



The Reel

Published by the LONDON BRANCH of the ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY
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No 258

DECEMBER 2006 TO MARCH 2007

We wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

LONDON BRANCH AWARDS

The London Branch is pleased to announce the bestowal of Branch awards on John Reeve and on John and Anne King. (see citations on page 3)



John Reeve



John and Anne King

Sin See

A CHRISTMAS CRACKER

Branch Dance

Saturday 9th December 2006
St. Columba's Church Hall, Pont Street, SW1.
7.00 for 7.15 - 11.0 p.m.

Ian Muir (Prestwick) and his Band

The Hollin Buss	24/8
Maxwell's Rant.....	16/10
The Braes of Breadalbane.....	21/7
The Chequered Court	42/3
General Stuart's Reel	10/3
The White Rose of Scotland... London 75th/3	
Pelorus Jack	41/1
The Silver Thistle	44/10
Staffin Harvest	1978/4
Cadgers in the Canongate	9/10

The Flowers of Edinburgh.....	1/6
Tribute to the Borders	L.31
Anna Holden's Strathspey	42/2
The First of September	London 75th/12
Major Ian Stewart	35/4
Miss Gibson's Strathspey	Leaflet 18
Earlstoun Loch	Foss
Neidpath Castle.....	22/9
The Machine without Horses.....	12/12
Mrs MacPherson of Inveran	Drewry

Admission £10.00 members,
£11.00 non members. Reception drink and refreshments included in price.
Those with highland/evening dress are encouraged to wear it.



RSCDS Chairman Irene Bennett displays her version of *The Reel* logo. See story on page 3.

CALLING ALL YOUNG DANCERS

This season's Spring Fling is in Oxford – just a stone's throw from London.

It runs from Friday evening, 30th March to Sunday lunchtime, 1st April 2007.

London Branch may be able to offer financial help to get you there.

See article on page 4

BURNS SUPPER AND CEILIDH DANCE

Saturday 13th January 2007
St. Columba's Church Hall, Pont St., SW1
7.00 p.m. - 11.00 p.m.

The Frank Reid Scottish Dance Band

Come and enjoy a traditional Burns Supper with haggis (including a splash of whisky), neeps and tatties, piped in and addressed in the immortal way. There will be ceilidh dancing with an experienced caller and inspiring music from the band. This is a great opportunity to share with your friends and family the fun of Scottish music and dancing.

Admission £9.50 for RSCDS members, £12.00 for non members,

Including a glass of wine and supper. Tickets in advance (SAE please) from Rachel Wilton, 31, Kensing Road, London SE10 0LL. Tel 0208858 7729.

E mail wiltonrachel@hotmail.com (a pair of tickets would make an ideal Christmas present!)

Issue No 259 will be with UK based members by 17th February 2007 unless delayed in the post. Contributions for that issue should be sent to the Editor, Wilson Nicol, 14 Great Woodcote Park, Purley, Surrey CR8 3QS, tel: 020 8763 4173, or preferably by email to editor@rscdslondon.org.uk, to arrive by 20th January. (Issue No 260 will arrive by 5th May 2007).

The opinions expressed in *The Reel* are the opinions of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the RSCDS, nor of the Branch.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The new season began with French dancers joining us to celebrate the 'New Alliance' – France, Scotland AND the rest of the U.K. The newly formed South East Region Teachers' Association had its first very successful meeting and our annual Day School welcomed more dancers and musicians. The Committee worked hard finding ways to advertise our November dance to encourage new dancers; we also explored different recipes for stovies – I hope you were there to enjoy the results!

The Committee has been giving a lot of thought to the present structure of classes, whether they are suiting the range of abilities? Is there scope for improving the existing arrangements? Do you have a view on this?

At Society level the Branch submitted two amendments to the new constitution voted in at the AGM in Aberdeen (see next column for the report). Thanks to Wilson Nicol for his expertise in this area. Jeff Robertson continues his three year term as a member of the Management Board.

As usual, *The Reel* and the website between them provide you with information about where to dance: as well as London and the SE. there are links to groups country and world wide – thank you to Wilson Nicol, Meryl Thomson and John and Anne King for their work.

Malcolm Ferris-Lay has had to resign from the Committee because of pressure of work and we thank him for his contribution. He will, however be continuing to teach the highland classes and helping at Branch functions whenever he can.

We are pleased that people who do a lot of work for the Branch as 'background' workers have agreed to accept Branch Awards this year (see next page). One of the thoughts behind the initiation of these awards was to recognise the work done by people who are not always high profile.

We look forward to seeing you on the dance floor at 'A Christmas Cracker' when we shall be dancing to the music of Ian Muir from Prestwick and his Band – what an excellent start to the Christmas period! – make sure you do not miss it!

Rachel Wilton

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

Website: The website review is nearing completion and in conjunction with the new Society logo will offer improved access and navigation with a consistent house style.

RSCDS Tartan: The new Society tartan designed by David Normand-Harris in conjunction with the House of Edgar is now available in kilt-weight fabric. A silk version suitable for ladies plaids, tops and skirts is also proposed.

Database: The Membership database has been compiled and the next development being considered is that Branches will have the opportunity to update their own members' data on line.

The Society Magazine: The magazine continues to be well received worldwide and the present edition contains Three Dances 2006. Members are encouraged to submit copy for inclusion in the next issue.

Technique Sub Committee: This recently formed sub committee has been formed to answer questions of a technical nature. Enquiries should be addressed to Headquarters in the first instance and preferably by email to info@rscds.org.

Jeff Robertson

THE SOCIETY AGM IN ABERDEEN

Hundreds of Society members descended on Aberdeen over the first weekend in November for our annual conference. The weather was mild, the hospitality warm, the music invigorating, the discussion lively, the laughter loud (too loud for some) and there was also an Annual General Meeting. The AGM opened in the customary manner with the presentation of the Society Scroll to several deserving members who had given exemplary service to Scottish Dancing over many years. It was especially pleasing for London Branch members that our good friend Dennis Tucker (Oxfordshire Branch) was one of this year's recipients. The main business of the meeting was the adoption of a revised constitution that met the requirements of new Scottish charities legislation. London and Aberdeen Branches proposed amendments to the revision that were also accepted on a show of hands. Stewart Adam, a remarkably jolly Chairman throughout his two years in office, stepped down and was succeeded by Irene Bennett. Her place as Chairman Elect was taken by Alex Gray. The meeting was chaired very effectively by our President, The Earl of Mansfield, who was there, sadly, in a wheelchair. Then everyone got back to their principal aims for the weekend: meeting friends, having a ball on the dance floor and putting the Society to rights in discussion groups large and small.



Stephen Webb

Andrew Kellett

EDITORIAL

So what do you think of the Society's new logo introduced in the recent issue of the *Scottish Country Dancer*? The clever crown of dancing ghillies has been marginalised in favour of letters. Jim Healy says 'Change is always difficult but we are sure it will grow on you.' First we have to ask whether change was necessary at all and then whether it WILL grow on you. I think most members will just accept it with reservation and regret. Now for the flood of letters – I hope!

The Day School this year was an outstanding success. The talent at the evening ceilidh was exceptional. On a personal note I was overjoyed that we had over 20 musicians from far and wide absorbing the wisdom and guidance from band leader/teacher/dancer David Hall and putting it into immediate effect to produce fantastic dance music. The group could quite easily have attracted bookings for dances, such is the talent in this part of the world.

Wilson Nicol



COMMITTEE AFFAIRS

The London Branch Committee next meets on 8th February and 29th March; the convenors meet on 8th March. Items for discussion should be sent to the Secretary, Pamela Ellam at least two weeks before the meetings to ensure inclusion on the Agenda.

ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY



Patron - H.M. The Queen

HEADQUARTERS:

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www.rscds.org.

LONDON BRANCH

Hon. President
Mary Stoker

Hon. Vice-Presidents:
Mary Barker, Stella Booth, Ellen Garvie,
Jenny Greene, Marie Jamieson,
John Laurie, Owen Meyer, Rosemary Tilden.

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SUB-COMMITTEES

Youth:..... Andrew Kellett, Angela Young

Classes: Moira Strutt, Lena Robinson,
Stewart Murray

Day School: Margaret Catchick,

Dances:..... Rachel Wilton, Margaret Catchick,
Angela Young, Stewart Murray

Demonstrations: James Fairbairn, Angela Young,

Publicity: Jeff Robertson, Rita Marlow*,
Wilson Nicol, Meryl Thomson, Rosalind Zuridis

Open-air Dances: .. Simon Wales, Jeff Robertson.

Membership: Owen Meyer*

Bookstall: Ian Anderson*

Central Council of Physical Recreation:.....
Marie Jamieson*, Simon Wales

Hon. Archivist:..... Iris Anderson*

S E Branches:..... Andrew Kellett, Simon Wales

Combined Societies: Rachel Wilton

Branch Website:..... Meryl and Ian* Thomson

*Indicates a non-Executive Committee member.

Website

www.rscdslondon.org.uk

Objects of London Branch

To advance the education of the public in the London area in traditional Scottish Country Dancing, in particular by:

- preserving and furthering the practice of traditional Scottish Country Dances;
- providing or assisting in providing instruction in the dancing of Scottish Country Dances;
- promoting the enjoyment and appreciation of Scottish Country Dancing and Music by any suitable means.

LONDON BRANCH AWARDS

The London Branch is pleased to announce the bestowal of Branch awards on John and Anne King and on John Reeve.

John & Anne King

John and Anne were both Scottish country dancers when they met – John had started as a young man in Norwich and later attended classes in London and Croydon. Anne, after being inspired by a ceilidh on a family holiday in Scotland went with her mother to an evening class teaching Scottish Country dancing on their return home. She has been dancing ever since and found her earlier ballet training a good basis for SCD. She has worked with computers all her life, and now works as a technical author – as she says, writing the manuals that nobody reads – hopefully in contrast to the Diary!

Some time ago the London Branch Committee decided it would be a good idea to produce a list of local dances annually, both for those who wanted to know where they could dance next Saturday, and to help those who were planning dances to avoid clashes. Jeremy Hill produced the first one in 1994 – a single sheet, and an advertisement was placed in *The Reel* asking for a volunteer to continue and extend this idea. This caught the eyes of John and Anne – a challenge to compile all the information and also a chance to make a contribution towards the life of SCD having enjoyed it for so many years. For the last 12 years the Dance Diary has been part of their lives. They used as many sources as possible to make a database from which to work and now, each year, over 100 letters are sent out to local clubs and societies asking for the following year's events. We have become used to having it appearing at the beginning of each dancing year; and being able to telephone or e-mail Anne and John to find out what is on when planning an event. They have even, on occasion, been able to point out a potential double-booking for a band! They know names and groups even if they do not know faces or feet!

Initially the internet wasn't as widely available as it is today, but after a couple of years, a dancing friend offered to post the diary on the internet and it grew from there. Meryl and Ian Thomson started the London Branch website and Meryl updates the website version whenever Anne sends the material. So the work has continued, enjoyable and rewarding, looking ahead all the time – they even have one event in the diary for 2010!

John Reeve

John started Scottish Country Dancing in 1951 whilst at Cambridge when he joined the Cambridge Strathspey & Reel Club hoping to meet some nice girls (at Cambridge in those days men outnumbered girls by 10 to 1, and in his engineering faculty by 300 to 1). He met his wife Patricia on the dance floor and they've been Scottish dancing on and off ever since.

Before retiring in the early 1990s his job in an engineering project team included designing and writing up reports with special emphasis on eye-catching layout. On retirement he continued this activity preparing artwork with suitable text for a local printer, whose customers wanted flyers or similar printed matter, but didn't know how to word their advertisement nor how to lay it out. His job was greatly facilitated by the arrival of desktop publishing software.

About then he remarked to Stephen Webb that he thought *The Reel* could be laid out better with more articles that might then make it interesting to read. It was also missing that essential stage – the graphic artist's contribution. At that time Andrew Kellett was just taking over as Editor. Stephen knew that London Branch were looking for a new printer, preferably one familiar with quirky SCD names. The rest is 13 years of history. For John pleasure, not work. He can spend hours playing around with a layout and take real interest in the appearance and readability of printed matter, even grabbing the editor's red pen occasionally.

John has found it a pleasure to work with the several editors, Andrew Kellett, Jim Cook, Daniel Capron and now Wilson Nicol who in partnership with him have improved the layout and scope of *The Reel* to make it one of the leading publications in the Scottish Country Dance world.

IRENE BENNETT CHAIRMAN RSCDS

The Society elected Irene Bennett as Chairman at the AGM in Aberdeen in November. Writing for *The Reel*, she has this to say:

For as long as I can remember Scottish music was played in my home. My grandfather played the melodeon, my mother played the fiddle and sang in a choir and we regularly listened to the Saturday night dance music on the radio. My father, a contemporary and pal of Jimmy Shand, shared with him a love of motorbikes. My grandparents were the hallkeepers during the 30s, 40s and 50s at a Fife village hall, where many well known bands played, Jimmy Shand included. On many occasions I was permitted to sit at the back of the stage and watch the proceedings. I can still remember Jimmy remarking to me, "Aye lassie, one day you'll be doon there among the dancers." Little did I suspect then what the future had in store for me.

I started Scottish Country dancing at primary school and continued in the Girl Guides. During the 1950s the youth organisations in St. Andrews took part in an annual festival at St. Andrews Castle. I remember the dance we demonstrated was Roxburgh Castle – my first demonstration! I did my teacher training in an Edinburgh college where Miss Nancy Arnott was on the staff. Under her tuition I took my Preliminary Certificate in 1964. Miss Milligan was the examiner and I well remember her asking each of us where our homes were. When I said St. Andrews her reply was, "My dear, my Mecca!" – much to my embarrassment as it was my first encounter with her. I took my Teacher's Certificate at Summer School in 1966.

I joined St. Andrews Branch in 1964 and soon became involved in Branch activities. It was not long before I was elected to serve on the committee, eventually holding the office of secretary for a short time, followed by that of treasurer for fifteen years. Subsequently I became Chairman on two separate occasions, 1994-1997 and 2004-2006. I was the Branch representative for a number of years on the Executive Council, serving on Summer School, General Purposes and Publications and Research committees. My main interest was in the Publications and Research committee, of which I became Convenor.

During these years of committee work I continued dancing, demonstrating and teaching. Since my employment was in school-teaching, it was easy to involve children in dancing. I also encouraged the parents to participate with their families and we had some great family events. When the local secondary school was rehearsing for the Christmas dance, they could always identify the pupils from my primary school – they did a mean Dashing White Sergeant! As well as dancing socially, I danced in the Dunblane Hydro team of the day to Jim Macleod's music. If you are old enough to have the Society's 50th Anniversary LP you may see a face or two you recognise on the sleeve.

I have taught at day schools and weekend schools in Britain and Europe. My Summer School teaching began following an invitation from Duncan McLeod, who succeeded Miss Milligan as Director of Summer School. I am fortunate that my home town is St. Andrews. This has afforded me the opportunity to make many friends and acquaintances among those attending. During the weeks of Summer School, St. Andrews Branch, has for thirty five years run weekly social dances at which we have been pleased to welcome fellow dancers frae a' the airts.

I am aware of the honour and the responsibility which the position of Chairman brings. I know many tasks lie ahead. I shall endeavour to carry them out to the best of my ability.

Irene Bennett

PETE THE FEET

Readers may have wondered why Peter Luke (Pete the Feet) has featured in photographs with the Demonstration Group in recent issues of *The Reel* considering he retired from it back in 1993.

His renaissance started when he was recruited to augment the Group at a wedding reception in Henley in October 2004, the night before the Branch 75th Anniversary Ball at the Hurlingham Club. He had a further call for help from the Dem group to dance at the Slough Festival in May 2005; they needed a man for their team in the over-50 class. They won that section!

In September of the same year he danced with the South East Branches in the CCPR event at the Albert Hall and narrowly missed being in *The Reel* photos of that event. However he did appear in *The Reel* in the photos of the Demonstration Group at the 2005 Christmas Dance at St



Stephen Webb

Columba's when several ex-members were invited back. His next jaunt with the Demonstration Group was to the Aberdeen Festival the report of which appeared in *Reel* 256. It was a snowy weekend up there and Peter survived the cold to appear next to the Snowman they'd made – another first for the Demonstration Group.

Once again, in May of this year he was called upon for the Slough Festival and was in the over 50s and over 16s teams both of which won the respective cups. The photo shows holding the latter cup with Joan Desborough. Peter was in the Reading team that won that cup back in 1969!

Old dancers never die: they just keep coming back again and again. Through all of this, Peter was suffering from a carcinoma on his thigh. We are pleased to report that this has been successfully removed completely.

THE RUTH SIMPSON KEYBOARD

The Branch is very grateful to have received a bequest from the late Ruth Simpson from which it has been possible to purchase a keyboard instrument. This bears a Memorial Inscription to Ruth and has already been put to good use at the London Branch Day School and by the Demonstration Team. In keeping with Ruth's enthusiasm for dancing the balance of her bequest will support outreach activities in order to promote Scottish Country Dancing and encourage new dancers to take up the activity which Ruth so very much enjoyed.

BRANCH DANCE

Saturday 24th March 2007

St. Columba's Church Hall, Pont St., SW1

7.00 p.m. - 10.30 p.m.

Invercauld

Good Hearted Glasgow	Knapman
The Sailor	24/4
Seann Triubhas Willichan	27/9
Espie McNab	Gr. 7
The Dashing White Sergeant.....	3/2
The Belle of Bon Accord.....	Drewry
Scottish Reform	3/1
Monymusk	1/2
The Eightsome Reel	2/12
Lady Catherine Bruce's Reel.....	Gr. 7.
Round Reel of Eight	27/7
Wind on Loch Fyne	Dickson
The Hollin Buss	24/8
Mairi's Wedding	Cosh
The Robertson Rant	39/8
The Machine Without Horses.....	12/12
Cape Town Wedding	39/4
The Reel of the 51st Division	13/10

ADVANCE NOTICE OF DANCES

Branch Dances 2007

At St Columba's unless otherwise stated.

12th May.....	Nicol McLaren
	St Columba's participators dance
9th June.....	Craigellachie
	Outdoor dance, Polesden Lacey

FANTASY DANCE PROGRAMME

The winners of the Fantasy Dance programme competition set in the May issue of *The Reel* were Sue Speller and Ann Dix. Each will receive a ticket for the Christmas dance on 9th December, 2006.

BILL IRELAND MEMORIAL FUND YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

The Branch has received a number of generous contributions to the fund set up in memory of Bill Ireland, for which we are extremely grateful. If anyone else should wish to contribute, it is not too late – please send donations to the Branch Treasurer.

This money has been set aside specifically to fund scholarships to young dancers attending summer, winter or youth schools or taking their teaching certificates.

Anyone who wishes to make an application for funding should contact the Branch Secretary in the first instance.

SPRING FLING 2007

Are you full of the joys of spring?

Do you ever look around your dance class and feel that, without wishing to be rude, you are rather below the average age? Do you long to really GO for it in 'down the middle and back'? If the answer to either of the above is 'yes' (or even if it's not!), and you are aged between 16 and 35, then the RSCDS Spring Fling is for you. Organized 'by young people for young people' as the slogan goes, it is a weekend school which brings the younger element of the dancing fraternity together at an affordable price for a rant and a romp Scottish-Country-Dance-style. The primary emphasis is on fun, whilst at the same time improving style and technique or just mastering the basics. With high quality teaching from young, dynamic teachers (including London Branch's own Angela Young), complemented by live (and lively) music, this is the perfect place to indulge your hobby – or even discover it for the first time – in an informal atmosphere where you will be able to give full rein to your youthful energy.

Having previously visited Stirling, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Newcastle, the Fling comes to rest in Oxford from 30th March to 1st April 2007, running from Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime. You are given the option of being resident or non-resident, with accommodation and, largely, food being provided by the local Youth Hostel, which is conveniently located right next to the railway station. There will initially be three levels of class – Beginners, Intermediate and Experienced – to cater for all comers, and these will gradually come together as the weekend progresses, ending with a united display class and a celebratory lunch to replace a few of the expended calories!

We begin with a ceilidh on the first night, to underline the relaxed, informal and downright fun ethos of the event, and to encourage those who are new. Our musicians for this occasion are the exuberant and virtuosic Karl Sandeman from Cambridge, and his drummer. It will be impossible to keep those toes from tapping, I can guarantee! In addition to the basic format, each Fling brings an ingredient of its own to the basic mix; to impart something of a historical Oxford flavour to our Fling, we have decided to offer eighteenth-century quadrilles. Green Ginger, our chief musicians for the weekend, have a great interest and expertise in quadrille music and have even released a CD of it, so the atmosphere should be truly authentic and highly refined. There will also be opportunities to sample Highland and Ladies Step for those of you with more traditional tastes.

We hope there will be something for everyone, whatever your preferences and experience, and greatly look forward to seeing you all. For further details and information, email springfling@rscds.org, check out the website, www.rscds.org/springfling, or contact me on alice_stainer@hotmail.com

Happy Dancing!

Alice Stainer

The Branch Committee is keen for as many of our members as possible to attend what will be a fantastic weekend, and has set aside a generous amount of money for this purpose. If you are under 25 or a full time student and you pay your RSCDS subscription through London Branch, you can apply for a subsidy that will meet a significant proportion of the costs. Do get in touch with Andrew Kellett on 020 8301 1403 or through the Branch website (www.rscdslondon.org.uk)

FOCUS ON YOUTH

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

The Branch Children's Class will be held on Saturdays 13th January, 3rd February 2007
10.30 - 11.30 a.m.

St Columba's Church Hall, Pont Street, SW1

Teacher: **Angela Young**

Musician: **Jean Harrison**

£2.00 per child per class (including drink).

Adults welcome to stay.

Newcomers always welcome.

The Branch is also running a class in Aston Clinton, near Aylesbury, Bucks.

This starts again on Monday 15th January,
4.00 - 5.00 p.m.

Teacher: **Joan Desborough**

The class ran for a few weeks in the autumn and the children learnt some country dances and some basic Highland steps. "The Bucks Herald" sent a reporter along to one session. In the spring the children will be dancing with Brownies and Beavers in the local area.

For details of this class please contact

Ann Robertson on 01296 630682.

CHILDREN'S MEDAL TESTS

There will be another opportunity for teachers to enter their pupils for the RSCDS Medal Tests for Children on Saturday 3rd March at St Columba's Church Hall, SW1. Over 400 dancers, including over 40 from the London area, took the Tests last year. They are a good way of encouraging and rewarding young dancers, and we try our best to make the examination day a relaxed and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. If you would like more information, including details of the syllabus, please get in touch with Andrew Kellett on 020 8301 1403.

CHILDREN'S DAY

Saturday 24th March. Dancing for all the family with music from the Invercauld Band.
More details in the next issue.

ENGLISH FOLK DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY 75TH ANNIVERSARY

The English Folk Dance and Song Society celebrate their 75th Anniversary in 2007. Look on their website www.efdss.org, to see all the events/activities they are organising to celebrate.

London Branch's contribution to their celebration is sponsorship of a **Shetland Dance Workshop** on Sunday 18th March 2007 at Cecil Sharp House, the Society's home. It will be led by Mats Melin with Ian Robertson as the musician. This was very successful last time Mats came to London so keep the date FREE!

Did you dance at the Royal Albert Hall in any of the EFDSS's Annual Festivals 1926 - 1983? Or were you in the audience? If the answer is yes, why not come to the Albert Hall reunion at Cecil Sharp House on Saturday 10th February 2007. Remember the rehearsals there? Remember Douglas Hitchcock? John Armstrong who danced Gillie Calum for us? Better still, can you form a demonstration team? Why not come to the tea dance, meet old friends, find yourself in an exhibition of photos/films of performances and watch the evening performance by many of the groups you used to meet? Details appearing soon on www.efdss.org or email efdss75@btinternet.com to discuss a possible performance. Hilary Blandford c/o 020 7485 2206.

CLASSES

Come to class, meet old friends, make new ones, improve your dancing and have fun!

Class	Day	Time	Location	Teacher / Musician
ELEMENTARY	Wednesday	6.30 - 8.00	Marlborough School, Sloane Avenue, SW3	Rachel Wilton / Jean Harrison
POPULAR S.C. DANCES	Wednesday	8.00 - 9.30	Marlborough School, Sloane Avenue, SW3	Lindsey Rousseau / Ian Cutts
TECHNIQUE	Wednesday	7.15 - 9.15	St. Columba's Church Hall, Pont Street, SW1	Gaynor Curtis / Ken Martlew
DEMONSTRATION	Tuesday	7.15 - 9.15	<i>For details contact James Fairbairn, 01865 512308</i>	Angela Young / Sandra Smith
GENERAL	Wednesday	2.30 - 4.30	St. Columba's Church Hall, Pont Street, SW1	Jeni Rutherford

Term starts week beginning 8th January 2007. Half term week commencing 19th February. Term ends during the week beginning 19th March 2007. Enquiries about classes: 020 8748 6711, or email classes@rscdslondon.org.uk.

SUNDAY TECHNIQUE CLASSES

Dates to be arranged
Band Hall, Coram's Fields, 93 Guilford St,
London WC1.
11.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

Teacher:.....**Philippe Rousseau**
Musicians: **Ian Cutts, Barbara Manning,**
Peter Jenkins.

Nearest underground: Russell Square.
On street parking available. Cost £6.00.
local establishments available for lunch.
Further details: 020 8748 6711.
Email: classes@rscdslondon.org.uk

TEACHER'S SUCCESS

Davinia Miln has passed her Unit 5 making her a Fully Certificated Teacher. We wish her every success in promoting Scottish Country Dancing.

DEMONSTRATION GROUP

Our class teacher, Angela Young, put together an attractive display for the New Alliance dance at Pont Street on 23rd September in which dancers from France also participated. At lunchtime on Friday 6th October four dancers and piper Neil Esslemont entertained new students at Regent's Business College and invited them to dance, with some success. This is an annual feature in our calendar and seemed to be well appreciated again this year.

On 15th October we attended the annual Dance Around the World (DATW) festival at Cecil Sharp House where with Neil Esslemont piping we put on a varied display of country and highland dancing, with some audience participation at the end. DATW brings together a host of groups performing different styles of dancing from many different countries, which follow each other in quick succession and make good spectating. Some groups are invited to run a workshop as well and I am glad to report that the Scottish one attracted over 30 people who enjoyed Ian Cutts' lively fiddling

We are getting regular enquiries for dems through the website, though some are either at such short notice or so well outside our geographical area that we cannot take them up. As many dem requests are now for a show of country and highland dancing and a desire for audience participation, and we are often asked to include items such as singing or addressing the haggis or other recitation, we are wondering whether the time has come to revise the name Demonstration Team to something more encompassing. Any ideas out there?

We will be re-running our audition process in the spring and are on the look out especially for male dancers with talented feet and smiling faces.

James Fairbairn

STEP DANCING

Joan Desborough is continuing Step Dancing classes in the Scout Hut, Kings Langley into 2007 to live fiddle music by Wendy Desborough. Dates for your diary are Sunday 4th February and Sunday 29th April, 2007. Classes will be 10.30-12.30 and 1.45-3.45. Joan will welcome anyone who wants to come and try step dancing. Further details from Joan Desborough, Telephone: 01442 826629.

HIGHLAND CLASSES

Dates and hall to be arranged
Teacher: **Malcolm Ferris-Lay**
Musician: **Sandra Smith**
Further details from Lena Robinson,
tel: 020 7584 2476.

SERTA 2006 WORKSHOP

A very successful all day workshop for teachers was held at Finchampstead on Sunday 17th September 2006 when 26 teachers gathered from all over the Southeast including Milton Keynes, Oxford and the Isle of Wight. An excellent morning session by Jackie Osgathorp, a physiotherapist took us firstly through the anatomy and physiology of the toes (particularly the importance of the big toe for push off) feet, legs, hips and spine. Then she highlighted the importance of warm ups to ensure muscles receive extra oxygen and can work more efficiently and for longer. She advised that the warm up should last for a minimum of 10 to 15 minutes. Stretching should be built up gradually as tissue becomes more elastic as it warms. We also touched on problems associated with teaching children and older dancers.

Jackie then initiated a 20-minute warm up session which was quite challenging but also enjoyable and certainly gave us food for thought.

Lastly she detailed the various types of injury occurring and possible treatment stressing the importance of RICE: Rest (48 to 72 hours), Ice (wrapped and no more than 10 minutes), Compression (double Tubigrip, decent length and remove at night) and Elevation (straight leg and support back of knee).

As the sun shone many of us decided to take our packed lunch in the open air and felt a mite reluctant to restart on such a lovely day. However, we couldn't have had a better afternoon with Angela Young. Angela began by not just asking us to identify the dance but also the musician/band. After this challenge, she ran through the process of choosing tunes and discussing the types of reels, jigs and strathspeys. Then it was up on our feet to try this out – different tunes for the same dance as well as practising bringing in the live musician as very few of us have this luxury in our classes.

We then had a very enlightening session on choosing and using recorded music and the way

musicians and bands interspersed other tunes with the original during the dance. Angela gave us the good advice of using old recordings when there was no music to match a dance. The use of iPods created much interest.

We ended with some more dancing. Firstly a jig but we weren't prepared for the speed! The dance turned out to be "The Guidman of Balangigh" from Book 30 which is played about half the speed of jigs we are used to. Then we all did a dance where only the first lady knew the dance and then another where only the top couple knew the dance. The latter was easier!

We finished with a brief discussion session on how we would proceed in the future. We all felt it had been a great day and wanted to continue.

The next meeting will probably be in Reigate next Spring so watch this space.

Mike Johnson

We are building up a database of all teachers and leaders of groups who would like to maintain contact with SERTA; if you would like to be included, or do not know if you are already included, please contact me on tel. 01491 873026, email mikejohnson@waitrose.com.

DANCE AROUND THE WORLD

This was a feast of dance and music for watching and participation at Cecil Sharp House for a whole weekend, very well organised and a pleasure to be present. The House was gradually filled with dancers of all ages, greeting old friends, making new friends, enjoying their own performances and those of others, joining workshops – at least 30 different dancing styles were available during the 2 days, some quite challenging!

Our team presented Scottish Country and Highland dancing and finished with audience participation dances, showing that our dancing can be for demonstration and also as a social activity for all ages and stages. This was all to the stirring music of piper, Neil Esslemont – how fortunate we are to have a musician of such calibre. Musicians and recorded music were used during the two days by different groups and however good the recorded music, it was a pleasure to see how well musicians worked with the dancers to the benefit of all. It was good to see that this year workshops for musicians were included in the weekend, I think for the first time.

This year we were allocated a larger room for our workshop and James Fairbairn with musician Ian Cutts steered 24 enthusiastic participants through steps, formations and some simple dances.

A letter from the organisers said 'Please pass on our thanks to all the members of your group for their professionalism, hard work and, of course, their wonderful dancing!'

Rachel Wilton

A RETURN TO ST. ANDREWS SUMMER SCHOOL

This summer my daughter and I went to the RSCDS Summer School where Wendy joined the musician's course and I danced.

My last visit to Summer School was in 1971 when Miss Milligan was directing the courses. Some elements have changed little over the intervening years. Obviously the location is unchanged and the basic structure of the day, which started with a piper to wake you, is similar. I remember Miss Milligan teaching a morning class in The Younger Hall, where she had an eye for all corners of the room, followed by a Ladies Step class taught by Rene Fiddler. I remember evening dances, ceilidhs and in particular the Thursday night dance in The Younger Hall, with The Olympians band, when selected members of the courses did demonstrations of country dancing, ladies' step and men's highland. I also remember some wonderful piano music for classes and that too has not changed.

This year Andrew McConnell took my country dancing class in The Younger Hall, with excellent music from Mo Rutherford. Kate Gray took the Ladies' Step Class in St. Leonard's School gym. There was always a small problem getting in and on the last sunny Saturday we were told it would be half an hour before the key arrived! Being resourceful we found a shady spot and our splendid pianist, Jeremy Hill, sang which enabled us to continue until we could get inside. There were optional classes in the afternoon and a good selection of dances in the evening. The Thursday night dance in the Younger hall, this year dancing to Marian Anderson's Band, continues with the same range of demonstrations and there was a superb Ceilidh on Friday evening.

The most obvious change over the 35 years is the more friendly approach of the senior RSCDS personnel, who all give very generously of their time to organise the 4 weeks of the summer school, The excellent food in University Hall is now self service, a considerable change from the formal meals. I would suggest that the average age of the course members was rather higher in 2006 than in 1971, a reflection of the perennial problem of attracting younger dancers to SCD.

The musician's course is a more recent addition to the Summer School. The week 3 music course was directed by Angela Young supported by Gordon Simpson, fiddle, and George Meikle, accordion. The musicians worked very hard with a lot of individual attention. They had the opportunity to play for dancing in small groups and as a large group at the Ceilidh and the last Saturday evening dance. My daughter and other musicians said they had had an excellent week and they also gave the dancers much pleasure.

Dancers do not seem to expect the same concentrated level of tuition and individual assessment as the musicians experienced. Matching teaching level with a class standard would be easier if dancers were more realistic about their own ability when self selecting their classes and prepared to change classes for the benefit of all.

The Summer School at St. Andrews is a flagship of the RSCDS and is enjoyed by many people from all over the world. To my knowledge I met people from Germany, France, Japan, Canada and a large variety of places in the UK. It is a great social occasion mixed with good music, plenty of dancing (producing tired feet and legs!) and laughter galore. 2007 will be in a different venue in St. Andrews, but it will certainly be fun so find a friend and book yourselves in.

Joan Desborough

THE BIG DANCE

This year the Mayor of London's office decided to hold a dancing event with an eye to preparations for the London Olympics 2012. So it couldn't just be an ordinary dancing event – this would be in Trafalgar Square, with as many dance styles and as many dancers as possible on national television and, well, maybe it could break a World Record at the same time.

In May London Branch were asked if they could provide Scottish Country Dancers for the event and at first it sounded straightforward – the organisers wanted just a couple of minutes of Scottish Country Dancing. Then I met Jeanefer, the Event Choreographer.

45 different dance styles were to be represented dancing in a small featured section, followed by participation in a Record Breaking attempt – all the dance styles would dance at the same time to the same piece of music in their own style. The music was last year's chart hit by Junior Senior and didn't instantly inspire strong strathspey or rhythmic pas de basque. But if the Slovaks and Turks could do it, so could we!

Rehearsals took place on Sundays in the Docklands area. For some West Londoners the adventure was just getting to the warehouse! Then the training began in earnest....As well as the Record Breaking attempt all the Folk Dance groups were to dance to 30 seconds of River Dance music – Iberians, Slovaks, Turks, Irish and Highland dancers were all classed as Folk. Then we had to use different styles to dance onto the floor, join in the other routines and take part in the finale.

Many thanks to those dancers who helped out attending rehearsals to make sure we had the right number of bodies at those practises – especially to Andrew Nolan who attended one rehearsal on his own. Pretending to be 12 dancers is never easy let alone taking copious notes to explain what a Combine Harvester is! And no, it's definitely not an agricultural vehicle!

Finally the weekend arrived – one of the hottest this summer! A quick teaching and practise session for our disparate group in a very sunny Embankment Gardens ensured we were ready for the mass rehearsal in Trafalgar Square – as well as providing quite a lot of entertainment to the Friday afternoon London workers and travellers.

Then over to Trafalgar Square to join the other 800 dancers putting the final touches to the routine – except every practise was a performance. Thousands of Londoners and tourists were continually watching but we weren't put off and eventually we felt ready for the final event.

On the Saturday evening our part of the TV Broadcast was due to start at 9 pm, at 8:50 pm the heavens opened and the rain lashed down. Some attractive rain mate ponchos kept our costumes dry; however there was no hope for our dancing shoes.

Bruce Forsyth and Zoe Ball introduced the programme under brollies and steadily the rain began to clear. However despite floor assistants rapidly sweeping water away there was still about two inches on the dance floor. Both Bruce and Zoe spoke to performers – and we got a quick word with Zoe (yes she is that tall, and no she didn't slip once in her high heels!). We heard some words of wisdom from Strictly Come Dancing star Anton du Beke – I think he said to be careful of slipping. And then it was time to be in our places and we were off.

Hip hop and Bhangra down the stairs, flamenco clap at the side, a quick Celtic Reel, then some synchronised swimming movements before quickly shoving the blue scarves into the

men's sporrans while getting into a longwise set.

Jennifer's Jig, Byron Strathspey and John of Bon Accord – with only a few slips and falls – then spin into line for the finale. Ladies forward, men back, heads up, heads down, arms up, arms down, spin and it was done. The record was broken in 8 minutes 30 seconds, and we had been part of it.

Thanks to all those dancers who came to take part from all over the country, and to the support team at rehearsals and on the day. It was a huge team effort and one which I know I'll never forget. Jennifer's Jig will never be the same again.

Angela Young

(Photos on centre pages)

BRANCH DAY SCHOOL

Saturday 21st October 2006.

Dancing Classes

It was 21st October and I set out early to join the friendly atmosphere of the Day School at Lady Margaret School, Parsons Green. This has become one of my favourite events of the year and Bob and my wedding anniversary, which fell on the same day, was not going to deter us from attending. Yes – we were married on the 156th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar!

High expectations were rewarded. The morning and afternoon classes for experienced dancers were both of a high standard and made enjoyable thanks to the excellent teachers, Elma McCausland and Mervyn Short and pianist, Robert Mackay. I would hasten to add that I received glowing reports from participants of the other dance classes and the musicians workshop.

After the hard and rewarding work of a day of dance classes, there was an MCs workshop run by Andrew Kellett with further input from John Laurie and David Hall which gave insight into the various skills which can be developed to become a successful MC. Other optional activities on offer were Highland/Step, Dances from the Islands or just a chance to relax and chat to friends.

Finally it was time for everyone to let their hair down and enjoy the Evening Ceilidh with dancing suitable for all abilities to the uplifting music of David Hall and Judith Smith. We were entertained by a variety of Ceilidh items of high standard and the catering was exceptional, as it was throughout the day.

The Day School was indeed fortunate to have such first class teachers and musicians to take us through the day. However, above all, special thanks must be given to Margaret Catchick, the other Members of the London Branch Committee and helpers who I know put in more work and effort than I can imagine to make the day a success.

Meg Harman

Musicians' Workshop

21 players took part in an inspiring musicians' workshop at Lady Margaret School, Chelsea as part of the Branch Day School. David Hall the well known band leader/teacher and dancer ran the workshop with confidence and style. There was a good mix of accordionists, keyboard players and fiddlers, with flautist and concertina player coming not only from London, but from Sussex, Essex, Cambridge, and Bath.

Here was a great opportunity for all of us keen players to learn as much as we could about Scottish dance music technique and style. David Hall took us through a mixture of jigs, including

(Continued on next page)

THE MACLENNANS: DANCERS and PIPERS



The Argyll Sword Dance

The Argyllshire Connection

Situated about 12 miles south of Inveraray, on the west side of Loch Fyne, is Minard Castle, built by the Campbells of Knockbuie in the mid-eighteenth century. In about 1866, the Minard Campbells appointed a new Factor to manage their estates. He was George MacLennan, who, with his wife and family, migrated south from Strathconon where generations of his forebears had lived as crofters and were also noted for having produced fine Highland dancers and distinguished players of the Highland bagpipes. One of the most famous pipers was George Stewart MacLennan (1884-1929), Pipe Major of the Gordon highlanders, amongst whose many fine compositions is the reel *Mrs MacPherson of*

(Continued from previous page)

pipe jigs, several different types of reels, and strathspeys illustrating his points either on the accordion or piano. We were advised that the most important thing of all was to keep a steady beat for the dancers and not to play too slowly. Not much danger of that!

Lunch at the end of the morning, was a welcome hot potato, salad or vegetable/meat stew, with a filling apple pie and custard (unless you brought your own), delicious and energising for the afternoon session.

As David Hall is an accordionist, there was less technique and style tuition available for the fiddlers, however Judith Smith, who was playing for classes throughout the day, was able to take a little time out, to give us some quick tips as well as contacts, to pursue ornamentation if we wanted to. It might also have been helpful to learn more bass and accompanying parts in the fiddle parts. Splitting us up into small ensemble groups might have motivated us to really hear what each other was playing better had there been more time. However, we were given some useful ideas, such as playing a third below or octaves above or below the tune. The day passed extremely quickly, and I know I learnt a lot. So a big thank you to David Hall and the other musicians who helped us.

Emily Bingley (fiddler participant)

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the RSCDS and London Branch costs £14.00 per annum for UK based members (£14.50 for Europe; £16.50 elsewhere). Current members of other Branches can join London Branch for £4.00 per annum if they live in the UK (£4.50 in Europe and £6.50 elsewhere).

London Branch membership brings benefits including *The Reel*, while Society membership includes the annual dance publication, *The Scottish Country Dancer*.

Membership applications and enquiries should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Owen Meyer, 50 Bunby Road, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BP. Tel: 01753 643461.

Inveran, the tune which accompanies John Drewry's popular dance of the same name. The Minard Castle Factor, an uncle of Pipe Major GS MacLennan, had three sons, William, Donald George and Duncan Stewart, who carried on the family's piping and dancing tradition.

William MacLennan (1860 - 1892)

William was one of the foremost pipers and dancers of his day. He had his first lessons in piping and Highland dancing from his uncles in Dundee and later when he moved to Edinburgh to pursue his architectural career, he became the pupil of an eminent dancer and teacher, John McNeill. Having spent some time in Paris studying classical ballet, he then applied his ballet training to his own national dances and developed a new approach to the interpretation and performance of the Highland exhibition dances by combining graceful and elegant deportment with precise technical accuracy. His style of dancing was met with some opposition from the older dancers, but gradually its merits were acknowledged and it was generally adopted by dancers, teachers and competition judges. Consequently, it has had a lasting influence on the Highland dancing of the present day.

Despite his short life of 32 years, William had some notable successes as a competitive dancer and piper. In both arts, he gained many prizes at Scotland's major competition events – the Argyllshire Gathering (Oban), the Northern Meeting (Inverness) and at Braemar. In 1888, he opened a school of dancing in Edinburgh; his pupils received instruction in all aspects of solo and social dancing, including the country dances and the other popular ballroom dances of the day.

William had a number of successful visits across the Atlantic, and in 1892, he formed a group to tour North America. One of his recruits was James Scott Skinner, the famous violinist, known as the "Strathspey King", and who, in his autobiography, *My Life and Adventures* (1923), gives a graphic account of the tragic events which occurred on the tour. At a concert in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, William MacLennan collapsed on stage while dancing the Highland Fling. He recovered sufficiently to travel to Montreal but on Sunday, 30th October 1892, he died in Montreal General Hospital from an attack of meningitis. His remains were returned to Edinburgh and as befitted his status and reputation within Highland society, his funeral on 7th December 1892 was a grand affair. It was reported by the *Scotsman* as follows:

The procession [to Morningside Cemetery], which started from St. James Square, was headed by about 20 pipers, some of them belonging to the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. As the procession moved slowly through the busy streets, the pipers meanwhile playing dirges, it attracted considerable attention.

Donald G. MacLennan (1869 - 1965)

"D.G.", as he was usually known, was the youngest of the three brothers and the only one to be born at Minard. He learned his Highland and ballroom dancing from his brother William, whose example he also followed by acquiring a ballet training in London. When William died, he took over the dancing academy at 24 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, and continued to run it until

his retirement in 1949. William's eldest grandson, the late William Donald MacLennan, Professor of Oral Surgery, University of Edinburgh, recalled for me his experiences of attending the academy as a youngster "to learn the Highland dances and the modern ballroom dances". He remembered his grand-uncle as a "big man and a strict teacher" who, in old age, "sat in a chair to demonstrate steps".

D.G. MacLennan is best remembered for his book, *Highland and Traditional Scottish Dances* (1952). Just as significant was his presence, as secretary and professional adviser, at a specially convened conference, held in Edinburgh in April 1925, of Highland dancing representatives including our Society's then President, Lord James Stewart Murray. The purpose of the conference was to agree, for the first time, a standardised set of rules for the performance and

judging of Highland dancing. *Highland Dancing. A Guide to Judges, Competitors, and Teachers*, was approved by the conference; it was compiled by D.G. and, essentially, encapsulated his brother William's ideas regarding the "style and execution" of the dances.

Duncan S. MacLennan (1863 - 1935)

There is not a great deal of information available about Duncan probably because he spent the last few years of his life in New Zealand. Investigations carried out by helpful RSCDS friends there have enabled me to

fill some gaps. As a young man, he married and lived in Rothesay, Isle of Bute, and taught dancing there until he departed for New Zealand after the First World War. His final place of residence in New Zealand was Gisborne where he took over an established dancing school in 1925 and where he died in 1935 at the age of 72.

It is acknowledged that Duncan MacLennan's arrival helped to raise the standard of Highland dancing in New Zealand. At least two founder members of the New Zealand Academy of Highland and National Dancing (formed in 1946) were his pupils and from him "they learned a finer technique with greater importance given to interpretation".

The MacLennan Legacy

As already indicated, the style and technique of Highland dancing which now prevails in many parts of the world owes much to the influence of the MacLennan brothers. More particularly, they have bequeathed a lasting reminder of their association with Argyllshire in the form of the Argyll Broadwords, a dance usually attributed to them and which often features in Highland dancing presentations, especially those given by Scotland's regimental dancers.



William MacLennan



D.G. MacLennan

Alastair MacFadyen

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THE 19th SHETLAND ACCORDION AND FIDDLE FESTIVAL

The Festival was held between Thursday 12th and Monday 16th October with the Craiggellachie Band, one of six invited dance bands.

It was with much excitement that our party assembled at Heathrow for the flight up to Aberdeen – four members of the band Ian and Judith Muir, Keith Anderson and Graham Hamilton plus family and friends. Sadly, Brenda de Souza, our other fiddle player, had to pull out at the last moment due to a serious illness in her family. The final member of the band, John Browne, was flying from Manchester to join us at Aberdeen for the last leg to Sumburgh airport on the southernmost tip of Shetland. However, things did not go as planned and cancellations and delays meant we missed the connection, had to stay in a hotel for the night in Aberdeen and flew to Shetland via Orkney the following morning. Taxis failing to appear further added to the stress levels and it was a slightly less ebullient party that finally arrived in Lerwick at lunchtime on Thursday just as the festival was starting.

The festival is based round the Islesburgh Community Centre in the middle of Lerwick, a superb venue that boasts, in addition to the main function hall, a café, restaurant, a bar (open all hours!), a foyer for informal chats and meetings and three session rooms that are used by any number of musicians to have a tune. Just wandering between the rooms, at any time of the day or night, one gets a sense of the dazzling quality of musicians, both visiting and indigenous, that characterise the festival, and this even before attending any of the scheduled events.

These started on Thursday lunchtime with the opening concert, which, due to our travel problems, we missed altogether. On both Thursday and Friday evenings there are events at various locations around the islands, all taking the same format; a concert of 6 or 7 acts each playing for about 20 minutes followed by a couple of hours of dancing to the featured dance band. The concerts all offer a mixture of artistes from Shetland and overseas – this year Scotland, England, Ireland, Norway and Hungary were represented. All items are based around the accordion and/or fiddle and a fine balance of the dance and folk music from all these cultures keep the packed halls entertained and tapping their feet.

After a 1 a.m. finish you'd think people would be away to their beds but no! Most musicians and many dancers reassemble at the Islesburgh where informal dance sessions in the main hall keep people dancing and listening until the not-so-weak hours of the morning. Bands are put together spontaneously from the available musicians – at one stage I found myself drumming with accordionists Robert Whitehead from Newcastle and Nicol MacLaren from Blairgowrie, fiddler Fiona Driver from Orkney and pianist Martin Henderson from Shetland – how's that for geographical diversity?

The entertainment continued on Saturday with the Youth Concert at noon (followed by more session dancing). The Youth concert is extremely popular with seats being filled well before the start of the show. There is no shortage of acts as a constant stream of young musicians appears on stage. The musical standard is exceptionally high and it is re-assuring to know that traditional music has a secure future, in Shetland at least. The stars of the show were the Callum Nicolson Trio – Callum (age 11) on accordion, Matthew Scollay (10) on piano and Joe Hunter (9) on

drums whose sound would bear comparison with any adult band and whose talent is way beyond their years!

Saturday evening was the big dance in the Clickimin Leisure Centre with 700 dancers and no less than 12 dance bands, 6 from Shetland and the 6 visiting bands. Craiggellachie was certainly in esteemed company; Ian Muir of Prestwick and David Cunningham are well known to dancers in this area, Marion Anderson is a well known recording band and a couple of bands I haven't heard before, The Orwell Band and Steven Carcary, made up the visiting bands. The local bands were Cullivoe, Da Fustra, Jim Halcrow, Leeshinat, Jimmy Burgess and James Leask. Each band plays 2 or 3 dances and the atmosphere in the hall is "fair jumping". The floor heaves with people and the music is augmented by cheers and whoops throughout. The dance doesn't finish until well after 2 a.m. and the floor is as packed at the end as it is at the beginning.

Dancing in Shetland is more akin to ceilidh dancing but it has a style all of its own. Encores are nearly always obligatory, a second encore common. The same dances appear regularly throughout the evening with the Boston 2-Step and St Bernard's Waltz being the most popular. Each dance is slightly different from the way we have learnt them. The Boston 2-Step for example has no turning the lady under the arm, the "bounce and kick" movement is completed with all the ladies and all the men holding hands in a ring with everyone giving a loud Wheesh! Dances are danced at the usual ceilidh speed which is a lot faster than the RSCDS speed that we are more used to down south. Two dances that we rarely see down south are the Quadrilles and the Lancers. A word of warning here – we were persuaded to join a set for the Lancers, which is danced in half-a-dozen figures and takes about 25 minutes to complete. We were on our knees at the end of it so intense and fast was the birling. One section has the basket as its main movement and the speeds we reached were terrifying. Not even a season of Summer Tuesdays prepared us for that!

Sunday started with a final formal concert at the Garrison theatre, which features six acts selected from the Thursday and Friday concerts. So many tickets were sold that it was repeated at the Islesburgh centre with the two halves reversed. Our band was honoured to be invited to close the concert at the Garrison so we started at the Islesburgh listening to the two other acts in our half, Irish accordionist Seamus O'Sullivan leading a band of Shetland musicians and three times former National Fiddle Champion Alistair McCulloch. Playing a concert spot at the Islesburgh was certainly a daunting prospect. As a dance band we are used to seeing plenty of movement when we play but to see 200 people concentrating on every nuance of our sound is a very foreign experience for us. It was all worthwhile though as the band was very well received and we hastily packed our instruments away and into a van for the short drive to the Garrison where we set up again and awaited our turn. Playing in the Garrison was much easier as we were on a brightly lit stage and the audience was totally in the dark! Once again a very exciting experience and the compères at both venues spoke in glowing terms of the whole event.

Sunday evening for us was 'The Final Fling' at the Islesburgh, an informal party and dance for
(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

musicians and their Shetland hosts. This is by way of a thank you to the Shetlanders for providing accommodation for the visiting musicians. Without the pressure of performing it was nice to relax, enjoy the music and dancing, chat to the other bands and swap stories of an amazing weekend. Dancers joined us after midnight and the festival closed with another informal dance session to a procession of bands. Knowing we didn't have to play the next day meant the party went on even longer than usual.

Monday arrived. A bleary-eyed party assembled at Sumburgh airport for the journey home, thankfully without the delays of our outward journey. Now we've swapped the clear blue skies and crisp sunshine of Lerwick for a damp and grey London. The music of the past four days is still echoing in our heads and when we shut our eyes, the buses and taxis of the West End are replaced by musicians and dancers whooping it up in the Islesburgh. The sense of displacement is quite overwhelming and returning to a normal existence takes many days. The festival may not be for everybody but, if you delight in listening, and dancing, to accordions and fiddles played superbly in a wide variety of styles and traditions then it is something not to be missed.

Graham and Caroline Hamilton

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NEW RECORDINGS

The Vallin Suite, Volume 1 – Neil Barron and his Scottish Dance Band (jvmcd 0601)

Reel Friends, Book 3 – George Meikle and the Lothian Scottish Dance Band (adpcd003)

John Morris from Bramhall is publishing five books of new dances. Neil's CD contains music for Volume 1, and three dances from Volume 2, (further CDs in due course). There are no suggested original tunes, so Neil was given a free rein to choose suitable ones. Neil's six-piece band, including the ever youthful Pam Wilkie on piano, plays impeccably as always and he has indeed chosen some fine tunes, mostly traditional ones, as originals. Jig and reel tempos are just right in accordance with current RSCDS guidelines. The strathspeys are a bit on the slow side – eg 8 minutes 45 seconds for 8x32 bars, but this is compensated by lots of lift.

George's recording is for 16 new dances by Ann Dix. All but two of the originals have been composed specifically for these dances and are included in the book. A fine roll call of composers – George himself, Judith Smith, David Hall, Ian Muir and Ian Robertson all appear. Again the playing is nice and lively with good tempos but the strathspeys are a whisker too fast, eg 8x32 bars in 8.04 minutes. Having said that, they are delightful with a very relaxed feel. They are great just to sit and listen to.

There are lots of new CDs for ceilidh and old time dancing and I have selected four of the best. They are all highly recommended:

The Occasionals led by accordionist Freeland Barbour treat us to twenty one tracks in *Down to the Hall* (CD TRAX 289). The Occasionals have distinctive sounds with lots of bounce.

Sandy Legget and the Carseloch Ceilidh Band's CD is entitled *Gay Gordons* (HRMCD 103). Hidden amongst the other

gems is a full length set for *Mrs MacPherson of Inveran*, and the *Orcadian Strip the Willow* which lasts for 8 minutes 35 seconds. I am intrigued that they play 4 jigs for it, then 3 reels, 3 jigs and 3 reels!

Tuned In is the title of the Andy Kain Band's CD (BRCD 040). Andy is on the fiddle but it does not sound as if he is leading the band. Ace accordionist Liam Stewart multi-tracks on accordion, second accordion, piano and bass. It is a lovely sound but I would have hoped to hear a bit more of Andy's fiddle coming through the texture.

Ross MacPherson's latest CD is *The Shores of Loch Creran* (GLRCD 02) and is my favourite of these four even although he does not have a fiddler. Perhaps I am biased as my late mother was born at Loch Creran and I have been there many times. There are three lovely waltz sets. One of the tunes is the Gaelic song 'Kirsteen' which my mother often sang. This is the first time I have heard it recorded by a dance band.

Away from the dance floor, fiddler James Alexander from Banffshire plays 17 delightful tracks. (CDGR 201) there are a number of his own compositions. It is always good to hear fine new tunes. No solo fiddle album would be complete without a few Scott Skinner and Marshall tunes interspersed in the cocktail. Try Scott Skinner's *Flower of the Quern* and Marshall's *Chapel Keithack* for starters. The CD inlay card is a bit short on details but I guess James plays fiddle and piano.

A last minute addition: I have just received a new CD 'Take Your Seats' by the Craiggellachie Band. This is very much a listening CD: full review in the next *Reel*.

John Laurie

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Picture Pages

A selection of pictures taken at some of the recent events: 1. Day School Dancing Class 21st October; 2. Ladies' Day 20th October; 3. The Tuckers' 50th Wedding Anniversary Party; 4. The Tuckers' 50th Wedding Anniversary Party; 5. Penny Seddon and Maguy Paillet at the Anglo French evening; 6. Penny Seddon, Danielle Reinstein, Catriona Stewart with Philippe Rousseau, Danielle Reinstein with Simon Wales, show how it should be done at the Anglo French evening in Aberdeen; 7. The Big Dance in Trafalgar Square; 8. Peter Knight, Jenny Sweeney, Michael Merrifield; 9. Peter Knight, Jenny Sweeney, Michael Merrifield and Elma McCausland; 10. Fanny Moureaux-Nery, former Chairman of Paris Branch at the New Alliance Dance



Step Dancers at Summer School; 3. Roger Huth, piper at the Kensington Gardens event; 6. Chris Twinn providing victuals at the New Alliance Dance; 7. Kate Sweeney with Jerry Done; 8. Pam Ellam, Sue Speller and Lena Robinson at Summer School; 9. Dancing after the AGM; 10. The Big Dance. It can rain here too; 13. Summer School top teachers Mary Murray, Helen Frame and Angela Young; 15. Musicians Workshop.



Pictures by:-
 Stephen Webb: 3,5,6,7,8,9,11,13,14
 Ann Dix: 1, 4,15
 Andrew Nolan: 10
 Angela Young: 2, 12



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Name that Tune?

Hemel Hempstead

Dear Wilson,

Correct tune? How often do we hear from a dancer on the floor saying, 'the band is not playing the correct tune for this dance'? Well, more often than we should! But before we can respond to this question we need to be able to say what we mean by the *correct tune*.

Go to the original description of most dances and alongside this will be the music chosen or composed to accompany it – is this the correct music? Go to dances and dance a particular dance regularly to the music chosen by the band that fits the dance – is this the correct music? Dance to any *good* tune – is this the correct music? Ask three different dancers and you will probably get three different answers. Is the musician the best judge of this or is it the dancer? Does the musician only play or dance as well as playing and thus have an added empathy with the dancer. Do some musicians only play what they are familiar with and play it with such fluency that it seems right for the dance? Is it in the ear of the listener alone? Who is to say what is correct?

The dance deviser should be best placed to state the correct tune. In *Reel 256* our President believes like Hugh Foss that the music should come first. Even sometimes, well known tunes and not ones especially composed, are adopted with success to accompany new dances! The partnership of Muriel Johnstone and Roy Goldring devising music and dance together is a success story (take *The Scotia Suite*) but a deviser, does not always have this luxury, as with most, but not all, of John Drewry's dances that have an existing tune name given to go with them. Paterson Publication's *Introducing, 99 and 101 SC Dances* (the predecessors of *Miss Milligan's Miscellany*) compiled by Jean Milligan frequently stated the tune as 'original/ own tune or any good reel, jig or strathspey'.

Under these circumstances can we expect bands to give us the correct tune – of course we only get or want this for the first or last time through and for the rest of the dance we are content to accept a combination of compatible tunes. Bands, generally, give careful thought to ensuring that such a seamless set of tunes is played.

Some dances appear regularly on programmes, whilst others are less popular. To dance to *Cadgers in the Canongate, Hamilton House* or *Braes of Breadalbane* to other than the correct tune would be inconceivable and would immediately be spotted by the dancer and feel wrong to dance to. Yet, would we recognise the correct tune to say, *Minard Castle, Old Nick's Lumber Room* or *Autumn in Appin* and is it therefore, in these and similar cases, really that important to use the tune published with the dance when *any good tune* would do?

In these latter three examples assigned, rather than original tunes are given with the dance description. Be that as it may, personally, I believe that the tune given by the deviser or publisher should always be used as the most suitable first and last tune played in a set of tunes and even for the encore. Why is this? Partly, as a courtesy to the deviser but, more importantly because if SCD is about anything, it is about consistency. Dances, figures, footwork are prescribed to a set standard such that these can be recognised and repeated by others anywhere that SCD is danced and in the same way dances should be recognisable and remembered through their music by using *the correct tune*.

Afterthought – since the tunes we hear and dance to are so important to our enjoyment of SCD would it not be a good idea to print them on the dance programme alongside the title of the

dance to be danced, as The Cairngorms Dancers do?

Stephen Webb

Afterthought – since the tunes we hear and dance to are so important to our enjoyment of SCD would it not be a good idea to print them on the dance programme alongside the title of the dance to be danced, as The Cairngorms Dancers do?

Demonstration Team

Bookham

Dear Wilson,

What has happened to our elegant white and tartan costumes, known and loved the world over? The Demonstration team at present look dull and drab and certainly do not stand out in a crowd.

Please – our dancing roots are with the old French Court and should reflect its style and elegance. Tradition does not need to be changed. I doubt we will ever see Cossacks dancing in T-shirts and shorts!

Yours, in disappointment,

Jean Taylor.

Dancing Shoes

King's Lynn

Dear Editor,

Being injured, I became a dance watcher rather than a dancer for some months. Many people are dancing in shoes that are too narrow for them and using part of the upper as sole.

Where can one buy wide fitting dancing shoes? There is obviously a need.

Janet Bowles

The Strathspey Tempo

Edinburgh

Dear Wilson,

The Strathspey is unique to Scotland, but the tempo at which we dance our Strathspeys has varied over the years.

In the RSCDS Manual, we are told that Scott Skinner's suggested tempo for the strathspey was given:

1 minim = 94, representing approx. 41 seconds per 32 bars

In the Society's Bulletin No.2 in 1932, the recommended tempo for Strathspeys was given:

1 minim = 94, or 41 seconds per 32 bars

So, the Society continued to use the Scott Skinner tempo during its first nine years.

In 1950, Brig. Clark suggested that the standard tempo should be taught.

Strathspey: 8 bars in 12 seconds (48 seconds per 32 bars)

In 1954, in the programme of the first Edinburgh Fancy, the team danced "The Haughs o' Cromdale", which was described as a typical country schottische.

Today's recommended tempo for Strathspeys as given in the Manual (2005 Edition) is:

1 minim = 60, or 64 seconds for 32 bars

This is, however, even slower than the recommended tempo since Duncan MacLeod was responsible for our early recordings. Duncan always aimed for

61.5 seconds for 32 bars

This clearly shows how we have slowed down the tempo of the Strathspey, but in so doing enabled the steps to be developed, or made more balletic (as the late Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that ilk once said, whilst he was a Vice-President of the Society), which was a style a great many of us enjoyed dancing so much.

However we must ask ourselves, "Has this change made Scottish Dancing less appealing to

many Scots?"

The first Atholl Ball, I attended as an Atholl Highlander Piper was on the 1st October 1947, on that occasion there were two strathspeys on the programme, 'The Glasgow Highlanders' and 'Monymusk' both danced quite fast, more a schottische tempo, and of course everyone dancing in outdoor shoes.

Again in the early 1950s, I along with the Gowrie Group danced at a charity event in Dundee. As Jimmy Shand's Band was playing for our demonstration, I was concerned about his tempo knowing how fast he usually played. But he played much slower than his usual tempo and we enjoyed very much dancing to his music. Later I thanked Jimmy for his playing saying how much we enjoyed his music. He replied saying "I ken how you folk like to dance, but I wouldn't sell any of my records if I recorded them at that speed".

Bill Clement

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 3rd June is the day when our candidates do their Teachers' Certificate teaching examination – Unit 3 or Unit 5. They will need a volunteer class to show how well they can teach. Several dancers who did this at Summer School said how much they had enjoyed it and how much they had learnt. We need dancers of any standard, all you have to do is what the teacher tells you; you will get some rest, some lunch, an interesting day and you will have been of service to the Branch.

Contact Rachel Wilton for further details email wiltonrachel@hotmail.com, tel. 020 8858 7729.

BRANCH BADGES

The Branch Badge is based on the rectangular *Reel* masthead logo and is available in a smart enamel and polished finish. These are modestly priced at £4.00 and are available from Jeff Robertson on 01903 530750, 020 7730 9633 or jtr@ctg.co.uk or from Ian Anderson at the Branch Bookstall on 01420 84599 or bookstall@rscdslondon.org.uk.

Please continue to support your Branch.

Jeff Robertson

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ON FIRST LOOKING INTO JAMES SMITH'S ANIMATIONS

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies, when a new planet swims into his ken
(Keats: On First Looking into Chapman's Homer)

Like many SCD tyros, my previous Scottish dancing experience was limited to a handful of ceilidh dances – performed to varying standards at weddings, family parties and Burns' Nights: and not a strathspey in sight. When I finally saw the light and realised what I had been missing all these years (thanks to the lovely people at the Surbiton and District Caledonian Society) it was immediately obvious that much work was needed to "get up to speed" if I was ever going to go to the ball.

By joining the Sloane Avenue classes of Rachel Wilton and Lindsey Rousseau, I soon learnt the basics. But the question then was how to learn the dances on the next week's programme, especially when there were no recaps or walk-throughs? I was about to discover the joys of Summer Tuesdays at Pont Street. In my state of almost complete ignorance, I found Minicrib difficult to follow at this time and Pilling was literally a closed book as far as I was concerned. Nowadays of course, the World Wide Web covers just about every human activity and so I started browsing.

In no time at all, I had found the splendid Grand Chain website and there on its page of Assorted Scottish Dance links: <http://www.scottishdance.net/links/SCD.html> was the link to James Smith's CD of SCD Animations: <http://members.shaw.ca/dancimation/scd.html>. My Keatsean moment arrived as soon as I loaded and ran the demonstration version of Back o' Bennachie from James's website. The demo was exactly what I had been looking for: coloured circles and squares representing the men and women in a set tracing out the patterns of the dance and accompanied by the correct music. It was like a combination of Minicrib, Pilling and your favourite dance band! I ordered the CD immediately (for a bargain price of £20) and waited impatiently for it to arrive. It was not a disappointment! It contains around 250 dances, most of which are commonly danced in the London area. The latest version of the Disc includes all the Book 45 dances and, by special request from Christine Conitzer, another of James's fans in London, Schiehallion, which is the longest dance he has so far animated.

Most of the dances are presented in two formats on the same CD (with and without a spoken description). Both versions have captions. The action can be stopped and replayed at any time. There is also a selection of some of the trickier formations on their own. There is no attempt to illustrate steps or technique, only patterns and formations. In other words, the CD does not teach you how to dance, only how to do a dance.

Many newcomers to dancing in the London Branch have purchased the CD and have found it invaluable for learning new dances, especially for balls and summer Tuesdays where there are no recaps. I have no doubt that I would have gone to far fewer dances in the past year if I had not had the benefit of using the CD to learn the dances.

I was fascinated to learn how James came to accomplish this magnificent oeuvre and he has kindly provided the following background. He learned a few simple dances at school in Scotland and later, during his National Service in the Royal Navy, he discovered that SCDs were popular among the (mostly English) officers. He was impressed at one mess ball to see a group

consisting of one admiral, three captains and their wives dancing the foursome reel.

James eventually settled in Vancouver. He remembers seeing a display there which included a demonstration from a group led by Dr. Hugh Thurston (the deviser of Schiehallion) which was so impressive and intimidating, with lots of high kicking, that it was many years before James finally took up SCDs seriously! This happened in the early 1990s after his retirement from active medical practice and was largely thanks to the encouragement of another illustrious lady in SCD circles, Mary Murray. With her encouragement, he joined the West Vancouver club, the largest of the groups affiliated to the Vancouver Branch of the RSCDS.

James admits that his computer skills are not cutting-edge, though he did some programming in Basic in the late 1980s. He recalls that as an SCD beginner, he was working out formations by sliding buttons around on a tabletop, as one does, when it occurred to him that there might be a computer programme that could do the same thing.

In 1994, he found by chance a programme called Animation Works. The company that produced it has disappeared without trace and no-one has continued to support or develop the programme but it does the job of producing animations admirably. Although it was developed for use under Windows 98, the animations produced using it will run on any modern Windows-based computer. James soon evolved the current format and within a couple of weeks, he had produced his first animated dance – Mairi's Wedding – after his wife's name. Nowadays, it takes him anything from 2 to 12 hours depending on the complexity of the dance. For sheer complexity of animation, James gives the prize to "Let the Hackles Rise", one of John Drewry's most subtle challenges.

At first, the animations were produced simply to assist his own learning but he later bought a device to convert them to a format suitable for reproduction on a videocassette. He sent a version to the RSCDS in 1997 with a suggestion that they might publish it. Although the RSCDS Publications Committee was impressed, it appears that a slight problem of synchronisation between music and images may have contributed to the Society's decision not to accept his offer. Synchronisation can still be a problem on some computers, in that the music may run slightly faster than the visual animation.

The first CD version, which was first produced in 1999, had 155 dances on it. The original selection was based on those that were popular in Vancouver. The number of dances has grown steadily to the current 251, mainly by including the dances from the new RSCDS books.

As to the future, James will continue to animate new dances and he is constantly on the lookout for an even better animation programme which could be used to extend his work and solve the synchronisation problem. A number of his users in the London branch have discussed sub-contracting him to animate some of the missing dances which are popular here. But there is no need to wait. Anyone starting to learn those "joyous Scottish reels" who has a Windows-based computer should log on to James's website now. The learning curve will suddenly not seem so steep!

Stewart Murray

DIANA AND DENNIS TUCKER

*Oh, Alastair Macintyre, Jennifer Morrison,
Hilary Mackintosh, favourites of chance!
Blessed are you who are christened in jig time
And never can muddle a reel with your dance!*
DENNIS TUCKER
Reel No 171 1985

Diana and Dennis Tucker from Oxfordshire Branch celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in August. Unknown to Diana and Dennis members of the Branch and friends from around the country joined together to organise a surprise evening in their honour with dancing and music provided by Ian and Judith Muir. Some of the dancers performed a small impromptu demonstration, including a dance – Les Nocés D'Or – written especially for the occasion by two of the dancers, with music composed by Ian Muir and everybody enjoyed a beautifully made celebratory cake and the sparkling wine provided by other members of the Branch.

OBITUARY ULLY HARRIS

13th May 1916 - 23rd September 2006



Ullly started dancing in about 1964 at the Mary Ward Centre with Andrew Gillies as teacher. With his encouragement, she joined the RSCDS in 1970 and attended Branch classes for many years. She also went to the Summer School at St. Andrews in the early 70s. She danced at many Branch Day and Weekend Schools, and also ones held in Tunbridge Wells, Isle of Wight, Edinburgh (for 12 or 13 years), Rechberg (Germany) and the Argyll Scottish Country Dancing events.

She was a member of the London Branch Committee from 1980 to 1982 serving on the Classes Sub-Committee and organizing the Branch weekend Schools at Easthampstead Park over this period.

Ullly was Stage Manager for the very successful Branch Jubilee Concert in 1980 and the Diamond Jubilee Concert in 1983. She also co-ordinated planning for the Branch's teams of 64 dancers over the age of 50 who participated in "Celebrating Age" at The Royal Albert Hall in 1987, a wonderful experience for all concerned.

Ullly continued to take an interest in the Branch's activities by attending Branch dances and AGMs regularly until very recently, and then through *The Reel* which Andrew Cockett and Eleanor Watt read to her after her eyesight failed. Ullly will be greatly missed by all of her many dancing friends.

Rosemary Tilden and Robert Mackay

LYON CELEBRATIONS

French television viewers have been treated recently to a sumptuous dramatisation of the life of Madame de Pompadour ... The scene takes place at the French court, beautiful ladies in splendid gowns floating through ballrooms or out in the carefully laid-out gardens, fountains playing in the distance, delicious banquets, liveried staff scurrying about ... Got the picture? Now fast forward 260 years ... The scene takes place in a beautiful château, ladies float around in colourful gowns in the ballroom and out on the balcony overlooking the impeccably manicured gardens complete with fountain, there is gastronomic food and liveried staff ... No sign of Madame de Pompadour, however. But there is Muriel Johnstone and Keith Smith and Bill Zobel, so who needs the King of France and his courtiers?

All this gives you a taste of the weekend of 20th-22nd October in Lyon when Scottish Chanterelle were celebrating their 20th anniversary with friends from far and near. The celebrations kicked off on the Friday night in the city with a well attended Ceilidh (around 300 people turned up as it was open to the general public) and the usual masterly MCing from Georges Craen was accompanied by the irresistible music of Keith and Muriel. A few short hours of sleep later, participants were parking at the Château de Lacroix-Laval in the outskirts of Lyon and making their way along a tree-lined walk festooned with blue and white balloons towards the château set in the inevitable French gardens with a fountain playing in the centre. The ballroom, decorated with numerous Scottish flags and posters, was unfortunately L-shaped so Bill had to cope with the 'top' room, the 'bottom' room and the 'dog's leg' in the middle, but he spared no energy running from one to the other to keep a good-humoured eye on everyone. Thanks to Mike Williams' expertise and professional equipment, Bill had a microphone and could be heard, if not seen, by all the dancers. Thus began one and a half days of alternating dance sessions and scrumptious meals, each a justification of the other. The break in the late afternoon allowed the courtiers to retire to their apartments and put on their finery before assembling on the terrace in the setting sun to await the summons to dinner – another gastronomic delight with the addition of a tiny piece of the 20th birthday cake. The candles were blown out by Christiane Orgeret and Pierre Vernay, current President and Treasurer and the sole remaining founding members. Muriel and Keith kept everyone literally on their toes till 1 a. m. with a varied programme which included The Duke of Atholl's Reel and the Reel of the 51st Division. What a thrill it was to dance those to the sound of the pipes courtesy of Bill Clement! Another short night and everyone was back on Sunday morning for the final session and another superb meal with doors and windows wide open and the warm sun streaming in. Reluctantly, those who had not signed on for the delightful visit to the nearby Dolls' Museum took their leave of friends old and new, ears and minds and bodies brimming over with movement and music. Thank you, Marvellous Muriel, Creative Keith (ever heard him launch into a lascivious tango on his fiddle?) and Boundlessly-energetic Bill for all your efforts to make your contribution to an unforgettable weekend. Thank you also, Clever Christiane and the Tremendous Team for all the months and months of planning and organising without which it could not have been achieved. Scottish Chanterelle is now 20 years young – here's to the next 20!

Diana Sarran

THE WALTZ COTTILLION

In *The Reel* issue 256, Douglas Dean mentioned the 'Waltz Cottillion' and indicated that he no longer had the instructions. This dance has strong Scottish connections and is widely regarded as the finest of the quadrilles. It was regularly performed at Scottish Balls until about 1970 and deserves a revival. There are different versions of this dance. One such is:

Bars Introduction

1-8 Honour partners and corners.

Bars

1-16 First couple waltz round inside the set.

17-24 First and third ladies waltz to change places and honour.

25-32 Second and fourth ladies repeat.

33-40 First and third men repeat.

41-48 Second and fourth men repeat.

49-6 First and third couples waltz back to own places.

57-64 Second and fourth couples repeat.

65-96 Set and turn Grand chain:

97-98 All face partner, advance and balance.

99-100 All retire and balance.

101-102 Change places with partner giving right hand to face corner.

103-104 Turn to face partner and balance.

105-112 Repeat bars 97 - 104 back to place.

113-128 All four couples dance once round the set to original places.

129-256 Repeat 1 - 128, third couple leading.

257-384 Repeat, fourth couple leading.

385-512 Repeat, second couple leading.

Normally in the 'set and turn grand chain' on meeting dancers perform a 'waltz balance' step, then as they pass alternate right and left hands are raised, the lady turning under the arch thus formed. In Scotland this figure is traditionally performed slightly differently, both hands are crossed and joined, left uppermost, and in passing the lady turns counter-clockwise and the man clockwise under the raised hands. The hands being released as they face the next dancer.

It is a convention in the Quadrilles and Cottillions that the dance is performed by the head couples (first and third in RSCDS terminology) followed by the side couples: the dancers finish in their original places. Most Old Tyme Dance Manuals number the couples clockwise from the top as First, Fourth, Second and Third, as that is the order in which the dance is repeated.

Victor Sylvester (Old Time and Sequence Dancing [1949]) published similar instructions for an 'Old Time' version of this dance. The English Folk Dance and Song Society (Community Dance Manual, part 7. [1967]) published a shorter version – omitting the 16 bars of solo waltzing once round the square set with which each repeat commences; the other figures being arranged in a slightly different sequence.

Another dance which should be considered is "The Caledonians"; in brief:

Fig 1. First and third couples, right hands across, set to partner and turn, ladies chain, promenade half way to change places, rights and lefts. Second and third couples repeat. First and thirds repeat. Second and fourth repeat.

Fig 2. Top gentleman advances and sets. Set to corners and turn corners half way to change places. All promenade. Repeat three times, gentleman in top place setting each time.

Fig 3. First lady and third man, advance and

retire; advance and turn. First couple lead between third couple, divide and cast to place. All set and turn corners. Repeat with each lady and opposite man leading in turn.

Fig 4. Top lady and opposite man advance, top man and opposite lady advance; all turn partners to place. Lady in fourth place and man in second place lead the repeat. All promenade halfway round set and turn partners. Repeat back to place.

Fig. 5. First couple lead round inside the set. Ladies advance, curtsy and retire; men advance salute and retire. All set and turn partners, half a grand chain. Promenade half way. First and third couples slip across. Second and fourth couples slip across. Repeat with each couple leading in turn. Finale all promenade round the set.

Finally, 'The Alberts' comprises: The first figure of the Quadrilles; the second figure of the Caledonians; the third figure of the Lancers; a half Waltz Cottillion; and the fifth figure of the Quadrilles. In the half Waltz Cottillion, the first eight bars the head couples waltz round, and on the repeat in the first eight bars the side couples waltz round

On a completely different note, our German friends may be interested in the following dance:

Cuckoo's Nest

48-bar reel included in David Rutherford's *Compleat collection of 200 of the most celebrated country dances both old and new which are now in vogue, performed at court and all public assemblies, with the newest and best figures and directions to each tune by Mr. Rose, for the violin, German Flute, or hautboy. Volume I (1756); Volume II & Volume III (1760).*

Bars

1-4 First couple cast off into second place

5-8 First and third couples dance four hands round to the left in a circle.

9-12 First couple cast up into first place

13-16 First and second couples dance four hands round to the left in a circle.

17-24 First couple cross below second couple to dance reels of three on the opposite sides of the set.

25-32 First couple dance down between the second and third couples, cast up into second place and dance in to finish back to back between the second couple.

33-40 First and second couples dance a reel of four across the set, first couple finish in second place.

41-48 First and third couples dance rights and lefts.

John W Mitchell

THE GOLDEN AGE

Does anyone believe there was once a golden age of Scottish country dancing and that the function of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society is merely to select dances then popular and translate the instructions into modern language?

If so, recent correspondence in *The Reel* about "Waverley" may have disabused him. Practically no dance, not even "The Reel of the 51st Division" is recorded in the S.C.D. Books in its "oldest known form."

Dances are always changing....

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from previous page)

Amid drastic changes, the Scottish Country Dance Society was formed in 1923. Imagine yourself back in that year founding such a society. What would you have done?

I can think of four approaches:

(1) **to freeze:** you could have published exact descriptions so that no one could be in any doubt how the dances were performed in 1923, and then tried to persuade everyone that this was the right (I do not say best) way of dancing them. Freezing is one way of preserving.

(2) **to develop:** arguing that tradition is always changing, *you* could have decided to organise the change yourself, starting with the 1923 style, smartening it up, modifying existing dances and inventing new ones. This would have been the traditional (meaning usual) thing to do. Rutherford's (1756) "Compleat collection of 200 country dances [had] the newest and best figures and directions to each tune, by Mr Rose." Some 60 years later, Thomas Wilson, even more than Mr Rose, laid down the law about country dancing, composed new dances and invented new figures.

(3) **to revive a golden age:** you could have selected your age (a short one to avoid changes) and imitated exactly the dances and versions of dances then popular. The golden age of English country dances is considered by many to be about 1650-1670; when John Russell was proving he was not an old man. (A Frenchman visiting the Court of Charles II in the 1660s spoke of the 70-year old John Russell as one of the most furious dancers in all England. He had a collection of two or three hundred dances in print, all of which he danced at sight.)

(4) **to study history:** arguing that dances reflect culture and that culture study is more important than dancing, you could have tried to do all dances in the style or styles in which they used to be performed, making sure you did not do a 1750 dance, or version of a dance, in the style of 1720 or 1780.

Judging by results (and if I have judged wrongly I hope someone will correct me) the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society seems to have done a bit of everything except freezing. The Society was formed to burn the 1923 style rather than freeze it. Their golden age for technique was the earliest they could reach by hearsay, since dancing masters wrote very little about steps. But, thank goodness, they did not confine themselves to the rather unexciting dances of that age. They took dances from as early as 1695 ("Cold and Raw" and, "Red House") to as late as 1890 ("Ladies' Fancy" and "La Danse Florence," better known as "The Dashing White Sergeant") and developed them, inventing new figures when they did not like, or did not understand, the old ones. And now, again thank goodness, they are reviving the tradition of inventing new dances.

The results have been remarkably popular. The Book 15 "Waverley" seems to me to be a much better dance than the one Thomas Wilson composed for Button, Whittaker and Beadnell and, in particular, the modern "double triangles" is far more exciting than Wilson's "double triangle."

Though, like Dr and Mrs Flett, I am very curious to know who composed the modern "Waverley," and who invented the modern "double triangles," I am at the same time very glad they did. The golden age of Scottish country dancing is now.

Extract from *The Reel no 46, December 1958*,
author unknown.

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DANCE EVENTS

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SPRING BALL

Weekend of 16/17 June 2007

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Dancing, eating, drinking, dancing again followed by a day on the water.

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Website: <http://danseecossaisemtp.free.fr/>



THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION FOR WALLINGTON, CARSHALTON & DISTRICT New Year Ball

Saturday 13th January 2007

7.00 - 11.00 p.m.

Aitken Hall, St Andrew's Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam SM2 7HF

McBain's Band

Programme: Joie de Vivre, Happy Returns, The Gentleman, Ladies' Fancy, Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan, Miss Milligan's Strathspey, Pelorus Jack, The Ladies of Dunse, Sugar Candie, Tribute to the Borders, John of Bon Accord, Lang Tyme Mairrit, The Piper & the Penguin, The Sailor, Bedrule, Postie's Jig.

Tickets £18 to include supper and wine

Details from Maggie Westley: 020 8647 9899 westley3148@tiscali.co.uk

Or Gill Russell: 01372 812821 rusmar@ntlworld.com.

JERSEY SCOTTISH DANCE WEEKEND

Bank Holiday Weekend

Saturday 26th May and Sunday 27th May 2007

Jersey College for Girls Hall,

Le Mont Millais, St. Helier

Sound Company

£25.00 for two nights

It is advisable to book travel and accommodation early. Brochures from Jersey Tourism Tel.01534 500700 or visit www.jersey.com.

Contacts: Helen McGugan, La Pelotte, La Rue a Don, Grouville, Jersey JE3 9GB Tel/Fax 01534 854459 or Alan Nicolle Tel.01534 484375 or e-mail: alan_nicolle@yahoo.co.uk.

WEMBLEY & DISTRICT SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION Annual Ball

Saturday 24th February 2007

7.30 - 11.30 p.m.

Eastman's Hall, Kodak, Harrow View, Harrow, HA2 6QQ

The Craigellachie Band

Programme: The Bees of Maggicknockater, Fife Ness, John MacAlpin, Napier's Index, Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan, The Moray Rant, The Starry Eyed Lassie, Dance with Mother, The Bonnie Lass o' Bon Accord, The White Heather Jig, The Plantation Reel, The Dream Catcher, The Kelloholm Jig, The Queen's View, Foxhill Court, Quarries Jig, Anniversary Reel, The Wind on Loch Fyne, Diamond Jubilee, Mrs MacPherson of Inveran.

Tickets £15 and further details from:

Mrs Patricia Hamilton, 7 Boldmere Road, Eastcote, Pinner, Middlx HA5 1PJ. Tel: 020 8866 2841.



RSCDS BERKS, HANTS, SURREY BORDER BRANCH

Christmas Social

Thursday, 28th December 2006

Finchampstead Memorial Hall

7.45 to 10.45 p.m.

Bring and share refreshments, dancing to tapes.

Contact Jan Douglas, 0118 978 1125

Branch Day School

Saturday, 10 March 2007

Court Moor School, Fleet

Teachers: Linda Gaul

Alison Russell, Alan Davis

Pianists: Robert Mackay, Ken Martlew

Music Workshop: George Meikle

Contacts: Dancer's Workshop, Diane Hoskins

01628 639 699; Musician's Workshop,

May Sloan, 01428 604 868.

Day School Social

Music provided by Day School Musicians

Tickets in advance only

Contact: John Douglas, 0118 978 1125

Branch Ball - 19th May 2007

The Emmbrook School, Wokingham RG41 1JP

Music by Neil Copland

Contact: Margaret Williams, 01256 320015

Summer Open Air Dance - 16th June 2007

South Hill Park, Bracknell RG12 7PA

Contact: Fiona Albinson, 0118 9789181 or Sheila Jupp, 01344 773371.

RSCDS CHELTENHAM BRANCH

Annual Ball

Saturday 13th January 2007

University of Gloucestershire, Park Campus, Cheltenham, GL50 2RH.

Ian Muir and the Craigellachie Band

Tickets £15 (including finger buffet)

Programme and other details on website:

beehive.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk/cheltenhamrscds

Weekend School

Sat/Sun 10th - 11th February 2007

Richard Pate School, Cheltenham

Teacher: Margo Priestley

Musician: Ken Martlew

Details: Margaret Winterbourne, tel: 01242 863238.

RSCDS OXFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Day School and Dance

Saturday 17th February 2007

Headington School, Oxford, OX3 0BL

Teachers: Allison Russell (Ayr)

Eric Finley (Ayr), Dennis Tucker (Oxford)

Musicians: Ian Muir, Judith Muir
Jeremy Hill

Tickets: Whole day £21.00. Morning or afternoon class £7.50 each session.

Evening Dance £11.00

Music for the evening dance provided by

Ian Muir and The Craigellachie Band

Details: Trisha Rawlings, 29 Frances Road,

Middle Barton, Chipping Norton, Oxon, OX7

7ET. Tel: 01869 340830 or email:

trisha@rawlings50cc.fsnet.co.uk



LONDON HIGHLAND CLUB

Forthcoming attractions to be held at St. Columba's Church Hall, Pont Street, London SW1

Fridays: Upper Hall 7.30 - 10.30 p.m.

Saturdays: Lower Hall 7.00 - 10.30 p.m.

Unless otherwise stated

Saturday 16th December **Frank Reid**
7.00 - 11.00 pm

Christmas Dance, Inc Seasonal Fare

Saturday 6 January **Craigievar**
7.00 - 11.00 p.m.

New Year's dance, inc Haggis Supper

Friday 12 January ...AGM Followed by dancing

Saturday 3 February **Ian Muir** (Prestwick)
7.00 - 11.30 pm

Annual Ball

Friday 16 February St Valentine's Dance

Saturday 3 March **Stradivarius**

All dances will be talked or walked through on request.

For further details contact: Frank Bennett on 020 8715 3564, e-mail fb.lhc@blueyonder.co.uk, or Roger Waterson on 020 8660 5017. You can also telephone our "Dial-a-Programme" service on 020 8763 8096 to hear our programme, or leave a message. Everyone is welcome at all our functions, so please come along and join us for an enjoyable evening.

LONDON HIGHLAND CLUB

Annual Ball

Saturday 3rd February 2007

St Columba's Church, Pont Street

19.00 to 23.30

Ian Muir (Prestwick)

Programme: The Bees of Maggicknockater; Flowers of Edinburgh; Drumelzier; Seton's Ceilidh Band; Blooms of Bon Accord; Sugar Candie; Posties Jig; Catch The Wind On Loch Fyne; Blacksmith of Elgin; Nottingham Lace; St Columba's Strathspey; Polharrow Burn; Duchess Tree; Bonnie Anne; Highland Rambler; Dundee Whaler; Muirland Willie; Dancing in the Street; Silver Tassie; Argyll's Fancy; Hamilton House; The Robertsons Rant; The Montgomeries' Rant. Extras: Anniversary Reel; Ladies Fancy.

Dances will not be walked through at this dance

Tickets: (Including finger buffet refreshments)

LHC Members in advance £12.00.

Non Members in advance £14.00.

All classes on door £15.00.

Highland or evening dress preferred.

All enquiries to Frank Bennett 020 8715 3564, e:fb.lhc@blueyonder.co.uk or Roger Waterson 020 8660 5017.

**16th December is the date of the
Lucy Clark big 40th Anniversary Ball
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an excellent floor - supper with wine -
Karl Sandeman's Band...*

Phone Dick Field on 01494 562231 Hurry!

RICHMOND CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

Burns' Supper and Dance

Saturday 20th January 2007

6.15 p.m. - 11 p.m.

St Mary's Parish Hall, Langham Road,
Teddington

Dancing to Finlay Forbes

Tickets £22.50 to include wines.

Details from Mrs Jean Jacob, tel: 020 8977 4155.

Want to advertise in *The Reef*?

Contact Jeff Robertson, tel: 01903 530750
or 020 7730 9633. Email: jtr@ctg.co.uk.

DANCE EVENTS (continued)

There are more Dance Events
on the back page



BERKHAMSTED STRATHSPEY & REEL CLUB

Highland Ball
Saturday 13th January 2007
7.30 p.m. – midnight
Ashlyns School, Berkhamsted.

Sandy Nixon and his Scottish Dance Band

Programme: St. Andrew's Fair, The Sailor, The Rose of the North, Preston Mill, Newton Park, Canadian Barn Dance, Capetown Wedding, Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan, Muirland Willie, The Wind on Loch Fyne, Schiehallion, Scottish Waltz, Fife Ness, The Shepherd's Crook, The Bees of Maggie Knockater, Australian Ladies, Kilkenny Castle, Cadgers in the Canongate, The White Heather Jig, Wisp of Thistle, Quarries' Jig, The Irish Rover.

Admission by Programme – £18.50, inc. dinner.
No bar – BYO drinks (soft drinks provided).

Details and tickets from: Mrs Linda Godbold,
'Alize', Shootersway Lane, Berkhamsted,
HP4 3NP, tel: 01442 866651,
email: lindagodbold@hotmail.com.

Highland Ball Practice: Sunnyside Church Hall,
Ivy House Lane, Berkhamsted.

Saturday 6th January 2007
2.00 - 5.00 p.m. £3 on the door.

For cribs and more details see our website:
www.berkhamstedreelclub.org.

INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND COURSE

Budapest, Hungary
Friday 27th April - Tuesday 1st May 2007

Teacher: **Eric Finley**
Musician: **Andrew Lyon** (piano)

David Cunningham and his SCD Band

Further details and application forms available
from Gábor Turi, 1021 Budapest, Széher út 56.
ball@bstk.hu, or turig@bstk.hu, or online at
www.bstkh.hu/en

WEST MACS CHARITY BALL

Saturday 21st April 2007
North London Collegiate School, Edgware

The Craigellachie Band

Programme and other details in next issue.

Enquiries to Jim Henderson,

tel: 020 8954 2586,

email: jimhendersonuk@aol.com

MAIDENHEAD SCOTTISH DANCING CLUB

Highland Ball
Saturday 17th March 2007
7.00 - 11.00 p.m.

At a Maidenhead School (details in next *Reel*)

Frank Reid and his Scottish Dance Band

For further details, including programme, please
contact:- Alan Pfeiffer 64 Wavell Road
Maidenhead Berks SL6 5AD, tel/fax 01628
633928, Mobile 07956 233 536.

Visit our website at:- www.maidenheadscottishdancing.org.uk.

CHISWICK SCD CLUB

Kilts & Posh Frocks 5 – A Christmas Ball
Sunday 10th December 2006 from 7.00 p.m.

Chiswick Town Hall

David Hall & Band

Programme & details at chiswickscottish.org.uk
or call Kay Senior at 020 8743 9385.

WATFORD & WEST HERTS SCOTTISH SOCIETY

Caledonian Ball
Saturday, 31st March 2007
7.30 - 11.30 p.m.

Parmiter's School, Watford, Herts WD25 0UU.

The Karl Sandeman Trio

Details: Dr. John Crowder, tel. 01923 225522.

Tickets@WatfordScottish.org.uk

www.WatfordScottish.org.uk.

ABINGDON SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

Annual Ball,
Saturday 24th March, 2007
Abingdon, near Oxford.

Ken Martlew and Barbara Manning

Programme and details, see February Reel
Rena Fowler, tel. 01865 361129.



ARGYLL SCOTTISH DANCING GROUP

Day School
Saturday 21st April 2007
Edgbarrow School, Sandhurst Rd,
Crowthorne, RG45 7HZ

Teachers: **Eric Finley,**
Lynda Hughes, Sam Schad

Musicians: **Jean Harrison,**
Robert Mackay, Judith Smith

Further details and application forms contact:

Gaynor Curtis, 60 Bishops Wood, St Johns,
Woking Surrey GU21 3QB. Tel: 01483 721989.

Weekend School

Dillington House, Somerset
5th - 7th October 2007

Booking opens January 2007

For booking contact: Dillington House,

Iminster, Somerset TA19 9DT.

Tel: 01460 258613

Email: dillington@somerset.gov.uk,

Website: www.dillington.co.uk.

CAMBRIDGE & DISTRICT BRANCH Day School

Saturday 17th February 2007
Netherhall Lower School, Cambridge
Musicians (full day)

Teacher: **Iain MacPhail**
Dancers (afternoon only)

Teachers: **Malcolm Ferris-Lay (Highland),**
Kate Gray (Ladies' Step),
David Queen (Country)

Evening Dance

Joint with the Cambridge Scottish Society
Saturday 17th February 2007
7.30-11.00 p.m.

Netherhall Lower School, Cambridge

Iain MacPhail and Musicians of the Day School

Tickets £5, shared refreshments

For application forms for the day school and

tickets for the evening dance send an S.A.E. to

Dr R. Nedderman, 17 Clarkson Road,

Cambridge, CB3 0EH, Tel: 01223 353869, or

look at www.rscds-cambridge.org/events.html

Advance Dance Notice

REIGATE SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

Formal Dance

Saturday 10th March 2007

Reigate School, Pendleton Road, Reigate.

Dewhurst Band

Full details in next issue.

Alister Reid 0208 393 6732.

GUILDFORD SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

Spring Dance

Saturday 5th May 2007
7.30 - 11.30 p.m.

Normandy Village Hall,

The Frank Reid Scottish Dance Band

Enquiries: Catherine Smith

tel: 01483 502422 or

e-mail: crsmithgg@aol.com

HARPENDEN SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING CLUB

Annual Ball
Saturday 3rd March 2007
7.30 - 11.30 p.m.

Harpenden Public Hall, Harpenden, Herts.

Craigellachie SCD Band

Programme: The Jubilee Jig, Foxhill Court, The Montgomerie's Rant, Scotch Mist, The Huntsman, Mairi's Wedding, The Dundee Whaler, Midnight Oil, We're Noo Awa', Anniversary Reel, The Singing Sands, Blooms of Bon Accord, Father Connelly's Jig, Johnnie Walker, Macleod's Fancy, The Falls of Rogie, Culla Bay, The Goodhind Reel, From Scotia's Shores, Major Ian Stewart, The Moray Rant, The Plantation Reel, Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder.

£15, Students (16-21) £10, including Supper.

Tickets and enquiries:

Val Owens, tel: 01727 863870,

email: tvowens@beeb.net

Website: www.HSCDC.org.uk.

HARROW & DISTRICT CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

59th Annual Ball
Friday 5th January, 2007
7.30 - 11.30 p.m.

Allum Hall, 2 Allum Lane, Elstree, Herts WD6 3PJ

The Craigellachie Band

Programme: Bratach Bana, Aird of Coigach, The Dream Catcher, John of Bon Accord, Napier's Index, S-Locomotion, Mrs Stuart Linnell, My Heather Hills, The Rose of the North, Anniversary Reel, Father Connelly's Jig, Hooper's Jig, The Earl of Mansfield, Mrs Milne of Kinneff, The Cooper's Wife, Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan, The Cashmere Shawl, The Flying Spur, The Piper and the Penguin, The Moray Rant, Quarries' Jig, Ray Milbourne.

Tickets £15.00 (non-dancers and juniors

£7.50), including refreshments,

from Jim Henderson, Tel. 020 8954 2586, email:

jimhendersonuk@aol.com

THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE HIGHLAND BALL

Saturday 3rd March 2007
7.30 - 11.45 p.m.

The Guildhall, Abingdon

Green Ginger

Programme: Joie de Vivre, Mrs MacLeod, Miss Milligan's Strathspey, The Wee Cooper of Fife, Polharrow Burn, Singing Sands, The Bees of Maggie Knockater, Mrs Stewart of Fasnacloich, Schiehallion, General Stuart's Reel; The Nurseryman, Over the Volcano, Kilkenny Castle, Muirland Willie, De'il among the Tailors, Trysting Place, Bea's Delight, Minister on the Loch, Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder, The Reel of 51st Division. *Extras:* Rev John MacFarlane, Monymusk, Postie's Jig.

Tickets: £15 (students £12) inc. supper from:

Alan Ross, Wolfson College, Oxford, OX2 6UG.

Email: alan.ross@classics.ox.ac.uk

ON THE ORIGIN OF COUNTRY DANCES

Over the course of nearly 60 years of attending various Scottish Country Dancing classes I have heard many teachers attempt to explain the origins of country dancing and the reason for its peculiar description. Typical remarks are:

- Country dancing originated as Court Ballroom dancing and after it fell out of favour at Court, it continued in the lower echelons of Society and acquired its present name.
- Country dancing came to Britain from the Continent.
- Contradances were danced at the French Court. Mary Queen of Scots introduced the French Court dances to Scotland.
- French is the language of dancing, after the Continental Contradances were brought to Britain the name was anglicised as Country Dancing.

Miss Jean C. Milligan wrote in "The Scottish Country Dance" (1924 & 1931): *'In this connection it must be understood that 'country' is really a corruption of 'contra', the dances being of a type where the dancers stand in long lines, partner opposite partner.*

In an attempt to clarify matters a brief historical summary of the known facts follows.

In 1549, the Complaint of Scotland contained a record of country dancing in the Lowlands of Scotland. It reported that the musicians were playing bagpipes, fiddles and tin whistles for the performance of the following dances (amongst others): Al Cristeyn Mennis; North of Scotland; Huntisup; Robene Hude; Alman Heye; The Speyde; The Flail.

In 1561, Mary Queen of Scots introduced formal French Court Dances to Scotland. (The French Court were not yet performing country dances)

In 1563, Elinor Gunter's manuscript, was written. It is the oldest surviving British record of country dances and was reproduced by James P. Cunningham in "Dancing in the Inns of Court" (1966).

In 1577, Misogynous gives the earliest reference to English country dancing.

In 1581, Il Ballerino (Italy) contained the instructions for "La Chiaranzana". This is the earliest known printed description of a longwise country dance. It is not known whether or not other longwise dances existed in Italy prior to that date.

By 1591, country dances were performed at weddings and similar functions throughout England. When Queen Elizabeth I (of England) was visiting Lord and Lady Montague at Cowdray House, Midhurst, in Sussex, she first witnessed 'country dances' being performed by her hosts, their tenants and servants. As a direct result she introduced country dances to her Court; and there are many contemporary references to indicate that she enjoyed watching them being performed. A 16th. Century journal "News from Scotland" records: *Her Majestie that Saturday night was lodg'd in the Castell of Warwick; where she rested all Sunday, where it pleased her to have the country people, resorting to see her, daunce in the Court of the Castell, her Majestie beholding them out of her chamber window; which thing, as it pleas'd well the countrie people, so it seemed her Majestie was much delighted, and made very myrry.*

In 1600, it was recorded in The Sydney Paoers that: *Her Majestie is in very good health, and comes much abroad these holidays; for almost every night She is in the presence, to see the ladies daunce the old and new country dances with tabor and pipe.'*

In 1602, the Earl of Worcester commented in a letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury: *We are frolic here in Court; much dancing in the Privy*

Chamber of Country Dances before the Queen's Majesty, who is exceeding pleased therewith.'

In 1626, the French ambassador to the Court of St. James, Marechal de Bassompierre, invented the term 'contredanse' to describe country dancing at the English Court in his written reports to France. He used 'contredanse' as an easy transliteration of the well established term 'country dance'.

In 1651, John Playford published "The English Dancing Master"

On the 29th. October, 1694, the Marquis de Dangeau noted in his diary, with reference to a ball at Fontainebleau: *'For the first time country-dances were performed; they had been taught to all the ladies by an English dancing Master named Isaac.'*

In 1695, a French dancing master visited the English Court and collected the instructions for 50 country dances, some of which he recorded in two manuscripts: "Livre de la Contredanse present's au Roy" and "Livre de la Contredanse du Roy".

Unlike Britain (where, since 1650, country dances had retained their essential progressive pattern of being repeated by each couple in turn) in France the style of dancing changed rapidly due to the introduction of French music and steps. Lorin expressed surprise at the wide variety of steps used in English country dancing and the fact that very often country dancers would be using different steps at the same time, (probably because no formal steps had been introduced in England and the dancers used any steps they knew which fitted the music). This was not in accordance with the formality observed at the French Court, so Lorin wrote a manual incorporating formal steps to be used by all. This work appeared at least fifty years before any comparable British publication. The younger members of the French aristocracy liked the new dances and rapidly adopted them.

From 1702 through 1720, the French adopted the English custom of producing annual collections of dances. The books were much smaller than those produced in England, each containing no more than ten dances, each one being meticulously described in considerable detail. The most notable collections were those of Feuillet and Dezais. In addition to the country dances they included one or two dances described as "contredanse a huit (cotillon)". During this period country dances devised by French choreographers were described as "contredanse Francois", but this particular term was discontinued in later years.

In 1706, R. A. Feuillet published "Recueil de Contredanses mises en Choregraphie".

In 1708, the Dauphin included country dances in the programme of a Royal Ball.

In 1718, the word "contredanse" first appeared in the "Dictionnaire Francais" after its adoption by the Academie Francais. The use of the term contredanse in France led directly to its adoption by German speaking nations, who use 'Kontratanze' to refer to longwise sets.

In 1724, Bonnet wrote in "The general history of sacred and secular dancing": *Since the wedding of the Duke of Burgundy, noble and sedate dances have been noticeably disappearing year by year: the young people at Court have replaced them by country dances, in which neither gravity nor the nobility of the former dances are to be found.*

In 1756, Pauli wrote in "Elements of the Dance": *The members of the old French Court, being used to sedate and noble dances, hated the country dances, considering them too wanton and sportive for people of decorum.*

Dance terminology is usually expressed in French, as a result it is a widely held but erroneous belief that the term 'country dance' is an English corruption of the French word 'contredanse'. In

England the expression 'country dance' was in use for more than 35 years prior to the first recorded use of the word 'contredanse'. 'Contra-dance' is a corruption of the expression, arising possibly as a mistranslation of the French word.

John W Mitchell

From the Archives of *The Reel* No 41 of February 1958, Professor Hugh Thurston, compiler of *Schiehallion* and other dances had this to say on the subject:

...When I looked into old documents, the evidence I found pointed to the country dance as a whole, as well as a considerable number of individual country dances, having radiated out from England. Other people hold strongly the view that they come from France, and in particular from its court. When I wrote "Scotland's Dances" I did not know of this opposing view; so I presented the evidence as it stood, without balancing the one point of view against the other.

I therefore propose to put forward here the evidence for the English provenance of this dancing. If one of the champions of the other point of view will produce the evidence for that, we shall be able to balance the *one against the other*.

The first thing we find is that French terms came in late in the history of the dance. The earliest Scottish manuscripts – the Holman MS, the Menzies MS, and the Bowman MS (all 18th century) – contain not a single French term between them. It is later MSS, such as the Blantyre MS, National Library of Scotland MS No. 3860, and the Hill MS (all 19th century) that contain the French terms.

Let us start with Thomas Wilson's "A Companion to the Ballroom" (1816), for several reasons. Firstly, many libraries have it. Secondly, our books contain more dances from it than from any other single source. Thirdly, it contains several interesting chapters and is not 'just a collection of tunes and figures. And, fourthly, Wilson wrote other books to which we can turn.

He was a London dancing-master, His book is essentially a collection of dance-tunes, mostly English, Irish and, Scottish, with a few French, German and Italian, which he had collected. For each of them he invented (and printed in the book) three dances – one easy, one moderate, one difficult. There is not a stroke of evidence of any of Wilson's dances being performed in Scotland before the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society reconstructed them, or, in France at all. Thus we have 22 dances in the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society's repertoire which are one hundred per cent English! At this point I should like to challenge anyone who supports the opposing theory, to produce a single dance in the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society's books which is one hundred per cent French.

Again I challenge anyone still unconvinced to produce a quotation – English, French or Scottish – of a date anywhere near this, describing country dances, or contredanses as being French, or as being danced in France, let. alone as being danced at the French court, or derived from French court dances.

Now comes what seems to me a very strong piece of evidence indeed. The first book of country dances ever published in France is Feuillet's "Recueil de Contredanses," 1706. In the preface, Feuillet writes "Les Anglois en sont les premiers inventeurs, toutes les contredanses d'Angleterre que l'on trouvera dans ce recueil sont autant de pieces originales choisies entre les plus belles," So, here is the author of the first French book of country dances saying that they were invented by the English, What more could one want?

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Evening social dance with Peter Jenkins
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e-mail: pdavoll@aol.com
Spring Dance
Saturday 21st April 2007
Matfield Village Hall, Matfield,
Kent TN12 7JX
Recorded Music
Contact: Sandra Ranson Tel: 01892 524022 e-mail: sandraranson@hotmail.com

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