

# SCOTTISH country dancer

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 2 Spring 2006



News from Coates Crescent

News from around the world

Press attack

Queen's Birthday Honours award

Interview with the Grants

Overheard on the web

What does your sporran tell us?

The Glasgow Highlanders

Alfred Anderson

The Society on Camera

The Perth AGM and Conference

Opinion piece

Tribute to Miss Muriel Gibson

The Archive

Washington Branch profile

St Columba's Monday Dancers

Who's who?

Letters to the editor

The new Manual

The Scroll Awards

Australian Winter School

Reviews

Day School Diary

From New Zealand to South Wales





# Let's meet in St Andrews at Summer School this year!

## Courses for Dancers

Summer School runs for 4 weeks. Come for 1 or 2 weeks.

- Week 1: 16th July – 23rd July
- Week 2: 23rd July – 30th July
- Week 3: 30th July – 6th August
- Week 4: 6th August – 13th August

- Morning classes at all levels to suit everyone
- Beginners, experienced dancers and teachers all welcome
- Optional afternoon activities
- Social dancing in the evenings to Scottish bands and Summer School musicians
- Dance music you'll never forget!

## Courses for Musicians

Two courses for musicians who are interested in playing for Scottish country dance classes:

- Course 1 (led by Muriel Johnstone) 16 – 23 July
- Course 2 (led by Angela Young) 30 July – 6 August

For more details, contact: RSCDS, 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7AF  
Tel: 0131 225 3854      [www.rscds.org](http://www.rscds.org)      E-mail: [jill.henderson@rscds.org](mailto:jill.henderson@rscds.org)



# Editorial

Well, here's your second *Scottish Country Dancer*! We all breathed a huge sigh of relief when so many members e-mailed or wrote to say how much they had appreciated Issue 1. Thank you to everyone who took the trouble to contact us. Read some of the reactions on page 27.

Everyone knew that there would be hiccups setting up the database so that each member can be treated equally and receive *Scottish Country Dancer* by post. We hope most of the problems have been ironed out and there will be fewer households receiving multiple copies – or none!

There have been some wonderful times in the last six months and some of them are reflected in this issue: our very successful AGM and Conference Weekend; Australia's outstanding Winter School; and countless excellent dances, balls, day schools and weekend celebrations in branches worldwide – not to mention all our weekly efforts to maintain good turnout, upright posture, and keep smiling! At the same time, we mark the passing of some of our greatest supporters: Muriel Gibson, Betty Grant, Mary Currie, Charlie Todd, George Wells, Bert Jamieson, and James Senior. It is inevitable that an organisation, now over 80 years old itself, will lose its older members and it is right that we honour them and the contribution they made to the RSCDS.

We have an editorial policy to present the most positive side of Scottish country dancing so that anyone reading the magazine who is not a dancer may be instantly attracted. We cannot, however, ignore the attacks that are made on us from outside and it is sad that on page 9 we report further Press criticism aimed at country dancing in Scotland.

We hope that you feel that this is your magazine and we encourage you to be in touch and tell us what you think and what you want to see in future issues.

In case anyone wonders who the Editorial Board is, let us introduce ourselves!



Jimmie Hill



Andrew Kellett



Oluf Olufsen



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Elspeth Gray

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# Contents

- 4 **News from Coates Crescent**  
Management Board and admin matters
- 6 **From around the world**  
Reports from all over the world
- 9 **Attacked on New Year's Day**  
Report on the demise of country dancing in schools
- 9 **Well-deserved award**  
David Currie, Canberra, in Queen's Birthday Honours
- 10 **David and Betty Grant**  
Interview and tribute
- 12 **Overheard on the web**  
Chris Ronald on the Strathspey List discussions
- 13 **What does your sporran tell us?**  
Robert Lachlan on the mysteries of the sporran
- 14 **The Glasgow Highlanders**  
Alastair MacFadyen on the origins of the dance
- 15 **Old soldier**  
Alfred Anderson, dancer and soldier
- 16 **The Society on Camera**  
Were you there? Are you in it?
- 18 **The Perth AGM and Conference**  
Andrew Kellett reports on the conference weekend
- 19 **In our opinion**  
Views from the musicians' discussion at the conference
- 20 **Miss Muriel Gibson**  
Tribute to former Society Secretary
- 21 **The Archive**  
Marilyn Healy gives the background
- 22 **A branch and a club**  
Washington Branch / St Columba's Monday Dancers
- 23 **Dancing matters**  
Technique doctor / How to do the tournée
- 24 **Who's who?**  
Profiles of Jim Healy and Mo Rutherford
- 24 **Re-printed**  
From The Reel 1953
- 24 **Programmes**  
From New Zealand to South Wales
- 25 **Letters to the editor**  
Members' views
- 26 **Reviews**  
Book 45 / Masters of Tradition / Music for Quadrilles
- 27 **The new Manual**  
An assessment by Helen Russell
- 27 **Your reactions**  
What you thought of Scottish Country Dancer
- 28 **The Scroll Awards**  
7 members honoured
- 28 **Australian Winter School**  
Report from Melbourne
- 29 **Day School Diary**  
All schools from February 2006 – May 2007
- 30 **Obituaries**

*Cover picture: Blair Castle, Perthshire, venue of the Winter School Ball*

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# News from Coates Crescent

Elspeth Gray and Irene Bennett outline some of the issues currently under discussion on the Management Board.

Welcome to the news from headquarters in this second issue of *Scottish Country Dancer*. The first issue of the magazine was really well received. However, there have been a few hiccups relating to its distribution.

Firstly, and most importantly, please do not send any queries about distribution, or member data, to the Magazine Editor – distribution of the magazine is not his responsibility! We should have a staff member identified to deal with these issues soon. In the meantime, please direct any such queries to Elspeth Gray, by post or by email to

elspeth.gray@rscds.org

## Mailing you direct

In December, we sent to each branch a list of all their members (annual, long term and life) as held on our database, asking them to check and amend as necessary. Any members' names that may have been missed out first time round, or had incomplete addresses, should now be correct.

We urge all branches who have not yet passed on their members' data to do so, in order that all members can be treated equally in terms of delivery of this magazine. If you did not receive this issue direct from HQ, please tell your branch you would like to!

## Updating the database

The process of correcting amendments received has highlighted a particular problem: there are a number of people who appear on more than one branch's list of members! **Members of the Society should pay their RSCDS subscription only once, and the branch through which they pay it is their 'Primary Branch'.** Any other branches they belong to are secondary memberships, which should not be reported to Headquarters. Branch secretaries should ensure that they tell us only about primary members. If you are a member of several branches, please ensure that each branch knows whether you are a primary or secondary member.

**Any change of address should be given to your Primary Branch secretary, who will then inform us. If you are a Headquarters member, inform the office direct at any time.**

## Headquarters staff

Well, it's been six months of change! As you will know from the first edition of *Scottish Country Dancer*, Eileen Watt retired in August after 17 years with the Society.

June Dick, who has been with the Society only two years less than Eileen, will be retiring in March 2006. Many of you will know June, who has been an excellent 'right hand' to me and my predecessors as well as doing all the administration of Summer and Winter Schools, and I am sure you will join me in wishing her, too, a very long and happy retirement. In addition, Suzanne Durrand left us in October for pastures new. All of these changes, together with the increased requirements for updating the database and other additional work areas, have allowed us to review how tasks and responsibilities are allocated. I am pleased to say that two new members of staff – Susan Leask and Shona Coyle – have now joined us.



Susan Leask

Shona Coyle



Susan will be dealing with examinations and will be secretary of Education & Training Committee, while Shona will be

dealing with accounts and memberships and will be secretary of General Purposes & Finance Committee. In the next issue, I will be providing fuller details, so that everyone understands which member of staff they need to contact for specific queries.

## Life members

A letter was sent to all life members with the first edition of *Scottish Country Dancer* asking them to let us know if they wished to continue to receive the magazine. We have had many replies, and have also received an incredible number of donations towards the cost of continuing to send the magazine to life members – over £3,400. As we said in the letter, no one in the Society underestimates the contribution made by life members in so many different ways. Their generosity in demonstrating support for the magazine is very much appreciated. Those life members who have indicated that they do not wish to receive the magazine, or who have not replied to the letter, have been removed from the distribution list for this edition. If you know of anyone in this category who would like to have their name reinstated, please tell them to let us know!

Additionally, several multi-member households wrote to say that they wished to receive only one copy. When the distribution lists were prepared for the first edition, we had no easy means of arranging this. It would have meant a time-consuming trawl through all 18,000+ records on a spreadsheet to make the amendments. However, we have now added a feature to the database which will allow us to mark one or more members of a household as not wishing to receive a magazine. If you want us to do this for you, and we haven't done so already, please just send or email us the details.

## Directory of Secretaries

The last Directory of Secretaries was produced in October 2003. Last year, we had planned to produce a directory, which would have been distributed via branches. However, the staff changes and volume of work at Headquarters made the task impossible. At its meeting on 26 November, the Management Board decided that the days of the Directory were numbered. It is a time-consuming item to produce, and it has the enormous disadvantage that, the moment it is sent to the printers, something changes and it becomes inaccurate! As all of the contact



details it contains, and more, are available on the website, the Board feel that is the way forward. We are now investigating making available a downloadable listing on the website, that could be automatically updated every time the website is amended. We realise that there are members who do not have access to the internet, but these days most people know someone who does. If a member wants to plan a trip and simply cannot access the website, they could contact us to ask for a printout from the database of branch and affiliated group secretaries for that area or country.

### Core repertoire

The following notice from Jim Healy, Convenor of Membership Services, was sent to branch secretaries in October 2005:

*"The Society has been continuing to seek the views of members on a range of matters. One cause for concern that has been identified in these discussions is the continuing growth in the number of dances that any one dancer is expected to know. This appears to be having two separate effects. One is that dance programmes are becoming more 'regional' with an increasing proportion, and in some cases a majority, of locally published dances. The other is that the inexperienced dancer is faced with a much larger 'repertoire' of dances and formations than was the case even a few years ago and that is being cited as one reason we are not attracting and retaining new dancers. To counter this, it has been suggested that the Society should develop a more extensive and settled 'core repertoire' of, say, 100-150 dances comprising popular classics and incorporating all the major basic formations. It is accepted that such a list would, by definition, include dances from sources other than the Society's own publications. Branches and affiliated groups would be encouraged to ensure that some proportion (ideally substantial) of the dances on every social dance programme should be taken from the list. This would limit but not preclude the use of 'local' dances and such a list would offer inexperienced dancers a defined body of knowledge to aim for in the first instance."*

The initial response to this suggestion has been generally positive and encouraging and we are now asking all branch committees and individual dancers to comment on the suggestion, including their own nominations for inclusion in the list. Comments and suggestions should be sent to the Membership Services Committee through the Society Secretary or by e-mail to [msconvenor@rscds.org](mailto:msconvenor@rscds.org).

### Scottish Branch Conference

In issue 1, we mentioned the MB working group that had been set up to consider issues relevant to Scotland, and some of the ideas that had come from the group, consisting of MB members and others. The group has proposed a one-day conference in Dunblane on 11 February 2006 for representatives from Scottish branches, under the banner 'Let's Dance Scottish'. Among the topics on the agenda are: schools and young people; promotions and marketing; possible future projects, including suggestions for a 'Let's Dance Scottish' week; thoughts on the role of a national demonstration team; ideas for Saturday workshops, and other projects. There will be a report on the Conference in the Autumn magazine. It is important to reiterate that the benefits that may come from the conference will have a positive effect on the whole Society, not just members and branches in Scotland. We hope that this kind of conference may become a template for similar events elsewhere.

### Publications and recordings

With the publication of CDs for Books 6, 15 and 28 in summer 2005, all the Society's recordings that can be digitally transferred are complete. However, 12 books remain to be produced on CD, and they will have to be re-recorded. Membership Services Committee has scheduled 3 CDs to be produced each year for the next 4 years, as follows:

2006 – 14, 27, 35	2007 – 7, 13, 34
2008 – 8, 11, 20	2009 – 9, 17, 30

Two CDs are to be available at summer school and one at the AGM each year. The Formations Index should be ready for Winter School 2006, as will the Pocket Edition of Books 42-45.

### Annual Conference Weekend and AGM

An important element of the Annual Conference and AGM Weekend is the opportunity for members and branches to air questions of interest and have them discussed in 'The Floor is Yours' session. In 2005, we asked branches for suggestions, but only one was received. The Management Board agreed that we should, through the magazine, invite members as well as branches to suggest topics for this session at Conference / AGM Weekend 2006. Ideally, there should be someone present at the discussion to briefly introduce any subject suggested. If there are too many suggestions to be

covered in the one hour available, the Management Board will decide the final list. All suggestions to Elspeth, please.

### Website

Some of you may have noticed changes to the way the website looks. Ian Brockbank has now succeeded in transferring the site to a different Content Management System (called Plone, for the anoraks among you!) which will make updating easier. We are still working to get the site as up-to-date as possible, although whole areas, such as the section dealing with examinations, require a lot of re-writing. However, a great deal of information is available – in the public area, you will find branch and affiliated group contact details; a schools and training section with details of Summer and Winter schools, including forms for downloading when available; information on Spring Fling 2006, including an application form; details of all the books and CDs available (an online shop is the next priority); and a news section. In the members' area (for which you need a username and password – ask your branch secretary for these, or contact Headquarters) – you will find Management Board reports; details of the AGM and Conference Weekend, including summaries of the AGM itself and the various discussion groups / workshops, and past AGM minutes; details of Management Board and Committee members; reference information for branches; copies of Newsbriefs; and many other things besides! We are still developing it, but please use the site, and send your feedback to the Web Administrator.

### And finally something new!

If you have any questions about the New Examination Syllabus for the Teaching Certificate Part 1 or 2, or are unsure about arrangements for the transition from the earlier system to the new, contact the new RSCDS Examinations Helpline:

[examhelp@rscds.org](mailto:examhelp@rscds.org)

For those without access to e-mail, the same service is available by phoning or mailing 'Examhelp', 12 Coates Crescent.

#### Competition result

##### What was Janet saying to Ann?

*They've just told me they're going to come to your advanced class next week!*

*When a lady tells a man she didn't recognise him in his trousers:*

*This lady is sexually harrassing me!*



# From around the world

We are delighted to welcome two new area correspondents: Terry Lynne Harris reporting on Africa, based in Pretoria, and Arthur McNeill, based in Hong Kong, and reporting on Asia. Members in both areas are encouraged to be in touch with their correspondents and let them know what is going on where they dance. We only have South America and the Middle East left now, so if you dance in either of those areas, let us know at [mag.editor@scds.org](mailto:mag.editor@scds.org).

## Africa

**Correspondent: Terry Lynne Harris**  
[harris@unisa.ac.za](mailto:harris@unisa.ac.za)

SCD is alive and well in Lagos, Nigeria, with weekly classes and, though the venue is a private club, new dancers are especially welcome. At the last count, the group included dancers of 8 different nationalities, all with Scottish roots, including one Nigerian. The Caledonian Society is also strong in Lagos and holds Scottish events including regular ceilidhs.

In Cape Town, South Africa, the Lynfrae Club decided to visit McGregor some 200km into the interior. 20 club members made the journey and found 14 locals battling with *Strip the Willow* and *The Cumberland Reel*. By the end of the weekend all agreed that the journey had been eminently worthwhile, repertoires expanded and friendships made. SCD is a great pastime!

We are to host Marian Anderson's Band in 2006, starting in Cape Town with a Ball on 9 September. The band will then move on to Johannesburg and Pretoria for a similar event the following weekend. We invite dancers from other countries to come and see what this great country has to offer and enjoy top class dancing at the same time. We will be happy to organise accommodation and sightseeing trips and will ensure you have a warm welcome. If you are interested, email Campbell Tyler at [campbell@tyler.co.za](mailto:campbell@tyler.co.za)

In September, Pretoria Branch welcomed Malcolm and Helen Brown (York, UK) for a week on their way to the 2005 Australian Winter School. Although on holiday, Malcolm agreed to teach at what turned out to be a thoroughly enjoyable Day School. Dancers from Pretoria Branch and the 51st Club (Johannesburg Branch) attended and 3 dancers from the Pietermaritzburg group travelled over 500 km specially for the weekend.

Other events in Pretoria included filming of a Branch class by a TV station for a youth programme and Jane Hewitt (Pietermaritzburg) being our guest teacher one evening in November. In the Eastern Province, the Grahamstown SCD group and the East London Caledonian Society combined for a social where the two groups shared the teaching and on 27

January 2006 the Port Alfred SCD group held its biennial Burns night.

In South Africa the SCD year, like the academic year, ends in November / December and in Cape Town, the 8 local clubs got together to hold a Tartan Ball. In Johannesburg and Pretoria special year-end socials were held.

## Asia

**Correspondent: Arthur McNeill**  
[amcneill@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:amcneill@cuhk.edu.hk)

There have been a number of changes in Hong Kong, following the return of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China. The most obvious has been a decrease in the number of Scots living and working in the territory, which has dealt a blow to the local Scottish societies, including the 60-year-old Reel Club.



An unfortunate victim of the exodus has been the St. Andrew's Ball, which was formerly one of Hong Kong's more glittering occasions, with its highly sought after 600 tickets. In an attempt to popularise the event in the face of falling numbers, the dance programme has been progressively 'dumbed down', resulting in the sad demise of *Petronella* this year on the grounds that the dance is too difficult! Not surprisingly, for many of the keen local dancers this was the last straw and they are threatening to leave Hong Kong next November and head for balls in Singapore, Taipei, Hanoi and Kuala Lumpur, where, we are reassured, Scottish country dancing is thriving.

On a positive note, regular classes and social dances are still going strong, and members now come from a wider social and ethnic background than before.

These include Hong Kong students who got hooked on dancing while studying in Scotland; Chinese who have found the bagpipes irresistible; and a range of non-Scots who have homes in Scotland. And just across the border in Shenzhen a new dance group has been set up. They have arranged cross-border transport so that they can attend dancing in Hong Kong and get back to the Mainland the same evening – all in keeping with the spirit of 'one country two systems'.

## Australia

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

The Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) is often called a 'koala bear'. It is not a bear but a marsupial. It stands 70 – 90cm and weighs: 4 – 9kg. There are approximately 80,000 of these delightful animals living on the east coast of Australia. Recently on the way home after a Friday night of SCD we and fellow dancers in the car following us had to stop to permit a koala to cross a busy road right under our noses! The point being our SCD passion placed us there; it got us into the community to meet with like-minded wonderful people and to enjoy a life that many don't experience.

Australia being large of size but sparse of population has many isolated SCD clubs that are many hours drive from established clubs and yet the support given is first-rate. Although not initially Society connected the clubs are taken under the wing of Branch members who introduce them to the worldwide family of SC Dancers. Carloads of city dancers turn up for socials with many being billeted overnight. Country hospitality is experienced by the city folks and new friendships are formed. The Society and SCD is kept alive in the most unlikely places.

In July for Tartan Day celebrations we had several hundred people join us in dancing on the grass overlooking the river at Southbank (the site of Expo 88) in Brisbane. We entertained many thousands of spectators while an Australian Citizenship ceremony was taking place in an enclosure. The moral is that by joining in the dance, you will experience a new world and discover your own community.





## Europe

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

The autumn saw many well-attended balls and workshops in Europe with small groups making immense efforts to attract great teachers and musicians and compiling programmes appropriate for dancers. Local dancers also often offer hospitality to visitors.

This year the office-bearers of the International Branch were re-elected confirming the interest of ex-pats and dancers' desire to have a voice in RSCDS affairs. Two IB delegates attended the AGM, representing 11 different nationalities – a great success!

The new group in Kiev is actively supported by individual dancers, the Bristol Branch and by the IB. Donations of music, shoes, kilts etc. have enabled this group to get started.

The Turin group donated 600 euros to the Waldensian Church for its work with refugees, by organizing a ceilidh and 'potluck' dinner and at the same time nurturing the social aspects of dance.

In France, Switzerland and Italy there is a growing interest in Highland dance and several clubs offer Highland / Ladies' step as an alternative during workshops. Ceilidh dancing is also very popular.

Scottish country dancing is alive and well in Oslo with a group of mixed nationalities, dancing weekly. Oslo recently had a highly successful workshop weekend with the renowned teacher Ron Wallace, and musicians James Gray and Keith Smith.

In Switzerland there are 6 clubs, mostly founded by British expats around 30–50 years ago. The classes are run mainly in English, although there are other nationalities in all groups – and they even sometimes outnumber the Brits! Most of the teachers are expats too and in a multi-lingual country like Switzerland, holding classes in English is a big advantage, as it makes things easier for non-native English-speakers when they go to Summer School in St Andrews or other international events. Clubs in Switzerland are usually strictly Scottish dancing clubs, but dancing is often linked to other aspects of Scottish culture, such

as Burns' night and St Andrew's night. For the non-Brits it is also a way of getting to know Scottish traditions: wearing the kilt, eating haggis or singing *Auld Lang Syne* are seen as essential parts of the Scottish dancing 'experience'. Like Switzerland itself, the SCD community is quite small, but there is a 'big family' feel to it.

## Japan

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

Mrs Shigeko Egarashi, Tokyo Branch Chairman, was invited by the International Folkdance Association of Korea to teach SCD for the leaders at their Summer Workshop in mid-August. Mrs Park In-Sook, one of the leaders of IFDAK wished to have their teachers experience SCD and asked Mrs Masanori Murata of the Japan Folkdance Federation to suggest a keen Japanese SCD teacher when they met in California last year. Shigeko was chosen! She attended the Workshop in Chuenchon, 40 miles from Seoul, accompanied by Tazuko Nakata and pianist, Mieko Murakami. Shigeko taught foot positions, steps and basic formations to 40 dancers trying SCD for the first time. Before the end of the workshop, to everyone's surprise, they could dance *The Happy Meeting*, *The Summer Assembly* and *Miss Gibson's Strathspey*. Most people could understand a few words of English as Shigeko speaks no Korean. So, she had to teach using the international language of dance – demonstration! We hope this will be the first step in promoting SCD in Korea.

On 16 October, the 30th Anniversary Ball to commemorate the first teaching tour of Japan was held in Tokyo. In 1975 Bill Clement was first asked by Miss Milligan to teach SCD and piping in Japan. Over 330 dancers from three Branches and affiliated and non-affiliated groups from all over Japan congratulated him and his wife Atsuko on his great contribution to the growth of SCD in Japan in the past 30 years. All the dancers were impressed by the excellent music provided by Keith Smith, Hiroko Kokai, Bill and several Japanese fiddlers. The Ball ended with *The Duke of Atholl's Reel*. In mid-October, the Tokyo area experienced two medium-sized earthquakes. We hope the shocks

will be a great inspiration on the musicianship of both Keith and Bill!

## New Zealand

**Correspondent: Marjorie M. Crawford**  
**jaymarcrawford@actrix.co.nz**

Readers might be interested to know that in 2005, New Zealand Branch published the 52nd Edition of its annual magazine – *The New Zealand Scottish Country Dancer!* We've had cause to celebrate, too, with the appointment of Noeline O'Connor as one of the Society's Examiners; and the publication of *Catch the Wind* by Romaine Butterfield in *Book 45*.

The 2005 dancing year in New Zealand culminated in the annual Summer School in December/ January in Auckland. Classes from Elementary through to Very Advanced were offered (10 classes in all) and Robert McOwen, Kate and Alex Gray accepted invitations to teach. We also welcomed teachers from Australia and New Zealand. The Musician's Class was led by Barbara McOwen and a highlight on Final Night was when the members of the Musicians' Class joined the band (Peter Elmes) to play for some of the dances.

Our AGM is held during Summer School, and this leads me to some of the ideas which have borne fruit recently. Not all dancers in New Zealand are members of the Society and encouraging membership of the RSCDS is always a challenge. We now have a 'Dance Points Scheme', whereby clubs are awarded points for the number of members they have. For example: (a) annual members renewing their membership (1 point); (b) each new member paying an annual subscription (3 points). Dance Points have a value of NZ\$1 and they can be transferred to vouchers which can be spent at the Branch Shop. Some clubs also subsidise members who take out (or renew) their RSCDS New Zealand Branch membership and in Canterbury, the Region also makes a contribution in the form of a subsidy.

Encouragement of younger dancers (here, Junior Associate Members) is an important part of the operation of the Branch. We now have 247 registered JAMs throughout the country. A Summer School Scholarship is offered each year for one JAM to attend the School. Our





Smiles all round as the legendary Stan Hamilton receives his Scroll. From left: Marie McLennan, Bill McLennan, John Middleton, Stan Hamilton, David Grant, June Shore and fellow bandleader Bobby Brown.

own Medal Tests were introduced some years ago, and a Silver Bar Medal Test was held for the first time at Auckland Summer School. 'Dancing in Schools and Tertiary Institutions' is another project and a trial is already underway in the Waikato area.

## North America – East Coast

**Correspondent: John Middleton**  
**jjceildh@sympatico.ca**

Greetings from an unusually warm southern Ontario, not that the weather has had any impact on our Fall dancing activities!

Classes started off enthusiastically and there are reports of very successful workshops. One in particular, came from Halifax, NS, where Linda Gaul (Pitlochry) was guest teacher for a weekend of dancing with participants from all over the province. Lydia Hedge stated that Linda even had very new dancers dancing reels of three in very short order while maintaining a wonderful, relaxed atmosphere. On Sunday, instruction continued for more advanced dancers and, as Lydia said, "We were all able to work off the calories BEFORE Thanksgiving Dinners!"

It was with great sadness that we heard of Betty Grant's death just before Christmas. She had not been in the best of health for some time but to meet her, one would not have guessed that there was anything wrong. As usual, Betty (backed up as ever by David) would quickly bypass any health questions in order to get to the really important stuff: Scottish country dancing. The music at her funeral was played by Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent with some of Betty's favourite dance tunes, including the music for dances she had devised – *Bedrule*, to name only one. Scottish country dancing will be much the poorer for the passing of this wonderful, quiet, caring, and gracious lady.

A most joyful event was celebrated at the Hamilton Branch Weekend during October with the presentation of the RSCDS Scroll of Honour to J. Stanley

Hamilton. Stan made his indelible mark on Scottish Country Dance music – and, indeed, on our dancing itself – during the 1960's, 1970's, and early 1980's. An amazing pianist, he was also an arranger, a researcher, and, above all, a musician with a tremendous knack of appreciating the 'rightness' of a tune or set of tunes as relating to a particular dance. His attention to arrangements and tempos were legendary and, wherever Stan Hamilton and the Clansmen were playing at a function, you could be sure of a sell-out. Those attending were most privileged to hear Stan play, along with Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent, one of his most recognizable tunes: the first tune for *The Hamilton Rant* – Dr. Bob Smith. This was a first for many dancers who came to dancing long after Stan had stopped playing. A great occasion!

## North America – West Coast

**Correspondent: Rosemary Coupe**  
**rcoupe@rscdsvancouver.org**

Focus on the future: our younger dancers.

Many West Coast groups – San Francisco, Edmonton, Sacramento, and Vancouver – run successful children's classes. The Children's Ball in San Francisco keeps growing every year, and the Vancouver Branch organizes an annual Children's Workshop as well as a Bairns' Ball.

SCD seems to be the perfect activity for young adults: it's energetic, social, and the ideal antidote to exam-induced stress. Yet dance groups on campus can be hard to sustain, as students have other things to do. Strong and generous leaders are needed to keep youth groups going, and fortunately in the West and Midwest of North America we are blessed with a number of such people. San Francisco Branch reports that many classes, taught by enthusiasts, Sheena MacQueen, Jo Hamilton, Susie Langdon-Kass, Cathy Bertics, Ron Wallace and Kathleen, are all flourishing. In addition many youth dance in adult classes as well as family classes. In 2005 they celebrated their 7th Annual Children's Ball.

At Duncan MacKenzie's monthly ceilidhs

in Vancouver, the stress is on informality: 'Live music, refreshments and fun—no partner needed, just bring your smiles and wear flat, comfy shoes—kilts optional.' The cost is low, easy dances are taught and beginners are especially welcomed. Attendance has been as high as 200. The University of Victoria Caledonian Club grew from a chance meeting on the dance floor. "I'm a student at the University of Victoria. I wish we had a class on campus." "I'm a teacher, newly moved to Victoria, looking for a class to teach." Six years later the Club, led by Anita Mathur, is flourishing and its members take an active part in many dance events.

A key to success may be recognizing opportunities and that is what Tom and Rosemary Read did when they created two SCD courses through which students might fulfil their PE requirements at Western Washington University. Students who had enjoyed the classes then formed the nucleus of a Club which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. At Iowa State University, Victor Raymond has found a different niche in the curriculum: he teaches traditional Scottish dance as part of an honours seminar entitled 'Celtic Dance and Culture.'

Home-schooling has created another opportunity as parents often look for a physical activity to provide the PE component of their children's education. One mother approached Ron Wallace, and the result was the youth class in Santa Rosa, which according to Gary Thomas has 'taken off like wildfire.'

Events like the Santa Rosa Beginners' Ball bring the generations together and a high point for the Iowa State University Celtic Dance Society is the Twin Cities Failte Ball, which is particularly suited to beginners. Groups like the University of Victoria Caledonian Club also host their own ceilidhs and invite other dancers to visit them.

The highly successful Youth Weekend West, now in its fourth year, is run by young people for young people – a magical event which touches us all with youthful energy.



# Attacked on New Year's Day!

Jimmie Hill reports on the *Scotland on Sunday* article heralding the demise of country dancing in schools.

Waking up on January 1st this year was a sobering experience for country dancers in Scotland. Luckily, Annie and I were on the Isle of Lewis where the Free Kirk ensures we can't read the Sunday papers till Monday! *Scotland on Sunday* reported that 'traditional Scottish country dancing is being replaced by lessons in hip hop and street dance'. SCD was described as one of 'the most feared aspects of physical education in Scottish schools' - to be 'consigned to oblivion'. Following a pilot scheme by a new organisation, Scottish Youth Dance, this modern dance scheme was to be rolled out over the country. One of the teachers involved claimed that pupils did not find it 'trendy to dance to old-fashioned traditional dance music'. RSCDS Youth Director, Sue Porter, was quoted as saying that SCD was good aerobic exercise. She made the point that SCD is a social and life skill as well as physical exercise. Throughout Scotland the phones started ringing and the e-mails started flying as hundreds of us vented our fury! What a start to 2006!

In the next few days, the substance of the report was repeated in the *Glasgow Herald* and Aberdeen's *Press and Journal*. It was one of the most comprehensive blows not only directly to country dancing, but indirectly to everything we as a Society stand for. Former Chairman, Jean Martin, makes the point that one of the reasons the Society was founded in 1923 was to save our dance heritage from being swamped by modern dances, but here we were in 2006 with the

same challenge. The first public counter-attack on January 7th came from Robbie Shepherd, the host of BBC Scotland's *Take the Floor* programme. Writing in the *Press and Journal*, 'O ma bleed wis bilin' (my blood was boiling), he pointed out the commitment of MPs in the Scottish Parliament to uphold our traditions and culture while at the same time committing £1.2 million to this hip-hop initiative. The same day in the letters column, Myra McRobbie of Turriff pointed out that you don't see many 40-year-old Hip Hoppers! The following week Peter Clark of Kingussie made the good point that a trial project may work in a small area, but for it to be successful nationally, it needs trained teachers.

On January 8th I thought that the dancers of Scotland would have packed out the letters column in SOS. But no, only one letter and in support of hip-hop! I was lucky enough to have the following letter published on January 15th!

*Any new dance initiative in our schools is to be welcomed and Scottish Youth Dance is to be congratulated. However, this must not be at the expense of traditional Scottish country dancing. Your article of January 1st was another blow for our traditional arts and culture.*

*We have some of the most brilliant dances in the world, some of the greatest dance tunes, talented teachers and dedicated brilliant traditional musicians. The message your article sent out was that we are all wasting our time because it is no longer 'cool'. I am sure that the tens of thousands of school pupils who take part in our country dance festivals annually are*

*shocked to see their and their teachers' enthusiasm denigrated in such a way.*

*Gaelic-speaking children come to the Mod every year because they are taught to value their culture. They learn in their primary schools that it is 'cool' to stand in front of the television cameras and sing their culture to the world.*

*Our dance tradition is part of what defines us. Hip hop, brilliant and gymnastic at its best, is not community dancing. It is solo dancing. Our own dancing allows children to dance with their parents and grandparents at weddings and ceilidhs. Take the ceilidh out of Scotland and we are diminished as a nation. Hip hop has come and will go. The Dashing White Sergeant will remain.*

Attacks on the RSCDS and country dancing continue. What should our response be?



(Cartoon by permission of *Scotland on Sunday* and Kieran)

## Well-deserved award

The whole Society congratulate David Currie on his award of OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours. He is pictured with the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC.

David Currie, one of the longest-standing members of the Canberra and District Branch, was invested as a Member of the Order of Australia (OAM) in September for services to the community through Scottish country dancing. David's award recognises his tremendous service to residents of Nursing and Retirement Homes. David has organised nearly 500 entertainments at these Homes. In June 2005, at age 82, he decided to retire from teaching in the Burns Scottish Country Dancing Group in Canberra, after an 18-year career in the job. David is an Australian born and bred, but his Scottish dancing career started in Perth, Scotland, in the early 50s. He was then working for the *Perthshire Advertiser* after the



Royal Australian Air Force had sent him to the UK as a crewman for Bomber Command in 1944. At that time television was yet to arrive in Perth and everybody listened to the radio, including two weekly half-hour programmes of uninterrupted Scottish country dance music. One evening, one of the leading bands played for a dance at the City Hall. David sat in the balcony and watched. He says the sight from above of the dancers in *The Glasgow Highlanders* was momentous for his future life. He was so impressed that he decided to learn. David continues to enjoy Scottish dancing, and to use it for his dedicated, public-spirited community service.



# David and Betty Grant

Two of the Society's most loyal Canadian supporters.

In the autumn Keith Bark interviewed David and Betty Grant of Toronto for this issue of *Scottish Country Dancer*. Sadly, Betty passed away on 7th December leaving not only a legacy of dances, but a wealth of happy memories for all who came in contact with her. She was a great ambassador for the Toronto Branch. She enriched both the RSCDS and Scottish country dancing. When Keith interviewed 'the Grants', as everyone affectionately called them, it was in the same room at their home in the Forest Hill area of Toronto where Miss Milligan was entertained at a party in 1977. Betty sat in the very chair that Miss Milligan occupied almost 30 years ago. David and Betty danced across Canada, from Halifax to Vancouver. They regularly attended dances and balls in London, Hamilton, Toronto, Kitchener and Guelph. They attended branch classes in Toronto in addition to teaching their own class. For many years they enjoyed St Andrews Summer School and the Society AGM. The highlight of their Scottish country dance career was receiving the RSCDS Scroll in 1999. We extend our sympathy to David and the family. This is their story and also a tribute to a great lady of country dancing.

## When did you first start in Scottish country dancing?

We went to the St Andrews Ball in the Royal York Hotel in Toronto for many years. Betty had a cousin who was a medical officer in the 48th Highlanders, who ran the Ball in conjunction with the St Andrew's Society. The dancing was called highland dancing, but it was what we now call ceilidh dancing. In 1946, before we were married, I was invited to join Betty for dinner in the officer's mess and then go to the St Andrew's Ball. We did the *Eightsome Reel*, *Waltz Country Dance*, *Dashing White Sergeant*, *Scottish Reform* and other dances. The men wore heavy shoes, white tie and tails and the ladies wore their furs, beautiful evening gowns, jewels and high-heeled shoes. It was the social event of the year. Then in 1962, one ballroom had people dancing Scottish country dancing. When we saw this, we inquired how we could learn it. We were told to attend a class at Grace Church the following Tuesday and we went early and were shown some of the steps by George Armstrong, the teacher of the group. Over the years he got me involved in arranging balls and dances and when he died, I was asked to be the leader of the group.

## What is the story behind the dance *Bedrule*?

We had been attending Summer School for a number of years and Betty wondered how you got a dance published by the Society. We asked Miss Gibson and she said that you send it in and it was reviewed anonymously. She said that so many were received that you might never hear back from the Society! Anyhow, Betty had a dream in which she devised the dance *Bedrule*. She woke up in the morning and said "I have just dreamt about a dance. Don't speak to me or I may forget it." She typed it out and sent it in. About a month later Miss Gibson was on the phone and said "We want Betty's dance." Betty replied, "That's fine, but I would like to provide the music for it." At the time we were dancing in a class taught by Bob Blackie, another Scroll recipient. The pianist for the class was Anna Robertson. Anna wrote four tunes called *The Annandale Suite* dedicated to her father, Jack Annandale. We sent the tunes to Scotland and the one chosen was published with the dance.



*Bedrule* is a tiny little hamlet where Betty's great great grandparents and their ancestors lived before immigrating to Canada in 1832 and 1833. *Bedrule* means Bed of the Rule Waters and is in the Borders between Hawick and Jedburgh. In *Bedrule* you will see a church with a large bronze plaque for William Turnbull of *Bedrule*, Bishop of Glasgow, who was founder of the University of Glasgow. Betty's great great grandmother was Elizabeth Turnbull who married Archibald Dickson and came to Canada with their nine children. Just outside Seaforth, Ontario, Archibald built a settlers cabin which, although much altered, is still there. The Indians came to see Archibald whilst he was cutting trees down and said he would kill himself the way he was working, so he got his fiddle from his tent, and played whilst the Indians cut the trees down. Archibald became a member of parliament for Huron, with 84,000 constituents. We have visited *Bedrule* and Betty wrote in the guest book that she had written a dance named after the village because of her family connection. Apparently the dance has brought many dancers to the village.

Betty submitted another dance called *St Andrews Gardens* which was published in Book 35. She also devised *A Ring of Friendship* and *The Meeting Place*, derived from a Mississauga Indian word for Toronto. Another popular dance of Betty's is *Chrysanthemum*, written for a tour of Japan. When John and J'ina Middleton were in Japan teaching, they were taken to several Highland Games. At each one they saw *Chrysanthemum* being danced.

## What is your Scottish heritage?

The Grants came from Southern Ireland around 1830 and settled near London, Ontario. My second name is Ross after my maternal grandmother, Bessie Ross, from Scotland. I was brought up Scottish. Everything we did at home was Scottish, the food we ate, the pictures on the wall. My mother's influence was greater than the Irish influence on my father's side. My love of music also comes from my mother. Her father was the conductor of a military band. But really, my connection with Scottish country dancing is through Betty and that first evening at the St Andrews Ball.



### Where did you meet Miss Milligan?

We met Miss Milligan several times at Summer School and at the Society AGM. Our first AGM was in 1973 and Summer School in 1974. We planned to attend the AGM every five years and Summer School every second year, but finished up going to Summer School every year from 1978 to 2003. But, of course, our first meeting with Miss Milligan was here in Toronto. She made a number of visits here, one being in 1977 when I was Branch Chairman. On that occasion we had a class of 400! It was after she had had an operation on her knees and she needed someone on each arm to hold her while she demonstrated the steps. I brought her into the gym where we had both a piper, and Stan Hamilton on piano. Miss Milligan walked round the room waving like the Queen Mother. She taught a strathspey and the dancers really danced to their highest capabilities for her. People would really work for her; she was a 'no-nonsense' teacher. She wanted people to enjoy Scottish country dancing and she was very particular.

After the class she came back to our house for a party and she sat in the very chair Betty is sitting in. A photograph in the book *Dance With Your Soul* shows her standing by the piano with Alex Jappy and Stan Hamilton playing. The party went on until almost 3.00am. After a few hours' sleep, Bob Blackie and Ed Jones drove her to New York (a ten-hour drive) where she taught another class. She had great vitality, but on the other hand, at the airport she would have a wheelchair so that she got special treatment!

We have tapes of talks given by Miss Milligan over the years containing pieces of her wisdom. She was a mesmerising woman. She wanted people to understand what she believed in. Lots of stories about Miss Milligan were just not true. Some people would say that she had a big stick and hit you on the knees – but she never did anything like that. She had a gentle nature, but she was stern and she made sure things were followed up.

### You were involved in the Toronto Scottish World Festival, weren't you?

In the 1970's we had a Scottish World Festival here in Toronto. It was held in the Canadian National Exhibition grounds each August/September. We were in charge of the dancing and 350 dancers would perform each evening in front of a crowd of 20 to 25 thousand! We had so many bands, Royal Marines, Pipe Bands from Scotland and Australia that it affected the Pipe Band competitions in Scotland. We invited Miss

Milligan to come and be the honoured guest at the Festival. We raised money through functions, including our Tartan Ball, to cover her air fare, but unfortunately she couldn't come because of the operation on her knees. When we first talked to the organisers about performing at the Festival, they said that they would give us \$500 for each evening. We didn't expect anything, so were quite grateful for the donation. The next year we told them that we wanted \$1000 per night and they immediately agreed to our request!

The Festival was like a Military Tattoo with Highland and country dancing as well as the Bands and other military displays. The finale was called *Honour the Piper* and involved a full pipe band in the centre playing with the dancers coming on from the four corners to form a St Andrews Cross and would finish with all 300+ dancers dancing one large hands round and back. A lot of people were attracted to Scottish country dancing through the Festival.

### What are your Memories of St Andrews?

We both took our certificates at St Andrews: Betty in 1976 and me in 1978. St Andrews, to us, was like going to visit your family. Miss Milligan always spoke of the family. Members came from all over the world and we would meet many of them each year at St Andrews. In the early days, we were served our meals and it was relaxing as you could talk with people and meet new friends. You were required to wear shirt, tie and jacket and it was like a family dinner every evening. Then we would meet outside the dining room in a room I used to call the Blue Room because it was blue with smoke!

We used to dance at Summer School in a class with other teachers. We were all quite capable dancers and the dancing was a wonderful experience. The number of teachers going to that class has diminished because many now go to the Refresher Course for Teachers. We did not want to go to the Refresher Course – we went to dance! We really enjoyed the many years we went to St Andrews.

### How has Scottish country dancing changed over the years?

It is not as vigorous as when we first started. Too many people dance the dances as if they are walking. There is also a great proliferation of dances. You could know all the dances when there were just twenty books. That is not possible now with 45 Society books plus so many other books. Unfortunately though, it seems, so often, that briefing is not enough. Dancers rely on detailed descriptions of the dances rather than brief reminders.

I think that people don't look on Scottish country dancing as an important part of their

social life as they used to. People would practise and learn the dances before attending a major event like the Tartan Ball. Miss Milligan once said "Now, when I go to a Ball, I watch your faces. I see the real country dancers and they are not always the people with the most beautiful feet. They are the people who feel that it touches their soul. Remember you dance with your soul. You don't dance with your feet. There are some people that just worship their feet and they never get further than the feet."

Over the years Canada has become more like the UK. When we would dance in towns in the UK, the social dancing was not like that done by the Society at St Andrews. It was more carefree. Our dancing in Canada was of a very high standard, more like the Society style. Now things have changed. There is less precision in the technique and a more carefree attitude. People dance and enjoy both dancing and the music, so you do not want to discourage it. A lot of our teachers are not as particular as in the early days and downplay the importance of technique. You have to teach people at the level they are at. You have to get them to enjoy the music and enjoy the phrasing while doing the dance. Later you can improve their technique and enable them to dance more easily. It is important to do dances that have good music to go with the dance. Miss Milligan said in 1974 "I still don't think that you are sufficiently impressed with the importance of gaiety. I do see so many demonstrations that I think are deadly dull but well performed. I used to say to Miss Hadden that we have many performers, but few real dancers." Her comment to teachers was "If you can get your class to laugh, you've got the class with you. We lose far too many members through the lack of gaiety and social communication."

### What is the relevance of the Society in Canada?

We need the Society to maintain standards and technique – otherwise dancing, as we know it, will slip away until all we have is another form of square dancing or ceilidh dancing where anybody can get up without knowing steps or formations. The Society needs to promote the enjoyment of dancing together with phrasing and technique. We need the Society to maintain the standards so that we can dance anywhere in the world. It is necessary to have a framework to work within and in joining the Society we are helping to keep alive a tradition. The Society enables us to go anywhere in the world and enjoy Dancing. Happiness really IS Scottish Country Dancing.



# Overheard on the web

Chris Ronald of New York gives an overview of what people have been talking about on Strathspey, the website for Scottish country dancers and musicians to exchange information over the Internet. The Strathspey List was set up and is maintained by Anselm Lingnau, in Frankfurt, Germany. You can subscribe at [www.strathspey.org](http://www.strathspey.org).

Last October, we had one of the liveliest discussions I can remember. It was about etiquette at a dance or Ball. There were comments about whether a man should 'escort a woman to her seat' at the end of a dance; whether dancers should 'clear the floor'; whether there's a problem of some dancers 'hogging' the top sets; methods used around the world for counting off sets; when to begin clapping at the end of a dance; and how to request an encore. I couldn't begin to summarise what was said, but I'll mention just a few of the comments.

## The issue of gender

On the gender issue, it was pointed out that, while some of our dances may date from the eighteenth century, the role of the sexes has evolved, and we do not aim to recreate in our balls the social customs of eighteenth century Britain. Nowadays, many groups encourage women to ask men to dance, and often there are no seats for a woman to be returned to anyway. One woman pointed out that a man who did escort a woman back to her seat – or to the place he found her(!) – could find himself without a partner for the next dance, all the women having paired off.

## Etiquette

It is evidently acceptable in many places for the dance floor not to be cleared, but for sets to re-form quickly after applauding and thanking partners and other members of the set. Someone then asked: who or what are we applauding? The musicians (if any)? The other dancers? Or perhaps ourselves, for getting through the dance? This led on to how to request an encore: 'clap more vigorously'; 'stay in sets on the floor'; 'stomp on the floor'. Others mentioned the practice, common in the US, of waving an index finger in the air, to signify 'once and to the bottom' or 'one more time'.

## That Scotsman article

A recent discussion was prompted by an article in the *Scotsman* of 15th November. The article opened with the line: 'Scottish country dancing can be anything you make of it: formal and fastidiously carried out, or more free, with the emphasis on fun.' It contrasted the RSCDS style with ceilidh dancing, which was portrayed as more popular among young people, more fun, and where 'no one gets upset if you take a wrong step'. It added that 'the RSCDS teaches a greying group of people a

springing athletic dance that calls upon fancy footwork, pointed toes and turned-out knees.' In the discussion on the Strathspey list, a dancer in her 20s mentioned that she'd been to many RSCDS-style dances all over Britain and was 'usually the youngest at the dance by at least 20 years. At some there will be two or three other young people, but out of a hall of 100 dancers, this is not good for the future of RSCDS-style dancing.'



Chris on Strathspey!

The discussion covered some of the implied criticisms. Here's an example: 'I recently saw a young girl getting asked to join a set. She did so hesitantly as she had only come to look. She does some SCD (and) with a little help can manage to go to where she should be. The very well-meaning teacher stepped into the set and literally pushed her from behind round in rights and lefts. There was no need for this as we in the set could have helped her. The teacher wanted it done 'right' and 'proper', and left one teenage girl determined that she is not going to do this again. She felt humiliated and SCD – as we know it – has lost.'

## Attracting younger dancers

The discussion showed a lot of understanding for the concerns being raised by the young people, and most people agreed that a change of attitude is needed in order to attract the younger generation. One young person stressed: 'it is not just up to the branches. It is up to every individual who dances to encourage young people.' It was also emphasized that 'things within the RSCDS are moving in the right direction', such as with the Easter School for young people, and that there are other countries, such as Germany, where the average age of dancers is much lower than in the UK. The discussion ended with the drafting of a letter to *The Scotsman*,

initiated by Pia Walker, stressing that RSCDS-style dancers are of all ages, and that we do have a lot of fun. Many Strathspey List subscribers helped draft the letter, and 41 of them – from some 25 countries all over the world – signed it, in a wonderfully creative action by the List.

## Frowning at the birlers

Another of the younger 'Strathspeyers' mentioned that he sometimes liked to birl at a dance, but didn't dare to do so at Summer School, for fear of disapproval. In the somewhat heated discussion that followed, it was agreed that only a small percentage of people at a dance would show disapproval of birls, twiddles and other ways that some young dancers (and others) like to 'let their hair down'. But it only takes one or two frowns to spoil someone's evening: a regular contributor to the list (and member of the RSCDS Board) lamented: 'they constantly and consistently destroy my enjoyment of the dancing with their tut-tuts and disapproval of inexperienced dancers.'

## Dance names

A common query on the Strathspey List is to ask how a dance got its name: two recent examples are *Machine without Horses*, and *Hooper's Jig*. First, *Machine without Horses*. The list seemed to agree that, as with many of the older dances (and some recent ones too), the name belonged to a tune before it belonged to a dance. But what did the tune refer to? Some said an early steam engine. But the majority seemed to believe it referred to a sedan chair, invented around the time the tune is first known to have been published. One subscriber suggested that the figures of the dance might depict the actions of a steam engine, but others found this idea fanciful. Someone else asked if anyone knew who Mr. Hooper was (as in *Hooper's Jig*). One of the list's linguistics experts explained that this probably referred to a trade, rather than an individual. Apparently, 'hooper' and 'cooper' are at root the same word, meaning someone who makes barrels (puts hoops on a tun). The same subscriber pointed out that there are a number of words where there can be confusion about a 'ch' sound (e.g. loch). Strangely, no one started a loch versus lock debate! Ah well, every theme has to come to an end sometime.

Chris Ronald, New York





# What does your sporan tell us?

In this second article on the clothes we wear for country dancing, Robert Lachlan writes about fashions in sporrans.

'Sporran' is Gaelic for 'purse' and is in daily use by Gaelic-speakers. The sporan, worn with the kilt, has a long pedigree. Writing his history of the First Crusade around 1110, Guibert of Nogent reports, 'You might see (the soldiers) of the Scots . . . barelegged, with their shaggy cloaks, a scrip hang *ex humeris*.' A 'scrip' was a medieval word for the pouch carried by pilgrims. Guibert also notes that Scots wore their scrips 'hanging forward from their haunches.' Early illustrations of Scots show this simple practical leather pouch. Here is an example of a sporan from the 17th century:

After the failed 1745 Rebellion, the Disarming Act of the following year banned, amongst other things, the wearing of the kilt or any tartan garment, as well as the playing of bagpipes. Forcing the Gaels to



adopt a foreign form of dress had far-reaching cultural consequences. The Act was repealed 36 years later in 1782, thanks to the efforts of the Gaelic Society of London.

The 19th century saw a new vogue for Highland dress after the obese, yet magnificently kilted, George IV visited Edinburgh in 1822. Picture 1 is from an edition of *The Scottish Gael* of 1876 and shows two Highland Chiefs, be-feathered and with modest fur sporrans. The same illustrator shows us (below) 'Purses of the Different Regiments', all made of fur and with different arrangements of the 'tassles' for each regiment. Tassles were not arbitrary adornments.



Loudon Macqueen Douglas, in his *Manual of Scottish National Dress* of 1914, writes that the original sporrans were made from the skins of wild animals, such as the otter or the badger, but 'several historical personages have also worn those of velvet or other strong cloth'. He advises that the sporan for evening dress should be of goat's hair with tassels, and the lower fringe should 'fall below the edge of the kilt, about an inch', whereas 'small circular sporrans are more suitable for morning wear'. Directions from the Lord Chamberlain's Office for Scottish National Dress for Levées should be 'full dress white hair sporan, silver mounted with tassels'. The strap should be patent leather and the chain silver.

By 1936 the Highland outfitters, Stewart Christie and Co, advising lesser mortals, state that for day dress the sporan should be hogskin, leather or fur and without undue ornamentation, while the evening dress sporan should be white hair, fur or leather, silver gilt or mounted. Picture 2 shows Mr James C. Forbes of Corse, in day dress, wearing a fox fur sporan around 1900.

Much more common earlier, was the full military hair sporan. According to Maxwell & Hutchison, writing in 1958 in *Scottish costume 1550 - 1850*, 'it is the army (which) is responsible for perpetuating the monstrous horsehair sporrans, with shaving brush tassels, which appealed to the early 19th century gothic taste'. The Edwardian in picture 3 gives the impression, not that he is wearing his clothes, but that his clothes are wearing him! - feather in bonnet and full military-style hair sporan reaching below his kilt. Picture 4 is our magnificent piper, Alistair Duthie, at the 2005 AGM with his fine example of a military-style sporan.

Over the past 200 years, sporan styles have come and gone. At a ceilidh dance today you might see a young man wearing his grandfather's full military hairy

extravaganza, but you would be surprised to see one at the AGM ball!

For general dancing and day dress, the sporan should be plain and simple. You can splash out on something more flamboyant for evening dress - fur, silver trimmings, etc. A dress sporan looks out of place if you are wearing an open-necked shirt in class and a plain leather sporan would not normally be worn with a Prince Charlie or Montrose Doublet.

Today, if you go into a Highland outfitter, you will be spoiled for choice. There are black furry ones with white tassels, white furry ones with black tassels; blue, red, green or pink furry ones if you want to be more outrageous! It appears that the sporan has become more of a fashion statement than for many years. But don't get carried away! The salesman may tell you that pink is very popular this year at ceilidhs, but how will it look at the ball!

Two further pieces of advice. When wearing a sporan, make sure it is neither too high nor too low. There is nothing worse than a sporan hanging down and flying about, or one so high up it is almost at navel height!



high                      about right                      low

When buying a new sporan, do try it on and dance some springy pas de basque steps in the shop. Noisy tassels can be very embarrassing when you are setting twice! I have even removed tassels which made too much noise!

So, the message about sporrans is the same as for hose - the right sporan for the right occasion!



# The Glasgow Highlanders

Dr Alastair MacFadyen, former Society Chairman and Archivist, has researched the origins of The Glasgow Highlanders in this first of an occasional series of articles on our dances.

As it's one of my favourites, I was very pleased to see in the results of the recent 'favourite dance' competition that *The Glasgow Highlanders* appeared in the most popular list at number 7. There are several reasons for its appeal to me. When it features in a dance programme, the lines of dancers progressing down the hall and back again, especially in a large assembly, is, I think, a magnificent spectacle. In addition, the various aspects of the dance – its history, structure, deviser, regimental association, music and Highland step – all combine to provide us with a dance which has an interesting background story.



## The Dance

As one of the few strathspey country dances still danced or remembered by 1923, it was inevitable that *The Glasgow Highlanders* should have been included amongst the Society's first published strathspeys (Book 2, 1925). Surprisingly, since earlier printed versions clearly indicate 32 bars, it appeared with 24 bars only (4 bars for the rights and lefts and 4 bars for the Highland step). The consequent problem for the music was immediately identified and the correction made in later editions of Book 2.

Although the dance was probably composed in the 1870s (see below), its first printed version, as far as I am aware, was not available until c.1880 when the instructions were included by the deviser, Walter F. Gillies, in his *Manual of Dancing*. The name he gave it was the *Highlanders Country Dance*, a title which reflects, not only its military connections, but also the way in which Gillies choreographed his dance. In it, he amalgamated two Scottish dance traditions – the country dance in the first half and the Highland or Scotch reel in the

second. Precisely when or by whom the name change was made is not certain, but the title familiar to us was well established by the 1890s.

About his dance, Walter Gillies says, 'It is a little difficult, and requires to be well understood before attempting to join in dancing it. It is danced to strathspey time all through.' To us this may seem like a surprising comment, but as a professional teacher of dancing, he would have been well aware of the preferences of his pupils. Whilst dancers of the late nineteenth century continued to enjoy the Highland reels with their medley of strathspey and reel tempos and the country dances accompanied by the quicker rhythms of reel and jig, their liking for the strathspey country dances had diminished considerably. This fact probably explains why the version of *The Glasgow Highlanders* included by David Anderson, the Dundee dancing master, in his ball-room guide of c.1890 states that it should be danced to 16 bars of reel and 16 bars of strathspey. I am very glad that the deviser's original directions prevailed and achieved general acceptance.

## The Deviser

Walter F. Gillies (1851 – 1909) was a well known teacher of dancing on the south side of Glasgow. At the time of his death, it was said that 'the profession, which he had graced for upwards of 40 years, had lost one of its most able exponents'. As was customary in his profession, and as illustrated by a surviving programme of one of his Children's Balls, his teaching covered all aspects of fashionable dance as well as the dances of the Scottish traditions. Like so many of his professional colleagues, he was also an accomplished musician and was particularly noted as a cornet, flute and piccolo player. For several years, he was a member of the Bute Band in Rothesay, Isle of Bute, where he had a house.

As an adjudicator of competitive Highland dancing, the services of Walter Gillies were always in demand at Highland Gatherings and at International Exhibitions held, for example, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester and Paris. He was a founding member and Secretary of the Scottish Association of Teachers of Dancing. Formed in the 1890s, this was the first such organisation for professional teachers of dancing which restricted its membership to Scotland. Its first two objects were to

'promote a uniform method of teaching' and 'to assist Teachers in acquiring a knowledge of New Dances'. It may be assumed that the subject of this article, a dance for a Glasgow regiment, was the Secretary's response to the second of these objects.

## The Regiment

In his *Manual*, Walter Gillies records that his dance was 'made by me for a company of the 105th Volunteer Regiment and danced first by them in Glasgow at their Assembly'. Consisting of twelve companies, the 105th Lanarkshire (Glasgow Highland) Rifle Volunteers was formed in Glasgow in April 1868 and was made up mostly of exiled Highlanders resident in the city.



Wearing a uniform modelled on that of the 42nd Highlanders (Black Watch), the new regiment made its first public appearance in Glasgow in October 1868 when the Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone of the new University buildings at Gilmorehill. The chief function of the volunteer battalions, of which there were many in the nineteenth century, was to be prepared to supplement the forces of the regular army in times of war. But there was also a strong social aspect to their activities and it was quite usual for them to include a dancing assembly in their annual calendar of events.

So far, I have found no evidence to establish precisely at which assembly the *Highlanders Country Dance* made its debut. Because the 105th was redesignated as the 10th Lanarkshire (Glasgow Highland) Rifle



# Old soldier

Volunteers in 1880 and as the 5th (Glasgow Highland) Volunteer Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry in 1887, it seems likely that the dance was composed by Gillies, and first danced at a regimental assembly, at some time between 1868 and 1880.

Members of the Glasgow Highlanders saw active service in the Boer War and in both World Wars. In World War I, 1100 men of the regiment died on the western front. Memorabilia relating to the original 105th Volunteer Battalion and its subsequent history is displayed in the museum of the Royal Highland Fusiliers, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.

## The Music

Walter Gillies makes only a brief reference to music when he advises that it would be available 'for piano and any other instrument' on application to him. Whether or not he selected the tune now known as *Glasgow Highlanders* can only be matter of speculation. While investigating the origins of the tune, I was intrigued by a note which appears with an undated RSCDS leaflet for *The Glasgow Highlanders*. It reads as follows: 'Tune: Published in a set of *Lancers* called *Merry Tunes* by D. Godfrey, 1866'. Having located this set of the *Lancers*, and positively identified our familiar melody, I was surprised to note that it was entitled *Hop Light Loo*. Further enquiries have revealed that *Hop Light Loo* was a very popular nineteenth century refrain which was adopted then and since for a variety of purposes – quadrille, plantation song, trot-past for the King's Hussars, a Welsh folk tune, Croen y Ddafad Felan, (confirmed by RSCDS members, Heulwen Hall and Fran Smith) and the theme music for the well remembered Scottish radio series, the *McFlannels*. So it is possible that Walter Gillies, persuaded by the appeal and appropriateness of tune, did make the original selection. In any case, the published collections of dance music, *Kerr's Collection of Reels and Strathspeys*, for example, confirm that by the 1890s the familiar *Glasgow Highlanders* tune was the recognised and established accompaniment to the dance.

## The Step

The teacher's instruction "show me your Glasgow Highlanders step" is now immediately understood by many RSCDS members. That was not always so. This step has only acquired its familiar designation over time and, like the music, because of its association with the

dance. When recommended by early editions of *Book 2*, it was referred to as 'a strathspey step'. The first detailed description of it features in *Scottish National Dances: A Practical Handbook*, published in Edinburgh in 1901 by the Edinburgh teacher, James Grahamsley Atkinson Jr. In Letter XI of his book, *Ladies' Strathspey Steps*, he includes instructions for the now well known Glasgow Highlanders step.

## Postscript

I have an interesting and happy finale to my account of *The Glasgow Highlanders*. Mrs. Ruby Yuille, granddaughter of Walter F. Gillies, lives, as did her grandfather, on the south side of Glasgow where she attends a country dance class regularly.



When Mrs Yuille and I first met in 2001, she was well aware of her grandfather's claim to *The Glasgow Highlanders*, but admitted to having been rather diffident about mentioning it. I am very indebted to Mrs. Yuille for her grandfather's biographical details and for the illustrations which accompany this article.

### Congratulations

Ottawa Branch on their 40th anniversary  
Two of our oldest branches both celebrating their 80th: Dundee and West Renfrewshire

Inverness Branch have 4 sets of beginners this year. Well done!

### Thanks

Mrs Eileen Watt would like to thank everyone for their generosity and best wishes on her retirement. She hopes to see you all on the dance floor!

Alfred Anderson, the oldest man in Scotland, died at the age of 109 on November 21st. When his obituaries appeared in the Press, it came as news to many of us that Alfred had been a keen supporter of the RSCDS.

Alfred Anderson was born in Dundee in 1896. He was called up in 1914 at the age of 18 and served in the Black Watch in the First World War. He was the last survivor of the Christmas Truce when soldiers on both sides laid down their weapons, sang carols and played football together. Wounded in 1916, Alfred was sent home to recuperate. He eventually married and lived in Newtyle in Angus and later in Alyth in Perthshire.

Two years ago, Joan Henderson, an RSCDS member and former lecturer in traditional dance at Dunfermline College of PE in Cramond, visited Alfred in his home. He put the secret of his longevity down to keeping fit and in no small measure to his love of country dancing. He remembered being taught by Dancie Reid and that the music was 'very good in those days'. He remembered that at least half of the Dancie's classes were devoted to step practice and that he was very strict – with particular emphasis on posture and the accuracy of foot position.

Joan tells of Alfred's own immaculate appearance, shoes highly polished and wearing a smart shirt and tie, and his enviable posture. At the age of 108, he held himself upright and showed her with small gestures of the foot and leg what Dancie Reid was aiming for. Apparently, Mr Reid told his dancers never to look down to check what their feet were doing – they should 'feel it'.

It was common in those days for boys to sit on one side of the room and the girls on the other. In order to help the boys relax, Dancie Reid would throw a handful of sweeties into the centre of the room. The boys would all run and scabble to get them. This helped the boys get over their shyness! Alfred also remarked on how Mr Reid would insist on etiquette. When he announced a dance, the boys would go across the room and ask the girls to dance. The boys would then escort the girls onto the floor with each girl placing their arm on the boy's. At the end of the dance, the boys had to walk the girls back to their seats. If anyone was not dancing correctly, all Mr Reid had to do was tap them on the shoulder with his violin bow. He was both teacher and accompanist.

One of the last surviving veterans of WWI, Alfred's life was remarkable both for its length and for his many contributions to his local community. It is wonderful that country dancing was an important part of his long life.





# The Society



Clockwise from top left: AGM dancer, young dancers in Hamburg, Stan and Anne Hamilton, Matthias and Marie at Marie's Wedding, AGM dancers, Coming up the middle at the AGM, Dot Armstrong, Chairman of the Dunfermline Branch with Andrea of Dundee Branch, and Martina of the International Branch.





**CAPTION COMPETITION**

What is young Garry whispering in Joan's ear at the AGM Ball? Send your answer by post or e-mail to [mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org) by May 30th. Prize for the best caption in next issue.



# on Camera



Ilona and Alex (with perfect arms); Society Chairman Stewart Adam entering the AGM; AGM dancer; Fiona Grant of Bristol; Former Chairman George Lawson and his wife, Nan, at their Golden Wedding; young dancer Miss Jenna McLay from Port Seton; enjoying a birl at the AGM. (All AGM pictures courtesy of Fraser Band.)



# The Perth AGM and Conference

Andrew Kellett, member of the Editorial Board, reports on an excellent AGM and Conference Weekend in Perth.

We all know what AGMs can be like and conferences, whether political or business, do not enjoy a much better reputation. Happily, the RSCDS Conference Weekend 2005, incorporating the AGM, avoided these stereotypes and proved to be interesting, informative and fun. Over 700 members attended at least part of the Conference, held at the Bell's Sports Centre in Perth over the first weekend in

present was reminded of the immense contribution that individual members throughout the world make. In his address, Stewart paid tribute to Richard Turnbull and Alex Gray, who were standing down as Finance Convenor and Education & Training Convenor respectively, and to June and Eileen who were leaving their posts at Headquarters. He asked members to be patient while new staff found their feet.

local colour. The fact that consideration was given to running more than one RSCDS Conference Weekend in a year suggested that this one was a success. Each of the subjects encouraged a lot of members to speak and the chair of the session, Irene Bennett (Chairman Elect) had to guillotine proceedings to allow time for the last topic on communication, which of course is a good thing and we always seem to want



November, with over 400 at the AGM itself. These figures are pretty remarkable. It would be hard to think of a comparable organisation where the grass-roots membership takes such a keen and active part in managing its affairs. Of course, any sensible member goes to the weekend for the dancing and to meet with friends, but that doesn't stop him or her following the debates and contributing to the many discussion groups, both formal and informal, that will help to shape the Society's future. The Weekend showed the RSCDS to be in good heart, well led, with an enthusiastic and committed membership. Now that's something in which we can all take pride.

In keeping with tradition the Weekend opened with a formal Ball. The Bell's Sports Centre is one of the few venues in Scotland that can accommodate almost 700 country dancers, and it was great to see so many members dressed in their finest enjoying the music of Colin Dewar and his Band. To emphasise the international reach of the Society, the Ball programme was compiled by the three Branches in Japan. The following evening a similar number of dancers packed the floor again for an informal dance with Marian Anderson and her Band, who were on top form. This time Newcastle Branch had put the programme together. Both events were spectacular. We might take it for granted, but the sight of line upon straight line of trained dancers all moving in unison is really impressive; and taking part on the dance floor is thrilling and inspiring. A memory that will stay with us until . . . well, at least next year!

The AGM itself was well handled by our Chairman, Stewart Adam, with his customary good humour. Vice President, Peregrine Moncrieffe of that ilk, recounted some of his experiences on the dance floor, both "elemental and elegant", before presenting the Society Scroll of Honour to this year's recipients. Listening to the citations for the awards, everyone

He also urged members to be tolerant of different dancing styles as we try to keep more young people interested in Scottish country dancing. One of those younger members, Gary Coull, spoke impressively on behalf of Banffshire Branch proposing a motion to lower the age at which candidates could sit Part One of the Teaching Certificate. After a short debate the motion was narrowly defeated, but it was gratifying to hear that young dancers wanted to become RSCDS teachers. Accounts were studied, reports were heard, the election results were announced, thanks were given. The business was concluded very efficiently in under two hours.

During the weekend there were other opportunities to contribute to debates about the Society's affairs. The first of these was the Branch Forum at 9.15 on Saturday morning. Maybe it was the relatively early start after the ball the night before, but this was a rather lacklustre event despite the valiant efforts of co-chairs Elaine Wilde (Croydon) and Simon Wales (London) to get discussion flowing. On the other hand, the absence of strong feelings from the floor may indicate that Branches are broadly content with the way that the Society is being managed, and the Forum did make some recommendations to the Management Board, mostly about outreach. The next session, 'The Floor is Yours', was an altogether livelier affair. The later start, the chance for an extra cup of coffee and topics for discussion that were about dancing rather than management all helped. It was good that the Management Board used this occasion to sound out the views of members, and the brief introduction to each topic was appreciated. The question of recapping at dances attracted a lot of opinions. Clearly 'briefings', 'talk through' and 'calling' are becoming more common at Branch dances. Generally, people felt that the proposal for a core repertoire had merit, but wanted room for programme compilers to retain

more of it. While this was going on, David Hall was teaching a class in the main arena for about 200 dancers helped by some excellent music from Judith Smith and Gillian Cummins.

A few years ago the AGM concluded with a dance on the Saturday night, now the Weekend extends into Sunday morning with a range of discussion and practical groups. 80 members attended a workshop on 'What Makes a Good Dance' led by John Wilkinson, with George Meikle providing the music. Some of the dances coming out of the workshop would be worthy of publication.

Another workshop on 'Music for Dancing' led by Mo Rutherford (Music Director) brought together 40 musicians and dancers. A lively discussion ensued which highlighted the interdependence of music and dance. A meeting for Youth Coordinators, chaired by Sue Porter (Youth Director) covered some interesting ground including: ideas for establishing youth demonstration teams; training courses on teaching Scottish country dance to children; family camps incorporating dancing and other activities; and health and safety issues associated with running events for children.

As the workshops and discussion groups concluded, members made their way to lunch parties or began the journey home. Each had his or her personal highlight of the weekend, but they all shared the satisfaction of contributing to a conference that had shown the Society in a positive light as an organisation worth supporting and developing. Hearty thanks to the Board members who had masterminded the event, and the army of stewards who had kept the whole show running smoothly.

A more formal record of the Conference can be found in the members area of the Society website: [www.rscds.org](http://www.rscds.org). Copies of the AGM minutes and the annual accounts are available for all members. (More photographs on pages 16 and 17.)



# In our opinion

On the Sunday morning of the AGM Music Director, Mo Rutherford, chaired a discussion group for musicians and anyone interested in music. The 40 people present discussed some fundamental issues which could affect us all. In this issue we present the views expressed by the group rather than the views of any one person.

## Publication of music

Musicians in New Zealand had sent an e-mail about the proposal not to publish dance books with music. Some of those present expressed the worry that musicians would simply play tunes that they liked and the chosen original might never be played. The meeting felt the proposed policy should be reconsidered. Jim Healy reported that the main driver behind the proposal was the cost of publishing books of new dances with music – when the vast majority of the books' recipients were not interested in the music. Everyone agreed that musicians playing for dancing needed access to the chosen tunes.

## Format of music

At present the music is published in full score layout with left hand accompaniments written out in full. The meeting did not like the suggestion that future publications would only show a melody line with left hand harmonies. A number of people raised the fact that, especially outside Scotland, musicians who were trying to develop a playing style appropriate for Scottish country dancing would not be able to master the art unless full scored arrangements were available to them or at least until they gained some experience of playing for dancing. The general conclusion was that music should be set out in full score arrangements.

## Payment for playing

A band leader had written about the fact that class musicians at Summer School were not paid, and the nominal sums paid by Branches for classes and day schools. It was made clear that the rates paid for Branch events are set by individual Branches and the Society has no control over them. It was indicated that the main reason for the non-payment of a fee to Summer School musicians was historical, teachers receiving no payment either. The feeling of the meeting was that the Society should debate firstly the principle of payment (or not) and then consider how much should / could be paid. In the past, to be invited to teach or play at Summer School was deemed an honour and not simply another 'gig'. It was acknowledged

that School organisers relied heavily on the goodwill of both teachers and musicians. Everyone present agreed that being at Summer School was more than just about playing for, and teaching, Scottish country dancing. It was very much a cultural and social experience as well as generating lifelong friendships and memories for everybody who attended.

## The cost and make-up of bands

A letter from a band leader raised the issue of 'rent-a-bands' – where a small group of musicians appeared with a number of different bands. The effect was to water down the distinctive sound produced by some bands. It was suggested that one of the main reasons for this situation was the failure on the part of some dance organisers to pay enough to allow band leaders to retain their own players. As a result, people played with whoever offered them work. Another reason was the lack of cash available as ticket prices were often very low for an event with live music. Those present suggested that it was a historical matter for dancers to want an enjoyable evening 'on the cheap' and that it would take a long time to change this mindset. Younger dancers were generally more willing to pay higher prices for an evening out with live music.

## PRS Licensing

A question was raised regarding the legitimacy of using recorded music without a PRS licence. All RSCDS events in the UK using them are covered by the corporate PRS membership levy paid through Headquarters.

## Musicians' courses

Everyone thought the courses were very valuable in encouraging people to play for dancing and that the ability of the musicians attending such courses should, within reason, not necessarily be a stumbling block. It was noted that if more courses were made available, then more players may become proficient enough and gain enough confidence to start playing for classes and dances.

The awareness of musicians of the different skills required to play for classes and

dances as well as the knowledge needed of alternative tunes in addition to named originals was questioned. It was clear that musicians should be made aware of the need to have a full repertoire of alternative tunes.

It was suggested that it would be useful for music course students to 'shadow' experienced musicians. This would allow musicians to 'complete their apprenticeship'. It was agreed that thought should be given to having some form of graduation scheme following attendance at approved musicians' courses, thus giving them some recognition for their efforts.

There was a general feeling that HQ should consider organising more courses 'out and about' rather than concentrate solely on Summer School and leaving the rest to individual Branches worldwide.

## The role of the dance caller

One musician raised the issue of the role of teachers as MCs versus dance callers – as he had been experiencing a growing trend for teachers to refuse to act as MCs. As a musician, he found this trend worrying. A bandleader cannot perform the entire range of tasks required of an MC as well as lead the band. He suggested that there needs to be a great deal of teamwork between bandleader and the MC, and that all of the 'behind the scenes' work ensured a successful evening for both the dancers and band.

There was a suggestion that branches could do more to encourage people to act as MCs by running courses in this area. It was suggested that HQ might consider issuing guidelines to Branches as to the role and tasks to be performed by MCs as opposed to dance callers. A dancer wondered if bands wanted MCs or if they considered them to be an annoyance. This person had had experience of that sort of attitude. The musicians present unanimously voiced their support for an 'official MC' to act as a link with the dancer, a controller of situations regarding tempo, volume and encores.

All present felt it very worthwhile that musicians have this opportunity to express their point of view on a regular basis.



# Miss Muriel Gibson

Muriel Gibson was RSCDS Secretary from 1975 till 1988. Derek Haynes' dance, *Miss Gibson's Strathspey*, ensures that her name will not be forgotten. In this appreciation, Dr Alastair MacFadyen pays tribute to a person whose life was much more than our memories of her. Miss Gibson was born in Glasgow on 29 Nov 1912 and died in Edinburgh on 22 Oct 2005.

Muriel Gibson's application for the position of RSCDS Secretary requested she should not be dismissed 'out of hand on the account of age' (she was then 63). Fortunately for the RSCDS, the selection panel responded positively and offered her the job. She accepted and took up the post in time for the 1975 Summer School. The Secretaryship was vacant at the time of her appointment. Muriel had to get to grips with her job very quickly. It soon became apparent that she was more than equal to the task and for the next 13 years the RSCDS reaped the benefit of her undoubted administrative abilities.

When she joined the RSCDS, Muriel Gibson had already completed two very successful careers; the first in the regular army, in which she attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel; the second in personnel management with Ferranti. Not satisfied with retirement at the age of 60 from Ferranti, she was then employed as the first full-time County Director of Lanarkshire Red Cross, a post she gave up in order to become RSCDS Secretary. At the time of her appointment, the RSCDS was just beginning its second half-century. It was still a growing Society, especially overseas, and the administrative consequences of increasing membership and activity had to be borne by the Secretary and her staff. Miss Milligan was still very active in Society affairs (she died in 1978) and Muriel often said how glad she was to have had the opportunity to work with her and to have experienced her enthusiastic devotion to the cause of Scottish country dancing. I have no notion of Miss Milligan's impressions of Muriel Gibson. I'm sure she was pleased to have an efficient Secretary in place, but I suspect that even the indefatigable co-founder found Muriel's boundless supply of energy rather overwhelming at times.

As a member of the old Executive Council and as RSCDS Vice-Chairman and Chairman, I got to know Muriel Gibson well. Like so many others, I formed a very high opinion of her abilities and came to admire her many qualities – her integrity, energy, efficiency, loyalty, enthusiasm and above all her total commitment and dedication to all that she undertook. As Chairman, I was particularly grateful for her detailed knowledge of the membership, from its largest branch to its smallest affiliated group. This familiarity she acquired at the Summer School, which she always enjoyed, and at many UK branch functions. In 1986 she carried out a successful tour of several of the North American branches. I valued her advice and during my Chairmanship, I especially appreciated her almost daily phone calls to keep me up-to-date. I shall always be grateful for her support

and encouragement. It soon became apparent to me, however, that Muriel was a lady of very strong principles in defence of which she could be very forthright. Whilst on most matters relating to the RSCDS we were in agreement, there were times when we did not agree. Whilst the reasons for most of those disagreements have long since slipped from my memory, I do recall one incident. It concerned the front door of 12 Coates Crescent. After hearing comments from several members about the unwelcoming sight of a firmly closed front door whenever visiting HQ, I proposed



Photograph (courtesy of Marjorie Crawford) taken at the Jean Milligan Memorial Weekend at Jordanhill College, Glasgow in July 1986. Miss Gibson, between Mrs Marjorie Crawford and Mrs Raynor Stratford of New Zealand Branch, with the then Chairman of the Society, Dr MacFadyen.

that the front door remain open during office hours. Muriel was not convinced. But, having overcome her very reasonable concerns for the safety of her staff by the addition of a lock to the inner vestibule door, she agreed. The door was opened and has remained so ever since. Now this may seem like a very insignificant achievement. Nevertheless, as I now enter Coates Crescent through a welcoming, open front door, I am unable to resist a silent word of self-congratulation and, of course, a moment of fond remembrance of Muriel.

The AGM of 1988 recognised the indebtedness of the Society to Muriel Gibson by approving her appointment as a Vice-President. She never lost her interest in the Society, attending AGMs until failing health prevented her from doing so and accepting invitations to the Summer School. In the last few months of her life when, very sadly, her mental faculties were no longer as agile and as sharp as they once were, the mention of someone's name or an incident from the past was still sufficient to raise a smile and even some laughter.

It's not surprising that someone of Muriel's abilities should have had a broad range of interests outside her working life. She was a linguist, a musician, an active member of The St. Andrew Society of Edinburgh and, after leaving the RSCDS, Secretary of the Russian Ballet Society, of which her sister, Mme. Eunice Bartell, was President and Principal Teacher. To all of these she applied her characteristic energy and enthusiasm.

There was yet one more dimension to the life of Muriel Gibson and that was her devotion to all things Scottish and in particular to the cause of Scotland's political independence. She was a member of the Scottish National Party from an early age and for several years served as its National Secretary. At the outbreak of war in 1939, like other members of the National Party, she was temporarily detained by the police when the patriotism of party members was in doubt. In fact, there was no one more patriotic than Muriel Gibson. The flagpole erected in her front garden, and on which she proudly displayed the Saltire, was evidence of this. For visitors, the prominent flagpole was a very helpful guide to identifying her Cramond home in Edinburgh. In appreciation of her services to Scotland, in 1988 she was appointed a Dame Commander of the Chivalric Military Order of the Scottish Knights Templar.

Muriel Gibson's funeral service and burial took place on Saturday, 29th October 2005 at Old St. Ninian's Church Yard, Stirling. It was a moving and fitting celebration of her long and very full life. The piper present played Scott Skinner's *The Music O' Spey*, a favourite of Muriel's and the tune for the dance which the late Derek Haynes composed in tribute to her. In compliance with her own request, the piper concluded the funeral with *Highland Cathedral*. All aspects of her life were well represented and several RSCDS members were present, including the present Chairman and five former Chairmen. Our Society is privileged to have been associated with this remarkable lady and she will long be remembered with affection and gratitude by RSCDS members.

A final note from Muriel's sister:

"I would like to acknowledge the many notes and cards of sympathy and condolence which I have received from over 70 RSCDS branches around the world. It is comforting to know how much they all have appreciated knowing my sister Muriel, not just for the essentials, but for their acknowledgement of the extra personal help, advice and assistance which it appears she was always willing to donate outwith essential duties. I have been deeply touched by their response and comforting words, and very much appreciate their kindness. Eunice Biedryski Bartell"



# The Archive

The archive contains books of traditional music and dance in their original printed and manuscript form; books of modern dances, manuscripts, leaflets, printed articles, letters, photographs; items relating to the history of Scottish country dancing and the Society since its foundation and much more. It also includes early recordings of SCD music on vinyl and LP records, more recently on cassette and now on CD. Our current Archivist, Marilyn Healy, tells us more.

## Who has access to it?

The archive is in the archive room in the basement of Coates Crescent. An archive is not a library and therefore it is not possible to 'browse' or borrow its contents. Society members and researchers may access it by writing to me, indicating their area of research. Arrangements can then be made to view the material at H.Q. I try to answer queries sent in, but cannot carry out anything more than initial research on behalf of members.

## Original aims

From its earliest days one of the aims of the SCDS was to collect books, manuscripts and illustrations relating to Scottish country dances. By December 1923, within a month of the first meeting in Glasgow, a Research Committee had been formed. By 1929 a sub-committee for research was appointed, its duties being to 'collect dances, their history and music and to record variations of manner of performing dances'.

## Manuscripts

Most of the manuscripts in the archive are photocopies of originals held in national or private collections, but we do have a copy of Walsh's *Compleat Country Dancing-Master* from 1719. The copies include dance descriptions of the 18th and 19th centuries such as David Young's *Collections of Country Dances for 1740*, Thomas Wilson's *A Companion to the Ballroom* and the Castle Menzies, Blantyre and Holmain mss.

Although the Society has collected dances from its earliest days, it was not until 1979 that the archive was established. Alastair MacFadyen, archivist until 1990, created the first catalogue. Frances Gordon began to catalogue the recordings. Alan MacPherson transferred the existing catalogue to a database. Jim Healy then oversaw the move from the various cupboards, files or shelves to the shelving we have now and, with the very able assistance of Margaret Renton and Elizabeth Allan, completed cataloguing the collection of recordings. In April last year I was appointed. My main concern is to expand the current catalogue to include, eg, the names of all dances for which the instructions are included in the various

manuscripts, books and leaflets rather than merely the title of a book or set of leaflets, so that we can locate the original instructions for dances.

## Recordings

Recorded music has played an important part in the Society's development from its earliest days. Recordings were made of the music for Books 1 and 2 and sales of gramophone records were shown in the 1925 accounts. The early recordings, however, do not appear to have been very satisfactory and in 1926, when enquiries as to whether gramophone records for *Book 3* would be available, it was agreed to enquire whether HMV would be prepared to issue records for the dances. The enquiries were widened and 6 months later the Music Sub-Committee danced through the dances in *Book 3* to gramophone records made by the Beltona Company, and the committee recommended that they be adopted as the official recordings of the Society. The Annual Report for 1926-27 advised that the records for the three books were a great improvement on those first issued and were available from 'any agent of the Beltona Company at three shillings, (15p) for each double sided record'. We have many of these early records in the archive.

## The Bulletin

*The Bulletin* was first issued in March 1932. Until the war it was a bi-annual magazine and included articles and items of interest to members. Following the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, with paper 'a very precious commodity', it was issued only once a year. Between 1939 and 1944 seven *Bulletins* were produced, plus a one-page *War Economy Bulletin* in 1942. With the exception of Issue No. 1 we have a complete set of *Bulletins* in the archive (although we do have a photocopy of the first issue). We also have an extensive but incomplete set of *Bulletins* available for consultation in the Members' room.

## Branch files

Strictly speaking, Branch correspondence files are not part of the archives, but they are stored within it and take up the largest area of storage. There are 150 boxes, one

for each Branch. In total they occupy nearly 22 metres of shelf space. Unfortunately, the Branch files only date from 1955. Until then our affairs were handled in an office in Miss Hadden's home and in 1955, when we moved into Coates Crescent, it was decided not to take many of what we would now regard as important records. We may all regret that, but at the time the decision was made, they were not seen as important.

The Branch files were recently culled of superfluous material by Alan Mair and John Sturrock, and with advice from staff at the National Register of Archives for Scotland, we are studying the best way to store the remaining records to preserve their contents and reduce the amount of space they take up.

## What are the future plans?

We are at present looking into how the items should be stored – old manilla envelopes are not conducive to the safe storage of archival material – and we will shortly be investing in high quality acid-free storage materials.

The archive will be expanded to include the Minute Books of the Society and I am trying to build a complete collection of the early editions of the Society's publications. Surprisingly, we have very few pre-war editions of books 1-12 but we need to have them available because the way in which interpretations and instructions have 'evolved' in the last 80+ years is of interest to current and future researchers. I would also like to encourage branches to deposit their Minute Books and other records at headquarters both for research purposes and for safe-keeping – particularly in the absence of the records of the early years of the older branches.

We do appreciate all the gifts and donations to the archive. If you or your branch have early editions of the books, copies of pre-war *Bulletins* – especially Issue No. 1 – or indeed, memorabilia relating to pre-war or post-war Summer Schools, please do not think they are of no use and throw them away, but consider donating them. If we have them already, we can still use them but you never know, **your** copy of a book, programme for a long-past AGM ball or dance, or Summer School information leaflet may fill one of our gaps.





# A branch and a club



Washington, DC

## RSCDS Washington Branch

There are lots of 'musts' you should have on your list for a visit to Washington, DC: the Washington Monument, the Smithsonian Institution and Scottish country dancing. Within 50 miles of the US Capitol dome, you can dance at least three nights a week, with folks from all over the US and even the world.

Dorothy Penders, originally from Dundee and now a regular Washington-area dancer, says

*"Washington D.C. is so cosmopolitan. It draws in dancers visiting this great city for business and pleasure, from all the other states, Canada and overseas. Uniting us is this real thrill that one derives from Scottish country dancing and its unique style of dance music that is loved all over the world."*

Divided only by the Potomac River are two RSCDS branches – Washington and Northern Virginia. More than 150 people are members of groups that meet weekly in Bethesda, Greenbelt, Baltimore, and Frederick in Maryland, and in Alexandria in Virginia. The Washington Branch also hosts basic classes on Friday nights and has started a Sunday children's class.

This great network of Scottish country dancing goes back to 1950 and has continued uninterrupted for 55 years. Harry Ways, a longtime Washington teacher, remembers one of the highlights of class history.

*"In 1954, Group Captain David Huxley joined the beginner class, and shortly thereafter became a teacher and leader. He arranged the first teacher training course in the summer of 1957 and Miss Milligan's visit to examine candidates in the fall."*

All of the groups have several RSCDS preliminary or certificate teachers, who work to pass on RSCDS standards and, most important, the 'joy of the dance.' Washington area Scottish country dancers are also lucky to have some of the best musicians in the dance community – Liz Donaldson, Elke Baker, David Wiesler, David Knight, to name a few. They not only play wonderful tunes that frequently leave dancers cheering for

"once and to bottom," many of them are also Scottish country dancers.

There are several terrific Washington area weekend events, which feature day schools taught by top teachers from North America and Scotland, a welcome dance on Friday night, and a Saturday night ball. In the spring, when the cherry blossoms are bursting around the Tidal Basin, the Washington Branch hosts *A Capital Weekend*. The Northern Virginia Branch hosts *Argyle Weekend* in the fall, when the leaves are at their peak autumn colors. And dancers from both groups join the Delaware Valley dancers to put on the *Scottish Weekend* at Ramblewood, a residential workshop held at a camp in Maryland

You'll find class schedules and information about all of the Scottish country dancing events in the Washington area at <http://rscds-greaterdc.org>. Plan your next visit around one of our weekends. And, by all means, bring your ghillies next time you're in town, so you can drop in on a class.

Ellen Ternes

## St. Columba's Monday Dancers

St Columba's Monday Dancers or, to use our official title, St Columba's Young People's Social, came into being in the dark days of 1940 when like many other towns and cities in the UK, London was not the safest place to be. Indeed, on the night of 10th May 1941 St Columba's Church of Scotland, Pont St, Chelsea, was completely destroyed. Having been hit by a string of incendiary bombs, the ensuing fire caused it to be burned beyond repair. Down, but by no means out, the congregation, together with other Kirk congregations, moved to alternative premises and the Young People's Social was formalised at an AGM on 7th October 1941.

In the early days dancing was followed by community singing in 'camp fire' style and the evenings sometimes included table tennis and other games. By the mid-50s, however, the whole evening was given over to country dancing when *The Eightsome Reel* and *The Dashing White*

*Sergeant* were on the programme every week with regular appearances of other favourites like *The Duke of Perth*, *Hamilton House*, and *Monymusk*. Nowadays, we try to keep pace with the torrent of new dances – either a good or a bad thing depending on one's memory. What we like to consider as the success of the current format owes a great deal to Kirk Elder and SCD music expert, John Laurie, who for 35 years was both Convenor and MC.

The season runs from October to May: 30 nights of dancing with a local band six times a year. Programmes are devised by our team of four MCs and although we are not a teaching club, step practice is held once a month for the first half hour. Dancing begins at 7.15 and the evening ends with an epilogue – a reading, a hymn and a prayer to send us on our way and to remind us who we are and whom we serve. Admission is free except for Band Nights when tickets, including supper, are £6.

In 1950 the Queen laid the foundation stone of the new St Columba's, which rose to be the very beautiful building we know today and on 4th December 1955, the church was opened.

2005 was the 65th anniversary of our dance club and so we had a Grand Ceilidh on 12th December to celebrate. A near capacity crowd of over 170 packed into the lower hall and danced to the super music of David Hall's band. Guests included the Minister, Revd Barry Dunsmore and Dr Hilda Dunsmore, together with other St Columba's officials and many dancers from years gone by, some of whom made long journeys to be with us and renew old friendships.

It's fair to say that the appearance of such a large crowd caused slight unease in the kitchen, but everyone got a glass of wine and something to eat, including a piece of the magnificent birthday cake, baked by Cherry West, which was never expected to stretch to 170 portions. Divine providence perhaps?

If you find yourself in London on a Monday evening, you can be assured of a warm welcome at St Columba's.

Bob Harman



# Dancing matters

## Technique doctor

In the second in our regular series a teacher gives some advice to help us improve our dancing. This time it is Mary Murray of Vancouver Branch. Rather than focus on one point, Mary gives us her thoughts first on basic steps then on formations.

### Skip change of step

I always stress the lengthening of the 'reach forward' on the second beat, as this helps prevent landing on a 'bent knee' and can also eliminate a bouncy effect which often happens in this particular step.

### Pas de basque

Try to maintain a good turn-out of the feet to achieve accurate foot positioning, eg, when extending the foot from 3rd to 4th intermediate position for the final jeté. The transference of weight on each beat should be danced as smoothly as possible, without any exaggeration.

### Strathspey travelling step

On the third component of this step, I stress a good long step forward with the right foot, leaving the left leg fully extended behind before the slow 'pull through' and the final 'soft hop'. This step requires lots of balance and control to achieve the true character of the strathspey, which is distinctively Scottish.

### Strathspey setting step

As in the strathspey travelling step, I feel that the 3rd part of the step requires a fairly long step prior to lifting (not dragging) the extended foot up to 3rd rear aerial position and ending with the 'soft hop'. This movement also requires much practice to attain the desired effect.

### The allemande

At the beginning of this formation, the main objective is to achieve a smooth and elegant lifting of the hands into allemande hold by all couples. The same applies to bar 6 when we dance 'in and under' – a gentle turning under the arm provides a more pleasing effect to the observer as well as the dancer, rather than the 'jerky' movement that often occurs in this formation.

### The all-round poussette

In my opinion, this formation is one of the most exciting in Scottish country dancing, especially if the dancers are successful in forming good diagonal lines at the end of bars 1 and 4 of the phrase; and experiencing the exhilarating feeling when dancing diagonally out to the sides on bars 2 and 5 – providing the hands and arms are in the correct position, as described in Lesley Martin's column in issue 1 of *Scottish Country Dancer*.

### The knot

Another beautiful formation which is enhanced by the smooth lifting of the arms into an allemande hold on bar 2, and also the covering of the two couples in the middle of the set when turning by the left hand during the last 4 bars of the formation. However, in my opinion, the 3-couple knot is easier to phrase.

### Set and link

After the 2 bars of setting, I have a preference for hands to be retained briefly to assist each other in casting or dancing forward. In practice, I also have the dancers move slightly forward on bar 3 as they begin 'linking' round each other, as I think this provides a more pleasing effect.

## The tournée

The final 4 bars of this formation are beautiful to watch and dance if the phrasing of the turning one-and-a-half times brings both men and women, respectively, through the middle covering shoulder to shoulder before dancing out to own sides.

I make reference to Lesley Martin's helpful hints in the previous edition of this magazine, as the hands and arms are important factors in all of the above-mentioned formations. I must stress, however, that the above comments are made from a personal point of view, and whilst the technical elements of Scottish country dancing provide us with lots of challenge, let us be realistic in recognising that there are many other features that are just as important as accurate footwork, particularly the social aspect of our activity. I think, without doubt, that all of us who are involved in Scottish country dance activities are enthusiastic about our recreational pastime and have made many lasting friendships which have greatly enriched our lives.

## How do you do the tournée

Following on from Mary's comments above, here are the full instructions for the tournée from the RSCDS Manual.

**This formation is a method of progression in strathspey time. It is danced by two couples and begins on the sidelines. The pattern is a circular flowing movement.**

**Steps** 8 travelling steps

**No of bars** 8

**Hands** When two hands are given, the promenade hold is used and when one hand is given, it is at shoulder height with a shake-hand hold.

### Bars

- 1 1st couple dance towards each other, 1st man pulling back his left shoulder to finish facing his own side with his partner on his right, in promenade hold. 2nd couple dance towards each other, 2nd woman pulling back her right shoulder to finish facing her own side with her partner on her left, in promenade hold. Both couples are now in a straight line up and down the middle of the set with the men shoulder to shoulder.
- 2-4 Both couples dance round half-way, anti-clockwise, the two men turning their partners across in front of them on the fourth step so that all are in a line up and down the middle of the set, the women facing towards the man's side and the men facing towards the woman's side of the dance.
- 5-8 1st couple turn with the left hand one-and-a-half times and then dance out to finish on own side in second place. 2nd couple turn with the right hand one-and-a-half times and then dance out to finish on own side in top place.

The photograph, taken from the men's side at the top, shows the positions at the end of bar 1.  
(Thanks to Debbie, Bob and Jill!)





# Who's who?

For **Jim Healy**, Scottish country dancing is not a hobby, it's a passion. He was 6 when he first danced at school in Dundee. Social dancing was the usual *Gay Gordons* and *Dashing White Sergeant*, although he was also taught the *Duke of Perth* and *Scottish Reform* by his gym teacher, who was universally disliked for his habit of wielding a large board pointer to 'encourage' proper foot positions! While working in Kuwait in the 80s, Jim met RSCDS-style dancing. At a St Andrews Night one year, much to the surprise of his wife (current Archivist), Marilyn, Jim joined in the *Duke of Perth*, the *Eightsome* and *Monymusk*. From that moment he was hooked (as was Marilyn). Back in Scotland Jim became Chairman of Perth and Perthshire Branch, and from then he was well on the road to his current position as Convenor of Membership Services. As Convenor he has one of the biggest jobs in the Society, complicated by having to commute between his home in Perth and his day-job as Financial Manager of an international company in Monaco. Underlying all Jim's work for the Society is his relish of the social, mental, and physical challenge of Scottish dancing. In his own teaching, Jim stresses the effortless elegance of social dancing. He is not a fan of demonstration or performance dancing – something he finds at odds with the social roots of country dancing in Scotland.



Membership Services Convenor, Jim Healy, with his wife Marilyn (left) and Music Director, Mo Rutherford, at the AGM

**Mo Rutherford** was born and brought up in Keith in Banffshire., one of the heartlands of traditional music and dancing. Her upbringing was steeped in dancing. Not only did she start attending classes at the age of 3, her mother taught, and still teaches the Keith country dance class, and her father, an accordionist, is the class musician. Her parents, Betty and Walter, were recently awarded Branch Awards from the Banffshire Branch. Mo danced Highland dancing till she was 17, but music was her real interest. She graduated from Aberdeen University with a B.Mus., then trained as a music teacher in Dundee, teaching in Kinross and then Dundee. She is now a teacher of piano in and around Perth, where she lives with her bandleader husband, Neil Copland. For over 20 years Mo has played fiddle or keyboard in Neil's band – a family affair with Neil's brother on 2nd accordion and Mo's sister on piano!

It was Christian Catto of Perth Branch who originally encouraged Mo to play for dance classes. She first played at Summer School in 1987, but found the formality of it all a fairly daunting experience for a young girl in her twenties! Mo is currently Music Director of the Society and has overall responsibility for the music we publish and the music courses we run. She is also an extremely enthusiastic dancer.

## Re-printed

### From The Reel, London Branch

The Reel first appeared in September 1951. Here are three extracts, re-printed with permission, from Issue 12 of 1953.

#### Letter from Nancy R. Bartlett

I can see no objection to publishing recently composed dances of established popularity. Somebody will collect them one day and add them to those we now call traditional. However, I do think a 'probation period' of at least five years would be desirable to allow for modification or rejection, or perhaps a bit longer to allow for expiration of copyright.

#### And they were always sold out!

The programme for the Branch Dance on 28th November in the Royal Scottish Corporation Hall in Fetter Lane was:

Mrs Macleod, Miss Mary Douglas, *Scottish Ramble*, *Cadgers*, *Waverley*, *Lord Hume's Reel*, *General Stuart's Reel*, *The Eightsome*, *Middling*, *Thank You*, *Mrs Stewart's Strathspey*, *The De'il among the Tailors*, *the Foursome*, *The Montgomerie's Rant*, *She's Ower Young to Marry Yet*, *The Golden Pheasant and Waltz Country Dance*.

Tickets cost four shillings, ie 20p in today's money!

#### 50s humour?

"Face first corners. No! No! First corners! We spent half an hour on this last week. Now, Mrs Macgregor, who is your first corner?"  
"It's Mr Mackay. But he's no here the nicht."

## Programmes

### From New Zealand to South Wales

Here are two programmes from different sides of the world – one for a ball, the other for a festival. Are they similar to your programmes?

#### New Zealand Branch

This is the programme for the President's Ball held on 3rd January 2006. It is customary for the Branch President to choose the programme.

*Grand March*, *The Wild Geese*, *Gang the Same Gate*, *Corn Rigs*, *The Cocket Hat*, *Seann Truibhas Willichan*, *Red House*, *The Happy Meeting*, *Culla Bay*, *The Reel of the 51st Division*, *Just as I was in the Morning*, *Monymusk*, *Catch the Wind*, *Mrs. Stewart's Jig*, *The Glasgow Highlanders*, *Fraser's Favourite*, *The Frisky*, *Miss Gibson's Strathspey*, *Anniversary Reel*.

#### South Wales Branch

This is the programme for the Festival of Scottish Dancing held in June 2005.

*The Reel of the 51st Division*, *Noah's Ark*, *The Gentleman*, *Swiss Lassie*, *St. Andrew's Fair*, *The Belle of Bon Accord*, *Mairi's Wedding*, *Bonnie Anne*, *Gang the Same Gate*, *J B Milne*, *Pelorus Jack*, *The Reverend John MacFarlane*, *The Bees of Maggie Knockater*, *The Border Weavers*, *Polharrow Burn*, *Quarrie's Jig*, *Butterscotch and Honey*, *Alex T Queen*, *Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder*, *Neidpath Castle*, *West's Hornpipe*, *The White Heather Jig*



# Letters to the editor

## Future publishing policy

Dear Editor

I was disappointed with the plan not to publish the music with the dance. For amateur musicians it is always nice to have the sheet music and to hear the tune played. With the new scheme we will have to order both the CD and sheet music with all potential problems with customs duties and exchange rates. Thanks for the excellent magazine.

*Patrick Capper, Sault Ste Marie, Canada*

Dear Editor

I was sorry to read of the demise of the Pocket Editions. One only needs to look round at dances to see the value of the pocket Pillings. Teachers appreciate being able to carry a complete set of books without the risk of a hernia. It puzzles me however to read elsewhere in the magazine that Derek Haynes was able to produce A6 sized books selling for £2 or less and make £6,000. Am I missing something?

*Bruce Frazer, Borders Branch*

## New dances

Dear Editor

I was particularly interested to read the 'Reprinted' article by Derek Haynes and felt myself nodding in agreement. I thought it was every bit as relevant today as it was in 1980. Specifically in his 3rd paragraph where he says '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.' One of the newer formations which came immediately to mind was the tournée. It is quite complicated and has to be learned from both 1st and 2nd places. In a mainly female class or club where one is called upon to dance as either a lady or a man, the formation has to be learned from each of four places! I must confess that I dislike this formation so much that when a dance is coming up containing it, I make a strategic withdrawal to the ladies' room until sets are formed and I can't be cajoled into taking part. Which helps to account for my heartfelt agreement with the last sentence of the 5th paragraph: 'for many the enjoyment is reduced if they have to do a lot of homework prior to attending a social or ball.' I am not saying all dances should be simple, but it is nice to do a dance which 'flows', without too many awkward formations which seem only to serve to boost the ego of the deviser.

*Doris Corrigan, Cumbernauld*

## Use of arms

Dear Editor

Following on from Lesley Martin's article on the use of arms, teachers may be interested in the following explanation given to me by a member of my class who happens to be a lecturer in Physics: In a turn, holding the partner closer will decrease the radius of gyration of the couple, resulting in a drop in their moment of Inertia – from the principle of Conservation of Angular Momentum, this will result in an increase in their rotational speed!

*Margaret Masterton, West Lothian*

## Attracting new dancers

Dear Editor

Having read Ian Brockbank's letter in Issue 1, I fully agree with him that for the RSCDS the problem of attracting new members is not going to go away or be easily solved. Muriel Johnstone provides part of the answer in her answer to the last question of her interview. She says that the key to the future lies in the music and I agree that it is an important factor. The old man she met from the Borders said "Aye if ye cannae tap your foot tae it, there's nae music in it." Well, doesn't that say it all? If there's no musical message in the music, it's difficult to dance to it. Some dancers are not musical. They couldn't whistle or diddle a tune – these people are helped by the music to complete the formations in the dances. Getting people interested is a mammoth problem which must be addressed frequently.

*David Ross, Kilmarnock*

## One copy or two?

Dear Editor

We were pleased to receive our first copy of *Scottish Country Dancer*. Congratulations! We particularly like receiving a copy each, as this allowed us to use one copy for our classes and one to keep for ourselves – a wonderful advertising tool to have extra copies for new dancers and non-RSCDS members.

*Deirdre McCuish Bark and Keith Bark, Toronto*

## Our emphasis

Dear Editor

With regard to the letter by Ian Brockbank in Issue 1, I notice there is much emphasis on demo dancing and the reaching of high standards – not a vote winner – scares people off especially if they think it means appearing in public in expensive outfits. When I lived over there I could not find an ordinary club and didn't dance again till I

came to New Zealand. Here our clubs are social and from within our numbers we choose and groom a set for demos. Our emphasis is on fun and friendship. I should forget about the pub scene. None of our dancers would appreciate that. That's for rugby fans. I was taught in school over there and think it should be part of the PE syllabus. If they travel, they can pick up new dances and make friends – not be groomed for public appearances. Advertise fun and fitness and start social clubs – not beside pubs.

*Mrs M Maclean, Palmerston, Otago, NZ*

## Tartan hose

Dear Editor

Hand knitted kilt socks! I am not a Granny yet, but I do like knitting plain-coloured kilt hose. I would love to have a go at tartan hose, but I do not have a pattern for them. If any reader could supply me with the instructions, I'd be most grateful. (6 Limefield Rd, West Calder, EH55 8BQ)

*Fiona Gardner, West Calder*

## E-mail v snail mail

Dear Editor

Age discrimination? A propos the request for a caption to the photo of Ann and Janet to be sent by e-mail, some of us oldies still live in the dark ages minus computers. Please could you bear this in mind in future issues where answers of members' views are being solicited.

*David How, Strood*

## Reel of the 51st

Dear Editor

I was fascinated to read the history of the *Reel of the 51st* in the final edition of the *Bulletin*. I don't know whether this is an urban myth, but I have heard that at one stage the Germans in charge of the camp suspected that the formations in the dance were a devious way of transmitting vital information to the Allies and came close to executing the dancers as spies. Can anyone shed some light on this?

*S. Govindasamy, Sydney*

## And finally – from Atlanta

Dear Editor

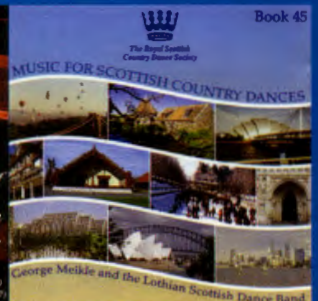
Well done, y'all!

*Trish Bolton*

**When writing to the editor, please e-mail [mag.editor@rscds](mailto:mag.editor@rscds) or send your letter to The Editor, Scottish Country Dancer, 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7AF. Shorter letters have more chance of being published.**



# Reviews



## Book 45 and CD

### George Meikle and the Lothian Scottish Dance Band CD 048

Book 45 is the second book where Society members had the chance to try out potential dances and provide feedback. Membership Services Committee had their input. The result is a variety of dances, simple and more challenging, using traditional and new formations.

*The Sands of Morar* introduces the 'tourbillon' as a new formation in RSCDS dances. It takes good phrasing to dance bars 17–20, but it flows well. The other three strathspeys all reflect their formations in their titles. In *Double Eighty*, the flow of the dance seems to suffer in order to finish with the two circles describing the figure eight, but it is nice to see the Highland Schottische poussette again. *The Saltire Strathspey* uses 'set and link' in an original way. Dancers need to be confident of the formation before tackling it. *The Dream Catcher* is a very satisfying dance for me. Don't be put off by the 2 pages of instructions! The middle 32 bars are simplicity itself, but lovely to dance, with the first and last 32 bars danced up and down and across the set respectively.

*The Westminster Reel* was already known to us in the south east of England, and once the 'set and rotate' has been mastered, is a dance for everyone. As a two-couple dance, it works well even if you don't have full four-couple sets. *Alan J Smith* uses simple formations and could be used for teaching as well as a social dance. *Catch the Wind* is another simple dance. I like the social aspect where the woman is chased by her partner – another dance reflecting its title. I have found that even less experienced dancers naturally cover as they dance the parallel reels. *Napier's Index* includes a 16-bar pattern with 1st and then with 2nd corners, which makes the whole dance easy to remember.

*The Fairbridge Reel* is less traditional, with no distinct 'dancing couple'. Each position is different, so it will need careful teaching. The final 8 bars resolve the progression. Hopefully, you finish with your own partner! Finally, the Society has published its first five-couple dance, *Preston Mill*. It uses all five couples to good effect, eg, in the first eight bars and in the double triangles for five

couples. It requires everyone to be alert.

I enjoyed George Meikle's tempos throughout the recording and the selection of tunes to fit the dances was excellent. For instance, the 40-bar tune for *Napier's Index* fitted the phrasing of the dance particularly well. The strathspey tunes were also well selected to accompany the differing style of each dance; from tunes suitable for Highland Schottische, to the smooth airs for *The Dream Catcher*. The tunes flowed effortlessly from one to the next, maintaining the 'feel' of each dance. I also enjoyed hearing tunes new to me, as well as some of my favourites, for example, in the encore to *Preston Mill*.

This is the last publication in this format. Book 45 is a strong selection, so the Society 'new book' goes out on a high note.

Pat Davoll, Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch

## Masters of the Tradition, Vol 1

### Muriel Johnstone Scotscores SSCD18

Just when you thought that Muriel Johnstone had composed and recorded everything possible, she has released *Masters of the Tradition, Vol. 1*. This is a listening album with a beautiful and unique piano sound – totally passionate, yet completely in charge of every note. Robert Mackintosh, Niel and Nathaniel Gow, Scott Skinner, William Marshall, and Simon Fraser are played with so much soul that I had to stop what I was doing and really listen.

The varied selections begin with Muriel's favourite, *Sir George Clerk of Pennycuik*, played as I had never heard it before. I was riveted. She plays familiar dance tunes, like *The Lea Rig*, *Sugar Candie* and *Jubilee Jig*, but as they were originally composed. Many selections are achingly sad; others are rollicking fun – making it easy to imagine her very lively self on the piano bench. Her enthusiasm for this music is very clearly heard in these sensitive arrangements. As she says in the liner notes, 'Here then are tunes written in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, mainly for fiddle, bagpipes or voice, played on the piano – my medium for expression of this glorious music.' Bill Zobel, Muriel's husband, has outdone himself as recording engineer on this album. Accolades to him as well.

*Masters of the Tradition* is a beautiful collection – one I will play over and over again while eagerly awaiting Volume 2.

Lydia Hedge, Nova Scotia Branch

## Music for Quadrilles

### Keith Smith and Green Ginger KSCD 012

Although not a typical Scottish country dance sound, this is an excellent CD.

The sound quality and tone of the instruments is wonderful. Keith Smith is wonderful on the fiddle, with his predictable sweet tone. Joining with the talented fiddle sound of Green Ginger they make a sound to dance to.

Starting with a lively arrangement for *Clutha*, I found myself wanting to dance, and wondering why we, at least in this area of the States, never do this dance. *The New Scotia Quadrille* is a great 2 x 48 reel, but my favourite track is the 8 x 32 reel for the *Quadrille Country Dance*. From the first tune *Mrs L. Stewart's Reel (of Java)* by William Marshall to *The House of Auchluncart* also by Marshall, I was up on my feet. This will definitely become a track used for teaching, often!

The Niel Gow/Robert MacKintosh set for the *Queen's Quadrille*, recently published in Book 43, will ensure this dance is done. There are two waltz country dances, both from the early 1800's. Ian Thomson's viola makes a wonderful, rich sound for the *Duke of Kent's Waltz*, which just makes you want to get up and waltz.

The three full quadrille sets (*Paines 1st and 12th sets*, and *Hart's Lancers*) are excellent, for what they are – early 19th century quadrilles. With a sound and feel we currently more associate with English country dance, than what we think of, and associate as 'Scottish' sounding, Green Ginger and Keith have in fact, captured the style and sound these dances would have been danced to.

This CD includes some excellent tracks for Scottish country dancers, and is a 'must have' if you teach or dance Quadrilles.

Included are the instructions for all the dances, descriptions of the steps and the figures. This CD makes me want to have an evening of quadrilles. I have my evening gloves, do you?

Elaine Brunken, Washington DC Branch



# The New Manual

Issue 1 announced that the new edition of the Manual had been published. Our Manual is a quite remarkable and unique publication as it encapsulates for future generations the style in which we dance today. In this article Helen Russell gives her assessment of the new edition from the point of view of teacher and tutor.

My original edition of *the Manual* is heavily annotated in many places, where I have added my own reminders, or recorded the views of other teachers, so it has been an interesting exercise to compare the new edition with my well-thumbed and note-covered old edition.

The first and most noticeable difference is the new size. The 'old' size was compact and portable, but the new one has the advantage, for those of us who use A4 paper, to be able to keep teaching notes and additions in the folder.

The addition of the Contents at the beginning, with sections and subsections for each chapter clearly laid out, makes finding what you want much easier, particularly in Chapter 6 when searching for formations. The page numbering is a most welcome improvement, as are the section headings within the text. The index is very helpful and I like the italicisation of dance names and tune names within the text. This makes it far more readable.

My main, and most favourable, impression is that there is more emphasis on music in this edition. The additional information on all aspects of music in SCD is not confined to the chapter on music, Chapter 4, which is now radically different in content, but appears in several other chapters. It is vitally important to educate teachers and dancers to work successfully with musicians and to have a better

appreciation of music. I am sure that the advice to say 'animated alligator' to identify a reel will be widely used! The advice on music for 'warm ups and 'cool downs' will be useful for all dancers and teachers.

One of my other favourite new bits is the delightful illustration of *The Triumph* on page 11. Some of my personal bugbears are also addressed, e.g. the reminder that in hands across and back the change of direction is in middle of the set. Section 3.2.6 is a new addition describing the Tulloch turn. I think the description will be quite hard to follow for someone who has limited experience.

New formations, such as reels of three in tandem, half reel of three in tandem, set and link for three couples, the spiral, the swirl, the tourbillon are listed in chapter 6. While the espagnole and bourrell are not listed, (I presume because they are not explicitly named in RSCDS publications) this is a useful update on formations. No doubt lively discussion on aspects of the ladies' chain and the strathspey pousette will continue, but we should remember the purpose of this edition, which is set out clearly in the Introduction: 'to provide a degree of standardisation for the practical performance of the steps, formations and dances found in RSCDS publications.'

Chapter 8, on Notes for Dances, has been updated to include some dances from earlier books, e.g. *St Patrick's Day* and *Dumbarton Drums* as well as dances from

more recent publications, including notes on dances from *The Scotia Suite*.

The three Appendices are a welcome addition, especially Appendix 3, which is a very much expanded further reading list.

This edition of *the Manual* is part of a tradition of Country Dance Manuals reaching back to Weaver, Peacock and Wilson. Thomas Wilson, in particular, knew why a manual was necessary.

'It is I believe notorious, that if Country Dancing continues to decline as fast as it has done for sometime past, that that once delightful amusement will shortly dwindle into mere running, and that beautiful regularity of movement, which should always be displayed in a Country Dance, be perverted into a chaos of riot and confusion.' *The Treasures of Terpsichore; or a Companion for the Ballroom by Thomas Wilson, Dancing Master, 1816.*

I would like to acknowledge the contributions to this review made through discussions with Geoffrey Selling, Rosemary Coupe, Morag Napier and Peter Clark.

Helen Russell

## Check your edition

Wrong in the first printing, and now corrected in the reprint: Page 66: 6.23.2.

This should of course read:

Bars 3-4: 1st and 2nd women pass right shoulders while 2nd man dances round the loop by his left.

## Your reactions

Thank you to everyone who contacted us to say how much they enjoyed Issue 1 of *Scottish Country Dancer*. Here is a selection of reactions received:

Packed full of interesting things: *Linda Barnes, Belfast* • Looks professional, well written, easy to read, entertaining and informative: *Irene van Maarseveen, Pretoria* • Something for everyone from raw beginners to those of us who have been around for a while! *Don Chitts, Mitcham, Australia* • Loved the name and the whole image and the message is the happiness and joy of Scottish dancing: *Brenda Hinton, Sussex* • Sufficiently Scottish without too much haggis or highland bulls! *Bill Whyte, France* • Looks great and just what members needed: *Fiona Newton, Strathpeffer* • Wow! I particularly liked the interview with Muriel. *Susie Langdon Kass, San Francisco* • I am very impressed. I look forward to getting the next one! *Olive Cammidge, New Zealand*

• I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. It is much more appropriate now than a book of new dances year by year. *Jean Massey, Sheffield* • It's not perfect, but it's pretty good! *Charles Warner, Picton, Australia* • It's a real quality product of which the Society can be very proud. *Alan Burn, New Zealand* • Bright and breezy! *June McKay, Paisley* • A marvellous publication. The coloured photographs are super and portray our hobby in the best possible way: *Ian Auld, Edinburgh* • Excellent articles and well put together: *Christine Norman, London* • Interesting and thought-provoking. *Margaret Bold, Thornhill* • Caution! Compulsive reading! *H. Isis Hilton, Sutton Coldfield* • A breath of fresh air! Keep it up! *Flora Selwyn* • And finally from *Di Rooney, Cheshire*: Fab mag!

## The WRF

The White Rose Festival is the festival of dancing organised by the Leeds Branch. This year it will take place on 8th July.

This year's will be the 52nd Festival. It is an outdoors festival, indoors if wet. It includes massed dances for children and adults, demonstrations, Highland dances and it ends with an evening social dance. Teams enter from branches and clubs. The massed dances are normally in pairs: a jig or reel and a strathspey. There are four demonstration dances.

This year the Festival is dedicated to Roy Goldring, who will open it, and the programme will start with his *Summer Assembly*. Programmes and entry forms from [www.rscdsleeds.org.uk](http://www.rscdsleeds.org.uk) or from 0113 281 1279.



# The Scroll Awards

This year seven Scrolls of Honour were awarded to mark the huge contribution made by individuals, both to the RSCDS and to Scottish country dancing.

Recipients of the 2005 Scrolls of Honour were as follows with the branches which nominated them:

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Johan MacLean, <i>Glasgow</i>                      | Jessie Harper <i>South Argyll</i> |
| Marianne Taylor, <i>Boston</i>                     | John Christie, <i>Toronto</i>     |
| Stanley Hamilton, <i>London, Ontario</i>           | Mary Ronnie, <i>New Zealand</i>   |
| Bruce Frazer, <i>Berks / Hants / Surrey Border</i> |                                   |

Johan, Bruce and Jessie were presented with their Scrolls at the AGM in Perth, with The Hon Peregrine Moncreiffe of that Ilk doing the honours. The others all received their Scrolls at local events.



Jessie Harper



Bruce Frazer



Johan Maclean

# Australian Winter School

In the northern hemisphere, it may be autumn, but in Australia it's still winter! This report comes from Marett Frolley, Melbourne and District Branch.

Australia held its 30th Winter School from 24th September to 1st October. It was hosted by Melbourne and District Branch at the University of Melbourne's Dookie Agricultural College in northern Victoria, which had a marvellous welcoming atmosphere to its Scottish dancing visitors. Dookie is a small country town, with the college situated some 15 minutes away in the midst of farming and grape growing land – a peaceful and verdant setting.

240 dancers came from every state in Australia, plus a contingent from New Zealand, with Helen and Malcolm Brown coming from Yorkshire. All enjoyed a week of dancing to accordion, piano and fiddle. We were woken each morning to the sound of the bagpipes – apart from the morning when we were all woken by the fire alarm! Six classes catered for dancers from advanced to social, plus a children's class. The teachers came from all over: Elaine Brunken from the US; Jean Dodds from Adelaide; Eric Finley from Scotland; Margaret Johnstone from Melbourne; Anne Kennedy from Sydney; Pam Perkins from New Zealand; and Denice Walter from Tasmania. In her closing speech, School Convenor, Heather Byers, said that with our teachers we had 'hit the jack-pot'.



The children's class with teacher Denice Walter

Our musicians were Neil Copland and Maureen Rutherford from Scotland; Ian Slater from England; and our own brilliant fiddler, Chris Duncan, from Newcastle, Australia.

It was a very successful and friendly school and the committee were greatly helped by the dancers of Melbourne.



# 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 3 will cover day schools from September 06 till Dec 07. Please send in your forward dates even if you have not finalised who is teaching. You can add details in the following issue. Compiled by John Sturrock.

## Feb 06

- 18-19 Tokyo Branch, Workshop  
*Atsuko Clement, Yoshiki Oyama*
- 18 Vancouver Branch, Workshop
- 18 Oxfordshire Branch, Day School  
*Janet Johnston, Jim Stott, Dennis Tucker*
- 23-28 RSCDS, Winter School at Pitlochry  
*Andrew McConnell, Helen Russell, Eric Finley, Johan Maclean*
- 25 London (Ont) Branch, Workshop  
*Marie Ziccarelli, John Walton*

## March 06

- 3-4 Saitama Branch, 5th Anniv. Weekend School  
*Peter Clark*
- 4 Birmingham Branch, Day School  
*David Queen, Julia Baker*
- 4 Newcastle upon Tyne Branch, Day School  
*Helen Frame, Bob Grant*
- 5 The Hague Branch, Day School  
*Wanda van Taanom*
- 10-11 Lorn (Argyll) Branch, 45th Weekend School  
*Jimmie Hill*
- 10-11 St Giles SCD Group, Alberta, Canada, Workshop  
*Lin Pettengill, Peter McClure*
- 11 Somerset Branch, Day School and Musicians' Course  
*David Hall, Maureen Rutherford*
- 11 Hamilton (Ontario) Branch, Workshop
- 11 Berks, Hants, Surrey Borders Branch, Day School  
*Janet Johnston, Eric Finley, Alan Davis*
- 12 Leicester Branch, Day School  
*Mervyn Short, Doris Buchanan*
- 18 Perth & Perthshire Branch, Day School  
*John Wilkinson, Jenny Greene*
- 18 Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch, Day School  
*Helen Russell, Joan Desborough, Jimmie Hill*
- 18 Derbyshire NE Branch, Day School  
*Janet Johnston*
- 18 Paris Branch, Day School  
*Lindsay & Philippe Rousseau*
- 19 Paris Branch, Highland School  
*Malcolm Ferris-Lay*
- 24-25 Orlando Branch, Spring Fling  
*Jimmie Hill*
- 24-26 Vancouver Branch, Vanisle 30th Anniv. Workshop
- 25 New York Branch, Teachers' Workshop  
*John Middleton*
- 25 Canberra Branch, Day School  
*Trish Nicholls, Elspeth Lacey*

- 31-2/4 RSCDS, Newcastle Spring Fling  
*Deb Lees, Malcolm Brown, Shona Harper*
- 31-2/4 Helensburgh Branch, Weekend
- 31-2/4 Washington, DC, Branch, Weekend  
*Howard Lasnik, Ron Wallace*

## April 06

- 1 Edinburgh Branch, Day School  
*Alison Russell*
- 1 West Lothian Branch, Day School  
*Anne Smyth*
- 2 The Hague Branch, Day School  
*Wanda van Taanom*
- 14-16 Gothenburg Branch, 30th Anniversary Weekend School  
*Linda Gaul*
- 22 Argyll (London) Group, Day School  
*John Sturrock, Maureen Haynes, Anne Carter*
- 22 NW Craven Branch, Day School  
*Catherine Livsey*
- 28-29 Portrush Branch  
*Jenny Greene*
- 28-29 Islay Branch, Weekend  
*Eric Finley*
- 28-1/5 NW Queensland Branch, Weekend School
- 28-1/5 Munich Scottish Assoc., Spring Course  
*Kate Gray*
- 29 Nanaimo SCD Club, (BC) Canada, Workshop  
*Ruth Jappy, Rebecca Blackhall-Peters*

## May 06

- 5-7 East Lothian Branch, Weekend in Pitlochry  
*Linda Gaul*
- 5-7 Vancouver Branch, Workshop  
*Ann Dix*
- 6-8 Groupe de Danses Ecosaises de Lyon, Weekend in Lyon  
*Rachel Wilton*
- 12-13 Cumbrae SCD Association, Millport Weekend  
*Linda Gaul, Jimmie Hill*
- 12-14 Winnipeg Branch, Weekend  
*Mary Murray, Liz Goossen*
- 13 Exeter Branch, Day School  
*Peter Clark*
- 13 Paris Branch, Ladies Step School  
*Mylène Rousseau, Danièle Landrieau*
- 13 London Branch, Musicians' School  
*David Cunningham*
- 19-20 Isle of Skye Branch, Weekend School  
*Anne Smyth*
- 19-21 Duns and District Branch, The May Weekend
- 19-21 New York Branch, Pawling Weekend  
*Jim Lampert, Robert McOwen, Elinor Vandegrift*

- 26-28 Victoria Branch, Youth Weekend West in Victoria (BC)  
*Mairi Hand, Fred De Marse, Ruth Jappy*

## June 06

- 2-4 Montreal Branch, Weekend Workshop  
*Tracey Applebee, Phyllis MacCulloch, Arthur MacNair*
- 2-5 Central Germany Branch, Kuckucks-nest, Weekend School for Teachers
- 24-1/07 Grenoble, Dance Week  
*Ian Barbour*

## July 06

- 2-7 Thistle School, Banner Elk, North Carolina
- 9-16 31st Australian Winter School
- 16-13/8 RSCDS Summer School at St Andrews

## August 06

- 6-13 TAC Summer School, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario  
*Ruth Jappy, Robert McOwen, Rebecca Blackhall-Peters*

## September 06

- 9 Lochaber Branch, Day School  
*Linda Gaul*
- 15-17 Queensland Branch, Weekend School
- 29-1/10 Argyll (London) Weekend  
*Jimmie Hill*
- 30 Ayr Branch, Day School
- 30 Manchester Branch, Day School

## Oct 06

- 7 York & North Humberside Branch, Day School  
*Helen Russell*
- 14 Stirling Branch, Day School
- 14 Ribble Valley Branch, Day School
- 21 London Branch, Day School
- 27-28 Victoria (BC) Branch, Annual Workshop  
*Ruth Jappy, Bob Anderson*

## Nov 06

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

## Dec 06

- 28-5/01 New Zealand Branch, Summer School

## May 07

- 18-20 New York Branch, Pawling Weekend



## Obituaries

### Mary Currie, Dundee Branch

It is with sadness that we learn of the death of Mary Currie aged 80 years. She had always been an active member of Dundee Branch, serving on the Committee more than once. Mary's primary contribution was in her teaching of children's classes. Not only that but her teaching at the university class encouraged many students to continue dancing after graduation. Her biggest contribution to dancing in the Dundee area was the setting up and running of the summer dances from 1975 until 2000. (David Hollings)

### James Senior, St Andrews

James Senior, born in the year the Society was formed, 1923, died late last year. Born in Pittlesie in Fife, Jimmy trained as a shoemaker in Cupar, then became manager with Norwells in Perth before eventually taking the bold step of opening his own shop in St Andrews in 1960. It was in 1945 that Jimmy first approached the RSCDS with a view to improving the quality and range of footwear for dancing. Initially this market was exclusively in lacing ghillies but Jimmy's major innovation was the elasticated slip-on shoe for ladies, based on the ballet pump. So popular was the brand that you were likely to see a Senior shoe-bag in the major cities of Japan, the USA or St Andrews. Jimmy's contributions to the local community were many and given with

enthusiasm. He retired in 2002 and in that year the Society published the strathspey *James Senior of St Andrews*. (Alan Mair)

### Charlie Todd St Andrews Branch



Charlie receiving his Branch Award last year

Charlie Todd died on 25th August 2005 at the age of 81. He was the teacher of the St Andrews Branch General Class from 1965 till 1995, for many of those years also dancing in the demonstration team. A PE teacher by profession, Charlie trained at Jordanhill College and was one of Miss Milligan's 'boys'. He was a wonderful raconteur and his classes were interspersed with anecdotes, frequently about Miss Milligan. Charlie was a fine golfer and a popular speaker at Burns Suppers. A few months before his death, Charlie was

presented with the first Branch Award of St Andrews Branch. This honour was greatly deserved, as throughout his life Charlie was a true ambassador for Scottish country dancing. (Irene Bennet)

### George Wells, Sydney Branch

George Wells died on the 11th January 2006 aged 88 years. His introduction to Scottish Country Dancing started in the 1930s when some Scouts were invited to participate in a festival of Folk Dancing in Sydney. When Sydney Branch was founded in 1952, George, having obtained his Teacher's Certificate while living and working in Britain, was one of the two founding teachers. George taught weekly Branch classes and Teacher Certificate Courses. He also taught at many day schools and several Australian Winter Schools. In 1990 he was awarded the Society's Scroll of Honour and continued dancing and teaching for several more years.

(Keith Napier)

### Robert Jamieson, Ayr Branch

Robert (Bert) Jamieson, former chairman of Ayr Branch, was one of the finest dancers of his generation. Bert, a highly respected teacher, was part of the RSCDS International Team to visit South Africa in 1960. He died on 25th September.

(Oluf Olufsen)



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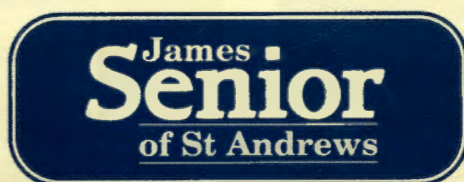
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