially the spontaneous endings involving an astonished Bill, which never really went according to plan (if there was one), but caused great hilarity. How easy it was when all three of us thought alike and talked with our feet – such happy memories.

It is a very fitting tribute to Derek that he has left behind a legacy of dances we so much enjoy performing. He had a skill in giving a little twist to a figure to create something different which even the less experienced dancer could cope with and enjoy.

It goes without saying what a worthy recipient he was for the Society's Scroll of Honour in 2003 and the thrill it gave him to be nominated. Truly outstanding dedication to the RSCDS.

Thank you Derek, from your many friends, colleagues and pupils all around the world, for the inspiration and enthusiasm to maintain standards, but most of all for the privilege of having known, worked and shared with you the passion of dance.

## Derek's dance legacy

by Jean Martin of Aberdeen

Exactly 40 years ago *Book 22* was published. The Society broke new ground in that it was the first book to contain modern dances in traditional form. In that book is a strathspey, *Neidpath Castle*, which has stood the test of time as it is still very popular. It was, of course, written by a young Derek Haynes.

Apart from *The Earl of Errol's Reel*, at that time *Neidpath Castle* was the only dance published by the Society requiring a 3-couple set – certainly it was the only strathspey. That form has become very

popular and today there are many strathspeys for 3-couple sets but *Neidpath Castle* still stands out as a gem.

Eager to find other dances of the same calibre, many teachers found several of Derek's dances in the Glendarroch SCD sheets, produced by Hugh Foss. Amongst them were such favourites as *MacDonald of the Isles*, *My Heather Hills*, *The Creel*, *Kinfauns Castle*, *Luck to Loyne*, *The Spey in Spate*, *Blervie Castle* and *The Black Mountain Reel*, all within the compass of most dancers.

Some of these dances can now be found in the Carnforth books, produced by Derek himself and containing a variety of styles – longwise sets for 2, 3 and 4 couples; 3-couple sets; square sets; 5-couple sets; 6-couple sets; a medley in a square set; a reel for 5 and one for 8 dancers; and a twelvesome. In all of these Derek took the traditional or existing formations and used them in a different way often just giving a little tweak to make the dance quite distinctive. An example of that is the 'divided knot' in *Miss Stevenson's Fancy*, a strathspey in the *Third Carnforth Collection*. It is 'innovation with simplicity' as one admirer once described Derek's dances.

Readers will no doubt have noted that all the proceeds from Derek's 'wee' books have gone to Cancer Charities and over £6000 has been raised, no mean feat considering that each book costs so little!

Crib cards, figcards, highland step cards all offer straightforward advice to the dancer and teacher and most recently Derek's *Indexed Guide for Progressive Teaching*, covering as it does dances published by the Society and by others, is a helpful reference for the teacher.

Any deviser's workshop run by Derek was much appreciated. He always

'showed' how an idea had developed and had a team of dancers there to demonstrate his point. Nothing was revolutionary – just a new take on the familiar. At the AGM in Perth in 2004 workshop participants were set the task of devising a dance within certain parameters. Particular figures had to be included, rights and lefts and some form of a reel (3-couple, 4-couple, diagonal – whatever!). That all made for focussed activity and all enjoyed the experience and were encouraged to go home and try out what they had learned.

Perhaps when you next dance *Miss Gibson's Strathspey* or *The Clansman* you will recall the wealth of the legacy left to us by Derek Haynes.

## From Maureen

*Dear Friends*

*I would like to thank everyone, whether as individuals, Branches, Affiliated Groups, or just any group of dancers, who have sent cards, letters, and messages of sympathy following Derek's sudden death. He obviously touched the lives of so many dancers around the world. I am truly appreciative of everyone's support which has given me strength to come through these difficult weeks.*

*It is wonderful to belong to our worldwide family of Scottish country dancers. I thank you all sincerely.*

*Maureen Haynes  
Carnforth*



# Letters to the editor

## Attracting new members

Dear Editor

Attracting new members is a perennial problem faced by all branches and every club. Do your readers have any ideas which they might like to share?

Here in Scotland, the RSCDS (and SCD in general) has an image of being stuffy and elitist. This may have been justified in the past, but things are definitely improving within the Society – so how do we go about convincing the sceptics to come and join us? Dancing correctly to a high standard is important, but we need to be careful how we present it to outsiders. Once the basics are mastered, there's still plenty to learn and improve on – that's why I'm still dancing – but the joy of dancing well is a long way off for novices who are still learning the formations. For many, the social aspect may initially be more attractive. It's much more enjoyable dancing in groups which create a sense of community, but how do we achieve this? Classes could be run near a handy pub, where all participants are encouraged to go afterwards. Maybe the answer is a weekly social dance class where dancers of all levels are encouraged to dance together. Where facilities allow, several classes could be run in different rooms of the same hall at the same time, and then all come together at the end of the night for social dancing – and head off to the pub together afterwards. Then everyone gets something at their level, plus a chance to mix.

That's all very well once we've got them in through the door, but how do we catch their interest in the first place? We know how great our dancing is, but to those not in the know, if they see a leaflet advertising 'SCD: classes available at all levels' they may just decide to go off and learn Russian or Iranian weaving. We have to work out what they are looking for. Maybe it's exercise – in Edinburgh we had plenty of interest from a New Year advert with the strapline 'Get yourself back in trim – more sociable than the gym'. Even the press phoned up. Or it could be our culture. The Edinburgh University society always has a good crop of foreign students joining, interested to learn something local to the country they are visiting. And my website draws a steady stream of queries from all over the world from people with Scottish ancestry. Or maybe they are already fans of our music and want to take it further.

The other classic recruitment drive is the dem. But again we have to think who we

are trying to attract. If we arrange for our crack dem team to turn up in full highland regalia, we'd better be sure the audience will be impressed rather than intimidated! Conversely, our informal team of intermediate dancers in casual clothes will be much more attractive to someone looking for a new social activity than to someone seeking a challenge. Either way, we have to pitch it for the people there so they think 'I'd like to do that'. And of course we need to remember to tell them that we welcome new recruits – it's no good just turning up, doing our ten-minute spot and going away again without letting people know how to get in touch.

What have other groups found that works? Please share your experiences so we can all benefit.

Yours

Ian Brockbank, Edinburgh

## The Reel of the 51st

Dear Editor

Can I add a postscript to the saga of the Reel of the 51st? When Mrs Harris Hunter got the instructions from her husband, one of the first to get a copy was one of my schoolteachers, who happened to be one of her dancers. She brought it to school and coached ten of us to dance it. I was one of the team which performed it at a class concert. Was this the first 'civvie dem' of the now famous reel? It was certainly my first dem!

Yours sincerely

Beatrice A. Nairn, Perth

Dear Editor

Further to Jim Healy's excellent article in the last Bulletin, I remember Miss Hadden, the then Secretary, writing to *The Reel* in 1955 that in September 1944 a bound copy of the Society's first twelve books was presented to HM the Queen at Holyrood House. Her Majesty expressed interest in the Reel of the 51st Division, which had been published in leaflet form. She was very interested in the dance's origin and expressed the wish that it should be included in the next book. The Executive Council felt it was appropriate to include the dance to commemorate the stand made at St Valery by the men of the 51st Division.

Although Jim states that Lt Atkinson was not an experienced dancer, nonetheless he had always danced at home with other county families in sets of 5 or 6 couples as was their custom.

In a letter in 1954 Miss Scrimgeour, a senior Perth Branch teacher, wrote to Mr

Atkinson, 'I was the person to whom Mrs Hunter brought her husband's letter with the instructions for the dance and between us we worked it out in our small wartime club. I thought you might like to know that the Perth Branch always dance the original form in sets of 5 couples. We never accepted the alteration in the Victory Book.'

On one occasion when talking to James Atkinson, he told me that when dancing their new dance in the prison camp, they always bowed to corners after leading up the middle, and again to second corners after turning partner.

Yours

Bill Clement, Edinburgh

## Summer School 05

Dear Editor

This is to ask you to pass on my thanks for the wonderful week of SC dancing that I spent in St Andrews.

Everything was perfect – organisation, classes, accommodation, food and non-stop sunshine. As a 'first-timer' I was able to feel welcome right from the start with the friendly tour. The feeling of welcome and friendship continued all through the week. I can't wait for my SCD class in North Berwick to start in the autumn!

I am looking forward to hearing next year's dates. I hope the next 3 weeks go as swimmingly as last week did. I know that my friends enjoyed everything as much as I did.

With all good wishes and SO many thanks.

Janet Raeburn

## Future magazine content

Dear Editor

In the new magazine we would like to see the following:

- ideas for new ways to host various events during the year from different branches
- the steps we need to take to run a Scottish country dance festival with competitions
- ideas to promote classes and socials and to attract new dancers.

We hope this kind of thing will be included in the magazine so that we can all share our ideas and benefit.

Yours

Helen Clark, Houston and District Branch

**All letters to the editor should be sent to [mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org) or by post to HQ.**



# In my opinion

by Alastair Aitkenhead



In each issue we are asking someone from the Scottish country dance world to do an opinion piece. In the first of these, former Chairman of the Society, Alastair Aitkenhead, gives his views on four issues facing the Society today. Alastair, now retired and living on the Isle of Arran, trained as a PE teacher at Jordanhill College, Glasgow. He passed his preliminary certificate in 1941, then served in the army for 5 years. He passed his Full Certificate in 1947 after his war service. He then taught PE for 15 years before being appointed as PE Adviser to over 200 schools in Ayrshire. Within the RSCDS he was a highly respected teacher and examiner. Characteristically, he retired at the age of 70 from his examination duties 'in order to set an example to other examiners'. He is the most social of dancers and is still setting us all a good example!

## The new Management Board

In my opinion, we are very fortunate to belong to the RSCDS. It is a wonderful organisation, which has been working tirelessly now for over 80 years to keep Scottish country dancing alive.

We have undergone several changes recently – the greatest of these being the reconstruction of our management structure. The Executive Council, made up of delegates from each of our branches, had served us well, but had become too cumbersome. This was replaced by a Board of 18. In my opinion this is still too many. During the consultation period, several options were discussed. I feel that we should consult again and reduce the number further.

## The new exam structure

Within the next level of administration, the Education and Training Committee has revamped the examination structure and the method of selecting examiners. Both of these changes are to be commended. However, I am just a little concerned that our examinations do not become too academic. We should not be expecting excellence too soon. Particularly in the early stages of teacher training, it is essential that candidates feel encouraged and their potential nurtured. We must ensure that good candidates are not eliminated at the first stage of their training. We need more young teachers. It would be tragic if they fell at the first hurdle. We must give them good training to ensure they pass Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the new system, so that they can go back to their classes to gain the practical experience which will prepare them for Parts 4 and 5.

## Dancing in education

Scottish country dancing is a social skill – not a competitive sport. Like many physical skills, the younger one picks up the basic elements, the easier it is to improve and the more you get out of it. In my opinion, the fun of learning new formations and dances, with a dash of control and flight, is often lost in the pursuit of technical excellence or a place in a schools festival team. Nobody would deny that competition produces the cream in all physical skills and has its place. But our dancing is a social activity. I never again want to walk into a gym in a school and find a teacher training an elite set of 8 for a festival in the middle of the room, while 24 bored, excluded, and dejected wee souls sit around the edge watching! For me, that is not Scottish country dancing. The education authorities in Fife are ahead of the rest of Scotland in their commitment to promoting Scottish country dancing as a non-competitive activity for all students. Throughout my professional life I promoted dancing for all, not just for the elite. I am a firm believer that every Scottish child should be taught country dancing in a way which will give them a sense of achievement and fun! No Scottish child should find him or herself at a loss when the band strikes up the Dashing White Sergeant or the Eightsome Reel.

## Branches and local schools

For many Scottish children, it is not the teaching of dance in our schools that puts them off. Many are not even being offered it! Dance is meant to be part of the Programme of Expressive Arts in schools. In my opinion, this means it

should have a place in every school. There are always reasons for not including dance: difficulty in finding time in an overloaded timetable; lack of opportunity for after-school clubs; and maybe finance. Participation in an event such as a Festival is costly, and not only in time. There are difficulties in providing a dance teacher in every school, but branches can assist. Could our branches offer help, either with human or financial resources to, for example, a group of primary schools in their area? Could branches offer any resources to assist? I am aware that RSCDS teachers already help to prepare groups of pupils using the Dance Scottish pack. This is an excellent teaching pack from the Society. Could branches offer it to a group of local schools? If finance for resources is a problem for schools, assistance from the local branch may well be in accord with the objectives as stated in our constitution.

In my opinion we should remember that most of our Scottish members had their first experience of country dancing in school. They didn't join the RSCDS till they were adults, but it was that first school experience that sowed the seed. It is essential that children's first experience of country dancing is fun. It might be costly for us to sow the seed now, but the harvest in years to come will justify the expense. I hope that branches, both in Scotland and worldwide, will take up this challenge.



# A branch and a club

## RSCDS Ayr Branch

In 2003 Ayr Branch hosted its 70th Anniversary Ball in Troon Concert Hall. The evening celebrated many happy dancing years of the first Ayrshire branch formed on 4 October 1933 when both Mrs Stewart of Fasnacloich and Miss Milligan were present.

An initial membership of 66 fell to 4 in 1944/45 when the branch was practically dormant, then rose to over 500 in the post-war years and now stands at around 230.

The commitment of many long-serving office bearers, such as first Secretary, Betty Macmillan, succeeded by Nina Galloway then Ethel Carlyle, as well as Treasurers, Betty Thow and Peter Hyssett, has certainly contributed to the stability and growth of Ayr Branch.

We currently offer 7 adult classes from beginners to advanced and 3 children's classes, while in 1983 we ran 3 adult and 8 children's classes! Attracting children and young people is a general problem, but through our Days of Dance for schools, Family Dances and local Festival we try to encourage young people. We are also very fortunate to have so many talented musicians providing live music for our classes.

Weekend / Day Schools and Dances have always been well supported and currently attract dancers from many other branches. Summer Dancing on Mondays has become an institution. Beginning in a scout hall, then moving to a church hall, then a community centre and now Troon Concert Hall where over 200 dancers and spectators enjoy excellent music from some of the best bands.

Fundraising activities have always featured high on our agenda with the proceeds going to many worthy causes – from the 51st Division Prisoner of War Parcels' Fund in 1943 to the Tsunami Appeal this year.

On several occasions we've hosted the Society's AGM. The first time in 1953, the Duke of Atholl, Society President, caused a few anxious moments after deciding to go 'walkabout', but luckily he was returned to the fold!

Members of Ayr Branch have always contributed to the work of the Society. Mr Terras was the Society's first Treasurer while Miss Forgan became Society Secretary. Isobel Paton, Jean Walker, Helen Frame, the late Margaret Anderson, and Peter Hyssett all served on a number of Committees while our Hon.

President, Margaret Parker, was elected Chairman in 1982. Nowadays, MB member and examiner, Helen Frame, teachers Allison Russell and Andrew McConnell, all promote the aims of the Society worldwide.

Our present Chairman, Helen Frame, danced in the International Team in Bavaria in 1956 while Margaret Troup and Bert Jamieson represented us in South Africa in 1960.

Demonstration teams from Ayr have visited Israel, Belgium, Norway, France, Germany and Sweden with dancers from these countries making reciprocal visits, while nearer to home teams dance in halls, parks, theatres, on cruise ships, at Holyrood Palace and other places of historical interest. In July 2004, we joined with Millport dancers to commemorate the return of the 'Scotia' research vessel and danced a selection of the Scotia Suite dances at its first Scottish landing site on the Isle of Cumbrae.

As Miss Nina Galloway, Past Secretary, wrote in 1983 'Ayr Branch has many assets, but by far the main and overriding one is a loyal, enthusiastic and co-operative membership without whom the Branch would cease to function.' Her sentiments are still true today.

Since Miss Milligan examined Ayr's first 6 candidates in 1953, many others have taken their certificate and with their involvement and enthusiasm, Ayr Branch members are assured of many more happy and fulfilling dancing years.

*Wilma Brown, Branch Secretary*

## Cambridge University Strathspey and Reel Club

The Cambridge University Strathspey and Reel Club was founded soon after the end of WWII, and in 2006 it celebrates its 60th birthday.

Following the disbanding of the Enigma Project some of the young mathematicians involved came to Cambridge to study, and were influential in the founding of the Reel Club. Whilst at Bletchley Park they had been taught Scottish Dancing by Hugh Foss, who composed many excellent dances including *Polharrow Burn* and *Wee Cooper of Fife*. After its formation, the Reel Club quickly grew to about four hundred members. At the time, there were three other Scottish Dance groups in the university, as well as the town-based Scottish Society. The Reel Club has always been open to people with no

connection to the university. The opportunity this offers to socialise with a wide range of people doubtlessly goes some way towards explaining the club's early popularity.

The current success of the Reel Club is still its diversity. It has a good mixture of ages, town and gown, and beginners and experts. The Reel Club runs a social dance on Mondays, as well as an advanced class on Wednesdays, which is offered in conjunction with the local branch of the RSCDS. Members regularly attend dances organised by other Scottish dancing groups in the area, such as the Cambridge Branch and the Scottish Society. The Reel Club itself was honoured to host the first Spring Fling held outside Scotland. It also organises its own events ranging from the formal Highland Ball to the more casual, summer punt party. Many of the Reel Club's members also have a wider interest in folk dancing and have been known to display at local ceilidhs and the annual Inter-Varsity Folk Dance Festival (IVFDF). Last year their display for IVFDF consisted of a traditional strathspey and a new reel written by a member of the club. It was presented first to live traditional music and then in a more modern style using UV lights and rock music.

Another big, annual event for the Reel Club is the Highland Ball, which is organised jointly with The Oxford University Scottish Dance Society. This year it is hosted by Cambridge. It will be at St Bede's School, with music from Ken Martlew. We are hoping for a good turnout for our sixtieth birthday.

*Naomi Herbert (nsh27@cam.ac.uk) with thanks to Ron Nedderman for his historical knowledge.*

### Children in Need Jig for Pudsey Bear 11th November 2005

Youth Director, Sue Porter, invites everyone – children especially – to dance on or around 11th November to raise money for the BBC Children in Need appeal.

Register with Headquarters at:  
[info@rscds.org](mailto:info@rscds.org)

or contact Sue direct at:  
[sue.porter3@btopenworld.com](mailto:sue.porter3@btopenworld.com)  
and get more details on how we can all co-ordinate our efforts.  
Dance the specially devised 'Jig for Pudsey Bear'! Help children in need!



# Dancing matters

## Technique doctor

In the first in a regular series a teacher gives some advice to help us improve our dancing. The first is Lesley Martin from Aberdeen, the well-known teacher and examiner.

In my travels around the Scottish country dance world, I am struck by the different ways dancers hold their arms when turning. Some of the ways can be very inefficient, both from the point of view of helping a partner, and also in the use of body energy. We dance with our feet, and we use our arm muscles and our hands to form an equal balance with our partner. This is often called 'counter balance'.

All dancers need to learn the use of and the differences between short- and long-arm turns in two-handed and one-handed movements. Short-arm turns are used to shorten the track to be covered, ie, to create a smaller base. We see this in the two-bar turns when turning corners and partner. Long-arm turns are used when there are more steps for the movement, and the turning base is wider, eg, turning partner once round with both hands in four steps in strathspey time. Turning one and a half times in four bars means the arms must be shorter since the distance to be covered is greater. An awareness of this need to change arm length and tension also improves the giving of hands.

We use arms to cross over; to turn with one hand; to turn with two hands; and in formations such as the pousette in strathspey, reel and jig time. The following pictures show good arm positions:



**Pousette in fast time:**

Notice the muscle tension, the elbows pointing down, and the arms at shoulder width.



**Pousette in strathspey time:**

Notice the wider arms and the elbows pointing down slightly.



**Two-handed turn in four bars:**

Notice the arms are not too wide, and the elbows are pointing down.

These arm positions, like the movements themselves, are different. In the fast-time pousette the movements are back or forward, and turning. In the strathspey pousette the movements are to the side, turning and retiring. In both, the need for counter balance is essential. We have all done a pousette with a partner who did not give us equal support! In any pousette or turning movement, it is important to use our bicep muscles so that we move as one.

I have become increasingly aware, however, that in turns which involve two hands, both in strathspey and fast time, dancers' arms are often too wide and the elbows too high. This looks unnatural and forces the use of the wrong muscles. Some dancers may think they look very impressive giving very wide arms (and they do draw the eye!), but it is more important to ensure that proper support is given. In a two-handed turn in strathspey time, make sure your arms are not as wide as they would be for a strathspey pousette, nor as close together as they would be for a fast-time pousette. In a two-handed turn in reel or jig time the arms should be held as they would be for a fast-time pousette. Your elbows should be pointing down in all turns. You should use your biceps to 'feel' that you and your partner are counter-balanced. I sometimes ask dancers to imagine themselves lifting their partner – not leaning on them!

Remember – always ask yourself this question: Are you good to dance with?

## How do you do 'set and rotate'?

In each issue, we will feature something from the RSCDS teachers' bible: *The Manual of Scottish Country Dancing*. We start with the formation 'set and rotate'.

**Set and rotate is a method of progression in reel and jig time. It is danced by two couples.**

**Steps** 2 setting steps and 6 travelling steps

**No of bars** 8

**Hands** When travelling, hands are given at shoulder height with shake-hand hold and while setting, nearer hands are joined at shoulder height.

Bars

1–2 1st and 2nd couples, joining nearer hands on the sides, set to partners, beginning to pull back the right shoulder on the second step.

3–4 1st man casts up and dances across the dance to finish in first place on the woman's side facing down, while 2nd man casts up to first place on his own side to face down. At the same time 2nd woman casts off and dances across the dance to finish in second place on the man's side facing up, while 1st woman casts off to finish in second place on her own side to face up. At the end of bar 4, 1st couple should be just inside the woman's side while 2nd couple are just inside the man's side.

5–8 1st and 2nd couples, giving right hands in passing, change places with partners and continue round clockwise in a chase to own sides, 1st couple finishing in second place and 2nd couple in first place.

*Scottish Country Dancer* is your members' magazine. If there is anything about dancing which you would like explained – steps, formations, or how to do a dance – why not write in or email us and we'll do our best to include it in a future issue.



# Who's who?



Alex Gray  
Convenor of Education  
and Training

Alex Gray, a lecturer in computer science, danced from a very early age in his home village of Drumelzier in the Scottish borders. Like most Scottish boys, he stopped dancing when he was about 12, but after a serious rugby injury, he took it up again at school in Edinburgh. While still at school he was picked for the Edinburgh Branch demonstration team and greatly appreciated the teaching of, among others, Miss Allie Anderson. At Edinburgh University he studied maths, and danced with both the branch and the New Scotland club before moving to Newcastle. There he continued dancing and met Kate, his wife, herself a dancer and teacher. Alex is a qualified country and highland dance teacher. He has been teaching at Summer School, in his home branch of South Wales, and at schools worldwide for many years. He served on the Executive Council and on several committees before the change in the Society's management structure. He has been on the Management Board since then and, as Convenor of Education and Training, has been instrumental in putting the new exam system in place. He recently taught in Colorado Springs with his elder son, James, as pianist – a very satisfying experience!



Stewart Adam  
Chairman

Current Society Chairman, Stewart Adam, grew up in Galashiels. Both parents were country dancers, so it was no surprise that he took it up as well. An added reason was that there were no women in his Civil Engineering course at Edinburgh University! He danced with the New Scotland club and the Branch, taking both his teaching certificates before moving to Newcastle. During his career, he has danced in both Newcastle and London dem teams. After returning to Edinburgh, he served as Chairman of Edinburgh Branch. Dancers who have seen the film of Yehudi Menuhin at Blair Castle may remember him. One of Stewart's biggest contributions to Scottish country dancing was as a founder member of the successful Dunedin club in Edinburgh, which every two years brings international folk dancers to Edinburgh, while in the intervening year, Dunedin sends teams abroad – usually to Europe, but also as far afield as Japan and Peru. Stewart has been closely involved in choreographing demonstrations for the Dunedin and Newcastle Festivals as well as the annual Edinburgh Branch show during the Festival Fringe. Stewart combines his work as Chairman with his day job as a civil engineer. It would be true to say that there are few people around who have done more to encourage young people to dance.

## Beginners in Inverness

**Irene Whyte, Secretary of Inverness Branch, describes their recent success in attracting and keeping beginners.**

There cannot be a branch anywhere in the world which has not grappled with the issue of attracting new dancers – and keeping them! In the past year Inverness Branch has run a very successful beginners class, so we asked Irene Whyte of the branch where the new people came from and how the class fared.

- Most of our new people came through our adverts and some through friends of dancers. Our adverts read 'Get fit and have fun – come Scottish Country Dancing'.
- 24 people came along and 18 stayed the course. All enjoyed the class because they were all at the same stage. Of those who left, some decided it was not for them and others gave up because it was too strenuous.
- During the first year the beginners are invited to our Cheese and Wine Party which is a mixture of Scottish Country Dancing and some Ceilidh Dances and is open to friends. They are also invited to our Christmas Party and End of Session Party and encouraged to join our Spring Classes. Our Programmes include dances

which the Beginners are familiar with and also simple dances which they can cope with. Walk-thrus are done at our Spring Classes.

- We encourage our beginners to join our General Class (after 2 years in the Beginners) and so far this has been successful with 50% of them coming along.
- This year we have two young girls doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award who chose to learn Scottish Dancing. The age range of our beginners was: 2 adults between 30–40; 6 between 40–55; and 6 in the over-60 bracket.
- Of the 18 who lasted the course, there are 6 men and 12 women.
- We feel that the success of the class is due to the enjoyment of dancing and making new friends. They specially enjoyed the party nights where they mixed with the more experienced dancers who helped them. We encourage the beginners to come along to the afternoon class at the day school which they said they enjoyed.

**If your branch or group has a similar success story, please write in and share your ideas.**



# Goodbye Eileen!

At the end of Summer School this year the Society said goodbye to Mrs Eileen Watt, the longest-serving member of Headquarters staff and its only country dancer! Eileen joined the Society in April 1988 following an interview with Miss Gibson, which Eileen describes as the most Scottish interview she had ever had! One of the questions which Miss Gibson asked was 'What is the date of the Battle of Bannockburn?' and having given the correct response – and presumably deemed politically correct by the said lady – Eileen was appointed!

Eileen comes from Carnoustie in Angus and started dancing in the Branch children's class in 1951. After bringing up her family and joining the staff, she started dancing on a more regular basis. She is a member of Edinburgh Branch and attends a Branch class as well as belonging to the Trinity Club.

As she retires, Eileen intends to do more dancing and, although we say goodbye to her and thanks for all her years of devoted, smiling service, we hope to see more of her on the dance floor!

To mark Eileen's retirement, two dances have been written in her honour: *Eileen Watt's Reel*, devised by John Wilkinson to the tune *Eileen Watt*, specially composed by Muriel Johnstone; and *Eileen Watt's Strathspey*, devised by Lewis Derrick.

## Eileen Watt's Reel

### 32-bar Reel for three couples

Bars

- 1–8 1st couple cross over giving right hands, cast off one place, taking left hand dance down between third couple crossing over and cast up to second place on own sides.
- 9–12 2nd and 3rd couples dance a petronella turn into the centre and set.
- 13–16 1st couple dance a petronella turn into the centre, 1st woman between 2nd couple, 1st man between 3rd couple, and all three couples set.
- 17–24 1st, 2nd, and 3rd couples dance a reel of four in tandem, finishing with 2nd man and 3rd woman pulling back with the right shoulder to finish back to back having changed places, while 2nd and 1st women face up and 3rd and 1st men face down. (That is: 2nd and 1st women in tandem and 3rd and 1st men in tandem, 2nd man and 3rd woman as individuals.)
- 25–28 2nd, 1st and 3rd couples, using four skip change of steps, chase clockwise to own sides (men moving up, women moving down to face partners) finishing in the order 3, 1, 2.
- 29–32 3rd, 1st and 2nd couples turn partner once round with the right hand.

© John Wilkinson



*Eileen at Summer School 2005*

## Eileen Watt's Strathspey

### 32-bar Strathspey for three couples

Bars

- 1–2 All three couples set on sidelines.
- 3–4 While the 1st couple cast off one place, the 2nd couple, giving nearer hands, dance up to the top and face out and the 3rd couple dance in to give nearer hands briefly before facing out in third place.
- 5–8 The 2nd, 1st and 3rd couples dance half a reel of three on own sides, giving hands wherever possible, to end 3, 1, 2.
- 9–12 The 1st couple dance a petronella turn, to end woman between the 3rd couple facing down and man between the 2nd couple facing up, and all set in lines across.
- 13–16 The 1st couple dance half diagonal rights and lefts up and down the set with the 3rd woman and the 2nd man.
- 17–20 The 1st couple dance a petronella turn, to end woman between the 2nd couple on the women's side and man between the 3rd couple on the men's side, and all set on sidelines.
- 21–24 The 1st couple dance half diagonal rights and lefts across the set with the 3rd man and the 2nd woman (All are now on the opposite sides in the order 2, 1, 3.)
- 25–28 All set on sidelines and turn partners once round by the right hand.
- 29–32 All chase clockwise halfway round the set to end on right sides in order 3, 1, 2.

Repeat twice more from new positions each time.

Notes

*At the end of bar 12 after setting, the 3rd man and 2nd woman, who are not involved in the rights and lefts, return to the sidelines facing in.*

*Suggested tune: Lamb's Strathspey (Colin Finlayson)*

© 2005 Lewis N. Derrick



# What's new?

## The Manual, 2005 edition

Society members awaiting the appearance of the new edition of the *Manual* will be pleased to learn that it was available for this year's Summer School. No doubt you will be wondering what you can expect to find in it.

The aim of the *Manual* Revision Working party was to bring the *Manual* up to date rather than to carry out an extensive re-write. There are, however, some amendments to the content:

- Chapter 4 on music has been completely re-written by Muriel Johnstone.
- The new formations adopted by the Society have been included in Chapter 6.
- The notes for dances in recently published RSCDS books have been added to Chapter 7.

Deleted from Chapter 7 are the notes for dances which have now been incorporated into revised versions of the books and Appendix 1 of the *Manual* supplies a list of dates for the most recent versions of all published books.

Other noticeable changes to the *Manual* are:

- the new A4 format
- a new page design
- a new internal reference system
- a new and expanded contents section where you can see a complete list of all formations
- a new index

All these changes are designed to facilitate access to the information and, generally, to make the *Manual* more user-friendly. Because it is now A4 and looseleaf, you can keep all your teaching notes in it as well, along with other supplementary booklets which the Society produces.

Translating dance movement and style into the written word always poses a considerable challenge and although the *Manual* may not entirely satisfy everybody all of the time, it is, nevertheless, an achievement of which the Society can be justly proud.

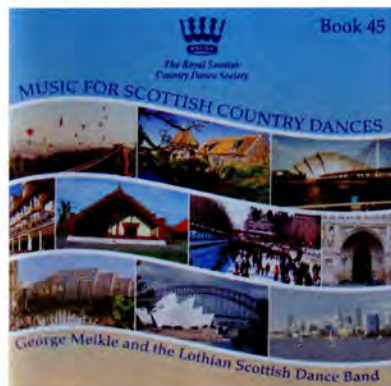
To all who have an interest in enhancing their knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Scottish country dancing, the *Manual* offers a valuable repository of information.

Dr Alastair MacFadyen

The new edition costs £12.  
(£10.80 to RSCDS members)

## Book 45

### Alternative lead tune



When *The Westminster Reel* was originally published by the London Branch of the Society in 1989, two tunes, both in the same key, were given. The Society's current policy is to publish only one tune for each dance and *St Albans Caledonian Society* was included in Book 45. *Ian Murray's Reel*, the other tune, is a suitable alternative and it has been decided, on this occasion, to publish it separately. Copies of the tune, can be obtained, free of charge, by contacting Headquarters.

## Originally Ours

by George Meikle



*Originally Ours*, compiled by George Meikle, is a single portable reference book containing all of the nearly 700 original tunes for all the dances published by the RSCDS to date, up to and including Book 45. Approximately 200 pages, the book is fully indexed to make it easier to find the appropriate tune when playing for a SCD class or dance. Invaluable to class musicians and bands.

Member's price (no discount) £24.00.  
Full price £36.00

## Pocket Editions

The increasing sophistication of desktop publishing software and investments in technology by printers have resulted in lower printing costs for everyone. Such progress, however, comes at a price and that is the increasing restriction of print formats to a very few sizes. In Europe that means the A-formats such as this A4 magazine. The printing of any publication in a non-standard size requires production of a quantity sufficient to absorb the set-up costs. Regrettably, our current pocket editions are a non-standard size. While many members use and cherish their pocket editions, we sell under 50 of each per year. Replacing an out-of-print edition either means purchasing a quantity equivalent to fifty years of current sales or printing a smaller quantity and pricing them at more than £10 a copy. Membership Services has reluctantly decided that neither option is viable and the pocket editions will not be replaced as they sell out. This change does not affect the previous decision that a final pocket edition of Books 42-45 will be produced to complete the series.

## Future Publishing Policy

The Management Board and Membership Services Committee have been reviewing both communication issues and future publishing policy for the past two years. *Scottish Country Dancer* is one of the first results of this debate.

For some time, the production and format of dance books with music has been one of the main questions raised by members. For a number of years, the vast majority of dancers have indicated that they have no need for music arranged for the piano and, in general, more and more contributors have commented on the number of new dances being published. We have decided that Book 45 will be the last in the present format. The Society, however, will continue to publish new dances. The current intention is to publish a text-only version as a pull-out section of the September edition of the magazine, while an edition with music would be available for sale. Discussions on the exact format are continuing. If you would like to contribute to this discussion, please email or write to HQ. All of your comments will be considered by Membership Services.



# Reviews

## Book 10 CD

David Hall and his Scottish Dance Band  
RSCDS CD 047

Congratulations David! Congratulations the RSCDS! A surprise! The normal tune is used for *Montgomerie's Rant* and no sign of *Lord Eglintoune*! This makes a bright start to this CD of *Book 10* dances. Here you have a wealth of beautifully-played strathspeys – four full length and two 16 bar, both of which can be used as 4 x 32 sets. We used track 6, *The Shepherd's Crook*, to dance *Moment of Truth* and it was a delight. In between these are a collection of lively and interestingly arranged reels and jigs all going at appropriate speeds and giving lots of lift. Any teacher who battles with a fixed speed CD player must go and get this CD for decent dancing. *General Stuart's Reel* is played at a suitably brisk pace and nicely articulated, and there's a very danceable *Miss Mary Douglas*. Then there are all the 'traditional' tunes used, all finely matched – a further pleasure. The sound is familiar from the previous David Hall CDs. I have used this CD on a variety of systems and one small improvement can be made, to my ears, by using an equaliser to lift the middle frequencies. Altogether a Top Ten 'must have'. Go and buy now!

Peter Wright, Bristol Branch

## Book 38 CD

The Muriel Johnstone Quartet  
RSCDS CD 044

With this recording for CD of *Book 38* Muriel Johnstone and her band provide ideal music for these dances, several of which such as *Follow Me Home* and *Peggy Dewar* feature regularly on dance programmes.

Muriel's own piano playing is key to the four-piece sound, providing rhythmic and harmonic interest in support of the strong and well-balanced lead of Jimmy Lindsay on accordion and Keith Smith on fiddle. The fourth member of the band is the always excellent Gordon Smith, adaptable to the differing playing styles of many bands (contrast his playing with Gordon Shand, for example), but somewhat in the background here.

The tunes have been very carefully matched, and are a mixture of traditional and modern, with several of Muriel's own. Transitions between tunes are always smooth, with no uncomfortable changes of style. Tempi are, of course, a matter of taste and vary for all sorts of reasons. These tend towards the slower side of the

range one currently encounters in dancing with different groups.

All told, the disc has plenty to offer for dancing and indeed for pure listening, right from the first track of *Peggy Dewar*, my personal favourite.

Jeremy Hill, London Branch

## Book 44 and CD

Robert Whitehead and the Danelaw Band  
RSCDS CD 046

Being introduced to *Book 44* at St Andrews last summer took me back to my last time there in 1990. That was the year of the first of the two *Frae A' the Airts* books, *Book 36*. I wondered how the dances in *Book 44* were chosen since the book struck me as one 'full of wee haufs'. The teaching of it was excellent during the first five days but when, on the Friday, the teacher suggested using Saturday to quickly run through four or five of the dances, many of us realised that we could not remember one from another!

However, one should not judge too quickly and I am now approaching them individually. *Starlight* repeats its pattern in bars 5–20 and finishes with two well-known figures. Being thus fairly easy to remember after a few performances, it should go down well on dance programmes. *Knotwork* requires a bit more care, but goes along fairly gently as long as the dancer refuses to rush it.

*The Silver Strathspey* is, to my mind, for very experienced dancers who can phrase exactly to keep the flow, this applying particularly to the support couples. *Hand in Hand* would be a good challenge for advanced dancers, requiring excellent phrasing and footwork. I doubt that I would include either of these two on a dance programme, where sets would be likely to contain mixed abilities. *The Cocket Hat* is fine for the first couple, but 'bitty' and downright awkward in places for the supporting couples. *The Wishing Well* is different enough to be remembered easily and will, I think, become popular on programmes. *Festival Fling* falls into the same category with the added advantage that its performance makes dancers feel 'clever' enough to love it. I'm not sure if a 48-bar strathspey like *Crathes Castle* will catch on, but this dance does have very good flow. *The 51st Travellers* would be an excellent 'teaching' dance, particularly when emphasising difficult phrasing. *The Silver Thistle* presents no problems to the experienced dancer who can deal with, and remember, 4-bar phrases.

Taken as a whole, which does not reflect upon the individual devisers, I think the book contains too many half reels and this would make me extremely careful were I choosing any two dances from this book to put on the same programme. However, I am still often surprised by the dances which become dancers' favourites and for those we must wait and see.

What makes a dance a perennial favourite? I have often thought the music is the deciding factor, so what about *Book 44's* CD? I am not a musician, so I can only say how the music affects me when dancing or teaching these dances and hope the musicians will not curse my ignorance. I found the CD extremely pleasant to listen to, although in my area I am much more accustomed to a greater preponderance of traditional tunes. The selection for *Starlight* is lively if a bit of a challenge for newer dancers to hear the '8's'. *Knotwork's* selection gently skips along and if the dancers stay with it they may be less likely to 'rush their fences'. From a teacher's point of view the lilting selection for *The Silver Strathspey* may cause dancers to syncopate, so enjoy, but don't bounce!

*Hand in Hand* I found 'bouncy' and of little help in the phrasing. *The Cocket Hat* has really great tunes which may 'make' this dance in spite of what I said above. As *The Wishing Well* is my pick for the book so is the music – great drive and excellent for the dance. *Crathes Castle* is a gentle, enjoyable selection – most helpful to the dancer and may well make this 48-bar dance popular.

I found the music for *The 51st Travellers* a bit 'English Country' for my taste, but light and happy tunes. A hornpipe flavour always lifts and adds interest for me and provides an enjoyable ending, in *The Silver Thistle*.

Pat Coyle, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

### San Diego's 30!

Saturday October 8th sees San Diego Branch celebrating their 30th Anniversary with a Ball in the beautiful Balboa Park Club. The band will be Fiddlesticks and Ivory. All the best to San Diego!

### Thought

Are we preserving the tradition or is it preserving us?



# Re-printed

## The dance explosion!

There are lots of articles on Scottish country dancing which you might have missed. Here we reprint extracts, with permission, from a discussion initiated by Derek Haynes in *Scottish Dance Archives*, September 1980.

Thanks to the RSCDS, we have a large collection of dances in a standardized form. This standardisation made it possible for dancers to visit other districts and do the same dances in the same way. It also gave dancers and teachers an authority to go to for, and with, information. As time went on, more and more dances were collected and more figures appeared. This happened slowly at first, but later the growth and development increased. Over the past two or three decades this growth has accelerated to such an extent that we now have an explosion and it could get out of hand.

Today's growth is mainly due to the current vogue for devising new dances rather than to the collection and publication of old dances.

The modern Scottish country dance is devised with today's technique and fashions in mind. Many soon get forgotten, but some of the popular ones could eventually become traditional. New figures are appearing, most following established traditions. However, it is unfortunate that some devisers, in their quest for something new and different, seem to take a delight in twisting standard figures and creating many exceptions to the established rules.

A dance often reflects the character of its deviser and although many keep to tradition, a few are moving away from it. The latter often show the inexperience and lack of knowledge of the deviser while the better ones belie the thought and effort involved in their creation. The more knowledgeable dancer will be able to quote examples of the 'technical exercise', the 'demonstration dance' and the 'competition piece'. Whilst there is room for all these types of dances, we must not lose sight of the fact that Scottish country dancing is primarily social dancing. Many dance devisers do not consider the less experienced dancers.

Today's newcomers to Scottish country dancing have to learn far more than their counterparts of bygone years before they can cope with many current dance programmes. The modern dance tends to involve more people at any one time and leaves very little room for error. It is very difficult to help the novice through some of these dances. It is not surprising, therefore, that many beginners are taught mainly dances, rather than the basic techniques of dancing. Even experienced dancers can go to a dance in another area, and not know many of the dances on the programme. For many, the enjoyment is reduced if they have to do a lot of homework prior to attending a social or ball.

Today's teacher is faced with the dilemma between teaching people to dance and preparing them for the next special occasion.

It is generally accepted that for any art form to survive it must be allowed to develop. Some changes and new ideas must be allowed, but they must be controlled if tradition is to be preserved.

Derek Haynes, 1980

© Scottish Dance Archives

# Programmes

## From Aberdeen to Adelaide

In every issue we plan to feature two current dance programmes from very different parts of the world so that members can see who is dancing what. Aberdeen and Adelaide Branches have provided us with programmes for two of their 2005 dances. Are your favourite dances amongst them?

### Aberdeen Branch

This is the programme for the Branch 80th Anniversary Ball on 21 October 2005. It is a mixture of dances portraying places, people, events and devisers well known in and around Aberdeen and in the RSCDS. Immediately before the Ball members of the children's classes will have their own dance with two of our Aberdeen musicians, sadly for us, now gone from the city – Peter Shand and Angela Young.

*The Happy Meeting, Anniversary Reel, Miss Milligan's Strathspey, A Trip to Aberdeen, Mrs Stewart of Fasnacloich, Monymusk, Airyhall Delight, The Royal Deeside Railway, Balmoral Strathspey, Mrs Ina Wilson, The Royal Yacht Britannia, Haddo House, Margaret Parker's Strathspey, John of Bon Accord, EH3 7AF, The Belle of Bon Accord, Festival Fling, The Elphinstone Jig, Lochindorb Strathspey, Duke of Perth*

### Adelaide and District Branch

This is the Programme for the Annual Ball, held on 27 August 2005. Children attended until after the supper break.

*Pelorus Jack, Swiss Lassie, The Wishing Well, The Duke of Atholl's Reel, Starlight, The Cradle Song, The Chequered Court, The Saltire Society Reel, The Sparkling Shores of Kamagari, The Reel of the 51st Division (Men), Australian Ladies (Women), A Castle in the Air, Barmkin, Miss Milligan's Strathspey, Blue Bonnets, Bratach Bana, My Friend Joe, West's Hornpipe, The Gentleman, Follow Me Home, The Montgomerie's Rant.*

### Fiddle with your feet!

In the 1968 edition of Miss Milligan's *Introducing Scottish Country Dancing*, she gives the following instruction for the beginning of the Strathspey 'roundabout' poussette:

'On bar 1, 1st and 2nd couples dance into a diagonal line from 2nd lady across to 1st man – 1st lady and 2nd man back to back in the middle. Now comes the first difficulty: as partners join both hands to dance outwards on bar 2, the 1st man and 2nd lady must change feet as the men are pushing their partners out, 1st couple to the right, 2nd couple to the left. No rule can be given as to how this change of feet is to be done and the usual way of describing what happens is 'fiddle with your feet'.'

Candidates! Do **not** quote this in your examination! See the new edition of *The Manual*, page 58!

### MMM II

Beginner dancer: Amazing! This MMM2! Book 3002! I didn't know there were that many!

### Competition

Men – have you been accosted in the local supermarket by a loud and enthusiastic woman: 'Oh, I didn't recognise you with your trousers on!' What do you say? The four best replies will be printed in the next edition.



# Day school diary

All branch and club secretaries are invited to send in details of all schools and workshops direct to [mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org). Include date, event and teachers. For contact details, please refer to branch or club websites or the Directory of Secretaries. Issue 2 will cover day schools from January 06 till June 07.

## Sept 05

- 10 Lochaber Branch, Day School  
*Irene Bennett*
- 16-18 Seattle Branch, Annual Weekend Workshop  
*John Middleton, M. Stroh, M. Zadworny*
- 18-19 Victoria Branch, Fall Workshop  
*Fran Caruth, Rosemary Coupe*
- 23-25 Oslo Scottish Country Dance Group, Weekend Workshop  
*Ron Wallace*
- 23-25 Hamburg Dancers, Weekend Workshop  
*Jimmie Hill*
- 24 Ayr Branch, Day School  
*Jean Martin, David Queen*
- 24 Manchester Branch, Day School  
*Alex Gray, Kate Gray, Catherine Livsey, Margo Priestley*
- 30-2/10 Argyll (London) Group, Weekend at Dillington  
*Allison Russell*
- 30-2/10 Saskatchewan Branch, 25th Annual Workshop  
*Muriel Johnstone, Bill Zobel*

## Oct 05

- 7-9 RSCDS, Family Weekend in Troon  
*Andrew McConnell*
- 8 Ribble Valley Branch, Annual Day School  
*Helen Frame*
- 8-9 Halifax Branch, Teachers Workshop and Class  
*Linda Gaul*
- 14-16 Hamilton (Ontario) Branch, Dance Weekend  
*Jimmie Hill*
- 15 London Branch, Day School  
*Margo Priestley, David Hall, Angela Young*
- 22 Sheffield Branch, Day School  
*Helen Russell*
- 22 Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles Branch, Day School

## Nov 05

- 4-6 Kingston Ontario Branch, Annual Workshop  
*Elaine Brunken, Jim Ferguson, Carole Skinner*
- 11-13 Croydon Branch, Weekend School in Eastbourne  
*Denis Tucker*
- 12 Bristol Branch, Day School  
*Angela Young*
- 18-20 Dancing Weekend in France, Grenoble  
*Jim Cook, Martin Sheffield*
- 26-27 Zurich SCD Club, Weekend Course  
*Andrew McConnell*
- 27 Hague District Branch, Day School  
*Wanda van Taanom*

## Dec 05

- 10-11 Scotia Shores, Weekend and Ball, Vicenza, Italy  
*Helen Russell*

## Feb 06

- 3-5 York and North Humberside Branch, Weekend School  
*Eric Finley*
- 4 Inverness Branch, Day School  
*Jimmie Hill*
- 4-5 Cheltenham Branch, Weekend School
- 18-19 Tokyo Branch, Workshop  
*Atsuko Clement*
- 23-28 RSCDS, Winter School at Pitlochry  
*Andrew McConnell, Helen Russell, Eric Finley, Johan Maclean*

## March 06

- 4-5 Saitama Branch, 5th Anniversary Weekend School  
*Peter Clark*
- 10-11 Lorn (Argyll) Branch, 45th Weekend School  
*Jimmie Hill*
- 11 Somerset Branch, Day School and Musicians Course  
*David Hall, Maureen Rutherford*
- 18 Perth and Perthshire Branch, Day School  
*John Wilkinson, Jenny Greene*
- 18 Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch, Day School  
*Helen Russell, Joan Desborough, Jimmie Hill*
- 18 Derbyshire North East Branch, Day School  
*Janet Johnston*
- 24-25 Orlando Branch, Spring Fling
- 31-2/4 Helensburgh Branch, The Helensburgh Weekend
- 31-2/4 RSCDS, Newcastle Spring Fling

## April 06

- 1 Edinburgh Branch, Day School
- 14-16 Gothenburg Branch, 30th Anniversary Weekend  
*Linda Gaul*
- 22 Argyll (London) Group, Day School  
*John Sturrock, Maureen Haynes, Anne Carter*
- 28-29 Portrush Branch  
*Jenny Greene*
- 28-1/5 NW Queensland Branch, Annual Weekend School

## May 06

- 5-7 East Lothian Branch, Weekend in Pitlochry  
*Linda Gaul*
- 6-8 Groupe de Danses Ecosaises de Lyon, Weekend in Lyon  
*Rachel Wilton*
- 13 Exeter Branch, Day School  
*Peter Clark*
- 19-21 Duns and District Branch, The Duns May Weekend
- 26-28 Victoria Branch, Youth Weekend West in Victoria (BC)  
*Mairi Hand, Fred De Marse, Ruth Jappy*

## July 06

- 9-16 31st Australian Winter School
- 16-13/8 RSCDS Summer School at St Andrews

## September 06

- 29-1/10 Argyll (London) Weekend
- 30 Ayr Branch, Day School
- 30 Manchester Branch, Day School

## Oct 06

- 14 Stirling Branch
- 14 Ribble Valley Branch
- 21 London Branch, Day School

## Nov 06

- 3-5 Kingston Ontario 40th Workshop
- 11 Bristol Branch, Day School  
*Janet Johnston*
- 10-12 Croydon Branch, Weekend in Eastbourne



## Obituaries

### Jimmy Brown

James Brown, OBE, MA, LLB, JP, chairman of the Society from 1970–73, died at the age of 83 on 3 November 2004. James, known as Jimmy, served both the Society and Edinburgh Branch well and in a very active capacity over many years. He held the post of Branch Chairman twice, from 1960–63 and from 1966–69. He received the Scroll in 1990.

A lawyer by profession, he advised the Society on its structure. He was very active in the formation of the Morningside Club and danced there regularly as well as taking the class.

Jimmy was Area Manager with the South of Scotland Electricity Board, Assistant Chief Commissioner of Scouts for Scotland. He also served as a JP. He was a person of great integrity and dignity, who made a great contribution to Scottish country dancing in Edinburgh and beyond. (*adapted with permission from Dancing Forth, Edinburgh Branch*)

### Junko Matsuhashi

Junko Matsuhashi passed away on 24 November, 2004, at the age of 69. She devoted herself energetically to Tokyo Branch for 20 years – from 1984 as a teacher as well as a committee member. She held the posts of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. She made friends with many dancers from different countries over the years at St Andrews. She will be very sadly missed by everyone who knew her. At the same time she will be remembered with gratitude for her contribution to the promotion of Scottish Country Dancing in Japan. *Tokyo Branch*

### Bob Millar

William Robert (Bob) Millar, in his 73rd year, passed away peacefully on 3 April 2005, after a short battle with cancer. Bob Millar was one of the pre-eminent teachers of country dancing, and for over 35 years was a well-known RSCDS teacher, not just in Toronto, but across North America and internationally. Bob was a regular attendee at Summer School over a great many years, always participating in the dem team in the Younger Hall.

Bob passed his teacher's certificate in 1968. At the Service of Celebration of his Life, held in Toronto, Kathleen Kynoch spoke of Bob's very significant contribution to Scottish country dancing in Toronto. *Roz Scott-Huxley*

## Do you dance?

If you are reading this magazine and you have never tried Scottish country dancing, why not give it a go? There will be an RSCDS branch or club near you. All you need is a good level of fitness. If you are a man, you don't need a kilt. You can use soft shoes to start with, but your teacher will recommend that you buy a pair of dance pumps in due course. Thousands of us – all over the world – are hooked! Why not you! Try our website [www.rscds.com](http://www.rscds.com) for more details of a branch near you.

## 76th Annual Conference Weekend RSCDS AGM

4th – 6th November, 2005

Based at the Bell's Sports Centre, Hay St, Perth

- All RSCDS members welcome
- Friday night ball dancing to Colin Dewar and his SCD Band
- Saturday meetings and the Society AGM
- Saturday morning general class
- Saturday evening dance to Marian Anderson and her SCD Band
- Sunday morning workshops and meetings

Contact your local branch or RSCDS, 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh for an application form.

## Winter School

23 – 28 February 2006

The Atholl Palace Hotel, Pitlochry, Perthshire

Director: Robert H Mackay

- fantastic venue
- super teachers
- great musicians
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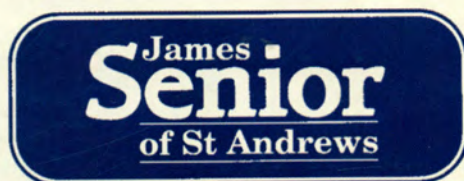
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