

SCOTTISH country dancer

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 4 Spring 2007



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Editorial

There is something absurd about Scotland! In global terms we are tiny, but there can hardly be anyone in the world who does not have an image of us. That image may be the kilt, whisky, Burns, bagpipes, fiddle music or whatever. One of the enduring images is that of the dancer. The RSCDS is responsible in no small part for our national image.

The past month has been an interesting time to be in Scotland. I can remember the shock to the system when Winnie Ewing became the first SNP member of the Westminster Parliament. Now we have the SNP as the largest party – by a whisker – at Holyrood and Alex Salmond installed as First Minister. It will be interesting to see if this has any effect on the status of Scottish culture in schools or the support, financial or otherwise, given to cultural institutions such as the RSCDS. Rest assured that a copy of this magazine will be on its way to Mr Salmond!

This issue sees us looking back at our past and planning for our future. 2007 is the 200th anniversary of the death of Francis Peacock, Aberdeen teacher and source of much of our traditional material. Dr Alastair Macfadyen has written a two-part article on Peacock. We also look back at the life of one of the great post-war dance devisers, Hugh Foss, three of whose dances you will have received with this issue.



For the future, we now have our own official RSCDS tartan. No, not Strathspey, but the new one designed by the current Convenor of E & T, David Normand-Harris. Many members will be interested to read David's fascinating article on the tartan. If you don't have your own family tartan you might consider having a kilt or ball-gown made up in it.

Dance Scottish Week this coming September is an innovation, which we hope will become an annual event. Originally the idea of the Scottish Branches' Dunblane conference, to kick-start the recruiting of new dancers in Scotland, we hope groups and branches worldwide will embrace it and raise the profile of both country dancing and the RSCDS.

Increasingly, our magazine reports the passing of members who have given unstintingly of their time and effort. This issue marks two great men of our tradition, Jackie Johnstone and Hugh Thurston.

As this is my last issue as editor, I would like to take the opportunity of thanking both the Management Board for having the foresight to allow *Scottish Country Dancer* to go ahead and the Editorial Board for all their support. In particular, Jean Martin has acted more as assistant editor rather than just a member of the team. I wish the next editor every success in developing this members' magazine.

Editor

Jimmie Hill

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Cover picture: *Auld Lang Syne* at the AGM 2006

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News from Coates Crescent

Elsbeth Gray and Irene Bennett bring you up-to-date with highlights of what has been happening in Headquarters with news from the Management Board and the Committees.

George Lawson

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the recent death of Past Chairman, George Lawson. Universally liked, George will be sadly missed. We offer our heartfelt sympathy to Nan and Jennifer. There will be an appreciation in the next issue.

Appointment of Marketing Officer

Liz Fraser has been appointed Marketing Officer for the Society for a period of six months on the basis of one day per week or equivalent. Liz runs her own agency, Quietstorm Marketing & PR, and is based in Nethy Bridge in Inverness-shire. Amongst her first priorities will be marketing activities around *Dance Scottish Week* in September 2007.



Liz Fraser, Marketing Officer

President

2007 is the 30th anniversary of The Earl of Mansfield becoming President of the Society, and Lord Mansfield has decided that this would be an appropriate time for him to stand down – so this year will be his last RSCDS Annual General Meeting. Lord Mansfield's contribution to the Society over the last 30 years has been very important, and his advice and guiding hand will be very much missed. There will be a tribute to Lord Mansfield in the next edition of the magazine. The Management Board is continuing to discuss a possible successor, and we will keep members informed.

Editor for magazine

Jimmie Hill has edited, designed and produced the first four editions of *Scottish Country Dancer*. Feedback from members

has been extremely positive. However, as he has been teaching full-time since January 2007, he now finds he is unable to give the time commitment that editing the magazine demands, and will stand down after this current edition. A replacement is therefore sought, and anyone who would like to express an interest is invited to contact Elspeth Gray at Headquarters.

Photos of RSCDS events

Members should note that photographs will be taken during RSCDS events such as Summer and Winter Schools, Spring Fling, and the Annual Conference and AGM Weekend, and that any of these photographs may be used for RSCDS publicity and marketing purposes.

Database

In June 2007 we will be ready to launch the latest stage of the members' database development, mentioned briefly in *Scottish Country Dancer 3*, which is the facility for Branches to access and update their own members' data online via the website. There have been two stages of testing: an initial phase involving just a few Branches, to test the design of the online portion and the contents of the draft guidelines / instructions; and secondly, an extended test of the entire process, to ensure that changes made online are captured on the database at Headquarters and vice versa. At the time of going to press, the second phase is still ongoing, but the process will be completed and rolled out to branches as soon as possible.

The only elements of members' records from the database that will be accessible are names and contact details, and whether or not they are branch office-bearers. Each branch Secretary will be given a password, which they can immediately change, and they will be able to access *only* their own members' details.

As a result of feedback from some of the Branches involved in the testing process, we may be considering further developments to make the database more useful to branch and Membership secretaries – but this will take time!

Website

Hopefully many of you will have seen the updated website, which went live in November 2006. Many positive comments have been received about how

much fresher the site appears, and about the organisation of the information that it contains. Further development work is ongoing – keep watching that space!

House style

As reported in *Scottish Country Dancer 3*, the Society's logo has been updated, and redesigned stationery is now in place and in use! We plan to circulate a CD with the logo in various formats to all Branches in June 2007, together with guidelines for how it should be used.

Headquarters staff

There has been one change of staff since publication of the last edition of the magazine. Susan Leask left us and was replaced by Craig Jackson in November. Craig is responsible for administration of examinations, medal tests, Spring Fling, and acts as secretary to the Education and Training Committee.



Craig Jackson, new at Coates Crescent

12 Coates Crescent – plans for visitors' area and opening hours

The Management Board has been considering for some time how best to use the space at Headquarters, in particular so that a more 'welcoming' area for visitors can be created. After looking at a number of possibilities, it has been agreed that work will be carried out on the main room on the ground floor – which used to be known as the 'Members' Room', but is now more often referred to as the 'Board Room' – to do just that. The room will be redecorated; a seating area will be created at one end of the room, with new display units for our stock, so that visitors can browse in comfort; and the existing furniture

redeployed, with some meeting chairs stored elsewhere. The arrangements will be flexible enough so that meetings can continue to be held in the room – generally on Saturdays – but during the week, it will be a more welcoming space in which to receive visitors.

Members should note that Headquarters is open to the public from 10.00am – 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Dance Scottish Week

As a result of recommendations made at the 'Let's Dance Scottish' conference of Scottish Branches held in February 2006, the Management Board is planning a 'Dance Scottish Week' to take place from 7–15 September 2007. Various events are planned to publicise SCD and all Branches are encouraged to take part by holding events in their own areas. The primary focus is on events within Scotland, but we hope that Branches worldwide will participate too. The main official events planned so far are:

1. Launch Reception in Edinburgh

This will be a prestigious event, held at the newly-opened Surgeons' Hall Complex in Nicolson Street on Friday 7 September. Invitations have gone out to many influential sections of Scottish Society: Members of the Scottish Parliament, newspapers and the media, other cultural agencies, societies and other organisations with whom we should be in contact.

The Reception will be followed by a Ball. Priority is being given initially to branch representatives and Launch Reception guests until 15 June.

2. Open days at Headquarters

During *Dance Scottish Week*, Headquarters will be holding 'open days'. Tea and coffee will be available and members will be able to relax and enjoy an interesting display from our archives, as well as meeting the Chairman and staff.

3. Commemorative celebration in Glasgow

Fortuitously coinciding with Dance Scottish Week, on Friday 14 September, the Faculty of Education of the University of Strathclyde will be unveiling a memorial plaque to Dr Jean Milligan. This event is invitation only, and The University have invited a member from each RSCDS branch to attend the commemorative celebration of Dr Milligan's life and work.

4. Closing Informal Dance in Glasgow

An informal dance will be held to round off the week at St Andrews in the Square Church in Glasgow on Friday 14

September, from 7.30 to 11.30pm. Tickets are on a first-come, first-served basis. See page 31 for more details.

2007 Annual Conference Weekend and AGM

The Annual Conference and AGM will be returning to the Bell's Sports Centre in Perth this year, from 2 – 4 November 2007. Application forms are available on request from Headquarters or can be downloaded from the website. In the meantime, to whet your appetite, here are some of the details: the band for the Ball on the Friday evening will be David Cunningham, and for the Saturday dance will be Marian Anderson; the teacher for Saturday morning's class will be Mervyn Short, with Rodger McAndrew accompanying; the Members' Forum (see following note) will be led by members of Bristol Branch; the Sunday morning workshop "Are these the instructions?" will be led by Peter Clark, accompanied by his wife, Pat; other sessions on Sunday morning will be a Musicians' Forum, Youth Forum and a meeting for International Branch members; and finally, there will be a specially-arranged tour of Scone Palace on Saturday morning, for those who neither wish to dance nor discuss! It should be a great weekend. Get your application in quickly!

Members' Forum 2007

At the 2007 Annual Conference and AGM Weekend, there will again be a single session called the 'Members' Forum', as last year, open to all members to participate. Bristol Branch has kindly volunteered to take responsibility for organising the session, which will again comprise small discussion groups with a plenary session at the end. This is an opportunity for members to raise issues that they would like aired on any aspect of the Society and its activities. Please send any suggestions to Andrew Smith, preferably by email to :

afsmith@talktalk.net

or by post to 148 Southmead Road, Bristol, BS9 4LX, as soon as possible, but certainly by 18 August 2007. The final topic list and further details will be included in the September mailing to Branches, and will be put on the website at the same time.

The report from the 2006 Members' Forum was discussed at the Management Board meeting in February 2007. Management Committees were asked to discuss the contents of the report relevant to each of them at their next meetings, and a combined response will be included in the autumn 2007 edition of *Scottish Country Dancer*.

Summer School Scholarships

Scholarships for Summer School 2007 have been awarded to members from the following countries: Canada, England (x2), Germany, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Russia, Scotland (x3), and USA. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship for Summer School in 2008, application forms and information will be available from Headquarters or on the website in October 2007, and the deadline for submission of applications is end of February 2008.

Winter School 2008

Put it in your diary now – Winter School 2008 will be from 21 – 26 February in Pitlochry, and the Co-ordinator will be Johan MacLean. If you would like to be sent an application form, please email or telephone HQ to request one. Application forms will be posted to overseas members on Monday 18 June, and to members in the UK and Europe on Friday 22 June. The forms will also be available to download from the RSCDS website at midday on Monday 25 June. The closing date for applications is Friday 20 July, but please note that they will not be processed until September.

Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Brittany 2007

The Society has been invited by VisitScotland, on behalf of the Scottish Executive, to send a team to the Festival Interceltique de Lorient in Brittany in August, as the guest country of honour is Scotland. We have commissioned a dance for the occasion, and young dancers will 'present' it at the festival. Lorient is one of the biggest festivals of its kind in Europe, with a high media profile. A report and photographs will appear in the next edition of *Scottish Country Dancer*.

Spring or autumn?

Each edition of *Scottish Country Dancer* has had, in addition to its issue number, 'Spring' or 'Autumn' and the year on the front cover. Some members in the southern hemisphere think that is misleading, as it is not *their* spring or autumn! What do you think? Is this something we should change? Please let us have your views.

And finally

Welcome to another new branch, Edmonton Caledonian, which was approved by the Management Board in September 2006. We wish them every success!

From around the world

Once again we have reports from our correspondents. We say goodbye to Tess Edelman and thanks for her past reports. This means we are looking for a new correspondent for Europe. If you are interested, please let us know. For the correspondent system to work, your contact needs to hear from you!

Africa

Correspondent: Terry Lynne Harris
harrill@unisa.ac.za

Congratulations to Wouter Joubert (Pretoria), Norma Craven (Johannesburg) and Martyn Nickless (Johannesburg) on passing Units 4 and 5 to become fully fledged RSCDS teachers. We look forward to many years of happy dancing under their teaching.

Pretoria Branch will be celebrating its 35th birthday later this year and plans are afoot for a celebratory ball in October.

Port Alfred, a scenic seaside town in the Eastern Cape, has an unofficial group of 24 dancers. They dance on Tuesday evenings at Happy Hours Nursery School, starting at 17:30. Any dancers finding themselves in that part of the world are most welcome to join them. Contact: Harry and Mary Thackwray +27-46-604-0478 or Gill Wilson +27-46-624-3171.

Asia

Correspondent: Arthur McNeill
amcneill@cuhk.edu.hk

Promoting Scottish country dancing among the local Chinese received a boost recently, when Hong Kong's Stephen Li was awarded the Duncan MacLeod scholarship, which will enable him to take the Teaching Certificate Part 1 at Summer School in St. Andrews. Like many of the RSCDS grandees, Stephen is a teacher of PE, who combines his teaching of PE with the teaching of dance. For over ten years, Stephen has been an active member of the local advanced class and has participated in demonstrations and the Hong Kong Highlanders' dance training video. He also runs a dance group of his own, consisting of local Hong Kong Chinese teenagers. They give regular performances at dance events, including Scottish country dancing, usually with four of the taller girls dancing as men and wearing kilts, and sometimes donning false moustaches and beards!

Fears that the Hong Kong St. Andrews Ball had fallen into terminal decline have been allayed, with the reinstatement, by dancing Chieftain Richard McKeown, of some of the traditional Scottish country dances which had been dropped from the programme. The Ball, albeit scaled down from its former glory and relocated from

the ballroom of the Intercontinental Hotel to a multi-purpose room at the Football Club, appears to have been given a new lease of life.

Australia

Correspondent: Sam Heron
sususe@powerup.com.au

The SCD world slows down considerably in Australia during the summer months because of the heat. However, most classes were back in action during February. A major event in Australia each year is the annual week-long Winter School, with this year's School being the 32nd consecutive School held. Seven of the Australian Branches take turns in hosting the Winter School. Canberra Branch is hosting this year's School from September 30 to October 7, in the nation's capital. Queensland Branch is hosting next year's School in July 2008 on Queensland's fabulous Gold Coast. The SCD Winter Schools are a wonderful way for dancers from Australia and New Zealand and indeed around the world to meet and to mix with fellow dancers while having a holiday at the same time. Many of the teachers and musicians who participate are well known internationally. On March 31, 2007 the RSCDS Queensland Branch dancers enjoyed dancing to the sound of Nicol MacLaren and his Glencairn SCD Band as did the Melbourne Branch dancers on April 9, Easter Monday, at their respective Branch socials. Also, as a matter of interest, the Melbourne Branch is again managing the organisational affairs of the Australian Teachers' Alliance (ATA) for the next three years.

Europe

Correspondent: Tess Edelman
info@ceilidhdance.org

Converting interested dancers to Scottish dancing is not easy – very often our style of dancing is in direct contrast to local traditions, especially where male and female roles are concerned. So, as a teacher, one 'sneaks up on' local dancers via easy partner dances and traditional but easy set dances to make sure that nobody is immediately involved in figures such as poussettes, reels or corners.

News from Telheiras (Portugal) and Tallinn (Estonia) bears this out. Both

clubs have set out on a path of ceilidh dances with the aim of gradually bringing dancers into the more complex SCD world.

Telheiras held a Beginners' Iberian Weekend, aimed at new dancers attracted to Scottish dancing but not competent enough to enjoy a full Iberian fling. The weekend meant using CDs, low budget accommodation, a local teacher, plus help from experienced dancers and support from local authorities. Roger Picken reports that not all went as planned behind the scenes but that the important result of everybody having a great time, some going on to the big ball event and continuing with SCD, was certainly achieved.

Similarly, the Tallinn group has organized many ceilidh events since it began in May 2005 and has also used the soft approach to Scottish dance with ceilidh dances and a bit of Playford/English country dance. Ceilidhs have been a monthly event, and Estonian dances have been included so that everybody can dance something. Even after a serious SCD workshop a ceilidh, including local dances, is great as everybody has a chance to dance and it encourages those who didn't come to the workshop to see what they missed! It also helps participants to relax after the concentration of a workshop.

I have started teaching dance and culture to 9-12 year-olds in primary schools in Turin. With such small children I have used mainly simple ceilidh dances from various traditions with marches and easy walking music. The children are enthusiastic about Scottish music and in the end even the boys participate with great energy. Even the small ones know about kilts! By the end of the first course I should have taught 250 children for about 200 hours.

South America

Correspondent: Marcela Galve
bascdancers@yahoo.com.ar

Hi again, from South America! I got in touch, this time, with our Bolivian friends and here is their story:

"The clouds were slow lifting off Mount Chacaltaya as the La Paz Scottish Dancing group prepared to set a new world record by dancing at 5,260 metres (17,358 feet) above sea level. With the Bolivian and Scottish flags in place and



the first bars of music floating off into the Andean valleys below, 12 dancers, including six Bolivians, paraded onto the terrace to perform.

The group only needed to complete *Dalkeith's Strathspey* to smash the previous record of 4,200m held by the Colorado Scottish dancing group. But having passed the mark, the members defied the thin, cold air to dance and leap their way through two energetic dances, *Cadgers in the Canongate* and *Burns' Hornpipe*.

As the group began the third dance, the clouds cleared to reveal the stunning landscape of Bolivia's Andean mountain range, the Cordillera Real. Looking way down from our vantage point to the capital La Paz it was clear that this was a record that would not easily be broken".

Down in Buenos Aires, BASCDancers closed 2006 with a Ceilidh at which all members showed their talents. There was some dancing, live music, jokes and games. We had a whale of a time!

Japan

Correspondent: Tom Toriyama
Tomtori@aol.com

Last summer Shigeko Egarashi, with Mieko Murakami's accompaniment on the piano, was teaching once again SCD at the International Folkdance Association of Korea's workshop. Tokyo and Saitama Branches held New Year Dances in January. 120 and 130 dancers respectively enjoyed fine live music! Tokyo Branch's weekend school attracted 160 dancers in February. Tokai Branch will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this year with events planned for early May.

It takes more than 10 hours to fly to Japan from Europe, North America and Down Under. We always make teachers, musicians and dancers from such countries feel very welcome. In the past two years Martin and Genevieve Sheffield (Grenoble), Peter and Pat Clark (Kingussie), Joe Murphy (Wigton), Larry and Maureen Onotera (Surrey, B.C.), Mary Murray (Vancouver), Chris Duncan (Australia), Simon Scott (Vancouver), Ann Dix (Berkshire) and Rachel Wilton (London) as well as tutors and examiners, have visited us.

In 1992 the first musicians' course in Japan was held by Tokyo Branch, the teacher being Barbara McOwen, who

emphasised the importance of playing strict tempo music! At first Japanese students had great problems in playing the music at the correct tempo. Those who danced to the students' music were heard whispering "Is *The Reel of the 51st Division* a strathspey?" Since that time there have been musicians' courses taught by Liz Donaldson, Bill Clement, Calum MacKinnon, Muriel Johnstone, Pat Clark, Judith Smith, David Hall and Keith Smith. Today Japanese musicians provide music for classes, weekend schools, social dancing, training courses and examinations.



New Zealand

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

Kia Ora Katoa e Aotearoa (Greetings from New Zealand, the Land of the Long White Cloud). We've had a break from dancing in New Zealand over what should have been the hot Summer months! The 2006 season closed in late October/early November and the new season got underway in late February/early March.

However, many of us have been less than idle during the break. Over 300 dancers attended the 50th Nationally-organised New Zealand Summer School in Dunedin. We welcomed a goodly number of dancers from both Australia and Canada; and others came from Scotland, England, France, Germany, Japan – and from all over New Zealand, of course!



Summer School was marvellous! Organiser, Janet Favel, and her team did a splendid job. The staff at the Halls of Residence (The University of Otago) couldn't have been more helpful – and we've been invited back!

We were very pleased to welcome back to Summer School, Bruce and Valerie Frazer (Bruce taught the Very Advanced Class); Robert Mackay (who played for classes) and Neil Copland and Mo Rutherford (who took the Musicians' class).

Highlights? The 50th Anniversary Dinner Dance, Hogmanay, and The President's Ball which were held in the Edgar Centre: a huge arena where a few Boeing 747s would have felt somewhat lonely; the launch of Peter Elmes' Band's CD, preceded by a wonderful Musical Soirée; and the Ceilidh, with no fewer than 28 items on the programme!



To list all the items would result in my dismissal as New Zealand Correspondent! Visualise fifteen pianists playing a fabulous medley on two pianos and three keyboards, overseen by Neil Copland, who sat in the middle of the floor, displaying his cue cards so that the soloists were kept in check; and eight penguins, who arrived on the Otago Peninsula on an iceberg, to dance for us *The Piper and the Penguin*. As the Piper was not available, Robert Mackay obliged and we were treated to *The Pianist and the Penguins* instead. It brought the house down!

I hope that you will consider coming to a Summer School in New Zealand. This year (2007/2008) it will be held in Wellington and in 2008/2009 Christchurch will be the host city. Our Website is: www.rscdsnz.org.nz Come down-under and see us some time.

North America – West Coast

Correspondent: Rosemary Coupe
rcoupe@rscdsvancouver.org

More and more dancers on the West Coast have the delight of live music as part of their dance experience. In some areas, like the San Francisco Bay, the tradition dates back to the 1970s when Barbara McOwen began to play and teach. It was continued by Kim McGarrity and now by musicians like Lyle Ramshaw, Andy Imbrie, John Taylor, Janet Kurnick, Susan Worland and many others. New musicians are nurtured and supported. The Berkeley class, for example, has an open band welcoming all interested musicians. Bruce Herbold writes, 'The excitement of having so many musicians playing infects the whole class'.

Elsewhere, the tradition is new, but flourishing. When pianist Kristi Lind moved to Namarata in the Okanagan area of British Columbia a few years ago, she lost no time in forming MacNamarata's Band. Now about ten-strong, the group plays for dance events and also hosts community dances to encourage new people to try dancing.

In Vancouver, fledgling musicians can try out their wings in the Vancouver Fiddle Orchestra. Founded by Ian Price in 1990 and now led by Janet Wright, the Orchestra has given a collective performing outlet to musicians interested in developing their skills. Today it has 28 active members, and its sound is extraordinarily powerful. From the VFO has sprung a number of smaller groups, like Calanais, Scuttlebutt, and The Tartan Players. VFO musicians also play for several local classes. Another Vancouver stalwart is Alex Jappy who, together with his wife Ruth, provides music for many dances and workshops.

In Winnipeg, the band Scotch Measure has just celebrated its 25th anniversary. Its four current members are Ken Nattrass, Ron Krug, Jay MacLeod, and Jim James. The band plays not only for local events, but also for many major dance events in Western Canada.

Workshops for musicians also encourage new players. In Vancouver, the Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians has offered the chance to learn and play with some of the great names of the Scottish music world. In Sonoma, California, the second Scottish Dance Masters' Conference will soon offer both teachers and musicians an intense four days of working together. And of course,

Muriel Johnstone's presence on Vancouver Island inspires musicians and dancers.

North America – East Coast

Correspondent: John Middleton
jjceilidh@sympatico.ca

Greetings from this section of the North American dancing community. Spring has been teasing us this year with several days of wonderfully warm weather followed by more Arctic blasts. However, the outside conditions have not affected classes – apart from the occasional cancellation due to ice or snow-storms! In this area various Scottish country dance groups and branches are celebrating significant anniversaries. The Toronto Association's 50th celebrations will extend from September 2007 until April 2008 with many activities planned. Details are on the website www.rscdstoronto.org. Guelph, Ontario, will be celebrating its 50th in September, 2007 and the Raleigh Scottish Country Dancers celebrated their 25th Anniversary with a weekend workshop and dance. This event was well-supported by members of the new Carolinas Branch.

And it's not all celebrations of past years of great dancing; the Ottawa Valley Dancers are planning a brand-new dancing and music event for October 2007.

The celebrations are an indication of the huge growth of Scottish country dancing that occurred here in the 1950's and 1960's. At that time, immigration from the UK was tremendous and newcomers swelled the ranks of country dance classes. The keener dancers, and there were many, could dance every night of the week and thought nothing of travelling 200 miles on a round trip to a dance. Now that immigration from the UK has slowed to a trickle, country dancers are working very hard to maintain enthusiasm and numbers and with considerable success. It is most gratifying to see new groups and Branches arising, the Carolinas Branch being one of the most recent. As we travel around that part of the continent, we find the same enthusiasm and commitment to our form of dance in other areas as we used to find 50 years ago in the Great Lakes area of Ontario. This speaks volumes about the strength and appeal of Scottish country dance: if it appears to be losing appeal in one area, it is more than likely to be springing up with renewed vigour in other areas. Long may it continue!

From the Archive

Archivist, Marilyn Healy, appeals for early vinyl recordings.

DSW Exhibition at HQ

As part of Dance Scottish Week there will be a display at HQ of items relating to the early days of the Society. Whilst acknowledging the achievements of the past, we also need to highlight where SCD is today and look to the future. With this in mind I am asking Branches and individual members to submit photographs which show SCD in unlikely places or from a different 'angle'. Trafalgar Square does not immediately come to mind as a venue for a dance but it was! Please don't leave it too late. We are planning it now.

78 rpm vinyl records

In Issue 2 I wrote about the early recorded music we have and in particular the 78 rpm recordings made in the Society's early days. Since then, we have been able to list the recording dates of some of the records. Our oldest was by the Scots Guards in 1905, another by Scott Skinner in 1910 and we have two, recorded on the Regal label by Peter Wyper between 1910-13. We also have c. 30 records recorded before 1930, when recording techniques changed and another 50 recorded before the war. We do not have equipment to play those early recordings but it has been agreed that we will have the pre-war recordings transferred to CD. Many so-called 78 rpm records were not made to run at exactly 78rpm. Some were cut as fast as 80 rpm and beyond and some of the labels on our records specify 80 rpm.

Search your attics!

Although we have a number of recordings made during the early years of the Society there are many gaps. If anyone has any early 78 rpm records that they no longer use, please consider donating them.

Flora Inglis

Flora Inglis, a founder member of Herefordshire Branch, left a collection of recorded music, books and leaflets, which her daughters donated for the archives. Several of the recordings were by bands we did not already have. The collection also included a copy of each edition of the Formations Index. One of our projects is to collect all editions of Society publications for researchers and I am grateful to Margaret Harding and her sister for their generosity.

From the Chairman

Irene Bennett, Chairman since November 06, gives her views so far.



Another great Winter School

At the time of writing this I have just returned from spending an enjoyable time at another successful Winter School in Pitlochry and the weather did not disappoint us! Snow usually makes an appearance at some time during the long weekend. This year it waited until the morning of departure and we awoke to a white world, which created some inconvenience when packing vehicles or getting to the railway station on time.

Importance of branches

Since assuming the position of Chairman in November last year, I have already visited a number of Branches. This has given me the opportunity of meeting many hardworking, enthusiastic people. Without these loyal members our Society would founder. We should be extremely grateful to all the people in the past who made the effort to lay the foundations of the wonderful organisation we have inherited. We must ensure we nurture it so that generations in the future can continue to enjoy Scottish country dancing. Had the Society not been formed in 1923 there would not be Scottish country dancing as we know it today. In the not too distant future there will have to be an increase in the subscription fee. When a proposal is presented to you, I urge you to think about any such increase as an investment for the future. I believe that, apart from dancing, each one of us derives different benefits from the Society, many of them intangible.

Marketing ourselves

Nowadays we live in a competitive environment - the market is crowded with hosts of activities from which people can choose. In order to raise the profile of the RSCDS in this environment, we have recently appointed a Marketing Officer, Liz Fraser. The appointment is initially for six months from March to September, and we hope Liz will help publicise the Society and attract new members. The Society will only survive if the membership is strong.

DSW!

The main event for the Society this year will be Dance Scottish Week from 10-15 September. You will find further information about it elsewhere in the magazine and on our website. There will be Open Days at Coates Crescent when I hope many of you will visit to meet me and the staff.

Mag.editor@rscds.org

This is the last issue of the magazine to be edited by the current editor, Jimmie Hill. Jimmie has gone back into secondary teaching and those of you involved in education will understand the demands that makes on your time. We wish him every success in his new job and thank him most sincerely for his unstinting efforts in editing the first issues of *Scottish Country Dancer* and creating the design.

General Purposes and Finance Committee

The RSCDS is a Scottish charity based in Edinburgh. To comply with charity legislation, a majority of our Trustees (Management Board) must be resident in Scotland. That restriction does not, however, apply to committees. At some AGMs we struggle to fill the positions on our committees. In this article Lawrence Boyd makes a plea to members to consider standing for the General Purposes and Finance Committee.

Your contribution

Be honest, have you ever had a thought that the RSCDS could do some things better. Or, have you ever said, referring to the RSCDS, if only it would do.....whatever? If so then please do read on. This article might give you the inspiration to do something about it, and indeed give you the opportunity to have some impact in helping to deal positively with the challenges of the future.

The role of the committee

Following the restructuring of the Management Board agreed at the AGM last November, the role of the General Purposes and Finance (GP&F) Committee has become more clearly defined and is very much about ensuring an effective infrastructure for the RSCDS is in place. This is more than checking the finances of the organisation.

Variety of experience needed

With the reduction in the size of the Management Board more work will be done in committees. They will not make decisions but they will do much of the detailed work to advise the MB. This means that in the future the GP&F needs people who can contribute to different aspects of the remit of the committee. So you do not need to be a finance expert, but perhaps you have general administration or management experience, HR or IT expertise, or financial planning or premises knowledge. We need

people with a variety of experience to come forward to ensure that this committee has the expertise to advise on all aspects of its remit.

Essential work

In many ways the GP&F can seem the most remote of the committees as it does not really deal with the front-line aspects of dancing - the reason we are all here in the first place. But without an effective infrastructure everything else becomes impossible. So the work is possibly unseen and perhaps lacking glamour, but is essential.

What is needed?

The vacancies on the Committee simply must be filled. The work which has now begun must be kept going in order to maintain momentum. Individuals who are willing to bring to the table any expertise mentioned above are needed. It is hoped that volunteers may be found now on a short term basis to fill the present vacancies. However, before the AGM in November next, positive steps need to be taken to ensure that there are more than enough candidates to fill all vacancies. Everyone who would like to ask any further questions is welcome to do so, sending them to gp&f@rscds.org. It must also be added that new committee members can be assured of a very warm welcome by their fellow committee members.

GP and Finance Committee, 11 January 2007

Interview with Bobby Brown



Last summer the editor caught up with Scottish Canadian, Bobby Brown, leader of The Scottish Accent Scottish Country Dance Band, one of last year's nominated bands for SCD Band of the Year. Born in Dennyloanhead, near Bannockburn, Bobby emigrated to Canada when he was 16, like thousands of other Scots who left during the 50s, 60s and early 70s.

Did you have a job when you landed in Canada in 1957?

No. At 16, I was too young to start work. I eventually got a job in Eatons, a big department store, in Winnipeg. I worked there for about a year as a kind of office boy, then my mother came over to Toronto. We came back to Winnipeg and then finally went back to Toronto.

How did you get into country dance playing?

When we were still in Scotland a lot of musicians were friends of the family. My mother knew a lot of people – like Jim Macleod, Jimmy Shand, Bobby Macleod. I never remember sitting down and learning things. It just seemed to be part of our life. There was music in the house all the time and most of it was Scottish. My mother sang Scottish and Gaelic songs. My dad would take the fiddle out and play it. We always had performers coming through to see us on a Sunday. There was always a stramash on a Sunday afternoon. Robert Wilson was a good friend and wee Tamas Fisher, who played the piano. Will Starr was a good friend of my dad's. He was born in Croy and my dad was born in Slamannan, right next door to each other, so to speak! I don't ever remember learning a tune. I think a lot of natural musicians are like that. If somebody asked me when I learned a tune like *The Flowers of Edinburgh*, I couldn't tell them. I've just always known it!

So when you were in Canada, how long did it take you before you started playing?

I bought myself a wee cheap accordion. I hadn't played the accordion in Scotland. I took it up because it was impossible to find pianos where we lived. My dad had tried me on the fiddle but somehow I didn't take to it – although I love it. So I just started playing for wee things in the church and stuff like that. I actually went and took some accordion lessons just to make sure I had the basics right (not sure it was that successful!). When I came to Toronto from Winnipeg, there was a lot more going on. There was Scottish country, but I didn't know about it. My enthusiasm led me to play in little Country and Western bands. I played the accordion and piano. They were terrible, but it was an outlet for me – and it gave me a wee bit of extra money.

How did you get into a country dance band?

I met a drummer from Grangemouth called

Alec Martin. I had a friend who played guitar, so Alec said come over to the house one Friday night. This was in Hamilton, Ontario. We had an evening together. Alec said why not stay over because Stan Hamilton and Bobby Frew were coming for a rehearsal. They were just a trio at the time. They couldn't get musicians. So Stan and Bobby arrived. I had met them before through my sister Jean, who was an ardent dancer and teacher and very much involved in the RSCDS. I sat in with them – and I was still playing with them 20 years later! The Stan Hamilton band was a great band. I was second accordion. Bobby Frew was lead accordion. I used to jump in with the melody and play around, but the main thrust of responsibility was on Bobby's shoulders. Stan used to jump in and play the melody a lot too. That became a bit of a signature for him – a completely unique and brilliant player.

Could you sum up how Stan influenced you?

Oh, big time. I didn't know anything about Scottish dance music until I met Stan and Bobby. I was playing around the perimeter of Scottish music, but I had never been subjected to the dance band discipline. I knew about strict tempo and change of tunes, but I got a great insight into the chord formations with the band. When you're sitting with an accordion player like Bobby Frew on one side and Stan Hamilton on the other, you listen and learn. It's almost like an apprenticeship. The first year I didn't have a stick of music in front of me. I was just filling in and doing wee things. I think Stanley had the idea he wanted to do something like Bobby Macleod had done. He used chords rather than just playing the melody. Jimmy Shand had the three leads going – the two accordions and the fiddle. I think Bobby Macleod thought one of them was somewhat redundant, so he thought – let's do something else to fill in! I think that's where the second accordion came from, but I may be wrong. I never heard anyone playing second accordion like that until I heard Bobby Macleod.

So was the band playing exclusively for RSCDS-style dances?

Oh no, Bobby Frew was a great modern accordionist and Stan was great at it too. In

the 60s we did a lot of 'mixed dances' where you'd do ceilidh dances, quicksteps, latin american, foxtrots.

Was Stan's band in demand in Canada or all over North America?

Yes, we were probably the pioneers of the Scottish dance band sound over here. We weren't the first, but we played all over North America – Vancouver, California, as well as the east coast. The vast distances meant lots of travelling.

What caused you to form your own band?

I started to work a lot in the summer because Stan and Bobby weren't too keen. They would finish in May and not start again till October. I was a lot younger than them, so I started playing with old-time fiddlers and French Canadian fiddlers. Then I was offered a television show as the arranger and piano player for a group called the Cape Breton Symphony Fiddlers in Montreal as part of the John Allan Cameron Show. At the time I was working for a small company. I got to the stage where I couldn't get any more time off. I knew within myself that this was an opportunity not to be missed. It was the right decision because I ended up doing about six years of television. After that, I toured with the Cape Breton Symphony Fiddlers – even to Scotland and in Europe – mostly concerts. I was the MC so it was a real learning process. I must have done it OK because nobody threw anything at me! It was when my time with the Fiddlers was coming to an end that I decided to take up playing for Scottish country dancing seriously and form my own band. It was about 1976 and we called it *The Scottish Accent*. Bobby and Stan were still playing for SCD I think some people saw us as a bit of an upstart band! We were relatively unknown. I now have a nucleus of 8 musicians and if I didn't have them, I wouldn't have a band: Fred Collins from Dundee, Kathy Fraser-Collins, Rob Wolanski, Don Wood, Warren Beesley, Chris Reesor, Roger Moniz, and of course, my son, Laird Brown. They are the nucleus of the *Scottish Accent*.

When did you first come into contact with the RSCDS?

I was first involved with the RSCDS over here in the early 60s in Stan's band. Things were in their formative years. Hamilton was the biggest club at that time in this part of



Canada. We used to play for their monthly dances and their ball. My first job with the band was the Hamilton Ball and I felt like a fish out of water. That's because I was! At half-time Stan came up to me, "Hey Booby, you're gonnae huv tae play louder than that!" I said "No Stan, I don't think so. If I play any louder somebody might hear me!" Then we started rehearsing and I began to understand the philosophy behind this whole thing – all the tune changes and stuff like that.

Were you ever a class musician?

No, not in the early years. Stan played for classes and so did Bobby.

When did you first meet Miss Milligan?

We were playing at the Hamilton Weekend, close to Niagara Falls, and she was over examining. My sister Jean knew her very well. We were standing in the gift shop and Miss Milligan walked in – probably to get some pan drops! So my sister introduced me, "Oh, hello young man," she said. "Very nice to meet you. What do you do? Do you dance?" "No," I said, "I play in Stan Hamilton's band." "And what do you play for Mr Hamilton?" "The accordion," I said. "Oh, I hate accordions!" she said. And that was the end of that! I said, "Nice to meet you too!" I never spoke to her after that. To this day I've always said if she had spoken like that to every young musician who was trying to build music in Canada, there wouldn't be any! She was lucky there was a band here at all – especially of that calibre!

She got on well with Stan, though?

Oh yes, they got on very well. She called him "Mr Hamilton". At these weekends, he would come into class in the morning with his eyes half open, a fag hanging out of his mouth, ten minutes late. "Oh, Mr Hamilton, how dare you?" "Oh, sorry Miss Milligan, really sorry." He would sit down and all would be forgiven – ash falling from his mouth. Then he would put his cigarette down on the piano! You could smell the lacquer burning. I used to come down to the class just to listen to Stan's music. I was amazed at the dexterity of the man. He'd hit an octave for his bass note and put a four or five-fingered chord in. It sounded like two pianos. When Stuart Thomson of the Wardlaw band saw Stan playing, he said, "I see it, but I don't believe it!"

I know you have strong feelings about original tunes.

Yes! I'm not so sure that this original tune

thing was the best thing that ever happened. I'm sure that a lot of the music in the RSCDS dance books shouldn't be there. A lot of them are anti-dance – especially the minor dirges of some of the strathspeys. There's a lot of them I don't think are very good tunes. Mind you, this is only my opinion! We all know that Miss Milligan's view of SCD was based on elegance, strength, accuracy of foot positions, and phrasing. To get all the footwork in, you have to slow everything down. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? It's a matter of opinion, but to say that this is the way the music was originally played wouldn't be correct.

But the earliest RSCDS recordings are much faster than today's, aren't they?

Yes, I have some of the early ones and they belt on! When I play at a dance I play faster than I do at a class.

So you have your class speed and your dance speed?

Yes, after we had recorded our latest anniversary CD, *Celtic Fire in the Music*, we had a launch party with about 80 dancers, dancing to the CD. As I was watching them, I realised that we would play it faster at a live dance. Miss Milligan used to come right up to a band and tell them they were playing too fast. She didn't mince her words, and if she didn't like the tune, she'd tell a band to stop playing that rubbish! I know that for a fact. It happened to Angus MacKinnon's band in New York. I was playing in the band when she came running up to the stage and gave us a real telling off, "You're far too fast, far too fast!" And if you think of the top bands in Scotland at the time – Jimmy Shand, Bobby Macleod, Ian Powrie, John Ellis, to name but a few – they were never asked to do a recording for the RSCDS! Why?

Things have changed since then. They've even asked this guy Bobby Brown to record!

Oh yes! As the first band from outside the UK to be asked, we felt very honoured. However, when I got the letter with all the requirements, there seemed to be quite a few restrictions.

Do you think some of the great bands from the past weren't asked to record because the people in control of the music were class pianists, not band people?

Well, perhaps. But I'm not sure if that was the whole story. I think some of the tunes they picked were rather academically

chosen – not for their 'dunt'. And today some of the stuff being recorded (not necessarily by the RSCDS) sounds more like yodelling music! It seems some of the tradition is being lost. I mean, what's Scottish about the tune for *Shifftin Bobbins*?

So should the RSCDS just have stuck to producing the text of the dances and left the music to the bands?

In my opinion, yes. They could have 'suggested' a tune, but they shouldn't have made it mandatory. I've never thought that was right and to this day I fight it. Teachers who are disciples of the RSCDS philosophy think that a certain tune is the only tune for the dance. That's what they've been taught. But many of the tunes are interchangeable. You can dance a reel to *any* good reel tune. Just look in the Miscellanies where Miss Milligan specified "any good jig or any good reel or any good strathspey"!

I've heard you play *The De'il Among the Tailors*. You wouldn't play anything else for that dance, would you – or for the *Duke of Perth*, or the *Dashing White Sergeant*?

No, I wouldn't. But I have old manuscripts for *The De'il*, and the original tune is *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*! Music wasn't always set in stone as it is today! If you look at my set for *The De'il Among the Tailors*, every tune is an original – *The Soldier's Joy*, *The Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Mrs Macleod*, *The Mason's Apron*, *The Fairy Dance* – all originals in their own right – great old Scottish tunes that make people want to dance.

Do you use originals as second tunes sometimes?

Yes, I think it's wrong to say that we can't use originals as second tunes. Basically, I play tunes that make people dance. Do you want a band that really makes you want to dance that plays really good strong traditional tunes or do you want a band that follows the book, but "the tune's no very good"! Some of the tunes we play were not originals when we first played them. Where is all this going to end?

And what about the arrangements of tunes?

We've got to be very careful with arrangements. We shouldn't play around with the tunes too much. Some people do some very flamboyant things with the tunes – harmonies and syncopation. I would never think of playing around with a good traditional tune. After all, good tunes stand on their own. I've been playing *The Flowers of Edinburgh* since I was a boy. It's a great tune

– just leave it alone! As Stan and I used to say, it's not the chords you're trying to get in, it's the ones you leave out that are important!

I'm not a musician, but I feel if I can't deddle to a tune, it's not Scottish!

That's it exactly! Most dancers don't know about the music, but if you start to embellish our music too much, you lose it – especially with strathspeys. If you feel you have to embellish a tune in order to make musical sense, then something is missing. If you had soul for it, you wouldn't want to do that! If you remember some of the earlier books, there used to be two tunes given. What was the second tune for? In case you couldn't play the first one? Was it supposed to go after it? That couldn't be it because sometimes the personality of tune 1 is totally different from the personality of tune 2! You couldn't put them both together and maintain this little rhythmic journey.

What do you think of dances which are not 32 bars?

I don't like 40 bars! I've finished my wee journey after 32! Musically, I'm not fond of compiling music for 40- or 48-bar dances. Most tunes are written in 32-bar sequences. You play AABB or ABAB. For a 40-bar dance I arrange my music as 32 bars plus 8. That alone tells you there's something not quite right there. A 48-bar dance is more musical because you play ABABAB.

Then you must love *The Wee Cooper of Fife!*

That should never be danced! I shouldn't really say that! The song is a ten-bar song, so they use it for the dance, and then they want it 8 times! Where am I to find other ten-bar tunes to put with it? I've said to the dancers that I'll just play the same tune 8 times and when you get to the last time, ring a bell so I know I'm on the last lap! What most bands do is play 8 bars then repeat 2! How's that for destroying music!

One thing that a lot of traditionalists say is that they want a band to come back to the original at the end.

People say things like this to me all the time. They also say things like, "I couldn't dance *Mairi's Wedding* to anything else but *Mairi's Wedding*" to which I reply, "So you dance as first couple every time you dance it, then?" The whole thing doesn't hold water. It's all right if you're first or last couple, but the second and third couples never dance to the original! Certain tunes catch the dancers' ear. Go to any dance and play *Mairi's Wedding* and they're all singing along. I think Miss Milligan's idea of originals was to help people have an idea of the dance by the sound of the music. But if you were to ask a musician to play the original tune for *My Mother's Coming In*, we would have to go to the book! Even we don't know them all! There are too many.

I think the idea of second, third and fourth tunes was to stop people being bored by the same tune 8 times.

If you have to sit down and arrange an 8-times through dance, what is your ideal number of tunes and the order?

Generally, I use 4 tunes and play them as 1234234 then 1. And within the 32 bars, I'm a great believer that your first 8 bars sets up your second 8. The second 8 may look the same as the first on paper, but you don't play them the same way. It's varying the way you play the second 8 that lifts the dancers. If you're a dance band, you're there to play for dancers. You're not there to show off.

Where do you stand on the *strathspey versus slow air* controversy?

The Lea Rig was the first slow air to be used for a strathspey. This was radical to us in Canada – because it's a song. We've got a lot of strathspey tunes – most of them very good for dancing. Miss Milligan's philosophy depended on a strong first beat to the bar in a strathspey – strength, carriage etc. That doesn't happen in *The Lea Rig*, *The Duchess Tree*, *Mrs Milne of Kinneff*, or *The Dreamcatcher* tune. My own view is that introducing slow airs was a mutation and was not necessary. As a musician I play them – and I think we play them very well. Dancers love to dance to them and to listen to them. But they're anti-dance! The dancing starts to become slovenly. It's not being induced by the music and if you try to play *The Duchess Tree* as a strathspey, you ruin the tune. It's a song in A flat, but it's been changed to A. And that's another thing that happened in the early RSCDS books. The key of the tunes was changed. That's not right either. Leave the tune as it is. But we're not going to get rid of slow airs now. We're stuck with them. We now call them strathspeys, but they're not! We can't say to people, "Take your partners for a slow air sped up!" They're not unpleasant to play, but sometimes I am surprised by teachers who compile a programme with 4 of these slow airs and no real strathspeys. I remember one teacher who spent 45 minutes teaching the strong strathspey step, then the class danced the dance to a slow air!

What do you think of *The Irish Rover* as a dance tune?

If you end up fighting these things, you'll end up playing on your own! Just as bad is *Australian Ladies*. That's not a reel – it's a pipe march! *Let's Have a Ceilidh* is another one. If you get a bunch of pipers listening to us playing these tunes, I don't know what they think! If we played them as marches, you couldn't dance to them! You've got to speed them up. I don't enjoy playing them at dance speed, but if you get me at a party, I'll play them for what they are – marches – and I love them. Another example is hornpipes. People say to me that they want

a hornpipe after such and such a reel. No, they're putting in another reel! To play a hornpipe at the speed of a hornpipe you couldn't dance to it! So any hornpipes we play are up to reel speed. As far as I know, hornpipes aren't even Scottish! And if you use a hornpipe with a beginners' class you're inviting chaos!

So do you get into trouble with teachers?

Sometimes I do! I have had teachers coming to me telling me that if I don't play the original tune, they won't teach the dance! It puts pressure on musicians – especially those who are a bit more limited in their sight-reading abilities and their technique. Some less experienced musicians are terrified when they play for a class. We must bring new musicians in – not frighten them away. When I think of the great Scottish musicians, they're great, not because they're technical geniuses, but because they've got a feeling for this music. It's a mythical sense. It's your heart that controls the fingers.

Are you finding that more young people are interested in playing for dancing?

There seems to be more interest in the USA than in Canada amongst young musicians. In America, there's a lot of fiddlers playing. In certain areas the accordion is frowned upon as an instrument. Someone recently was running down the pipes to me. But it's the sound of the pipes that I am trying to emulate – all the grace notes and ornamentation. Like the pipes, the accordion is air across reeds. My formative years were rich in pipe music – the major influence in my playing even to this day.

Your band is a very exciting band to dance to. What do you do that is special?

First and foremost, I pick danceable tunes. We use a lot of light and shade. We use a lot of tension. We exploit the strengths of the tune – especially little runs. We're very rhythmic. Our bass line is very simple. When someone jumps up in the air in a pas de basque to one note, it's nice if there's another one waiting for them when they come down! Within the melody and the chords we extemporise, light and shade, maybe crescendo and then back off. We may go very chippy for 8 bars then come in strong for the next 8 if the tune calls for it. The music I choose is very harmonic. I stay away from lots of minor dirges. If I can't find a chord for something, I don't want it. My chords are ecclesiastical in their shape. I use a lot of suspended chords, which are very much in that mode. Plus I've got great musicians who have bought into my philosophy. We all love it. To travel the distances that we have to travel, you have to love it! I strongly believe a band is a musical unit.

(*Bobby Brown's latest recording is 'Celtic Fire in the Music', a double album with 27 tracks, ideal for class use.*)

Hugh Foss

Hugh Foss was one of the great dance devisers of the post-war period. With help from Andrew Kellett, Wilson Nicol of London Branch has compiled the following article to coincide with the Society's publication of three of his dances with this issue. (photograph courtesy of John Drewry)

A Chelsea basement!

Hugh Foss started Scottish country dancing in a basement in Chelsea. His wife, Alison, was a Scot and in the early 1930s she took her very English husband to an evening of Scottish Dancing at a friend's house. Hugh sat out the first half and during the interval he was asked what he thought of the proceedings so far. He replied that he was enjoying the dancing, but did not think much of the teaching. At this he was told, probably quite indignantly, that if he could do any better himself he was welcome to try. Not needing a second invitation Hugh read through a book of instructions and by the end of the evening he was in charge. So began his passion for Scottish dance and its music.

Born in Japan

Hugh Foss, born in 1902 in Japan, the son of an Anglican missionary bishop, was educated at Marlborough and Cambridge University. He had an immense intellect, which he expressed through his dance choreography and in his professional career. He was tall, well over six feet, and lean. As an Englishman he felt he was not entitled to wear a clan tartan so his kilt was the plain grey shepherd's plaid. With grey beard, grey jacket and waistcoat, grey kilt and grey hose he was in appearance a grey man, but his personality and mind were quite the opposite.

Early reprimand!

His impromptu coaching of Scottish dancing that evening in Chelsea came to the notice of the infant London Branch which was concerned by his unauthorised teaching of dances out of the SCDS books. The Committee wrote to Hugh seeking an explanation. He replied that he had meant no harm and had merely explained the dances to a group of enthusiasts. He was unanimously forgiven and invited to join the Branch. Soon he became a regular visitor to the Society's Summer School in St. Andrews.

Precise and logical mind

His wife's friends with whom he started dancing formed the Chelsea Reel Club in 1935. Hugh was its first Vice-Chairman. He became Chairman in 1938 and largely under his tutelage the Chelsea Reel Club flourished. At the same time he was teaching an advanced and a demonstration class on behalf of London Branch. His precise and logical mind meant that his pupils were drilled as to where they should

be after every bar of a reel of three. In 1937 he was a member of the first SCDS team to dance overseas – at a Celtic Festival in Brittany, though *English* Hugh felt he was out of place representing Scotland at such an event. Nor did he accept everything emanating from Society Headquarters. He applied his own thought processes to each ruling and only followed it if it made sense to him.

Leading codebreaker

Hugh Foss was a remarkable but very private man. For obvious reasons he spoke little about his professional career, nor did he reveal much about himself. However a recent book, *The Emperor's Codes* by Michael Smith, reveals sides of Hugh Foss which his Scottish dancing friends never saw. During the war he was Head of the Japanese Section at Bletchley Park, and in 1942 was awarded the OBE for his work. He was a brilliant codebreaker who played a leading part in cracking Japanese secret ciphers before and during World War II. His first major success was in 1934 when he broke a new machine cipher used by Japanese naval attaches in their embassies. Hugh Foss developed a device to read Japanese machine cipher: it was made in the office using a brown foolscap file cover with a collar stud, a piece of string and slots cut in the cover for the letters. But it worked, and from what we know of Hugh Foss he would not have been worried by its apparent lack of sophistication. In 1944 he was sent to Washington to help American codebreaking work.

While at Bletchley he maintained his interest in Scottish country dancing by running a weekly lunch-time class in the local assembly hall. It was well attended and very lively. After the war he returned to London and in 1947 started the Chelsea Reel Club *Intelligencer, Entertainer and Recorder, 'The Crier'*. The first issue contained an editorial, a new dance, a description of some Highland setting steps, some verse and a logic puzzle all composed by Hugh. He also resumed his involvement with London Branch. Bill Ireland recalled being fascinated by the neatness of his feet and the intricacy of the steps he executed in the *Foursome Reel*.

London Branch chairman

In January 1951 Hugh was Chairman of the Branch Committee. He proposed that Branch notices would be more attractive if "issued free to all members of the Branch, in the form of a magazine containing also other items that



would interest or amuse members of the Branch, attract new members or prevent existing members from resigning". Hugh did not speak loudly but he knew how to get his way, and the Committee accepted his offer to edit the proposed magazine himself in May 1951. The first issue of "The Reel" appeared in the following September. The rest is history.

Hugh retired to Glendarroch in Dalry near Castle Douglas. There his mind could focus fully on the intellectual challenges of choreography. He had dabbled before but now his outpourings increased rapidly, and he became a prolific composer and distributor of modern dances. His advice on choreography was to:

"study existing dance figures and invent new ways of developing or combining them and of joining them together; with this for back-ground, and noting the ways in which the music 'can tell you what to do', take good tunes and construct dances to fit them, remembering that each dance must have a personality of its own."

Reputation for frugality

He continued to attend Summer School on a regular basis, taking part in the weekly ceilidhs. Hugh had a reputation for frugality. His shirt cuffs were invariably worn. The same shepherd's plaid kilt he had worn in Brittany in 1937 was still going strong in the 1950s, as Ellen Garvie recalls darning a hole in it then whilst at St Andrews. He also used only one pair of dancing shoes. Each one was numbered '1' or '2'. On the odd days of the month he wore number 1 on his right foot, and on the even days he wore number 2 on his right foot. That way he believed they would wear out evenly and therefore more slowly.

Meticulous

In his later years an inflammation in his legs prevented Hugh from taking an active part in dancing, but he continued to attend St Andrews sitting in class taking characteristically meticulous notes. He died in 1971. His widow, Alison, continued to distribute his dances until the business was taken over by Scottish Dance Archives.

The Emperor's Codes by Michael Smith, ISBN 0-593 04641 2, published by Bantam Press.

Francis Peacock (part 1)

by Dr Alastair Macfadyen



2007 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of one of country dancing's greatest teachers: Francis Peacock of Aberdeen. In this first article of two, Dr Alastair Macfadyen, gives us essential background to the man himself.

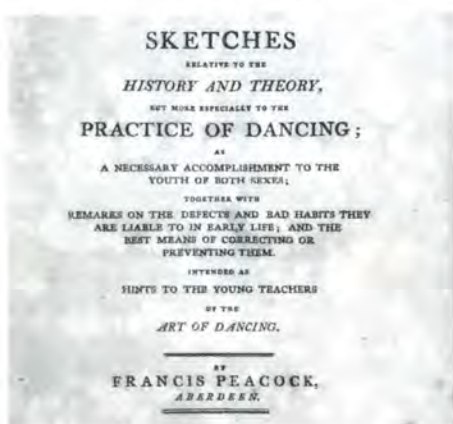
Francis Peacock

Francis Peacock died on Friday, 29 June 1807, in his 84th year, at Aberdeen where he had served as the town's principal teacher of dancing for 60 years. The confirmation of his teaching appointment 'during his good behaviour' was made by the burgh council on 14 February 1747, the councillors and magistrates having been satisfied that he was 'a capable Master and of a discreet and moral character.' In fact, he proved to be an exemplary citizen, entering fully into the life of his adopted town. Peacock's Close off the north side of Castle Street and the location of Mr Peacock's family residence and dancing school for several years, is a lasting reminder of his long and happy association with Aberdeen.



Remarkably, the Drum's Lane location of a later school was owned by a family descendant, Charlotte G. Peacock of Romford, Essex, until 1922.

The culmination of his long and successful career as a dancing master occurred two years before his death when he published his *Sketches Relative to the History and Theory, but more especially to the Practice of Dancing*.



The accumulation of knowledge and experience, gained over many years of practical teaching, qualified him, as he himself said, 'to throw out some useful hints relative to the art in question.' *The Sketches* have a significant place in the story of dancing in Scotland because they offer a fascinating insight into the thoughts and aspirations of an 18th century dancing master, as well as providing the reader with the opportunity to reflect on the ways in

which the dancing of that century has fashioned and influenced the Scottish dance traditions which have continued through to the present century.

Peacock's Philosophy of Dance

The Introduction to the *Sketches* begins as follows: 'There is not a more apparent principle of virtue in Man than his desire to appear agreeable to his fellow creatures.' The succeeding *Sketches* (his name for chapters) reinforce his view that learning to dance was an essential element in the forming of this agreeable appearance. His principal aim as a teacher of dancing was to develop in his pupils an ability to move with dignified and confident elegance. He considered this to be an asset not just in the ballroom, but in life generally. 'The graceful and elegant ease which it [dancing] gives to the generality of those who practise it with attention, is apparent to every one of true discernment', he says.

Minuets and Country Dances

In view of Francis Peacock's thoughts on the purpose of dance, it is not surprising that his most favoured dance was the minuet, which, he claims, was 'a dance essentially necessary' for his pupils to learn. The minuet required from its performers a poised and elegant deportment and a graceful management of the head, arms and hands. Although he continued to include them in his teaching repertoire, the dancing master has to acknowledge the diminishing popularity of the minuets in the ballroom, a circumstance he regrets. Its technical demands on the dancers probably help to explain its decline, but, additionally, it was also having to give way to the increasingly popular country dance.

The impression gained from the *Sketches* is that Francis Peacock was not as favourably inclined to the country dances as he was to the minuets. However, as a professional teacher of social dancing, he could not afford to neglect them and there is confirmation that he did include them in his teaching. Alexander Jaffray of Kingswells, a pupil at the Peacock dancing school, recorded his impressions of his experiences there in his *Recollections 1745 - 1800*. He did not share his master's enthusiasm for the minuet and the only pleasure he derived from his attendance at the school was from the country dances, 'which were practised once a week'. Alexander Jaffray left the school after three

months but was gracious enough to describe his dancing teacher as a 'really scientific professor... an excellent master, but stern and severe when a dull pupil came under his hands'.



Illustration from *The Minuet of 1735*

The Highland Reels

Sketch V of Francis Peacock's book has a special significance for anyone interested in the historical development of traditional dance in Scotland as it is devoted entirely to the Highland Reels or, as the author refers to them, 'the national dances of the Scotch', and provides the first recorded descriptions of Scottish dance steps. In the Reels, danced by three or four dancers, the reel figure is alternated with solo stepping and accompanied by a medley of reel and strathspey music, ie the *Threesome* and *Foursome Reels*. Peacock explains that he learned the Reels by observation of the Highland students attending Aberdeen University. He identifies ten Reel steps, names them (in anglicised Gaelic) and describes each one of them in detail, beginning with the *Kemshoole* (*Ceumshuibhail*) or forward step. As the name for the strathspey travelling step, 'kemshoole' was still in common use amongst teachers and dancers in Scotland in the early years of the 20th century. Having defined their basic choreography, Francis Peacock invites dancers to 'change, divide, add to, or invert, the different steps described, in whatever way you think best adapted to the tune, or most pleasing to yourself'. →

In my opinion

by Iain Boyd



Iain Boyd, well-known New Zealand dance deviser, gives his opinion on three common issues: formations which are not described in *The Manual*; how to get to the bottom; and the thorny question of all those 13,000 dances!

Expansion of 'The Manual'

Modern Scottish country dancing is a living and developing tradition. Many members of the Society have created new formations and devised new dances – mainly based on the steps, formations and dances recorded and taught by the Society. I would like to see the Society do more to acknowledge this development and, at least, to record the new formations in *The Manual*. At present it only includes instructions for formations included in RSCDS dances. Formations such as the *Philabeg*, *Chain Progression* and the *Espagnole* are not included.

Other formations have been classified only on the basis of their publication by the Society. An unfortunate recent example is the reels in *Hall Change* (where two dancers follow each other closely and change places at the ends of the reel). The compilers of *The Manual* have described these reels as being 'in tandem' without taking into consideration existing non-Society dances where the following dancers do not change places. These reels were already known to many as 'tandem reels'. The publication of *Eileen Watt's Reel in Issue 1* caused sufficient confusion that the formation needed to be described in detail.

Three-couple progression

In Section 3.1.3 *The Manual* states:

"In dances requiring three couples, the top couple progress one place at a time

and finish in third place having completed the dance twice . . . Having finished in third place, the dancing couple then step down to fourth place."

Unfortunately, nothing is said about how and when 1st and 4th couples should change places. I have noted that dancers will often 'scuttle' directly to the bottom after finishing their second time through. In my opinion, moving to the bottom at that point is necessary only occasionally, while stepping to the bottom on bars 1-2, although often necessary, is not always tidy.

I would like to suggest the following method of getting to the bottom. After finishing in third place, 1st and 4th couples stand for two bars then 1st couple step down along the side-lines while 4th couple step in and up. By waiting for two bars there is a wonderful moment of covering (in such dances as *The Montgomerie's Rant*) as 1st and 4th couples change places and second couple move up. It is also easier as 1st couple are able to steady themselves before moving. However, it does require discipline.

Additionally, 4th couple must step well in as they move up so that 1st couple are not forced to step backwards as they step down – not part of the movement. Too often, 4th couple give no consideration to the 1st couple.

This method, however, is not going to work in every dance. It will not work in *Maxwell's Rant* where 4th couple are

required in the reels of three nor in *The Sailor* where 4th couple are required for the 'balance in line' movement.

In the past, we finished reels of three with corners, as in *The Duke of Perth*, by crossing down to 4th place giving left hands while 4th couple danced up to 3rd place. It would be nice if this method of finishing was again acceptable. The movement flows and there is no need to change from one step to another.

Collecting Modern Dances

DanceData (Alan Paterson's computer index) lists over 13,000 dances – a little over 600 having been published by the Society. Many of these dances have not been published while many published dances are now out of print and many early devisers gone from the SCD scene.

The Society has asked devisers to deposit copies of their dances in its archives. However, the Society should be actively collecting modern dances before too many devisers die and their dances are lost forever. I believe the Society should also be collecting photographs of and biographical material about the devisers along with information about the people, places and events celebrated by the dances. Once obtained, this material must not be allowed to languish in the Society's archives. It must be readily accessible to members. At the very least, the sources of dances and publications could be listed on the Society's website to make it easier for dancers and teachers to obtain copies for themselves.

Francis Peacock (continued)

A 'Useful' Citizen

At the time of Mr Peacock's death, the *Aberdeen Journal* recorded its admiration for the significant contribution he had made to the life of Aberdeen generally, as well as for his 60 years of successful teaching. Soon after his arrival in the town, he was one of the founding members of the Aberdeen Musical Society, actively participating in its activities until the end of his life. At the Society's regular concerts, arranged to raise funds for local charities, if not conducting the orchestra, he was one of its violinists. As an accomplished amateur musician, he was a composer as well as a performer. To celebrate the

coronation of King George III and Queen Charlotte on Tuesday, 22nd September 1761, he composed a special anthem, which, accompanied by much civic ceremonial, was performed for the first time in Marischal College hall. In August of the following year, he published his *Collection of Fifty Favourite Scotch Tunes*, dedicated to the Earl of Errol and containing his own arrangements of the melodies.

Also well recorded is Francis Peacock's altruism. He gifted the proceeds from the *Sketches* to the recently founded 'Lunatic Hospital' and his will of September 1803 donated funds to the Hospital, Infirmary and several other charities. No doubt echoing the sentiments of many of Aberdeen's residents, the Aberdeen

Journal's judgement of Francis Peacock's virtues, accomplishments and achievements was that he was 'a useful citizen and a good man'.

Too great avidity!

An appropriate conclusion to Part 1 of this article is provided by Francis Peacock himself. In drawing his treatise on dancing to a close, he wrote: 'Although I may have experienced some amusement in writing these pages, yet I believe that our most favourite amusements are apt to pall upon the senses, if we pursue them with too great avidity. That I may not, therefore, intrude farther on the patience of the reader, I trust that I may now be permitted, respectfully – to withdraw.' Salutory advice for us all!

Aberdeen AGM 2006



The Society



Winter School 2007



on Camera



Aberdeen November 06

The AGM and Conference Weekend is the major event in the RSCDS calendar. Finding a venue large enough to accommodate us – and at a reasonable price – has meant that Aberdeen and Perth have shared the task over the past few years. Andrew Kelleff reports on the AGM itself while Peter Wright describes the success of the new Members' Forum. Lynn Wood gives us a perspective from the point of view of the host branch.

The Annual General Meeting

The meeting itself

With so much else happening during the conference weekend, it is important not to overlook the AGM itself. The AGM is an essential part of how the Society is run. The Chairman, the other Officers and the Management Board derive their authority from the AGM. So the 200 + delegates representing Branches from around the world and 150 observers who gathered at the Beach Ballroom on a remarkably fine November Saturday all had key roles to play in ensuring the proper governance of the Society. The meeting opened in the traditional manner with our President, The Earl of Mansfield, presenting Scrolls of Honour to a handful of members who had served the RSCDS and Scottish dancing with considerable distinction over many years. Sadly, Lord Mansfield had to conduct proceedings this year from a wheelchair, but this did not prevent him from displaying his customary charm and control. Reports

from the Management Board and the Committees had been available in advance. They highlighted the extent of the Society's activities and the hard work of many members that ensures the RSCDS continues to prosper. In her report, Elspeth Gray, Society Secretary, paid tribute to the volunteers who had offered help in what had been a difficult year for HQ because of staff turnover.

Change of Chairman

Stewart Adam stepped down as Chairman after two years at the helm, during which time his enthusiasm and his determination to remind us all that SCD is fun, never flagged. Irene Bennett stepped up from Chairman Elect to take his place, and Alex Gray was elected as the new Chairman Elect. There were also elections to the Management Board and to the Committees. The meeting approved the revised Constitution and Rules that the Board had been working

on for some time, including a period of consultation with Branches. The revision paved the way in due course for the Society to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation in order to obtain the benefits of limited liability. It also reduced the size of the Board and tidied up some of the arrangements regarding the Committees. Aberdeen and London Branches proposed amendments to a few of the clauses in the revised Constitution which were accepted after some fairly fierce debate.

Resolved to meet some other day

And that was it for another year. Delegates could return to their Branches and assure fellow members that all was in order, so that they could concentrate on what the Society does best: teaching people to dance and showing them how to enjoy their skills on the dance floor.

Andrew Kelleff, London Branch

The AGM Members Forum

A different style of forum

Discussion forums at past AGM weekends had taken the format of one large group with a roving microphone and one person speaking at a time – intimidating for many. Bristol Branch ran this members' forum with a system of small groups and a final plenary session.

Four topics

The session was organised with tables seating about ten, and a list of four topics for deliberation. Here are the topics, sent in by members:

- A The image and growth of the Society
- B The future role of the Society
- C Publishing and Sales
- D Affiliated groups

Generally positive feedback

Around 130 members were present, grouped around 13 tables. Here are some of the positive feedback comments written down by the groups. Judging from the feedback, this new system seems to have worked: *"an excellent idea and way of making constructive discussion; we could have talked longer; the group was not dominated by any one person; all felt comfortable and*

encouraged to 'air their views'". We had constructive comments on how to improve it for next year. The session sounded happy and 'buzzed' with an enthusiastic chatter. Everyone agreed that the discussion results needed to be published for all to read. We felt that too many of the items submitted came from either branches or Management Board or Committee members, and few from the general membership. On page 5 of this issue, all members are encouraged to send in ideas for this year's weekend.

Summary of the reports

Here is a condensed summary of the reports.

A: The image and growth of the Society

Members felt there was too much emphasis on teachers, teaching, and perfection and that we need to show enjoyment in our own dancing and be much more welcoming to new dancers, relaxing dress codes and emphasising the social aspects. We should use professional publicity.

B: The future role of the Society

We need to think hard about our actual

name, both the 'Royal' bit and the rest. We need paid professionals at the core. We need to encourage a view of our dancing as relaxed and social, not technical; teachers need to lead their classes in social dancing; new dancers worried about 'correctness' and 'knowledge of dances' will be put off. New dancers are different from those of thirty years ago.

C: Publishing and sales

The Society should be a central authority, holding ideas together, being a reference and authorising body. It should provide a wider range of sales and services to members.

D: Affiliated groups

Affiliated Groups must stay as such because of our 'rules'. There did not seem to be much gained from the subscription these groups pay. There was an idea that the affiliated groups should come under the umbrella of branches, but no ideas of subsequent benefits other than perhaps membership. It was noted that in some areas (eg New Zealand) groups come under the umbrella of the branch.

Peter Wright, Bristol Branch

Behind the scenes at the AGM

Fun and games

How would your branch fancy hosting the AGM and Conference Weekend? I feel that I could write a book about the 'fun and games' we had in preparation for last year's AGM in Aberdeen. Despite HQ having an AGM Working Group (AGMWG!), much of the donkey work had to be done by the local Branch. Paul Anderson chaired the group from the beginning, but then handed over the reins to myself, and with my hard-working team of Bob Drummond, Sheila Fyfe, Jane Leys and Jean Martin, we attempted to ensure that the three-day event ran smoothly from Friday lunchtime to Sunday afternoon – and I think it did!



The floor!

Moments to remember were 'the floor'. We knew that the Leisure Centre was having a new floor fitted in the Sports Hall, but they couldn't give us a date. We finally got written confirmation that the floor would be fitted either before or after our event, not during! As it was a new floor, we were told that only soft shoes would be allowed – outside shoes *without* heels would be accepted. However, on a visit to plan out the decoration for the band platform, a duty manager authoritatively advised that only soft shoes, and no outside shoes *of any sort*, would be allowed on the floor. This prompted a flurry of e-mails between myself and the bands. George Meikle suggested a portaloo on the stage for band members, and Frank Thomson recommended slippers for all the band members. I was thinking tartan slippers, but Frank had bright orange Garfield ones in mind! However, it was then clarified to us again that it was ladies heeled shoes, and men's shoes with hard heels, that would not be allowed!

With over 80 notices (printed, hand-written, and a bit of both) around the venue and over 165 steward duties we felt that all our visitors (and locals) should know where to go. However, some were asked questions which were more difficult like: "What's the phone number of a local taxi firm?" (fairly easy one); "Where on the West coast would I find a class on a Monday evening?" (not so simple).

Plastic bags

The cloakroom was a great success – the Beach Ballroom thought of the idea, and loved it as no staff were needed; we loved it because there were no problems in getting coats (apart from those who couldn't remember on which lettered rail they had left it) and the shoe bags worked brilliantly (as they did last time!). I had left finding the bags to rather late in the day, but a 'contact' for a local high street store quickly sealed a deal, and they have now gone for recycling.



The Poles, The Poles! Another inspiration from the AGM sub-committee (Sheila Fyfe's) was the 'set complete' markers. In recent years it has never been clear when sets were complete. The MCs had never been able to see that far anyway, so the yellow cards (is Sheila an SNP supporter in disguise?) on poles were magnificent and very effective. Even the MCs who wouldn't wear their glasses could easily see which sets were ready and could count to eight!

Those cribs!

I'm happy to report that the crib sheet problem was nothing to do with us. Apparently, the printer had had a fault in the original run, and then had another in the replacements. They had put the wrong covers on them, so Friday's cover was on the front of Saturday's dances! Fortunately, one of our teachers noticed that the dance she had practised at her class the previous evening was missing, and the mistake was spotted – and that's why the replacements didn't have covers

Lost – one earring!

Lost and found (or not found yet): 2 ladies handbags, a tie, a pair of glasses, a headband, shoe bag and an earring. We are still in possession of the tie, headband, shoe bag and earring.

In summary, a lot of hard work, but immensely satisfying to see everyone enjoying themselves and to receive thanks from just about everyone who attended. I'm proud of my team, the committee for their support, members of other Branches who helped and particularly the Branch for 'doing us proud'. Well done Aberdeen!

Lynn Wood, Aberdeen Branch

Election results

Chairman Elect

Alex Gray 2 years
then 2 as Chairman

Management Board

Wilma Brown 3 years
Jimmie Hill 3 years
Pat Houghton 3 years
Neil Copland 3 years
Craig Houston 3 years
Alan Carr 3 years
Pia Walker 2 years
William Whyte 1 year

Committees

Education and Training

Louise Fordyce 3 years
Bruce Frazer 3 years
Deb Lees 3 years

GP and Finance

Nigel Nicholson 3 years

Membership Services

Jean Martin 3 years
Luke Brady 3 years

Board and Committees

Management Board

Chairman
Irene Bennett
Chairman Elect
Alex Gray
Convenors
David Normand-Harris
Lawrence Boyd
Jim Healy

Members

Roy Bain
Ruth Beattie
Malcolm Brown
Wilma Brown
Alan Carr
Neil Copland
Allana Creighton
Helen Frame
Jimmie Hill
Pat Houghton
Craig Houston
Marjorie Hume
Lorna Ogilvie
Jeff Robertson
Roz Scott-Huxley
Pia Walker
William Whyte

General Purposes and Finance Committee

Convenor
Lawrence Boyd
Chairman
Irene Bennett
Chairman Elect
Alex Gray

Members

George Flett
Roderick McLachlan
Nigel Nicholson
Ross Robertson

Education & Training Committee

Convenor
David Normand-Harris
Chairman
Irene Bennett
Chairman Elect
Alex Gray
Schools Director
John Wilkinson
Youth Director
Jayne Brown

Members

Louise Fordyce
Bruce Frazer
Janet Johnston
Deb Lees
Johan MacLean
David Queen
Di Rooney
Helen Russell
Anne Taylor

Membership Services Committee

Convenor
Jim Healy
Chairman
Irene Bennett
Chairman Elect
Alex Gray
Archivist
Marilyn Healy
Music Director
Mo Rutherford

Members

Luke Brady
Rhona Chalmers
Pam Gillies
Catherine Livsey
Jean Martin
George Meikle

The new official RSCDS Tartan

The RSCDS has now got its own official tartan. Its creator, David Normand-Harris, convenor of E & T, gives the background to its design and development.

New tartans

New tartans are designed every day. There are tartans for the Royal British Legion, Scottish Scouts, the Royal Air Force Leuchars, the Scottish Rugby Union and many illustrious organisations in Scotland and overseas. It always puzzled me that the RSCDS did not have its own tartan, especially when there is a tartan for the FBI (the US Federal Bureau of Investigation), as well as the Salvation Army (Hunting and Dress versions) and even *Mother's Pride* – taken from the checked paper used to wrap the loaves!

The Strathspey tartan

Before the editor is inundated with claims that the Society does have its own tartan – *Strathspey* – it must be pointed out that the *Strathspey* tartan really has nothing to do with the RSCDS other than the happy co-incidence that Scottish country dancing has dances in a tempo named 'strathspey'. In fact, the *Strathspey* tartan is registered as a district tartan for the area around the River Spey, which was the home of Clan Grant, and the design was taken from the back of a waistcoat supposedly worn by an officer in the Strathspey Fencibles Regiment, which was raised by General James Grant of Ballindalloch (1793-1799). It was originally a military tartan, one of the many based on the *Black Watch*, the Government tartan worn by the Royal Highland Regiment.

Our own tartan

In 1984, the Society did, indeed, 'adopt' the *Strathspey* tartan, favouring the dress version. It seemed to me that, despite the name, this was not the most appropriate tartan for the Society. Consequently, in 2005 I proposed to the Membership Services Committee that the RSCDS should have its own tartan, for which it would not need to pay any fees other than for initial registration with the Scottish Tartans Authority, and I volunteered to prepare some designs.

Avoiding Brigadoon!

Designing a tartan is more challenging than may at first appear. There are now thousands of designs on the market, but, despite

the fact that possible permutations are infinite, it is not so easy to produce patterns which are distinctive yet tasteful. Many of the more recent designs have sought to be distinctive by using colours such as violet and azure (e.g. *Spirit of Scotland*, *Scotia*, and *Pride of Scotland*), but the result is often reminiscent of designs for costumes for *Brigadoon*.

Where to start

Originally, tartans were in no way 'representative' – they were woven with wool in colours of the most readily available dyes.

However, I decided that a good approach might be to produce designs which had some significance, and my first notion was to combine existing tartans of the two founders of the RSCDS: using the sett (thread-count) of one and the colours of the other. Unfortunately, while the *Stewart of Appin* tartan was ideal to represent Mrs Stewart of Fasnacloich, there was no Milligan tartan. Even though there were Milligans in Scotland in the fourteenth century in Galloway, there is no clan of which Milligan is listed as even a sept, though this is not entirely surprising, since tartan is the 'highland' textile.

There is a district tartan for Galloway, which to my mind is less than appealing. It was designed in 1950 by John Hannay, a chiropodist living in London. Hannay described his design as being 'everyday' in four shades of green with yellow and red stripes, but the only version nowadays produced is in two shades of green and the result is unremarkable, to say the least.

The Glasgow connection

Therefore, given her love for the city of Glasgow, I thought it might work to have Miss Milligan represented by the generic Glasgow tartan, which is not particularly complex in sett but does have rather more attractive colours than the Galloway. It has relatively ancient lineage, having been included in the 1819 pattern-book of *Wilson's of Bannockburn*. Alas, neither 'combined' version, applying the colours of the *Glasgow* tartan to the sett of the *Stewart of Appin* or vice versa, produced an especially attractive tartan.



Tartan designer David Normand-Harris (right) with Winter School Director, Helen Russell, and Robert H. Mackay

Royal and Scottish

My next idea was to take the 'Royal' and 'Scottish' elements from the Society's name and blend those into a design. These gave me four main colours: blue and white from the Saltire and red and gold from the Scottish Royal Standard. There is no colour to represent 'dance' but in some of the designs I used thread-counts of nineteen and twenty-three to convey the date of the founding of the Society.



Current Chairwoman, Irene Bennett, wearing her chain of office, set off against her RSCDS tartan waistcoat.



RSCDS Music Director, Mo Rutherford, in designer ballgown in the new RSCDS tartan.

12 designs submitted

Eventually I submitted twelve designs to the Membership Services Committee, including the two variants of *Glasgow* and *Stewart of Appin* and three which were non-representative in that there was no attempt to signify anything other than the look of a traditional tartan. From those twelve, two were selected by the Committee and referred to the Management Board. The final choice was one of the 'Royal' and 'Scottish' designs.

Handsome

Tartan is notoriously difficult to reproduce accurately in print, and even on the most sophisticated printers some of the colours do not appear as 'true' and rich as they are in the dyed fabric. Nor is it easy to see on paper the subtle variations: there are two blues and black in the chosen design, which, when interwoven, produce five different shades of blue. Fortunately, when it came to having the tartan woven, Blair Macnaughton of the House of Edgar was most helpful in recommending the dye-colours which best matched my original concept, and Kirsty Anderson, his chief designer, pronounced that the result is a 'handsome' tartan, which will look equally good as a kilt, skirt, or waistcoat or on any number of different accessories.

Needless to say, I was the first to have a kilt made in the new tartan, and to quote the Society's immediate past chairman, Stewart Adam: "If it looks good on you, David, it will look good on anyone!"



To be seen in Tesco's in Perth – every lady's must-have accessory – RSCDS tartan bag with all the trimmings!

A branch and a club

The International Branch

The International Branch is a new branch, started in 2004. It now has 150 members spread over 30 countries, including India, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Korea, Latvia, Cyprus, Estonia to mention but a few that are not usually thought of in SCD-terms. The rest of Europe, including the UK, as well as the USA and Australasia are also well represented. Many of our members transferred from being HQ members although some have come from other branches due to having to move location, for example students graduating and moving away, and others are members as they are frequently on the move because of their jobs and still want to keep in touch with the RSCDS. Our branch communication systems are set up to cater for members who are located over a wide area – ideal for the dancer on the move!

The committee is a little bit unusual, as it is a 'virtual' committee – with members living in Holland (Margaret Lambourne, Chairman), Austria/England (Susi Mayr), France/Scotland (William Whyte), Norway (Johan Berg), Luxembourg (Stephanie Robertson) and Scotland (Bernie Hewitt and Pia Walker). Meetings are held mostly by e-mail, and whenever committee members find themselves near each other – such as Summer School, Winter School, Gatwick and Edinburgh Airports and various dances around the world. Our AGM is also held on-line over a 24-hour period, with plenty of time beforehand for members without e-mail to be able to post their contributions to the committee.

The members likewise do not attend IB-classes, but have their own groups and classes the world over. The Branch has many excellent teachers and musicians as members, and is prepared to help establish connections between groups, and to help and support new groups with practical advice. The IB communicates with its members by e-mail, post and the occasional telephone conversation. We all try to meet socially with other members whenever and wherever it is possible, either at workshops in various countries, at Summer and Winter School or for example in a lay-by in Australia when a committee member was on holiday there.

We publish a newsletter and whenever information is sent out by the Society, this is forwarded to members. For those members who do not communicate easily in English, we translate all IB

communications into their own language – at the moment Japanese and French.

We are now in the process of organising our first event – a Weekend school in one of the new countries to join the RSCDS via the International Branch – Estonia, where a group was started by one person who was, as she says, bitten by the ceilidh bug on visits to Glasgow, and then wanted to explore SCD more fully. The weekend school will run from the 28 – 30 September 2007 with an option of sightseeing from the 25th. The teachers and musicians are all (with one exception) members of the IB and are well known in dance circles worldwide. 94 people from 16 countries have signed up at the time of writing, so it promises to be a fantastic event.

Our members are a wonderful group of people, with a true family spirit. Our success as a branch is thanks to these members – they are the driving force of the branch – they are dedicated, loyal country dancers who ensure that our style of dance and the RSCDS name is known throughout the world.

Pia Walker, Fife

The Argyll Scottish Dancing Group

Until the year 2000 The Argyll Scottish Dancing Group had never visited Argyll. In the early 1950s a night school class held in the Argyle Street School, Kings Cross, London led to the foundation of the Argyll Scottish Dancing Group.

The class moved around but the Argylls concentrated their activities on weekend schools. Initially these had been get-togethers at Holiday Fellowship houses, where the accent was on country rambles during the day with some Scottish country dancing in the evening. Later, classes were organised to prepare dancers for the evening programme. By the 1970s two classes were being run to accommodate experienced dancers and beginners.

When the weekends moved to Easthampstead Park in Berkshire their character began to change. The accent at the classes was targeted on dancing rather than on dances; live music replaced tapes and records at all the classes and bands were introduced to play for at least one of the evening dances.

During the last decade or so, mindful of the activities of London and the Borders Branch, and the affiliated groups in the



Dancing at the Argyll's weekend at Dillington

area, not wishing to clash with anyone, the Argylls sought to complement the existing SCD scene. The Group tried to introduce teachers and musicians who were not already well known in the South of England (Robert Mackay made his first appearance outside Scotland at an Argyll weekend). Opportunity has also been offered for dance devisors, including John Drewry and Roy Goldring, to teach in the South for the first time. Saturday afternoon workshops provided a platform for new talent, playing and teaching.

In the 1990s, because of increased costs at Easthampstead, a Day School was introduced to replace the May weekend. It now has 3 classes, including, most importantly, a beginners class, all with live music.

The October weekend moved from Easthampstead, first to Maryland College in Bedfordshire, and is now held at Dillington House in Somerset. The Argylls were forced by the available accommodation to have only one class; the Saturday afternoon workshop had developed into an opportunity to attempt other forms of dance. Argyll participants have experienced circle dancing, Appalachian step dancing, quadrilles, Morris dancing, reeling, Hungarian dancing to name but a few. A possible future development is a musicians' section of the weekend.

To celebrate the year 2000 the Committee planned a weekend in Argyll: what a wonderful welcome 24 Argylls had from the dancers in Argyll: it was an unforgettable visit. Two years later 35 Argylls spent a weekend in Arran, again with support from the local dancers. A weekend in Brighton, attending a Brighton Branch ball was enjoyed by a small group, and there will be an Argyll presence at the European City of Culture Ball in Liverpool next year.

The Argylls stress the social purpose of Scottish Country dancing and welcome newcomers – if you have attended an Argyll event, you are an Argyll – and they draw support from a wide area. The future lies in continuing to be able to attract dancers to weekends and day schools with the special character of the Argylls.

Rachel Wilton, London

Dancing matters

Technique doctor

In her second article, Brenda Burnell shares her views on teaching

Dancing in Threes

With beginners and children we spend much time training them to dance in musical 8s, 4s and 2s. When they have mastered this we confront them with dancing phrases of 3, 3 and 2! This is not easy unless you count. Weeks of listening to the music, suddenly go out the window!

The simplest of these unusual phrases is 'down the middle for 3, up for 3, and cast'. Suddenly, the couple is changing direction on a different foot. It is easier for the man to come up on the left foot but the woman has the more awkward turn. A lapse in concentration and the first couple dance down the middle and turn on 4 – doing exactly what the music tells them to do. Then we have 'first couple cross and cast in 3, cross again in 3, leaving 2 to come up to corners'. Here first couple need to cross on bar 4 to phrase the formation correctly. On bar 4 dancers are usually waiting for the end of the musical phrase and not making a strong movement across the dance.

It is similar in the rondel – the strong movement comes on bar 4 when the men make their arch to cross over.

We practise these formations and our classes dance them well. Then at the next Branch dance, they are dancing in 4s and are late at the end of the phrase.

As teachers we prompt dancers in class to dance these more awkward phrases. We even create our own rhythmical jingles. It is interesting when teaching children how they take on board these jingles and it becomes more automatic with them providing they do as the words say and not revert to listening to the music.

Perhaps the most difficult thing I have encountered is when this unusual phrasing is reversed. First couple do something on bars 1 and 2 followed by a 6 bar reel of 3 on the sides. Sounds simple!

But I really have to concentrate very hard to prompt the 'half-way' in the reel at the end of bar 5.

$$8 = 4 + 4 = 3 + 3 + 2 = 6 + 2 = 2 + 6!$$

How do you do the Rondel?

Brenda mentioned The Rondel in her article. Here is the description from The Manual.

The Rondel

This formation is a method of progression in strathspey time. It is danced by two couples. It begins in the middle of the set, 1st couple facing down and 2nd couple facing up, nearer hands joined.

Steps 8 travelling steps

No of bars 8

Bars

- 1 1st couple dance down through the arch made by 2nd couple who dance up.
- 2 Each man guides his partner across in front of him and all curve towards the opposite side.
- 3 Both women dance to meet each other and join nearer hands on the man's side as the men do the same on the woman's side. They face their partner across the set.
- 4 All cross to their own side. The women, retaining nearer hands, dance through the arch made by the men.
- 5 2nd couple guide 1st couple across in front of them. 1st couple dance up and 2nd couple dance down.
- 6 Both couples curve in to meet partners, 1st couple facing down and 2nd couple facing up, with nearer hands joined.
- 7 1st couple dance down through the arch made by 2nd couple who dance up.
- 8 Both couples dance out to own sides, having changed places.

What's new?

Jim Healy of Membership Services writes about what is new on the publishing front.

3 Foss Dances

With this issue you should have received a leaflet of three popular dances by Hugh Foss. They are:

Polharrow Burn
Fugal Fergus and
John MacAlpin.

They are three of Hugh Foss's best dances and ones which show his particular choreographic talents.

New CDs

New recordings of Books 13 and 34 have been recorded by Neil Barron and Ian Muir respectively and they will be available for Summer School. The project to produce CDs for all of our dances is on schedule and recent issues have included Book 14 (James Coutts), Book 27 (Frank Thomson) and Book 35 (Neil Copland).

Website catalogue

The website is being extensively revamped and a more accessible catalogue of items available in the RSCDS shop will be unveiled shortly.

Revised Terminology

The revised Standard Terminology was available for the Conference Weekend last November. The seventy-seven dances in the two volumes of Miss Milligans Miscellanies are currently being revised in line with the Standard Terminology by experienced dancers and teachers around the world and will be available in a single volume for Summer School. A few minor adjustments to the Standard Terminology document have been identified in this process. Full details will be in the next issue of the

magazine. The revision of Book 21 is also nearing completion.

The MacNab Dances

It is planned that the dances from the MacNab books will also be re-issued in a single volume in time for Summer School. In this connection, Angus Henry has produced a version of all the MacNab dances in detailed 'Pilling-style' diagrams and the Society has published these in a small booklet.

All Set

The Society is also stocking a CD-ROM, All Set, containing instructions for a number of popular dances. The PC format incorporates examples of the steps, moving diagrams of the dances and film of them being danced by a mixed ability team.

Who's who?

John Wilkinson

John learned to dance at primary school and in 1960 joined a class in his home village, Bankfoot in Perthshire. Two years later he joined the Gowrie Group in Perth where he met Ruby, later to be his wife. Ruby always maintains that she won John in a raffle!

John's work in the Civil Service took him to different parts of the UK: Whitehaven, Manchester, Glasgow and Stirling. He has been a member of more RSCDS Branches than many. In Manchester John danced in the demonstration team and it was there in 1970 that he took his preliminary certificate. A move to Glasgow in 1972 meant another demonstration team and that year he obtained his teaching certificate, going on to teach several classes for the Branch.

In Glasgow John served on the branch committee and was instrumental in organising the first Glasgow Govan Festival in 1977, (forerunner of the Spring Fling) a link with his work with the Glasgow University SCD club, which he taught for seven years. In Edinburgh John produced and directed the Festival Fringe show 'Strictly Scottish' for three years.

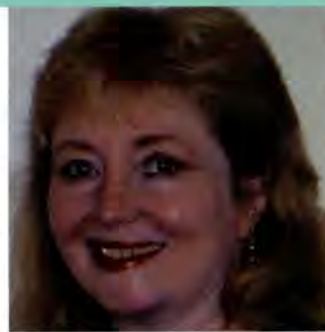
John's dancing and teaching has taken him all over the UK for day and weekend schools, to almost every country in Europe and to Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, America and Canada.

Since 1995 John has taught regularly at Summer School. He has been Depute Director three times. He was Director of Winter School in Pitlochry in 2005 and now is overall Director of Schools. His main responsibility is the organisation of Summer School. He plans to encourage younger dancers and first timers, as well as developing standards and maintaining the traditions and the all-important social aspects.



Helen Russell

Helen Russell was born in Lonmay, Aberdeenshire, growing up on a farm. By the time she left Aberdeen University where she studied Zoology, Helen had been taught Highland dancing by Bobby Watson and country dancing by both Lesley Martin and Tibbie Cramb. With that background, it was inevitable that Helen would go on to take her Teacher's Certificate.



Along with her husband, Ian, Helen worked and taught dancing in Australia for two years in the 1970s. After a short spell back in Aberdeen where Helen taught the University SCD class, the family moved to Yorkshire. There, as well as bringing up two daughters, Helen joined the Mathematics department of a large comprehensive school, and also taught for the York and North Humberside Branch.

After an absence of a number of years Helen returned to Summer School and soon joined the teaching staff. Professionally, she is involved in training teachers and she now employs those skills in tutoring candidate classes. Her favourite RSCDS job to date has been Director of Winter School, which was "hugely enjoyable".

Another charity, the Mathematics Association, had the benefit of Helen's committee skills both locally and nationally before she was persuaded that she should stand for an RSCDS Committee. She is currently Depute Convenor of Education & Training where her interest in the development of SCD teachers – bringing a greater awareness of music to all dancers and promotion of all forms of Scottish dance, especially Ladies Step dancing – is put to good use.

Helen considers that SCDers are amongst the most interesting and intelligent people you can hope to meet!

Re-printed

Book 2 (First edition, 1925)

Book 2 contained *Delvine Side* – the first dance in the books with an allemande. The allemande is described as follows:

"In some dances "Allemande" is danced for the poussette. In this movement partners take hands in a different fashion. The woman puts her right hand behind her back, and her left hand behind her partner; the man puts his left hand behind his back, taking his partner's left hand, and puts his right hand behind his partner, taking her right hand (both facing the same way, and both beginning with right foot), they take eight "Pas de Basque" steps to accomplish the poussette. (Fig E.)



Not how we do it today! Notice the eight-couple set!

Programmes

From Saitama to Somerset

Saitama Branch

This is the programme for Saitama's New Year Ball, January 2007.

The Happy Meeting, The Irish Rover, Jean Martin of Aberdeen, The Nurseryman, The Royal Deeside Railway, Ennismore Strathspey, Five Years On (devised by Peter and Pat Clark for Saitama's 5th Anniversary), Eileen Watt's Reel, The Frisky, Wisp of Thistle. The Black Mountain Reel, St Andrew's Fair, Cape Town Wedding, Mrs. Stewart's Jig, Shiftn' Bobbins, Miss Milligan's Strathspey, The Express, The Reel of the Royal Scots

Somerset Branch

This is Somerset's February 07 Dance programme.

The Machine Without Horses, The Reel of the Royal Scots, Cherrybank Gardens, Joie de Vivre, Eileen Watt's Reel, Harold's Strathspey, The Music Makars, Maxwells Rant, The Minister on the Loch, Airdrie Lassies, The Piper and the Penguin, Argyll Strathspey, Light and Airy, Portnacraig, Village Reel, Campbell's Frolic, The Inimitable Derek, Gang the Same Gate, Pelorus Jack, The Sailor.

Letters to the editor

Slow airs v. Strathspeys

Dear Editor

As a non-musician I must admit I don't know what distinguishes a 'genuine' strathspey from a 'slow air'. Could someone give a brief explanation, please? What concerns me more, however, is the tendency of some modern recordings to be rather too fast for comfortable dancing. It is perhaps not so bad for children, who can move quicker than adults, but for many older folk who are not very athletic, the enjoyment of the dance is spoiled, and any pretence at proper footwork falls by the wayside, as we struggle to keep up with the music. There may have been some reason in the days of 78s, with their limited available time (when you took a break in the middle of the *Eightsome* to flip the record and rewind the gramophone!), but I feel there is no excuse now for over-fast records. Maybe OK just to listen to, though not for dancing. How do we persuade the guilty bands to take this on board?

Chris Thornburn, Birmingham, UK

Dr Atholl Robertson

Dear Editor

I would like to make it clear that the photograph of Dr Robertson in the interview with Bill and myself, is a different Dr Robertson. Dr Atholl Robertson MC danced in Southsea before moving to Oban. He was a fluent Gaelic speaker and played both the pipes and the violin. I do not think he ever attended Summer School.

Hope Little, Castle Douglas

(Thanks to Hope for clarifying that, ed.)

Remembering dances

Dear Editor

Unfamiliar dances or those with more than five formations are often hard to recall when in free flight on the dance floor. Does any reader have a nifty memory system or mnemonics they would share – to help with instant mid-dance recall?

Chris Ingram, Tauranga, New Zealand

Original tunes

Dear Editor

In John Laurie's interesting article on Original Tunes in the last issue of the *Scottish Country Dancer* he states: "Finally, it is, I believe, wrong for a particular dance, to be stolen (if that's not too strong a word) and used for another dance as its original. This has happened with the original tune for my own dance Fraser's Favourite being chosen as the original tune for The Dunivard Reel on a recent non-Society recording".

As leader of the band in question which made the recording, I would like to point out that the specific tune used was not chosen by me, or any other member of the band. The tune played was the correct tune as chosen by the deviser of the dance, Jimmy Cosh. As the musician behind the society's "Originally Ours" project to put all the original tunes into one manageable book, I have always been a great believer that bands should, wherever possible, play the correct original tune for dances. As someone who has always tried to keep to this philosophy, it is indeed ironic that my recording should be the one criticised when we actually played the correct tune!

I was also interested that, in his opinion, an original tune should not be played as an alternative for other dances. I currently hold details of more than 14,500 in my dance database and if every one of those dances were to have a single unique set of tunes that would mean holding a stock of at least 58,000 plus tunes, assuming 4 tunes per set. I am sure everybody will agree that this is just not a feasible option. There are also some instances where the deviser of a dance has changed the recommended tune some time after it has been published.

John also asks whether or not the tunes for the two *Eileen Watt* dances in Issue 1 of the *Scottish Country Dancer* are available to musicians. I think they might be available from Headquarters, as I spent some considerable time sourcing one of the tunes in particular, and then getting both into print ready for musicians playing for classes at the 2006 Summer School.

I totally agree with John's comments in his paragraph "Well-known originals". Like John, it irritates me no end when bands play wrong tunes or bars for dances when they broadcast on the radio. I know of several occasions when *Black Mountain Reel* has been broadcast as a 4x32R

George Meikle, Lothian Scottish Dance Band

Bill and Hope Little

Dear Editor

Once again a most interesting edition of *Scottish Country Dancer* – especially for me the interview with Bill and Hope Little. Bill taught the class at Castle Douglas Branch which I attended from the day I was of age to join the RSCDS in 1952. He taught steps and formations in such detail. To this day I am most grateful for this and the encouragement he gave me in those early years which helped me get so much out of Scottish country dancing and the many memories I have.

Doris McCutcheon, Preston

Dunblane Conference

Dear Editor

I was delighted to read the article on the Dunblane Conference. It was refreshing and encouraging. It also coincides with some ideas that are circulating amongst some members in Northern Ireland. We have also been focussing on:

- Researching new target groups
- Getting more people dancing
- Getting dancing into primary schools

We would also like if people and funds were available to:

- Have more existing members available to work with primary schools
- Organise participative events for parents and children
- Engage with organisations working with young men
- Engage with organisations working in health promotion
- Have a region-wide marketing campaign

In September 06 we had rolled out a comprehensive advertising campaign for the Belfast Beginners class but it did not produce the target number of non-dancers expected. I am now carrying out some spot checks to find out why. The questions we would hope to answer are:

- Had non-dancers seen the ads
- How did they react to them
- If they saw the ads and joined the class what did they think of it
- If they saw the ads and did not join the beginners class what were the reasons

The results of this very limited research should give us useful information with which to move forward.

I am hoping that the RSCDS could be available to us for advice and guidance on our ideas and in helping us work with other groups in Scotland and the British Isles who are also working on attracting new dancers. We could share experiences. I am unsure where our initiative, if it were to get underway, for years 2007-2009 would fit into the RSCDS structure: I would appreciate guidance on this.

We have received encouragement from the Ulster Scots Heritage Council and the Ulster Scots Agency and they have already requested information about SCD for distribution to community groups. I would therefore like to move quite quickly on getting people together from across N. Ireland.

Linda Barnes, Belfast

Reviews



London Branch 75th Anniversary Book and CD

Various Bands LBCD0601
Available from bookstall@rscdslondon.org.uk

This book and CD are truly a celebration of London Branch. The dances reflect the history of the Branch and all have previously been published in *The Reel*. They date from 1956 to 2001. There are five reels, five strathspeys and three jigs of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty. There is something for every teacher to use, from an easy round the room dance (*The Merry Uplanders*) to an advanced class dance (*The Dancing Master*).

The music is played by musicians who have supported the branch in recent years, with seven different groups contributing. David Hall and his band are brilliant: his tunes and arrangements well-chosen, flowing effortlessly from one to the next. His way of building phrase on phrase, especially in his Strathspey *White Rose*, is uplifting, and any class must respond positively. *The First of September* was devised in celebration of David's wedding, and both the dance and the music reflect this happy occasion. *Nacton Hall* sets a fine pace and has a good definite beat for the pas de basque steps.

Frank Reid plays for *The Merry Uplanders* in a light and airy fashion. He follows it with a 4 x 32 strathspey, *Golden Harvest*, which would challenge an intermediate class.

Kafoozalum play for *The Jubilee Line*, a Drewry dance which I've no doubt will appear back in our programmes. The piano gives a good strong background beat to some really delightful harmonies from the fiddle and accordion as they play familiar jig tunes with flair. Their inspired choice of tunes and changes of key in *Miss McLean of Inverness* makes this dance a must in my next programme.

Green Ginger, Invercauld Scottish Dance Band and Judith Smith and Angela Young will bring a fresh experience to a class. They all play with one or two fiddles, piano, but no accordion. Dancie Reid would be nodding his head in approval at this comeback of solo fiddle playing! The fiddles harmonise beautifully, and the piano gives a definite beat, gently reminding the dancer to keep time.

It will be a rare treat for a class to dance to Piper Neil Esslemont as he plays for

the Drewry's *Argyll is My Name*. The class needs to be aware that after the chord the piper will play a four-bar introduction before the dance starts.

Rather oddly, the order of dances in the book and in the CD do not correspond, but that is a minor criticism. Do give this publication a try: the dances are well chosen and reflect the history of the London Branch; and the accompanying music will lift your heart and set those feet tapping. And getting seven bands for the price of one makes sense to this Aberdonian.

Isobel McMillan, Aberdeen Branch.

WE TWA

CD SPCD002
DVD SPDVD002

Available from musicScotland.com

'We Twa' is a CD of Scottish Country Dances written by Moira Stacey and Sue Petyt and performed by Kenny Thomson and the Wardlaw Scottish Country Dance Band. An accompanying DVD provides a demonstration of each dance.

The organisation of the project is excellent. The web pages are accessible and easy to use. http://www.streaming-pictures.co.uk/we_twa_cd.htm

The dances are available for download with clear, well-laid-out descriptions. The CD is a good mixture of jigs (6), reels (6) and strathspeys (5), seventeen dances in total. The DVD presents the dances in the order presented on the CD and each is demonstrated twice.

When I crit a CD, I do so as a dancer not a musician – knowing what I like and dislike when on the dance floor. Kenny Thomson's Band produces a smooth, gentle, harmonious rendering of both traditional and new tunes. From the information I have I do not know whether the dances or the tunes came first. I did note that *Horsewell's Jig* has the tune *The Horse's Well* and the strathspey *Corstorphine Road* has the tune of the same name. I particularly enjoyed *Miss Betty Ferguson*, the set of tunes chosen for *Heatherbrae* and Patrick's Stacey's tune in *Renaissance Jig*.

The DVD is a useful addition to the printed dances. While the dancing is not faultless to the trained eye, it serves its purpose well. It not only gives the

opportunity to check the details of the dance, it is particularly useful for checking the issues such as the linking of formations and indeed variations to familiar formations. My favourites are the *Renaissance Jig* and *Barton Barbecue*.

All in all, this is an excellent project.

Anne McArthur, Banffshire Branch.

Caledonian Muse

Terpsichore HBT005

Available from cduniverse.com

Terpsichore is a three piece band, based in Washington DC, and features Elke Baker (fiddle), Liz Donaldson (keyboard) and Ralph Gordon (bass). Caledonian Muse includes eleven full length dance recordings, one encore, and two waltzes. Their first recording of Scottish country dance music was in 1993; Caledonian Muse is their second, but in between, their interest beyond strict tempo dance music is presented in two other recordings of Scottish music.

The strathspeys vary from a strong *Monymusk*, to a lyrical *Bedrule*. The jigs and reels are lively, and all are played with infectious enthusiasm, but without losing the tempo. The selection of music is well-researched, with traditional tunes, music from Marshall, Gow (father and son) and Mackintosh and other composers past and present. I found the sleeve notes fascinating reading and sent me back to listen again to the tunes, particularly to the *Duke of Perth* encore. The recording for *Pelorus Jack* is a surprise. In America, it was six years between the arrival of the dance and publication of the music by the RSCDS. In the meantime, Terpsichore had selected and established another set of tunes! It is a great set of tunes, but may not be much used where the RSCDS recording is already well known. I was pleased that the full length tunes returned to the main tune at the finish.

The teamwork of the players would be expected of a line-up that has worked together for many years and makes it a recording for listening to as well as for dancing. Don't just store it in your club's collection; it is so much more than a CD for dancing.

Pat Davoll, Royal Tunbridge Wells

Overheard on the web

Chris Ronald of New York, our web-watcher, has been scanning the debates on the Strathspey List. This time it's attracting young people, Pilling, and *Mairi's Wedding*. Who said there's nothing new under the sun?

SCD and young people

Seldom does a week go by without some comment about whether we do enough to attract young people to RSCDS-style dancing. It only takes a comment like: "RSCDS-trained teachers over-emphasise the pointing of toes" and someone will say, "Aha! No wonder we're not attracting young people." But if the RSCDS style has more 'rules', does that mean it must be seen as 'stuffy'?

The majority clearly feel the answer is 'No'. A recent comment was: "I love the RSCDS style because there are standards. Circles will be balanced. We have been taught how to give weight, how to stop and start at the same time." And "if we allow the standards to slip, there will be, for me, far less enjoyment in the dancing. Elitist – yes – but that doesn't have to mean exclusionary, stuffy or mean-spirited."

As for young people, a key point seemed to be to make opportunities for them to realise that there are in fact other people of their age who love this dance form. The RSCDS is doing this, for example, with the Spring Fling. One writer mentioned several students he knew who had recently joined the local Branch, having met at the Spring Fling, and added, "They all believe in the RSCDS."

The other main point was: Always try to make young people welcome. One of the younger generation explained: "At a class, you're there to learn. At a dance, it's all about fun. If someone does something that is contrary to how you want to do a dance (whether it be a funky twiddle, a silly mistake or not knowing the dance at all) and your reaction gives out the message that this is wrong, unacceptable etc, then that is where the harm comes in and the stuffy image can come out. Likewise, I don't condone anti-social dancing in terms of lack of respect for other dancers, just like at any other social event."

Pawn to King Four!

In the discussion about rules, one dancer pointed out that Scottish country dances (at least modern ones) require a capacity for mental abstraction, and therefore they tend to appeal to

"computer people, academics and other kinds of 'pattern people'". He added: "The popularity of Pilling diagrams should tell you something." Someone observed that for many people the book of Pilling diagrams was their 'dancing bible.'

Then a teacher who had recently been in Japan told of how he stayed in a private home the first night. "Under the lamp beside the bed was a small green book. So, before turning out the light, I thought I'd see if it was a Christian Prayer book or a Buddhist equivalent. You guessed. It was Pilling."

This led to a discussion of the methods dancers use to figure out a new dance from the written instructions. While a few said they did it all in their heads, others said they used salt and pepper pots, dice, graph paper, bottle tops, Playmobil figures, Lego figures, pink and blue sweetener packets (in the US), chess pieces, and square and round beer mats on the lounge floor.

Mairi's Wedding

As one of the all-time most popular dances in the repertoire, *Mairi's Wedding* probably gets mentioned on the list more than any other dance. I'm sure everyone reading this column knows the dance, but here are a few things you might not know. First, the tune is also known as *The Lewis Bridal Song*, said to be a traditional tune from the Outer Hebrides (Isle of Lewis). The tune has Gaelic words, and the English words (Step we gaily, on we go, etc.) were written in 1935. We had a short debate on the list about whether to write 'Mhairi' or 'Mairi'. That question was settled by an authoritative explanation that 'Mairi' was correct Gaelic, and besides, the deviser (James Cosh) wrote 'Mairi', so that should decide it!

Being such a popular dance, *Mairi's Wedding* has been subject to the 'folk process' and is often danced in ways not foreseen by James Cosh when he wrote it in 1959. This, of course, has led to heated debates on the Strathspey List, especially about whether to pass right or left shoulder in the half diagonal reels of four, whether to twiddle, how to twiddle, etc. For the record, James Cosh said he wanted dancers to pass left shoulder. What do you prefer?

What's in a name?

The Dean Bridge of Edinburgh

Devised by Alec Hay of Auckland, and published in Book 23, *The Dean Bridge of Edinburgh* is a 32-bar strathspey.

The bridge itself, designed by the great Dumfriesshire engineer, Thomas Telford, was opened in 1831. It was built by Messrs Gibb & Son of Aberdeen.

The bridge spans the Dean Valley over the Water of Leith. It made communications much easier between the New Town and the area to the north of the city. It is 447 ft long, 39 ft broad and the roadway is 106 ft above the river.

A contemporary history of Edinburgh described the bridge as 'one of the most stately erections in the city.' As it is to this day!



The Revised DPA

As a result of a questionnaire to all branches, assessors and examiners, members of E & T have been working to revise the syllabus for the Dancing Proficiency Assessment (DPA) and have tried to incorporate many of the suggestions from the questionnaires. Helen Russell describes the aims of the examination and the syllabus.

The purpose of the DPA

The revised DPA is for all members of the RSCDS, who wish to improve the standard of their dancing and to have that achievement recognised.

Three levels

The aim is that assessment will now take place at three different levels, each progressively more demanding in terms of difficulty of dances, formations and standard of performance. Level 1, the introductory level, is accessible to competent adult dancers and will present a significant challenge. Level 2 will be more demanding and will be valuable preparation for dancers considering becoming teachers in the future. Level 3 will be more exacting than level 2 and will demand an even higher standard of dancing.

Level 1

A pilot course for level 1 will run at Summer School in St Andrews in 2007, for which candidates must attend a taught course of a minimum of five hours in preparation for the assessment. Assessment for level 1 will be based on:

1. Performance of three set dances
Lady Catherine Bruce's Reel | 32 (*Graded Book*)
The Sailor R 32 (*Book 24*)
Sugar Candie S 32 (*Book 26*)
2. Dancing two sets of 16 bars (or two sets of two 8 bar phrases), one in strathspey time and one in quick time to demonstrate formations or steps, taken from the list of required formations at level 1.

Further details will be posted on the website.

The Assessment Criteria

- At all levels, the following grades will be available:- Fail, Pass, Credit, Distinction.
- Candidates may re-sit at the same level as many times as they wish in order to improve their grade.

Required formations for level 1

(References to the Manual of Scottish Country Dancing are given in brackets).

- Advance and retire (4 bars)* (6.1.1)
- Allemande for two couples* (6.2.1)
- Back to back* (6.3)
- Balance in line* (6.4)
- Casting* (6.5)
- Grand chain for three couples* (6.6.2)
- Turn corners and partner* (6.7.1)
- Set to and turn corners*(6.7.2)
- Cross over* (6.8)
- Double triangles* (6.10)
- Figure of eight across the dance* (6.12.2)
- Four hands across and back* (6.13.1)
- Hands round and back (reel/jig time)* (6.14.1)
- Hands round and back (strathspey)* (6.15.1)
- Hands round (strathspey)* (6.15.2)
- Lead down the middle and up* (6.17.1)
- Petronella turn* (6.18)
- Poussette for two couples (reel/jig)* (6.19.1)
- Promenade for two couples* (6.21.1)
- Promenade for three couples* (6.21.2)
- Basic reel of four (across the dance)* (6.22.2)
- Basic reel of three (on the sidelines)* (6.23.1)
- Basic reel of three (across the dance)* (6.23.2)
- Reel of three (after set to and turn corners)* (6.23.7)
- Reels of three (after turn corners and partner)* (6.23.10)
- Basic rights and lefts for two couples* (6.24.1)
- Stepping up or down* (6.32)

Entry fees

The entry fee for each level is £15, with concessionary rates of £12 for those under 21 and for students in full time education up to the age of 25 at the time of sitting the assessment.

Scroll Awards

The 2006 AGM reported that a total of 10 Scrolls of Honour were to be awarded.

Pictured below (in order) are those recipients who received their Scrolls from The Earl of Mansfield at the AGM:

Dennis Tucker (Oxfordshire)
Marjorie MacRae (West Lothian)
Richard Turnbull (Richmond)
Pat Clark (York and North Humberside)
Stanley Wilkie (Edinburgh)

The following five recipients had received their Scrolls at local ceremonies:

Dr Heinz Duewell (Hunter Valley / Newcastle)
Avis Harrison (Leeds)
Ruth Jappy (Vancouver)
Antonio Moretti (Orlando)
Dorothy Wilson (New Zealand)



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. Include date, event and teachers. Issue 4 will cover day schools from October 07 – December 08. 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. For contact details, please refer to branch or club websites1.

Jun 07

- 8 – 10 Isle of Arran, Weekend
Alison Russell, Jimmie Hill
- 8 – 10 Chicago Branch, Weekend Workshop,
Beloit, Wisconsin
Elaine Brunken
- 9 Heather 'n' Thistle Workshop,
Columbus, Ohio
Marjorie McLaughlin
- 13 – 17 Scottish Dance Masters' Conference,
Sonoma State University, California
*Ruth Jappy, Ron Wallace, Muriel Johnstone,
Keith Smith*
- 30 Luxembourg, Day School
Avril and David Quarrie

July 07

- 4 – 8 Schluchtern, Germany, Summer Course
Malcolm Brown
- 6 – 14 Boston Branch, Pinewoods Camp
*Ron Wallace, David Queen, Norah Link,
Andrew Smith*
- 8 – 14 Thistle School, Banner Elk, North
Carolina
- 22 – RSCDS Summer School, St Andrews,
19/08 Fife**
- 25 – 29 Nova Scotia Branch, International
School, Halifax
*Mary Murray, Robert McOwen, Joe Wallin,
Duncan & Maggie Keppie, Merrill Heubach*
- 27 – 28 TAC AGM Weekend, Vancouver, British
Columbia
Eric Finley
- 29 – TAC Summer School, Shawnigan
05/08 Lake, British Columbia
Eric Finley, Ron Wallace, Jean Noble

Aug 07

- 18 – 25 Dance Week, Prague
Ron Wallace

Sept 07

- 8 New Haven Branch, Workshop,
Ivoryton, Connecticut
Robert McGowan, Kent Smith
- 14 – 16 Washington Branch Weekend Work-
shop, Timber Ridge Camp
*Fiona Carnie, Jean Martin, Geoffrey Selling,
Keith Smith*
- 15 Lochaber Branch, Day School,
Bill Zobel

- 15 Leeds Branch, Day School
- 22 NW Craven Branch Day School,
Whittington
- 28 – 30 International Branch, Weekend School,
Tallinn, Estonia
Patrick Chamoin, Susi Mayr, Jessie Stuart
- 28 – 30 Saskatchewan Branch, Fall Workshop,
Kenosee Lake
Keith and Deirdre Bark
- 29 Ayr Branch, Day School
Margie Stevenson
- 29 Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles Branch,
Day School, Galashiels
Helen Frame
- 30 – 7/10 32nd Australian Winter School,
Canberra
*Doug Mills, Majorie McLaughlin, Eric Finley,
Denice Walter, Sandra Carroll*

Oct 07

- 13 London Branch, Day School and
Musicians School
*Linda Gaul, Graham Donald, Irene Edgar,
Keith Smith*
- 13 – 14 Ottawa Valley Weekend, Almonte, Ont.
Ron Wallace, Fiona Miller, Keith Bark
- 18 – 21 Schluchtern, Germany, Autumn Course
Carola Fischer
- 19 – 22 New Zealand Branch, Weekend School,
Auckland
*David Ayre, Damon Collin, Janet Flavel, Doug
Mills, Duncan Smith, Andrew Timmons*
- 26 – 28 Rechberg International Weekend,
Schwabisch-Gmund, Germany
Eric Finley
- 27 Sheffield Branch, Day School

Nov 07

- 2 – 4 Kingston Ontario Branch Weekend
Workshop, Kingston, Ontario
- 2 – 4 San Francisco Branch, Weekend
Workshop, Asilomar, California
*Emily Evans, Fiona Grant, Eileen Hsu,
Duncan Mackenzie, Marjorie McLaughlin,
Shenna MacQueen*
- 9 – 11 Croydon Branch, Weekend School in
Eastbourne
Wendy Mumford
- 10 Toronto Branch, Workshop
Stewart Adam, Ruth Jappy, Keith Bark

- 17 Bristol Branch, Day School
David Hall
- 17 Norwich Branch, Day Workshop
Eric Finley, Jean Martin
- 21 – 25 Schluchtern, Germany, November
Course
Jenny Greene
- 24 – 25 Zurich SCD Club Weekend Course
Atsuko Clement

Dec 07

- 28 – 5/01 New Zealand Branch, Summer School,
Wellington
*Helen Frame, Noeline O'Connor, Doug Mills,
Romaine Butterfield, Pam Perkins, Yvonne
Gray, George Meikle*

Jan 08

- 12 – 13 Weekend School, Essen, Germany
Eric Finley

Feb 08

- 2 Carlisle and Border Branch Day School
Ann Dix
- 16 Oxfordshire Branch Day School, Oxford
*Helen Russell, Andrew McConnell, Dennis
Tucker*

21 – 26 RSCDS Winter School, Pitlochry

March 08

- 1 NW Craven Branch Day School,
Whittington
- 8 Somerset Branch Day School, Keinton
Mandeville, Somerset
David Hall, Neil Copland
- 14 – 15 Lorn (Argyll) Weekend, Oban
Janet Johnston

April 08

- 19 NW Craven Branch Day School, Ingleton

May 08

- 2 – 4 Toronto Branch, Youth Weekend East,
Peterborough, Ontario

July 08

- 20 – 17/08 RSCDS Summer School
St Andrews, Fife**

Sept 08

- 20 NW Craven Branch, Whittington

Clear out your attic!



Chance meeting

A chance meeting last summer between the editor and Marie Dillon, originally from Glasgow and now living in Ohio, meant that some fascinating photographs of past Summer Schools, as well as some very (!) informal pictures of Miss Milligan, are now deposited in the Archive. Colour photographs from the 60s are now losing their colour. Unearth them now so that they can be scanned and saved for posterity. Can anyone identify Marie's friends in this picture?

End-pieces

Featured Dances 07 – 08

Here are the Featured Dances that have been selected by Membership Services Committee for 2007-08.

Name	Type	Length	Book
Bridge of Nairn	S	8 x 32	Book 13
Cauld Kail	M	8 x (16S+16R)	Book 9
Festival Fling	R	8 x 32	Book 44
From Scotia's Shores 'We're Noo Awa'	S	8 x 32	Leaflet Bk
Glasgow Lassies	S	8 x 32	Book 34
Hamilton House	J	8 x 32	Book 7
Ladies' Fancy	J	8 x 32	Book 13
Lady Mary Menzies' Reel	R	8 x 32	Book 7
Open the Door to Three	J	8 x 48	Book 34
Summer Wooing	R	8 x 32	Book 38

Branch Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following branches, all celebrating a special anniversary this year:

80th	Clackmannanshire, Stirling
75th	Falkirk
60th	Peterhead, Dunfermline, Dumfries, Belfast
50th	Nairobi, Roxburgh Selkirk and Peebles, Toronto
35th	Pretoria
25th	Isle of Islay, Sutton Coldfield

Obituaries

John (Jackie) Richardson Johnstone

The death of Jackie Johnstone on 25th February 2007 at the age of 84 marked the end of a very long dancing career. He will be remembered most as an outstanding dancer in both Highland and Scottish country dancing and was a former World Champion Highland dancer. Jackie travelled with Miss Milligan and the International Team to South Africa and Norway, and with the Dumfries Branch team to Sicily, Germany, Belgium and Sweden.

Jackie was a renowned teacher of dancing and deviser of Scottish country dances (he introduced the Highland Schottische Poussette formation), teaching not only in Dumfries, but also in Carlisle and Manchester. For a number of years, he taught Highland dancing at Summer School in St Andrews and he taught at many day schools in the UK, Europe, and the United States.

In later life, Jackie, along with John Drewry, taught at the Morland Scottish Country Dance Week in Cumbria until past his 80th birthday. The great affection in which Jackie and John are held by the Morland dancers led the group to name a star for them in the constellation of Gemini on the occasion of their 80th birthdays in 2003. The dance *Double Eighty* in Book 45 also celebrates the achievements of both these men.

Jackie served many times on the Dumfries Branch Committee and was twice its chairman. He was always extremely kind and generous with his summer classes at Steel Avenue and his annual December dance raising more than £10,000 for local charities over the years. *Bill Clement and Colin Maxwell*

Mrs Kath McCulloch of Ardwall

In November Gatehouse of Fleet Branch lost one of its founding members, Mrs Kath McCulloch. In her 100th year, Kath was a remarkable lady in every respect. She led a very full and varied life and took an active part in whatever project she was engaged in. The Branch is grateful to Kath for her outstanding contribution as dancer, teacher, committee member and as President. Kath was a great lady and will be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Margaret Delacourt Gibbs

Margaret Gibbs was a founding member of Oxfordshire Branch. She was a Branch teacher and also coached the Oxford University Team. Along with Pipe Major 'Jock' Laidlaw of the Cameron Highlanders, Margaret expounded the virtues of Scottish country dancing on radio. She raised funds at dances in aid of St Dunstons Hospital for blinded ex-servicemen. Recently she and her husband celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary.

Hugh Ansfrid Thurston

Hugh Thurston was a wartime associate of Hugh Foss at Bletchley Park, where he worked as a cryptographer deciphering the messages of the Italian navy and the Japanese armed forces. It was probably his links with Hugh Foss that sparked his interest in Scottish country dancing.

Hugh Thurston arrived in Vancouver in 1958 after living and working in Bristol, UK and in Boston, USA. In both Bristol and Boston he is fondly remembered as a great enthusiast and several members recall his lively classes. In Vancouver he was to become Professor of Mathematics at the University of British Columbia.

Even as a relatively young man Hugh amassed a huge amount of information on the historical background of dances and in 1954 he published *Scotland's Dances*, which takes an analytical approach to the history of dance, and is still in print today. He went on to issue his own dance magazine *The Thistle*, and the 55 issues cover a tremendous breadth of knowledge of dance.

The RSCDS did not always find favour with Hugh Thurston. Miss Milligan is known to have said, "Dr Thurston and I have agreed to disagree!" He, however, was a marvellous, intelligent charmer and he charmed her too!

Hugh's best known dance is *Schiehallion*. "I noted the four figures that seemed most popular, put them in good order and began to teach the dance in this form." Today dancers the world over know about 'Schiehallion reels' and almost every dancer of school age is familiar with *The Flying Scotsman*, another of Hugh's dances.

Hugh's wife Nina shared his enthusiasm for all forms of dance. The West Point Grey SCD Club benefited greatly from his unpretentious teaching style and latterly the White Rock Club enjoyed the company of the Thurstons. Nina Thurston died on 14 September 2006 and Hugh, a month later, on 29 October.

Rosemary Coupe



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Web : www.rscdsnz.org.nz

Dance Scottish Week – join in!

7th – 14th September is Dance Scottish Week, an initiative of the 2006 Scottish Branch Conference, aimed at raising the profile of both SCD and the RSCDS on a Scottish national and local level, and helping the recruitment of beginners. All branches, and clubs worldwide are encouraged to take part. If you have not yet planned anything, there is still time!

Some practical ideas

Run a ceilidh for the general public

Everyone knows that it is impossible to involve the general public in a normal country dance programme, but a programme of ceilidh dances, perhaps interspersed with simple country dances could persuade people to begin – especially if they receive a warm welcome from dancers. And if you have musicians in your area, do involve them. Dancing to recorded music just isn't the same!

Run a dance and get it publicised

Local groups could run a social dance and invite the local press along to report it. Organise demonstrations in public places throughout the week. Think of the image we are trying to communicate. The message is 'be seen'!

Organise something for young people

You could offer a free Saturday morning workshop for young people. This could be the beginning of a new children's class!

Miss Milligan to be honoured by Jordanhill

Strathclyde University, of which Jordanhill College is now a part, will honour Miss Milligan by unveiling a plaque in her memory on 14 September.

The official programme

8 – 14 Sept: HQ open to the public

There will be an exhibition of the RSCDS's activities and achievements at HQ. Open on Saturday 8 Sept from 10am – 1pm and during the next week from 10 – 4.

Friday 7 Sept: The official launch Reception in Surgeon's Hall

Invitations have been sent to all the national newspapers, MSPs, representatives of many different organisations (health, youth, education). All branches have been invited to send two representatives to this Reception. Numbers strictly limited.

Friday 7 Sept: The opening ball

The opening ball, dancing to David Cunningham's band, will follow the Reception at Surgeon's Hall. Numbers limited. Priority booking to Reception guests. Applications for tickets (£25) from HQ after 15 June.

Friday 14 Sept: Closing informal dance

This final event of the week will be in Glasgow at St Andrews in the Square with George Meikle's band. Tickets £10 from Flora Frame, 19 Kilmardinny Crescent, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 3NP. 0141 942 6850 or e-mail: flora.frame@ntlworld.com



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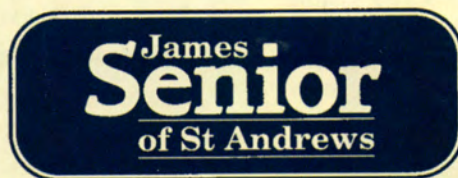
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