

# SCOTTISH Country Dancer

  
**rscds**  
Dance Scottish

The Members' Magazine of the RSCDS

No 35 October 2022



# RSCDS EVENTS



## AUTUMN GATHERING 2022 & 93<sup>RD</sup> AGM

4 - 6 NOVEMBER  
THE KELVIN HALL, GLASGOW

- Friday night - Informal dance: Music by Màrtainn Skene Scottish Dance Band, 8pm – 11:30pm
- Centenary Launch Presentation: Saturday 9:30am – 10:20am
- Saturday Class: Alasdair Brown with musician Bill Ewan, 10:30am – 12 noon
- AGM: Saturday 2pm
- Saturday Nice n' Easy Dance: Music by Scott Band Scottish Dance Band, 7:30pm – 9pm
- Saturday Night – Formal Ball: Music by Susan MacFadyen Scottish Dance Band, 8pm – 11:30pm
- Talk on Dances through the Decades: Sunday, 9:30am – 10:15am
- Sunday Class: Kate Gentles with musician Susan MacFadyen, 10:30am – 12 noon

## WINTER SCHOOL 2023

19 - 24 FEBRUARY  
THE ATHOLL PALACE HOTEL,  
PITLOCHRY  
CO-ORDINATOR: FIONA MACKIE

Enjoy daily dance classes, whisky tasting, social dancing each evening plus a ball on your last night at the spectacular Blair Castle.

## Book an event!

Information on all events can be found at [www.rscds.org/events](http://www.rscds.org/events)

For any queries contact the RSCDS Events Manager Moira Thomson, [moira.thomson@rscds.org](mailto:moira.thomson@rscds.org)



## CENTENARY BALL 2023

25 MARCH  
ASSEMBLY ROOMS, EDINBURGH

Help us to celebrate the RSCDS Centenary with a Ball at this stunning venue in the heart of Edinburgh City Centre. A reception will be held at 7:15pm with dancing from 8pm – 11:30pm. Music will be provided by both Marian Anderson and David Oswald.



## SUMMER SCHOOL 2023

16 JULY - 13 AUGUST  
UNIVERSITY HALL, ST ANDREWS  
DIRECTORS: JIM STOTT & TBC

- Attend as a resident or non-resident for any one or two of the four weeks
- Morning classes at all levels and optional afternoon classes
- Junior Summer School
- Social Dancing each evening
- Units 2, 3 and 5
- The Class Musicians' Course
- The Ensemble Musicians' Course
- DAA

All classes and courses are subject to demand.

## CENTENARY CELEBRATION SPRING FLINGS 2023

EDINBURGH, 14 – 16 APRIL

From one Roaring 20s to the next! A weekend packed with dancing including classes for all levels and evening dances open to all ages. There is something for everyone – even fancy dress! Music will be provided by Ewan Galloway on the Friday night and Jim Lindsay on the Saturday night.

TORONTO, 26 – 28 MAY

First time in North America, Fling and Fringe dancers welcome you to Toronto to celebrate a century of the RSCDS. Two evening dances, a medley of classes, teaching styles and musicians, and Fling-age teachers to boot! Let's trip the light fantastic in and around the University of Toronto downtown campus!

# Editorial

This year, we celebrated Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee with the publication of a beautifully presented book of dances and stories connected with her reign. Did you know that she was our patron for even longer? In this issue, Alan Macpherson, our Society archivist, describes the involvement of the Royal Family in Scottish country dancing since Victorian times. With documents from the RSCDS archive, he tells the story of the Queen's long involvement with Scottish country dance.

Scottish country dancing was thriving at the time of the Queen's accession, and while Miss Milligan was teaching in Glasgow, her contemporary, Allie Anderson, was making a significant contribution to popularising the SCDS in Edinburgh. Members of the Edinburgh Branch remember her in an article in this issue, as well as reminiscing about dancing in Princes Street Gardens. Born nearby in Dalkeith, John Bowie Dickson is commemorated in an interview with his wife, who shares not only his approach to creating new dances, but how they took dancing with them when they moved to Adelaide, Australia, then Montreal, Canada, and their long association with Pinewoods camp in Massachusetts, USA, before their return to Scotland where they danced with Dunedin Dancers in Edinburgh.

The Summer School in St Andrews was an exhilarating experience for many dancers from all over the world, some of whom made close friends in the examination class, others who were able to renew friendships as well as meet newcomers of all ages. Music is key to the enjoyment of dancing, and Jill Andrews expresses her thanks to all those who play for us in her opinion piece. Musicians themselves have taken the time to write about their experiences of attending music schools, whether to learn about playing in the Scottish style; or playing in a band and making up sets for a dance; or supporting the teacher at a dance class. Appreciation of our music makars, who put hours of practice and time into performing for us, is so important today. Scottish music is thriving in Scotland, but very few of those playing are either invited or choose to play for our dancing. What more can we do to encourage them to set our feet dancing?

Where would we be without our members who want to share questions about dancing with the rest of us and suggest changes to the RSCDS? The letters page might give you pause for thought, and perhaps spur you on to reply, and think about the future of the RSCDS as we enter our centenary year.

*Fiona Grant, Bristol*

**Cover:** Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip dance an *eightsome reel* at the Centenary Ball of the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, 2 July 1982.  
PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo

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The next issue of *Scottish Country Dancer* will be published in April 2023. Please refer to Notes for Contributors on the website. Send materials for inclusion to the editor: [mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org) no later than 31 January 2023. Please send enquiries about advertising to Cécile Hascoët: [mag.advertising@rscds.org](mailto:mag.advertising@rscds.org)

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# News from Coates Crescent

## Branch Awards

Members are the bedrock of the RSCDS and without you, the Society would not exist today. Congratulations to all the Branch Award recipients this year and a huge thank you for all your contributions to the strategic and charitable aims of the Society.

Belfast	Lyn Rankin
Calgary	Graham Sewell
Carlisle	Brian Oliver
Central Germany	Martina Müller-Franz
Cornwall	Polly Barton
Cornwall	Val Dawson
Cornwall	Felicity Hooper
Croydon and District	Ian Lunt
Duns and District	Annette Miller
Houston and District	Tiffany Clede-Howard
Houston and District	David Davies
Kingston, ON	Kay Munn
Los Angeles	Melinda Brown
Los Angeles	Robb Quint
Manchester	Heather Cook
Manchester	Robert Kinnon-Brettle
Manchester	David Taylor
Melbourne and District	Donald David Chitts
Monklands	Jean Gardner
Monklands	Joan Marshall
New Zealand	David Williamson
Norwich	Gay Heath
Ottawa	Jean Curtis
Peterborough and District	Sheila Lewins
Roxburgh Selkirk and Peebles	Lyn Bryce
San Francisco	Bradley Hobbs
Tokyo	Tom Toriyama
York and North Humberside	Sue Bell
York and North Humberside	Nigel Bell

For more information about Branch Awards, visit the [Get Involved Section/member recognition](#) at [www.rscds.org](http://www.rscds.org)



Yoshimichi Kudo Chairman of Tokyo Branch (Right) handing a branch award to Tom Toriyama (Left)

## 2022 AGM

### Elections to Management Board and Committees

Elections for the vacancies advertised on the website will take place in November. All candidate profiles are available on the website. The results will be announced at the AGM on 5 November 2022.

### Motion to 2022 AGM

'The Management Board proposes that for the year from 1st July 2023, the basic full annual subscription shall be increased to £26 per annum, with other membership subscriptions based pro-rata on this amount'.

Details of additional motions for the 2022 AGM have been shared with branches and are available on the website.

## Education and Training

### Unit 1

The fixed dates for the Unit 1 written paper in 2023 are: 11 March and 24 October.

Please email [info@rscds.org](mailto:info@rscds.org) if you are interested in applying for any of the E&T courses, including the Core Training for Instructors (CTI) programme. You can find more information about teacher training on the [Learn section](#) of the website.

## Membership Services

Just a reminder that ahead of the new *Book 53* being published in June 2023, you can still purchase your copies of previous MS publications including *Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II - A Celebration through Scottish Music and Dance*, *Sir Walter Scott - The Heart of Mid-Lothian and Thirty Popular Dances Volume 2*. Toe-tapping CDs are available to accompany each of these publications.

## Youth Services

Rowan, the Young Dancers mascot, is currently travelling the globe with the aim of reaching (and being photographed with) as many young (or young at heart) dancers around the world as possible to help celebrate the Society turning 100! The journey started in August 2022 with the Junior Summer School dancers in St Andrews and so far, Rowan has been invited to visit a variety of exciting dancing destinations including Austria, Belfast, Berlin, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Cornwall, Dublin, Frankfurt, Hobart, Lyon, New Zealand, Ontario, San Francisco, Sydney, the Scottish Borders and Switzerland.

It's not too late to join in – contact [Lyndsay.Walker@rscds.org](mailto:Lyndsay.Walker@rscds.org) if you wish to find out more and get involved.



## Staffing Update

Our innovative Graphic Designer, Katherine Butler, who joined the Society in 2018, has recently found a new creative role working closer to home. We are very sorry to lose Kat, but we wish her well in her new endeavours and thank her for all her contributions. We are currently in the process of recruiting a replacement for this role and will share any updates on the website.



*Jason Dyer*

We are delighted to announce that Jason Dyer has recently joined the Society in the new role of Fundraising Director. Jason began his career in fundraising over 26 years ago and has focused on raising funds for arts and heritage organisations. Over the course of his career, he has had the privilege of working on several significant projects, including the restoration of Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, Trimontium (Scotland's only museum dedicated to the Romans), Lichfield Cathedral, the Royal Horticultural Society and many more. Jason is passionate about the difference fundraising can make to arts and cultural organisations and the value of such organisations in our society. He is very much looking forward to his new role with the RSCDS and hopes to encourage a wide range of funders to engage with and support the important work of the Society.

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## Membership News

The Society would like to sincerely thank all our members for your continued membership renewals.

Last year, over 500 new dancers joined the Society and we now have a presence in 38 countries with a total of 9,608 members. Check out below where our dancers are based so you can plan future visits to dancing locations around the world!

Do you love teaching others to dance, organising events and making a difference in your local community? Then perhaps starting a Branch or Affiliated Group might be the next step for you. Visit the [Get Involved](#) section on the website to find out more or email us at [info@rscds.org](mailto:info@rscds.org).

<b>United Kingdom</b> England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales	<b>4412</b>
<b>Europe</b> Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine	<b>716</b>
<b>Australasia</b> Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand	<b>1865</b>
<b>North America</b> USA and Canada	<b>2578</b>
<b>Rest of the World</b> Argentina, Barbados, Israel, Mexico, South Africa and Uruguay	<b>37</b>



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## From the Chairman



**Lorna Ogilvie**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of our Royal Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 8 September 2022. We remember with affection and gratitude the service she gave to the Society over

many years. Being invited to represent the RSCDS at the Service of Reflection and Thanksgiving for the life of Her Majesty the Queen at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, on Monday 12 September, was for me both an honour and a privilege.

Dancers and musicians have so longed to meet, socialise, and dance together after two years during which we have become experts in virtual RSCDS events and meetings. For over 500 dancers and musicians this was, at last, to become a reality in St Andrews as the three-week 2022 Summer School got under way. There was palpable excitement as dancers met up with old friends and made new ones. We welcomed many attending Summer School for the first time to improve and learn in classes, make music, dance together and perhaps socialise into the early hours in the party room. The atmosphere in the Younger Hall at the first dance was electric as dancers enjoyed great music, and MCs reminded us, amidst much applause, how good it was to be back. 'Fun, fitness and friendship' very much in action!

“*We welcomed many attending Summer School for the first time.*”

Two years of virtual meetings has not stopped the work of both Trustees and Committees. The office staff in Coates Crescent, led by the Office Manager, Clare, have operated a very effective hybrid system, ensuring communication with members whilst allowing innovative ideas and creativity to flourish, alongside routine work.

The past two years have given William and me an opportunity to update procedures and paperwork, in preparation for the Society's second century. It has become clear that working practices, and how the Society operates through the Board, committees and working groups, as well as in branches worldwide, need to reflect the modern, fast, digital communication world we now live in. This means employing staff with different skills to ensure we are being smart in our use of our volunteers' time. Decision making can currently be cumbersome and must now move with the times.

Detailed plans for the centenary year celebrations will be launched during the Autumn Gathering in Glasgow in November, and updates posted regularly on the website, and in *Dance Scottish Together*.

As I near the end of my two years as Chairman I am very aware how few RSCDS members I have been able to meet in person. Unlike my predecessors, almost all contact has been virtual. Joining those in far-flung parts of the world to chat, or dance virtually, was great fun but one of the real pleasures of my recent visits to Summer School was the social interaction with dancers and musicians, especially with many from younger generations who are the exciting future of the RSCDS.

I have been so lucky to work closely with dedicated colleagues including Board Trustees, Convenors, and committee members, as well as the staff in Coates Crescent. Particular personal thanks must go to Bill, Lizzy and William who, along with Clare, have supported and worked with me tirelessly to ensure that the Society weathered the pandemic years. Similar thanks must also go to so many members in branches worldwide. I am confident for the future and wish all involved every success as the RSCDS enters its second century.

## Membership Services



**Angela Young**

Over recent months, Membership Services has been extremely busy and most of that is a result of your hard work. Many thanks to all who have taken part in the various trial classes and socials for *Book 53 in 2023*. The committee

appreciated all the time and effort that went into organising the sessions, the teachers and group leaders preparing their dance batches to teach, and the dancers who took part, feeding back scores and notes on all that went out to trial. Thank you!

Since receiving your feedback, the scores have been counted and analysed; a comprehensive list compiled of your favourite dances; the committee have undertaken a dance-through of the top 39 dances; the music has been discussed; and the team are checking that we haven't missed any gems as reflected in your comments. The next stage will be to finalise the shortlist and dance through the suggested book, making sure there is a real balance for all levels of experience with music to make everyone want to find a partner and dance.

Described by the committee as a 'must-have commemorative issue', in June we published *Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II – A Celebration through Scottish Music and Dance* celebrating our Patron's remarkable and unprecedented anniversary as the first British Monarch to reach a Platinum Jubilee, 70 years of service. This glossy publication draws on the beautiful photos held by the Society, images of special moments in the Queen's life, as well as the places and people connected to the dances. Unique shots from the Edinburgh Branch archive and RSCDS Jubilees are complemented with information about anniversaries, places, special events and the stories behind them. This continues our focus to deliver products for every member and dancer, complemented by information beyond dance instructions that will hopefully intrigue all those interested in Scottish country dancing and music. For this publication we also trialled print-on-demand CDs with mixed feedback – all of which we will be discussing at our next MS meeting. Do send us your comments.

“*We confirmed the core programme of 10 dances from the RSCDS 10 decades of repertoire.*”

Earlier in the spring we confirmed the core programme of 10 dances from the RSCDS 10 decades of repertoire. You can find the 'Dances through the Decades' list on the RSCDS centenary webpage:

[https://www.rscds.org/sites/default/files/dance\\_through\\_the\\_rscds\\_decades\\_final.pdf](https://www.rscds.org/sites/default/files/dance_through_the_rscds_decades_final.pdf)

We hope this enables branches and groups to create centenary dance programmes and events incorporating the choices, and to join a special Decades dancing event across 24 hours around the globe. A new recording proposal to support the programme is under way and we look forward to sharing more news at this year's Autumn Gathering.

Thanks are owed to the committee members and to Cécile for managing all the *Book 53* queries so quickly and efficiently, and to Luke for the ongoing mammoth task of managing the music. While *Book 53 in 2023* has been keeping everyone busy, work has continued on the Formations Index, plans for centenary recordings and the coffee table volume. Plenty for new committee members to do while bringing their MS ideas to the table in November.

## Education and Training



**Deb Lees**

It has been a busy first half of the year for everyone as dancing gradually returns to what we were used to a few years ago. As I write this, we are welcoming dancers and musicians to St Andrews for the first week of Summer

School and the excitement and joy at being back together again was clear to see. I'm sure the same will be true for all the other events and courses that are taking place around the world again and we are immensely grateful for the time and effort that all the organisers, teachers and musicians put in to make them happen.

Examinations for Unit 2, 3 and 5 of the Teaching Certificate have taken place so far this year in Japan, Australia, St. Andrews, Canada, and New Zealand. And an examination course is planned in Italy later in the year. During all these exams new examiners are being trained by pairing with experienced examiners, which will build our resource for the future. Congratulations to all those who have been successful in their exams and very good luck to those taking them shortly. We are delighted to have so many new teachers especially as many candidates have had a very long wait due to Covid disruption. We have also had the first successful completions of the new CTI (Core Training for Instructors) course: well done to those Trainees and their Trainers.

“*Training to be a teacher is just the start of an ongoing process of skills development.*”

Training to be a teacher is just the start of an ongoing process of skills development, and the E&T committee is currently looking at building resources and opportunities for teachers and instructors to develop their skills. The Virtual Teachers' Conference in May was the first of our ventures into online learning: look out for more in the future. You may also like to read about what the various Teachers Associations offer for continuing teacher development:

<https://www.rscds.org/learn/teaching-scottish-country-dance/teachers-organisations>

Committee members are reviewing Units 1 and 4 of the Teaching Certificate, including more guidance on the role of the Mentor for Unit 4.

We welcome Fiona Mackie to the team as Winter School Coordinator and she is busy organising staff and the programme for Winter School 2023 which runs from 19 to 24 February. Booking is now open, and we are expecting it to be very popular so do book your space now.

This November we say goodbye to Anne Robertson and Deirdre MacCuish Bark who have finished their term on E&T and to Margo Priestly and Pat Houghton who were co-opted onto the committee for this year. Many thanks to them and to the rest of the committee for all their hard work over the past year. I look forward to another productive year with the new committee in November.

## Youth Services



**Philippa McKee**

Hello readers, dancers, enthusiasts. What a busy few months it has been! We enjoyed a terrific response to the grants available for Spring Fling 2022 and hope you enjoyed reading about this event in *Dance Scottish Together*.

Highlights were that 10 branches and groups got in touch to say that they were hosting Spring Fling events this year with 5 branches being awarded grants to support these. For readers with access to the website I encourage you to look at the blogs written by participating groups: the joy and enthusiasm is so evident, and the accompanying photos and videos illustrate far better than I can the success of these events.

Writing this, I have just returned from St Andrews where week 2 of Summer School was under way: a truly uplifting and enjoyable time. I was only able to join for a couple of days, but it was clear that dance fever had really set in, and the Junior Summer School participants were enjoying their experience.

Away from the dance floor, the Youth Services Committee have been working together, drawing on our experiences and developing ideas about how we can better engage with young dancers and musicians. We are hopeful for a successful recruitment to fill our remaining committee positions in November and have been working with Katie Haigh (Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer) to make sure that what we are offering is compliant and child centred. I attended an online course called 'Child Protection and Wellbeing in Sport' run by Sport Scotland which contained some difficult but important messages.

“*Preparations are well under way for Spring Fling in 2023.*”

Going into the centenary year, we are keen to establish and build on existing links in universities and other dance groups with youth involvement. You may also have seen that Rowan the Sheep is going on tour during the centenary year. Please contact [Lyndsay.Walker@rscds.org](mailto:Lyndsay.Walker@rscds.org) if your branch would like to be involved. Preparations are well under way for Spring Fling in 2023, thanks to the efforts of all involved. I am also very glad of the support I have had from staff in the office, my fellow convenors, Management Board members and the members of the Youth Services Committee. Thank you all! Particular thanks to Malin Altenmüller who completes her term with us this November. As always, we are keen to hear from groups who are regularly working with youth or would like to be. If you have ideas or questions, please get in touch with us: [ysc@rscds.org](mailto:ysc@rscds.org) More information can be found on the young dancer webpages:

<https://www.rscds.org/get-involved/young-dancers>.

# The Royal Connection with Scottish Country Dance

**Alan MacPherson, the RSCDS Archivist looks back over Queen Elizabeth's long reign and shares his research into the Royal Family's interest in Scottish country dancing.**

The Royal connection with Scottish Dance can be traced back to Queen Victoria. During the period 1852 -1860, Mr Joseph Lowe, an established and respected Edinburgh dancing master, was retained by Queen Victoria's Household to teach dancing and calisthenics to the Queen and her nine children. Lowe taught the Royal Family and other members of the Royal Household between 1852 and 1860 and was frequently accompanied by his daughter Charlotte to assist with lessons for Queen Victoria's children. Charlotte Lowe and her sister Euphemia continued to teach the Royal Household until 1876.

Lowe recorded his many teaching visits to Balmoral and Windsor in his Journal, frequently commenting on Queen Victoria's graceful dancing style. The dances he taught were mainly the Highland Reels, The Reel of Tulloch, the Quadrilles, and the Waltzes, along with some country dances such as *Pop Goes the Weasel* and *Lady of the Lake*. He also records that he gave lessons to other members of the Royal Household and notes that he taught Prince Alfred the violin. Part of his duties as the dancing teacher was to prepare the Royal Family and Household for participation in the annual Gillies' Ball at Balmoral Castle. In this respect Lowe mentions that he endeavoured to strike a balance between the vigorous 'native' style of dancing and the more refined ballroom style.

Later generations of the Royal Family were also taught Scottish dancing. The photo shows Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (later the Queen Mother) and her brother with James 'Dancie' Neill at Glamis Castle in the early part of the 20th century.

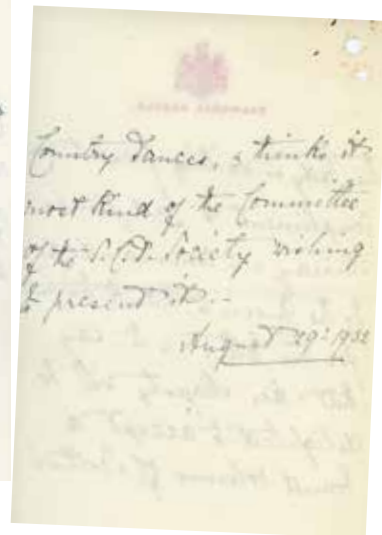


*Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (the Queen Mother) and her brother John, with their dance teacher, James Neill*

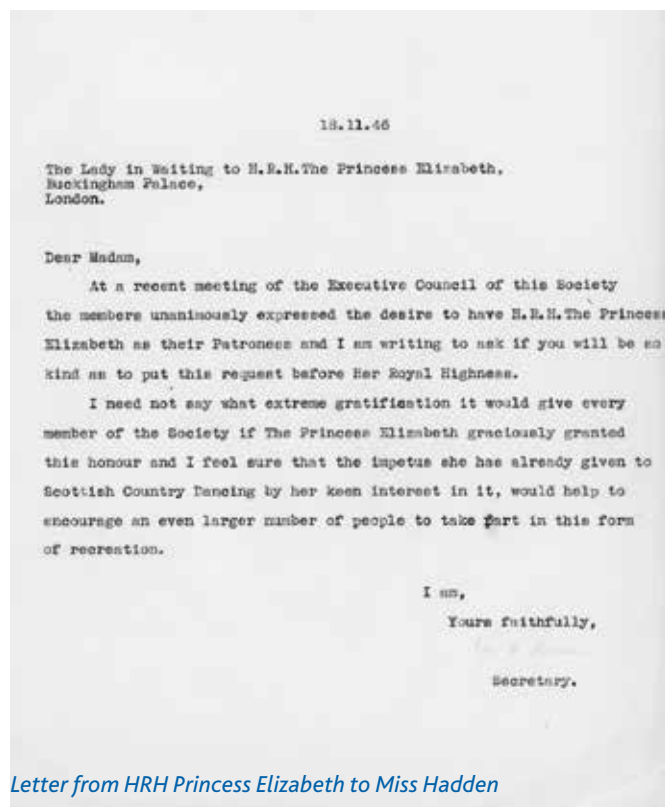
The first direct connection with the Scottish Country Dance Society was in the autumn of 1932. Lord James Stewart Murray, the Society's Chairman at the time, sent a bound volume of the Society's published dances to Queen Mary. The reply from Balmoral Castle is shown here.



*Letter from Balmoral Castle to Lord James Stewart Murray*



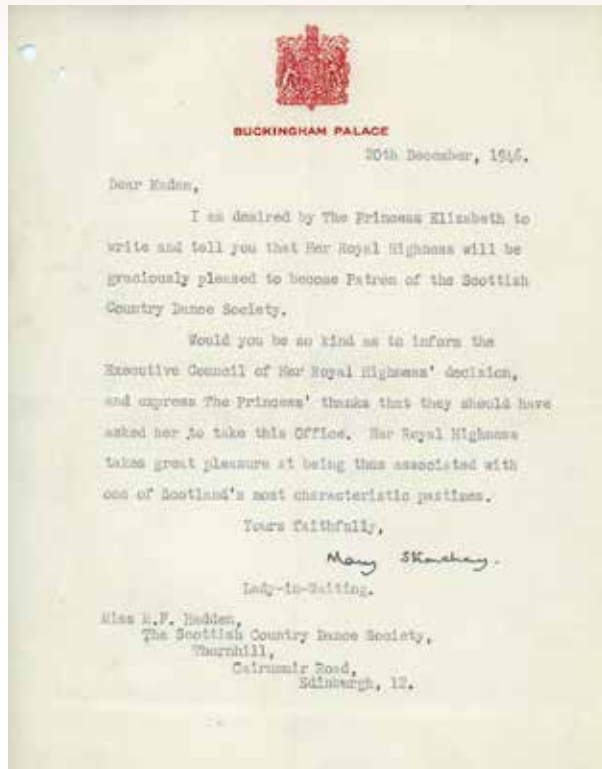
Thus started a continuing dialogue between the Society and the Monarchy. In 1939 Lord James again sent a bound copy of the latest collection of country dances, but on this occasion to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and again received a gracious reply of acceptance. This informal connection continued when in 1946, Miss Hadden, then the Society's Secretary, sent copies of the Society's latest publications to HRH Princess Elizabeth, which were graciously accepted. It was at this time that the Society, knowing of Princess Elizabeth's keen interest Scottish country dancing, decided to invite her to consider becoming the Patroness of the Society.



*Letter from HRH Princess Elizabeth to Miss Hadden*



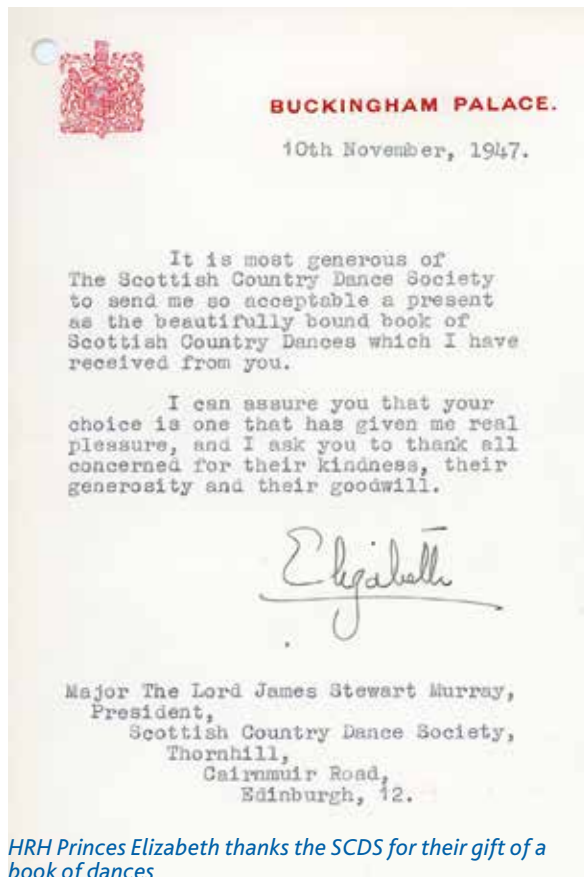
On the 20 of December 1946 the Society received a letter from Buckingham Palace to say that HRH Princess Elizabeth was graciously pleased to become the Society's Patron.



*HRH Princess Elizabeth agrees to be patron of the Society*

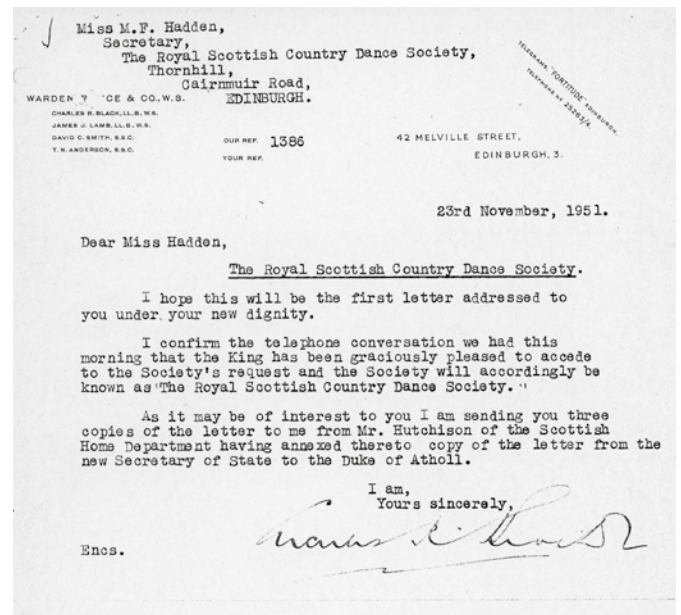
And so began an enduring Royal connection with the Society which is now in its 76th year.

On the occasion of Princess Elizabeth's marriage to the Duke of Edinburgh the Society presented her with a bound volume of all of the Society's dances published at that time. This was the reply received on the 10 of November 1947.



*HRH Princess Elizabeth thanks the SCDS for their gift of a book of dances*

At the 21st Annual General Meeting of the Society held on the 11 November 1950 it was resolved to petition HM King George VI for the grant of a Royal Charter. A committee was formed to prepare a petition in conjunction with officials from the Scottish Home Department. This committee reported to the 22nd AGM on the 3 November 1951. Arising from these meetings a suggestion was made that initially an application be made to the King for his personal permission to append the dignity 'Royal' to the Society's title and to leave the question of a Royal Charter until a later date. This was agreed and a letter was sent through the Secretary of State for Scotland to HM the King requesting this permission. The request was successful and on 23 November 1951 the Society was notified that it would henceforth be known as the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.



*Letter giving permission to add Royal to the title of the SCDS*

Following her succession to the throne the Queen granted her patronage to the RSCDS on the 14 of November 1952 and has in that capacity participated personally in many events associated with the Society.

The first Royal visit to the RSCDS was in 1962 when HM the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, accompanied by the Society's President, the Countess of Elgin, visited the Society's HQ in Coates Crescent. There the Royal visitors met Miss Milligan, the Vice-President, and Miss Hadden, the Secretary, and viewed a presentation of the work of the Society and were entertained to a display of dancing.



*The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visit Coates Crescent*



In 1973, the year of the Society's Golden Jubilee, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attended the Society's Jubilee Ball held in the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh and danced to the music of Jack Delaney's band and Steven Hastie and his Atholl Players.



*The Queen partners Sir Ian Moncrieffe at the RSCDS Golden Jubilee Ball*

2003 was the 50th Anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne and to mark this occasion the Society published five specially commissioned dances. These were included in the book for that year, *Book 47*. In July Elspeth Gray, the Society Secretary, and Alan Macpherson, the Society Archivist, presented a bound volume of the commissioned dances to Her Majesty at a private meeting at Holyrood Palace.



*Alan Macpherson and Elspeth Gray gift a book of dances composed for the Queen's Golden Jubilee*

The last visit by the Queen to a Society event was in 2013 when she attended the 90th Anniversary celebrations held in the City Chambers in Edinburgh. There, she met Society officials and was entertained to a demonstration, by a youth team, of some of the dances from the 90th Anniversary Book.

From 1946 the Queen maintained a keen and continuing interest in the work of the Society in promoting Scottish country dance throughout the world. In doing so she continued the connection between the Royal Family and the dance and music tradition of Scotland, unbroken for over 170 years.



*Dancers perform for the Queen on the 90th Anniversary of the RSCDS*



# Miss Allie Anderson: A Formidable Lady

Agnes Lizzie Anderson, known to everyone as Allie, was an influential and enthusiastic member of the Scottish Country Dance Society from its earliest years. In this article, after dipping into the archives of the Edinburgh Branch, Elizabeth Harry, assisted by many members of the branch, tells the story of Miss Anderson's dancing life.

Miss Allie Anderson is a lady I would very much have liked to have had a chat with over a cup of tea. Sadly, my one and only encounter with her was dancing *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh* as a young child at an event where she was presented with an award for her services to Scottish country dancing by the Saltire Society. Over the past few years more of her personal notes and diaries have been donated to the Branch archive and I have enjoyed dipping into these and introducing you to a very formidable and driven lady.

Born in Shetland in 1896, Allie Anderson attended High School in Aberdeen then returned to Shetland where she was teaching Scottish country dancing in 1913, 10 years before the Scottish Country Dance Society was formed. She moved south at the age of 18 to train as a physical education teacher at Dunfermline College, subsequently taking a post in Edinburgh at James Gillespie's High School for Girls, where she may well have taught Muriel Spark.

Whilst in Aberdeen she had enjoyed lessons with a dancing master where the focus was on good manners and deportment on the dance floor. Dancing in Shetland had mainly consisted of Reels where you would set for 8 bars, followed by 8 bars of reel, often with the men guiding the ladies by the waist with a cheeky kiss at the end. During the period when she returned to Shetland before moving to Dunfermline, she introduced them to new dances: *Waltz Country Dance* and *Circassian Circle* along with the *Foursome* and *Eightsome Reels*. There was no problem getting musicians to play for dancing as 'every man, woman and child played the fiddle or melodeon or both and had an excellent ear for music'.

Scottish country dancing was immediately part of her life in Edinburgh, whether teaching at Gillespie's and other schools in the Lothians or instructing local groups. During World War I she was asked to teach 30 miners in Prestonpans. Accepting the challenge, she knew she was on to a winner as the Zeppelin raids started but no one wanted to leave the class to head to the shelters. The traffic, however, was taken off the roads and she had a long walk home to Morningside. After that, and a request to teach 400 soldiers in hobnailed boots, nothing could surprise her.

After seeing an advert about a new Scottish Country Dance Society being formed in Glasgow in November 1923, she thought this was a wonderful idea, and later in 1924 she established a branch in Edinburgh with an annual membership fee of 5/- (5 shillings).

She took her teaching certificate in 1926, being examined by Mrs Ysobel Stewart and the first President of the SCDS, Lord James Stewart Murray, who became the 9th Duke of Atholl. The only publication at this time was *Book 1*, so there were no strathspeys included in the exam, despite these being her favourite dance, 'providing they are well done and properly danced and not like barn dance jigs'.

Branch classes were in full swing by this time, and dancers regularly met in the Swedish Gymnasium in Edinburgh with dances and party nights held in the Palais Ballroom.

Allie attended the first Summer School in 1927 and thereafter was a regular on the teaching staff for many years, enjoying both the dancing and the social aspect of meeting up with friends in St Andrews.



*At the Swedish Gymnasium*

By 1928 Allie had formed a firm friendship with Mrs Elizabeth Maclachlan, the President of the St Andrew's Society in London, and her skills were put to use arranging the dances and drawing the diagrams for *The Border Dance Book* and the follow-up book. These included the *Dundee Reel* and *La Russe* which became very popular.

The 1930s saw a raid across the Border as a team travelled south to compete at a festival in London. Finding men for the team had been a challenge, but undaunted, Allie visited banks and lawyers' offices in Edinburgh until she found men willing to be trained to dance. I'm not sure how that would work today! The team won and their prize was the Maclachlan Trophy, a gold enamelled medallion. It remained in a drawer for many years until Allie donated it to the Branch in 1975, and today it is our Chairman's Badge of Office.



*Demonstration Team 1930*

Allie believed that maintaining high standards was extremely important. As well as being an adjudicator and examiner she had a particular interest in the publication of dances and dance technique. A collaboration with John M Duthie led to the publication of *A Complete Guide to Scottish Country Dancing* in 1931 which included the instructions for 12 dances. A subsequent SCDS Executive Committee meeting noted their 'regret that it had not been brought out with the cooperation of the Society.'

Around this time Allie was seconded to Dunfermline College of Physical Education to teach the students who were taking their SCDS Teachers Certificate.

During the war years classes continued in the Swedish Gymnasium, mainly with ladies. There were weekly reminders about the location of air raid shelters in St Andrew's Square and Princes Street Gardens,

but she could not recall anyone ever leaving the class when the siren sounded. Classes were run for the 200 soldiers stationed in Edinburgh with a further class at RAF Turnhouse. The RAF class was apparently better as many airmen had their wives and girlfriends there and they joined in too.

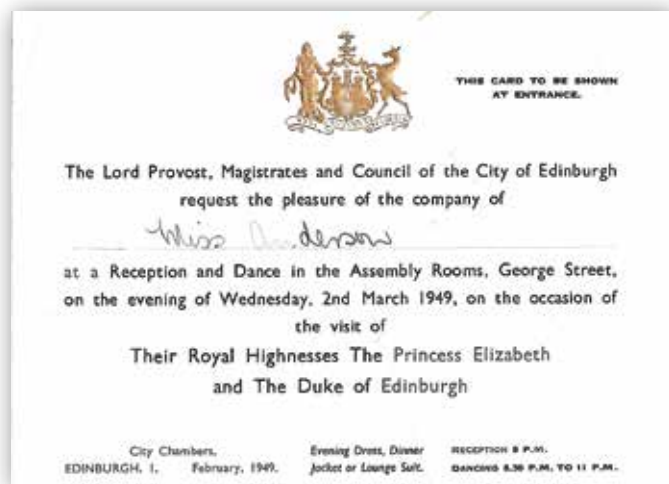
At the end of the war there were many opportunities to showcase Scottish country dancing in Edinburgh and Allie was at the heart of many of these events.



*The devisers of the dance The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*

A successful collaboration with dancer Mrs Florence D. Lesslie in 1947 brought about a new dance: *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*, which was devised to commemorate the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to the Duke of Edinburgh, with a tune commissioned from musician John Robertson, the conductor of the Scottish Country Dance Players.

Miss Anderson, Mrs Lesslie and Mr Robertson, along with a team of dancers, were invited to a Reception and Dance in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh on Wednesday 2 March 1949 to mark the occasion of the visit of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh to Edinburgh.



## Reported in the press:

### *"Princess to try new reel at home"*

*Princess Elizabeth has asked for full details of the steps for 'The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh' to be sent to her, so that she can try it at home. She and the Duke were particularly interested in the reel when it was demonstrated by members of the Scottish Country Dance Society in the Assembly Rooms last night.*

*"It's too complicated for me," said the Duke; but Princess Elizabeth told members of the Society "I think I've got the hang of it and I'm going to try it".*

*Later the Princess asked the Lord Provost, Sir Andrew Murray, if they could meet Miss Anderson, Mrs Lesslie and Mr Robertson, and they all chatted with Their Royal Highnesses for ten minutes.*

This same team would collaborate again to devise *Prince Charles of Edinburgh* to mark the birth of the new Prince.

Allie firmly believed that it was 'logical to turn with a progressive step rather than pas de basque which should be danced on the spot, and that common and physical sense said to use a travelling step to travel': hence bars 5 – 8 are stipulated to be danced with skip change of step and the 'Edinburgh style' of turning with two hands in quick time was set down. Allie comments in her memoirs that this is how she was taught to dance years before the formation of the SCDS. We know that this resulted in many heated discussions between her and Miss Milligan, especially as Miss Milligan notes in *Won't You Join the Dance?* that in the formation set to and turn corners 'the turning can be done either with two pas de basque again or with two skip changes of step.' Her earlier publication barely notes that there is 'another way'. There is a rumour that she changed her mind because she knew that the Duke of Edinburgh was challenged to dance a pas de basque, as she had given the Royal Family lessons when they stayed at Holyrood. Allie also had strong views on how to perform a poussette but we will save that debate for another time...



*The Opening of BBC Studios*

On 14 March 1952, the first TV programme to be broadcast in Scotland showed the Edinburgh Branch demonstration team dancing *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh* as part of a 10-minute programme of Scottish country dancing. It must have been the demonstration of the century with dancers vying for a place in the team. Broadcast from the Kirk o'Shotts transmitter, in black and white, filming took place in the BBC Studios in Queen Street, Edinburgh. An audience of distinguished guests watched the team dance including Mr James Stuart MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, and the Very Rev. Dr Charles L Warr, Dean of the Thistle and Chapel Royal. This was possibly the heyday of Scottish country dancing, with over 2,000 RSCDS members in Edinburgh and 34 classes in the city each week.

Young dancers were a focus for Allie with a Junior section of the Branch in Edinburgh. James Gillespie's and other local schools put together their own teams. Five hundred schoolgirls performed for King George and Queen Elizabeth, our present Queen's mother, at Holyrood Palace. There were other dance performances in



Edinburgh, and a team of Edinburgh school pupils travelled to Paris, to the jubilee celebrations of the International Federation of Schools Correspondence and Travel Organisation. Mina Corson recounted a story that during a performance by some of her pupils in the Music Hall a dark-haired lady rushed into the hall and sat down in front of the stage asking, "Why did you not tell me about this?" The lady was the ballerina, Margot Fonteyn.



*King George and Queen Elizabeth meeting young dancers at Holyrood House*

Demonstration teams were also a considerable part of Allie's teaching. The 1950s brought a new focus to the Demonstration team with Hail Caledonia, part of the 1954 Edinburgh International Festival, swiftly followed by *An Edinburgh Fancy*. Competition to dance in the team was fierce, with hundreds of dancers auditioning every two years for a place in the class. In 1965 during a visit home to Shetland she had met a member of the Cussons family and she persuaded them to donate a trophy to the Competitive Festival to be competed for in the Scottish country dance section. This trophy came to be known as the 'soapy trophy' as Cussons manufactured soap! Legend has it that there was much jubilation when the Branch team won and that the Golden Heather Trophy, as it was officially called, made by Hamilton and Inches at a cost of £800, was dragged along Princes Street by Allie in a Marks and Spencer carrier bag as they looked for a pub that was still open, eventually having to settle for coffee in the Caley Hotel.



*Winners of the Cussons' Cup*

*"Miss Anderson was my first teacher when I joined the Edinburgh Branch demonstration team. Her knowledge of dancing and well-planned classes made you want to dance your very best and always rise to the occasion. She was an incredible teacher, very analytic as to how you could improve. The class had a great deal of respect for her, although fun was rarely experienced, and there was always a strong emphasis on teamwork and dancing with your partner".*

Wendy Strang

Allie's contribution to Scottish country dancing was recognised by the Saltire Society in 1980 with an award and reception. This included a demonstration of a new dance *Miss Allie Anderson* devised by her friend, and fellow PE Teacher at Gillespie's, Mina Corson, with the tune *Coltbridge* composed by Susan Inglis. Many members shared their memories of dancing with her over the years; and listening to the recording of this event confirms the high regard and warmth dancers had for this strong, determined lady. Subsequent honours were conferred upon Allie the following year when she was elected Vice-Chairman of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, an honour of which she and the Branch were justifiably proud.

Allie passed away in 1986, leaving a considerable legacy in Edinburgh that continues today. We hope you will remember her fondly the next time you dance *Miss Allie Anderson*.

*"After my first class, on being asked if I had enjoyed it, my response was "No way am I going back, no-one is going to speak to me like that." However, some 30 years later I am still dancing in her class every week."*

Alasdair Smart

*"Allie was a teacher of the old school: a good one, with a kind heart well hidden. We learnt much and she earned our respect and fear in equal proportions!."*

Valerie Smart



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# Dancing in Princes St Gardens



*Dancing in the Gardens circa 1968*

## **Margaret Burns, Chair of the Princes Street Gardens Dancers, describes the evolution of a tradition.**

Dancing at the Ross Bandstand in Princes Street Gardens on a sunny, summer evening in Edinburgh is always an absolute delight!

Dancers have been enjoying this privilege since the early 1950s as part of the City of Edinburgh's regular programme of entertainment in the Gardens throughout the summer season. Scottish country dancing ran on Tuesday evenings and alternate Saturdays from May to the start of September, with Edinburgh Branch providing the programmes and many local teams, musicians and MCs involved. The long-standing format established then has remained unchanged until today: a team of dancers demonstrate the dance, and then the audience is invited to join in on the dance floor. Many dancers have honed their social dancing skills at 'The Gardens' over the years.

The Ross Bandstand is an iconic setting. It was gifted to the city by William Henry Ross, Chairman of the Distillers Company, in 1877 and has been a focal point in Edinburgh since then, redeveloped in 1935. As well as Scottish country dancing, it was the venue for Old Time dancing on Thursdays, and displays, competitions and regular entertainment from military bands. In the early years BBC radio Children's Hour brought children and their families to see and take part in the dancing displays and other entertainments, giving many local children their first performing experience.

On 28 June 1968 Iain MacPhail and his band played for a programme of dances including *The Montgomeries' Rant*, *The White Heather Jig*, *Mrs MacPherson of Inveran* and *Mairi's Wedding*. All these dances are still popular on our programmes today, and Iain still regularly plays for the Gardens.

On Tuesdays and Saturdays, the floor was packed with dancers, but many locals attended just to watch and listen to the bands, which attracted between 300 and 400 people. Many others stopped to watch and listen as they passed through the Gardens or walked along Princes Street. In 1995, 1075 attended a recording of *Take the Floor* for the BBC.

The weather has always played a big part in the success of this outdoor event, but for those who remember summers as warmer back then, there was less focus on watching the weather forecast than nowadays!

Council cuts in 1995 saw a threat to dancing continuing. Local dancers quickly set up a campaign and eventually, with support from Lord Provost Norman Irons, it was agreed that the dancing could continue, providing the dancers undertook the administration and financial burden. This was quite a task, but the dancers rose to the occasion and the challenge was accepted. Ever since 1997 dancing has continued at the Bandstand under the organisation and dedicated hard work of Princes Street Gardens Dancers. One change is that, sadly, we are no longer able to dance during August as the Edinburgh International Festival have sole use of the Bandstand at that time.



*Dancing in the Gardens beneath the Castle*

Dancers from far and wide love to come and dance in the Gardens with the beautiful backdrop of Edinburgh Castle. In 1993 RSCDS Tokyo Branch were our Demonstration team on their way to Summer School; it remains a vivid memory for them, and today, it is still a highlight for teams from local Branches and Groups to demonstrate in the Gardens.

Rising costs in 2003 saw a decision taken to move from two nights outdoors to one outdoors and one indoor evening each week. This has proved a popular innovation. Both evenings have live music and a programme of dances to suit all abilities. Many bands have supported us loyally over the years with some, including Calum Wilson and Iain MacPhail, having played every year for decades. The Covid pandemic disrupted the outdoor dancing recently, but we very much hope you will join us for dancing again in the Gardens next year.



# John Bowie Dickson: Eclectic Dance Deviser and Itinerant Dancer

Christina Dickson reminisces with Caroline Brockbank about a remarkable lifetime of dancing with her husband John.

John Bowie Dickson was born on 7 April 1919 in Gorebridge, near Dalkeith in Midlothian. Along with a fiddler and a pianist, John's father played the concertina in a Scottish country dancing trio, which sparked John's interest in dancing. He remembered being in a pub in Gorebridge where his uncle was up step dancing on a table! In 1926, at the age of seven, John emigrated with his parents to New South Wales in Australia, but SCD and music remained part of his home life. Initially a spectator, he was eventually persuaded to join in. In the meantime, after finishing his schooling, he became an apprenticed electrician.

In World War II, he was, for a short time, a medical orderly in a field hospital as part of the Australian Army. He then joined the Merchant Navy as a wireless telegraphist working for the Fleet Air Arm, ferrying troops across the Atlantic and later serving in the Far East. After the war, he returned to Australia for a couple of years, working at a radio station in Canberra.

John then returned to the UK to work for EMI as a television engineer, operating the TV cameras at the 1948 London Olympics and installing the first TV cameras in operating theatres at Guy's Hospital. On arrival in London John was soon involved with SCD, first dancing in John Armstrong's Saltire Society class in Baker Street. He himself later taught a class for the Staines Caledonian Society. It was in the London Branch class in Tottenham Court Road, taught by Bill Ireland, that he met Christina McLellan. They had much in common, both Scots, and had both been wireless telegraphists in the war, as she was in the WRNS at Rosyth. They danced together in the Branch demonstration team and married in August 1951.

John and Christina then became global travellers with frequent moves between continents. Almost immediately after marriage they relocated to Adelaide, South Australia, for John to take a post dealing with communications at the Woomera Rocket Range. Having already danced with Sydney Branch when visiting John's family, they helped found the Adelaide Branch of the

RSCDS in 1952. 1954 saw them relocating to Canada, based in Montreal but with John working as an electronics engineer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, designing and installing studios across Canada. Montreal's first SCD group had started the week before John arrived, and quickly recruited him as a teacher.

The Pinewoods annual summer school in Massachusetts was a highlight of their dancing lives; John taught there in 1956. Ewen, the eldest of their three children, accompanied them as a baby, and subsequently returned there to dance as a 14 year old. Christina, aged 99 when I interviewed her for this article, has many happy memories of their time there and a lot of our conversation consisted of her describing the camp in detail. In 1976, when Boston RSCDS published their book *Yankee Sampler*, John's dance *Pinewoods Reel* was included, 'Dedicated to Mrs Richard K Conant of Pinewoods Camp, where we have spent many happy days Scottish country dancing'. Having been wireless telegraphists during the war, John and Christina were both fluent in Morse code and would use it on their long car journeys across Canada to hold private conversations, much to the annoyance of their children in the back seat. Living in such a cosmopolitan place, they enjoyed not just SCD but also national folk dancing from all the different communities represented in the Montreal area. When taking a break from dancing, John and Christina spent a lot of their Canadian period enjoying cross-country skiing.

They returned to Scotland in 1957, to Glasgow where John became Assistant Chief Engineer at Scottish Television; later he also became head of the Outside Broadcast Unit. By the time they went back to Montreal in 1962, the group he taught had become RSCDS Montreal Branch. John would go on to represent Montreal Branch at the Society AGM for many years. Meanwhile he oversaw installation of colour TV right across Canada, and eventually all over the world, getting his air fares paid whilst Christina followed by ship!



*Dancing MacDonald of Sleat in London – John on the left of the men's line*

Bertha Small of Montreal RSCDS remembers their years in Canada and wrote to me 'My late husband Alexander Small was a very dear friend of John and Chris, and it was a visit to John's class which persuaded my Scots husband to start dancing, as it had been considered an effeminate activity in working-class Renfrew growing up. Alex was immediately infected with John's enthusiasm.' Montreal Branch published the *Cockleroy Collection* of seven of John's dances, among them a medley in a square set, named *Cockleroy* and dedicated to Alex Small. Bertha told me that Alex 'learned from John that if a dance being taught was not working, it was an issue with the teacher and her/his approach, not with the class, and either the approach should be altered, or the effort entirely postponed to another



*Trip to Finland with Dunedin Dancers: John on left wearing his jabot, Christina in the centre front*

session while the teacher worked out another teaching strategy. He also considered John the best teacher of SCD that he ever experienced and used him as a model in his long teaching career. John was always alert to everyone in the room and made sure that the shyest and least confident dancer was included, and he was always the most helpful and courteous of partners.'

Four of John's dances, all written in 1968, were published by Hugh Foss in his *Glendarroch Sheets*, of which the best known is *The Luckenbooth Brooch* (no. 28). Christina McLellan is also included as no. 27. Much later, in 2004, Highlander Music produced a CD entitled *The Luckenbooth Brooch*, with tracks for 17 of John's best loved dances, played by Sandy Nixon and his band.

*The Lothian Collection*, published by Montreal Branch, included *Bauldy Bain's Fiddle* (devised in 1978 and dedicated to John Armstrong, John's first teacher from his time in London) and *Angus MacKinnon's Hornpipe*, both of which were republished in the Montreal Branch 60th Anniversary book in 2018. Angus MacKinnon was bandleader of The Scots-Canadians and his hornpipe includes the inverted triangle formation, later used in *The Nurseryman* by Roy Clowes, with acknowledgement to John.

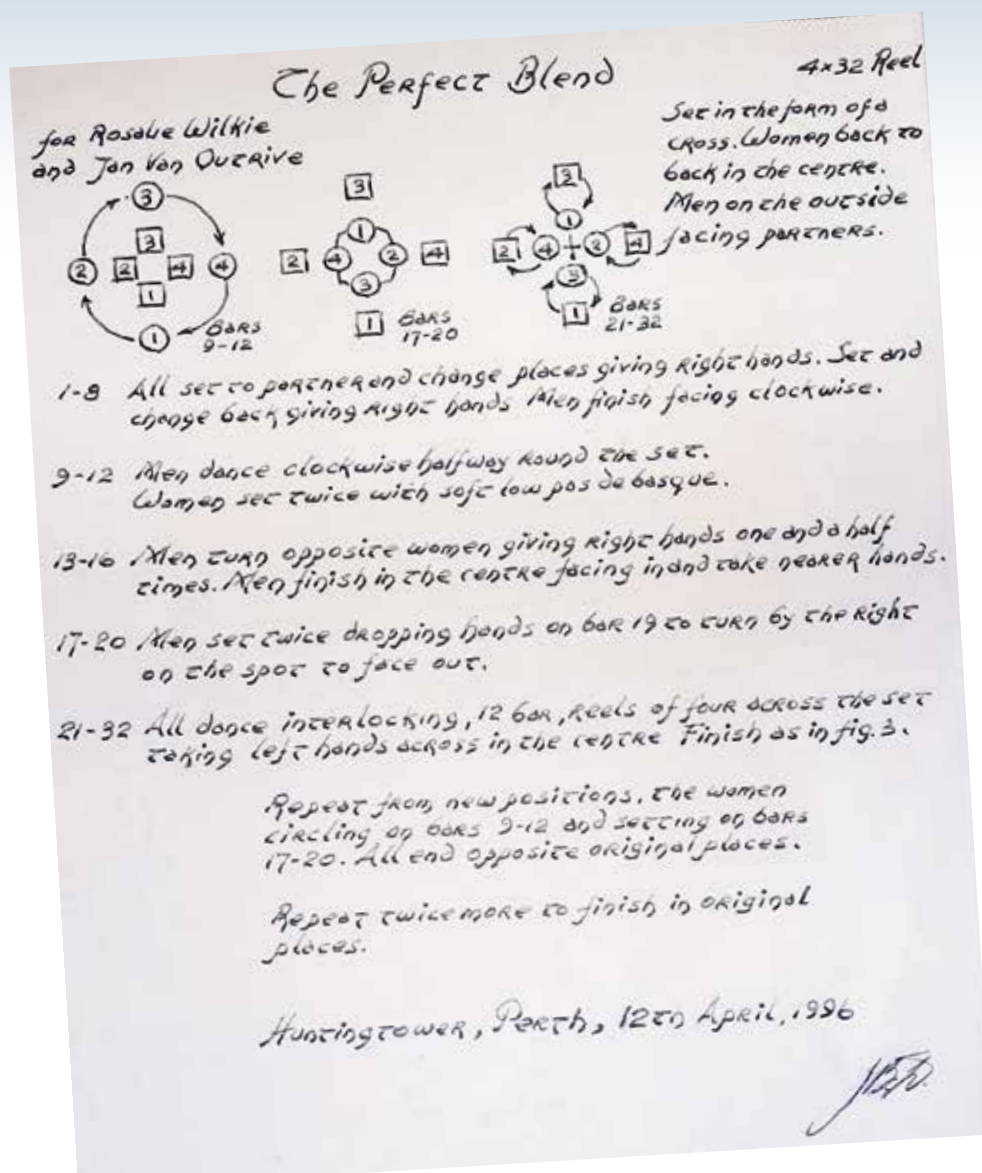
In 1981, John took early retirement and he and Christina lived first in Edinburgh, then in Peebles, where they became wardens at Neidpath Castle, before finally settling in Edinburgh's Dean Village. On returning to Scotland they joined Dunedin Dancers, participating in several of their dance trips abroad. Dunedin published many of John's dances, for example *The Wind On Loch Fyne* in the first Dunedin book in 1986, and *Gypsy Glen* in *Dunedin Dances Book 2* in 1989. John and Christina quickly became well-loved and respected Dunedin members and as Rosalie Van outrive writes 'Their enthusiasm and energy were infectious and they took such an interest in everyone, that although they were much older than the average Dunedin member at that time, we all soon forgot about age'. Denise Fallas told me 'We looked forward to going dancing not only to dance but to go to the pub afterwards and chat with John. Such a lovely and interesting person'.

John's dance devising was really to the fore by now and *Dunedin Dances Book 3* contains only dances written by him. Christina described John's devising process, explaining that the initial inspiration always came from the music, when he would put on dancing records in their living room. 'He would think of formations that would go with the music... And then of course he'd tell me "Come on! Get up and try this out, will you?" ... always when I'd settled down with a book or something. And he'd say "No no no! That's not going to work!" So then we sat down again and then he'd ask me to get up again and we'd do something else. And that's how he put together dances. One thing would trigger off another idea and how you could blend from one piece of dancing to something else, to fit in with the music he was listening to. The music always came first.' This is evident in some of his earlier publications where he recommends not just a tune, but sometimes a specific recording of a particular band, to accompany his dances.

Like most devisers, John wrote dances for special occasions, for example *The Dean Village Reel* for Christina's 70th birthday. On occasion he would hand over a dance to someone celebrating an event and it would disappear completely, never to be seen again! Most however are greatly treasured, often given as gifts written out in his own beautiful handwriting, complete with hand-drawn diagrams. Many have been framed by the recipients and are much cherished. Bertha Small wrote 'As is obvious from the dances he composed, John worked to make the flow of his dances effortless. I saw this process up close when he wrote a dance for Alex and me for our marriage in 1981 and there were numerous versions of the final eight bars, never quite satisfying John!' In fact, many people fondly remember long discussions with John about dancing and music, and several told me how they would work together on a dance of John's or of their own, to get figures exactly right.

The last dance that John wrote was *The Reel of the Puffins*, three weeks before his death in September 1998. It was written for Ken and Denise Fallas' daughter Katie's wedding, and in his last





a full and varied life. In his eulogy, John's brother-in-law Neil McLellan described him as 'a thoughtful, kind and a very gentle gentleman with a great fund of stories. He had an inquisitive mind and was interested in so many things, but especially people. He had also that very special skill (unknown to many of us), the ability to listen.'

The last thing Christina and I discussed in our chat was the matter of John's name and its potential for confusion. Christina told me 'He was John Wallace Bowie Dickson. Bowie's part of his surname. So he was always known as Bowie Dickson. He always used both.' – something to bear in mind when assigning sources on dance programmes. (Christina, however, is just Christina Dickson.) John was a fascinating person of many talents and a huge breadth of knowledge and experience, who leaves a fine legacy of enjoyable dances by which we remember him.

John's dancing philosophy was encapsulated in a poem by Ian Hamilton Findlay, which he loved in the later years of his life

*'When I have talked for an hour  
I feel lousy  
Not so when I have danced  
for an hour  
The dancers inherit the party  
While the talkers wear themselves  
out and  
Sit in the corners and glower.'*

#### *The Perfect Blend: a dance handwritten as a gift for friends*

few weeks, Denise and Ken would visit John and try the dance out with salt and pepper pots, as they had to be able to dance it and teach it at the wedding. The tune is *The Black Bear* and the dance has been celebrated on Jim Lindsay's CD *The Reel of the Puffins*, again published by Highlander Music, with a cracking recording of *The Black Bear* played four times through with syncopated ragtime-style variations.

In 1999, Dunedin Dancers published their *Book 5* in posthumous tribute, comprising 24 of his dances, including *The Reel of the Puffins*. Other highlights are *The Purple Heather Jig* – a double-ended variant of *The White Heather Jig* by James B Cosh, and *The Highland Midge*, which involves a clap for all four couples on bars 1 and 9 as 1st and 4th couples cross over the set – reminiscent of *Hooper's Jig* but also of the habits of those on midge-infested Highland walking and camping trips! Moira Reekie, friend of John and Christina in Canada in the early 70s and on their return to Scotland, contributed three tunes to the book: the slow air *John Bowie Dickson*, written in his memory, *The Dicksons' Strathspey*, and *Johnny Dickson's Hornpipe*. The latter is the tune for *Edinburgh's Welcome*, written by John for a dance demonstration by the groups attending the Dunedin Festival in 1997.

I myself knew John in only the last few years of his life. I remember him as a man of short stature but lasting impact, who radiated the calm, humorous and tolerant attitude that comes with having met many diverse people and having lived

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# Music Makars in the Making

**Musicians love to share music and play together, and here we report on two music courses which encouraged playing for dancing. A third course was aimed at giving dance teachers a better understanding of Scottish music.**

**Edward Bunting attended the Musicians' Ensemble Course at the RSCDS Summer School in St Andrews aimed at preparing an evening dance programme:**

We talked of many things with our tutors, David Oswald and Gillian Stevenson: the choice of harmonies to set up a change of tune (and key); ways to articulate phrasing, such as a clean break at the end of a line, or play the line out in full; where to slur notes and where to separate them, where to create contrast by playing one line quietly then full volume for the next. In one tune, the *Chinese Dance*, we created a lovely 'polka effect' by emphasising the offbeat. In two other tunes, *Staten Island* and *The Black Bear*, we added drama at certain crucial bars where all would hit the first two beats, but only accordions replied with the quick notes that finished the bar.

For fiddle players (like me) it was rewarding to have detailed advice from Gillian on bowing, a vital topic that I don't remember hearing so much about in classes before. Gillian also pointed out that in a reel, the dancers are not just hopping up and down: it is the musician's job to play the melody in a flowing style to help their graceful movement across the floor.

A valuable piece of teaching was recognising that putting together sets requires an immense knowledge of the ocean of tunes available, and the magic touch of selecting and arranging them in an interesting order. The band leader Jim Lindsay, famed for his skill in the design of Scottish dance sets, visited our class and gave a talk on this very subject.



*The Music course play in the Younger Hall*

When all plans had been revised and finalised, the programme was ready and on Saturday night we appeared on stage in the Younger Hall. David led the band, supported by Gillian, Luke Brady and Graham Berry. Completing the line-up was David's son Stuart Oswald, a gifted drummer. These excellent players lifted our music and made us play with a sparkle that went straight to the dancers. Their response was exhilarating to watch, and a reward for the band's hard work all through the week.

**Colin McEwen plays concertina and attended the RSCDS Berks, Hants and Surrey Border Branch course organised by Judith Muir, and led by Ian Muir, which focussed on how to deliver music to support the class teacher and inspire the dancers:**

One of the highlights of the course for me was learning that tunes that work fine for the band at a social dance are not so appropriate in the class situation. For example, busy reels such as *Mrs MacPherson of Inveran* will sound fast, and beginners may struggle to hear the beat. Many dances that are used with beginners, those from the *Miscellanies* in particular, have busy recommended tunes and might not be the best tunes for step or formation practice. We were assigned a challenging homework exercise on dealing with technically demanding original tunes!

The course covered a number of situations where the class musician can enhance and support what the teacher is doing: playing slowly then bringing the music up to time for pas de basque practice; adjusting the volume or tune structure to match the dance phrase and provide light and shade; the ability to stop and start part way through a tune, when requested to play bars 9-16 or only 4 bars.



*Musicians hard at work*

On the final day we had the Master Class, with Mervyn Short as teacher and 16 volunteer dancers. We all played a part in the class, covering warm-up, step practice, skills exercises, formations, and cool down. One of my tasks was being asked to vary the tempo during the skip-change step practice - which produced interesting results, so Mervyn asked me to do it again!

I found the course demanding but very valuable - well worth the effort.

**As part of its ongoing Teacher Development, RSCDS Sydney Branch Teachers' Liaison Group arranged a productive, informative, and practical session focusing on creating the perfect partnership between the class teacher and class musician.**



*Chris Duncan loves to share his skill with other musicians and dancers*

Chris Duncan, a fiddle player from Newcastle NSW, led the presentation and brought his wealth of experience and knowledge from years of playing for dancing. The teachers learnt about types of tunes for dancing and the importance of the characteristics that can inform a teacher's choice of music. Rhythm, phrasing and expression, tempo, structure of the tunes and arrangement of tunes were highlighted through Chris's practical illustrations. All the participants had the chance to feel the difference between reel and jig as Chris seamlessly swapped from one to the other and back again several times as the teachers kept dancing. All then practised using 'ready...and' (and alternative methods) to cue a musician and dictate the tempo. Rhythmic coaching was touched on briefly and there was also discussion on suitable music for warm-up/cool down.

Chris enlightened the attendees about working with a musician or band when planning socials. Some had little or no experience of this so were happy to learn how a musician can advise on a dance programme, from using easier tunes at the start of the event to shuffling the order to avoid having lead tunes with minor keys in two successive dances.

So positive and interactive was the meeting that Chris and the teachers decided that a further session later in the year was warranted.



# Summer School Times

The RSCDS Summer School returned to St Andrews with an energetic and hectic schedule of dancing and socialising, and much fun. Two attendees share their memories with us here.

Summer School is hard to describe in a few words, as a lot goes on each and every day. Being resident in University Hall, a fifteen-minute dash across town to class provided the necessary kickstart to get my brain going for morning country class: very necessary as this daily session provided so much opportunity to learn and improve, with attentive teachers and highly accomplished musicians. I was in

the High Impact class, polishing up my dance style and really pushing my dancing knowledge forward. Whatever your needs, there will be a class to help you to develop as much in a week here as you could in many months of branch classes.

The afternoons can be very different depending on what you want to get out of them: opting into Highland classes through the week was a fun choice, but

given that so much dancing already occurs, you might prefer to sample some of the opportunities St Andrews has to offer. Strolling around town, visiting the museum or a quick swim from one of the stunning beaches are just some of the options. On Saturday, due to fair weather and a day off from Highland, we opted for a beach trip to West Sands and a stroll into town for ice cream, then the Final Night Ball that no-one should miss.

With social dancing and other activities on every night, there's never an evening short of fun, but the Younger Hall balls really put the cherry on the cake. Walking out onto the floor with dozens of sets made up to dance in such a beautiful setting was quite a thing to be part of, but it's when the dozens-strong band struck a chord and the dancers leapt into action that this hall came into its own. Throw in a circle six hands round and back, and the floor leapt on its springs to carry the dancers on their way. After a lively polka round the room to finish, some people headed for bed, but there was lots of fun left to be had. A local pub with a ceilidh band and a demonstration of newly learned Highland skills with a piper extended the dancing into the early hours for us. When the pub closed, we returned to the party room in University Hall. Lively dancing and chaotic fun continued as long as people remained on their feet. As numbers dwindled the focus turned more to conversation, with friendships made that will last well beyond Summer School.

*Rory Dyer, Cambridge Branch*



*Dancing friendships formed in St Andrews*

Returning to St Andrews for Summer School 2022 was special for everyone. After a long two years away, it felt tremendous to be back on the bouncing floors of Younger Hall, with glorious music, amongst friends both new and old.

During Weeks one and two, myself and 11 others had the challenge of undertaking our Unit 2 and 3 teaching exams. We didn't quite know what to expect, however we had excellent tuition from Rachel Shankland, and unbeatable

music from George Meikle. What more could you want for two weeks?

Although the exam preparation was tough on the legs (and brain!), the beauty of Scottish country dancing is the friendships made and unique experiences shared. Our group connected quickly, which made our time studying and practising most enjoyable. A trip to Jannetta's ice-cream parlour, or a swim in the North Sea soon became an afternoon ritual!

Our group had international status, hailing from Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Portugal, France, and England. However, one thing is for sure – we all share the same passion and love for Scottish country dancing and have come away from Summer School feeling inspired to continue our teaching journeys across the globe.

*Quinn Inglis, Carlisle and Borders Branch*



*The Unit 2+3 certificate Class of 2022*





# Dancing around the World

All branches and affiliated groups are invited to send in their news (fewer than 200 words and photos over 500kB please) to Caroline Brockbank [caroline@ceilidhkids.com](mailto:caroline@ceilidhkids.com)

We particularly like to read news from branches who have not featured recently, and those whose events are out of the ordinary!



*Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield Branches Celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee*

The Sutton Coldfield Branch of the RSCDS joined with Birmingham Branch to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The two branches organised an evening dance on Saturday 2 July which was attended by people from across the West Midlands and beyond. The hall was decorated with bunting and many attendees wore red, white and blue.

After supper, those attending enjoyed several dances including many with a royal theme such as *The Royal Deeside Railway*, *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*, *Balmoral Strathspey*, and *The Royal Town*. Music was provided by Andrew Lyon and David Queen.

The event was fully booked. "We are proud to come together as Scottish country dance branches to celebrate such a unique occasion," commented Frances Richardson, Chairman of the Sutton Coldfield Branch.

*Susan Rice*

## Cheltenham Branch



We were delighted to welcome Ian Muir and The Craigellachie Band and some 90 dancers and spectators to Cheltenham Town Hall on 15 January for our Celebration Ball. It was a wonderful evening, with fantastic music, an excellent sprung floor, beautiful surroundings, good acoustics, and many happy dancers. The following is an extract from an email that we have since received: 'Cheltenham Town Hall was the best of all Scottish dancing in years for us, because it offered everything we enjoy! Great sprung floor, beautiful architecture, fantastic band, good dancers, and a lovely programme!' We look forward to welcoming you next year.

*Hilary Foulkes*

## Hamilton (Ontario) Branch



This past summer, the Hamilton Branch resumed its yearly public dancing event we fondly refer to as 'Dancing on the Dock'. We haven't been able to have this event for the past two years so this year was extra special. It took place every Wednesday evening from 20 July to 31 August. We dance each year at a beautiful park overlooking Hamilton Harbour. The park has plenty of foot traffic, perfect for attracting new dancers! Members of the public are encouraged to enjoy a dance or more with us and we have our registration information at the ready once they see how much fun dancing can be. Who can resist Scottish country dance music and an invitation to join the dance?

*Elaine Zidar, photo Diana MacKenzie*

## Kilcreggan, Helensburgh & District Branch: Dance Scottish for Ukraine



'Wow!' was the reaction after our dance on Friday 13 May. Lots of folk had laughed. 'Friday 13th, unlucky date'. Just how wrong could they be?



The weather was gey dreich; not the best for a ferry trip across from Gourrock to dance in our Burgh Hall. About 30 dancers braved the seas, more came from Helensburgh on the bus and, when it reached Kilcreggan Pier, all the ferry passengers boarded too: a bit like a game of sardines. Altogether, by various means, 90 friends arrived, making this our best attended event ever. We had folk from Aberdeen to Ayr and from all points in between, including Dunoon and Millport, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Largs, and North Ayrshire. We even had a brief visit from Canadian friends who were visiting family locally.

We had decided to send all dance and raffle proceeds to a Ukrainian charity and were overwhelmed by the support from our visitors. The amazing result is that we have raised £850! Thanks to everyone who supported a fantastic day, from a' the airts.

*Helen Bain*

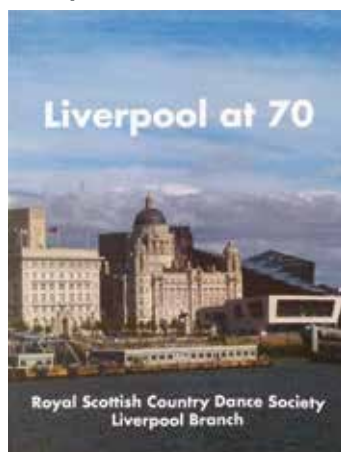
## Leicester Branch



RSCDS Leicester held their afternoon Charity Tea Dance in February in aid of Leicestershire and Rutland Blood Bikes, a charity run by volunteers who ride across the county to deliver vital blood products to local NHS hospitals. The dance was well supported, and the dancers were very generous, raising £550 for this very worthy charity. We were pleased to be able to present the cheque to the Blood Bike charity at one of our class nights. Our dancing slogan is: Get Fit and Keep Fit, Make New Friends and Have a Great Time!

*Neil McLaren*

## Liverpool Branch at 70



The pandemic encompassed our 70th anniversary (1951-2021) and special Afternoon Tea Dance, a locally renowned annual event. This left the committee with only one prospective anniversary project, a celebratory book of dances to be devised by our members. Keeping us going through isolation, Hazel Astle, our Honorary Chair, sent around a monthly encouraging email message and permission was sought to circulate members' replies. A theme of shared

experiences and the importance of dancing in our lives emerged, with a comprehensive collection of personal accounts, a by-product of isolation, as an obvious suitable addition to the book of new dances, edited by Margaret Palmer. Our celebratory book demonstrates the importance of the Branch to members, an unusual 70th anniversary during a pandemic. Finally, we have shared a cake, created a souvenir book, recruited ten new members, and generated extra confidence in our continuing existence.

*Rosemary Williamson*

## Midwest Scottish Weekend, June 10-12, 2022 Hosted by Chicago, Madison, and Milwaukee Scottish Country Dancers



After a three-year hiatus, the eleventh annual Midwest Scottish Weekend was held for the first time at Ripon College in Ripon, Wisconsin. Our ball programme consisted entirely of dances by John Drewry, a ball of subtlety, distinction and, yes, challenge. Our teacher, Sharon Barker, is archiving all his dances: the Drewry archivist teaching us Drewry dances, what could be better? Sharon and our other outstanding teacher, Alan Twigg, and musicians Mara Shea and Tom Pixton increased enjoyment of dancing for a memorable weekend.

The Friday welcome dance was aptly named, since we had an unusually large number of first-time attendees. Saturday classes improved technique for everyone, from basic to advanced. The evening's festivities began with a reception, followed by a banquet and grand march. Post-ball, members displayed entertainment from farce to fantastic flair at a ceilidh that recharged flagging energy.

*Nancy McClements*

## Millport Weekend



The second weekend in May, and the sun always shines on the Isle of Cumbrae! Back after two years, everyone was delighted to dance together again. With Gary Coull teaching and Shona and Susan MacFadyen playing, it was guaranteed to be up to the usual high standards. Shona and Susan come from West Kilbride, just a few miles over the Firth of Clyde as the crow flies. It was their first time playing for us, and they are booked again for next year, so inspiring was their music.

There has been a SCD group on the island since WW2. In the early days we danced every Friday night and when 100 people were in the hall the door was locked! Today we are a small group who meet on Friday mornings, but once a month, dancers from as far afield as Helensburgh and Ayr make the ten-minute ferry crossing to swell our numbers. This was the fourteenth weekend and the rain kept away. Raquel, Josep and Luis were over from Barcelona as usual. And it was wonderful to see our oldest member, Bett Christie, looking splendid in one of her 'cruise' frocks and still dancing at 94 years of age – what an advert for Scottish country dancing!

*Margaret Allen*



## New Zealand Branch



Many Clubs and a Region have or will be celebrating special anniversaries this year. In Auckland, the North Shore Clubs of Braemar and Milford celebrated their 60th and Andrew Carnegie their 35th at a combined ball in May. In August both St Heliers club in Auckland and Picton Club will be celebrating their 60th. The Auckland Region has reached the milestone of 65 so a dance and cake were the order of the day for this event.

David Williamson, a past President of the New Zealand Branch, was presented with a Branch award at the Canterbury Region Ball by the current president, Linda Glavin.

With the absence of the Summer School these last two years, dancers are looking forward to this year's school in Auckland from 28 December 2022 to 5 January 2023 and I am sure that the organising committee would love to see visitors from overseas as well as New Zealand.

*Sue Lindsay*

## ROIS Dance School in Rome



The RSCDS affiliated group, ROIS Dance School, based in Rome, organised a Scottish and Irish dance party to celebrate the end of classes, with live traditional music by The Shire. ROIS Dance School expressed its dual Scottish and Irish soul thanks to the performances of students of Scottish country dancing, highland dancing, Irish step and céilí dancing courses; students of all ages and levels, from children to seniors, from beginners to experts. For the Scottish country dancing, the class, prepared by teacher Giorgia De Luca, presented a combination of strathspey, reel and jig. The audience was pleasantly surprised when they were involved by Ms. De Luca in the jig *The Riverside*; simple movements and figures with which friends and relatives of the Roman dancers could immerse themselves in the festive and fun atmosphere of a Scottish ceilidh.

*Martina Spagna*

## Sydney Branch



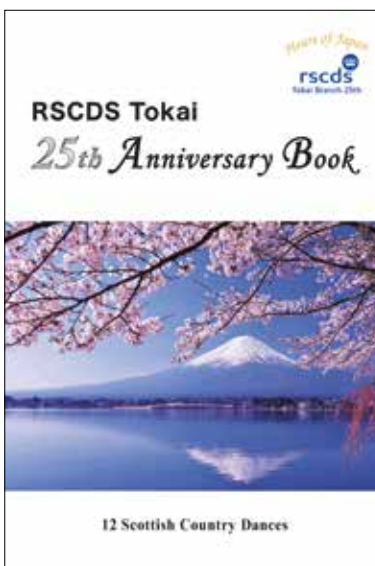
In June we held our 70th anniversary ball. Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt provided a spectacular musical performance. The energy of the dancers and numbers on the dance floor were impressive for the entire evening. We heard a brief history of the Branch and honoured our past presidents, Branch award and scroll recipients, and teachers. The cake was cut by one of our longest-standing members and our youngest member.

We launched our anniversary book containing a history of the Branch and dances from devisers with Sydney connections. Next year's ball will be part of the 2023 Australian Winter School in Kiama, 24 September - 1 October 2023. We will celebrate the centenary of the RSCDS and Dance Through the Decades.

Three of our members finally took the Unit 5 exam shortly before Easter. All were successful - congratulations to them and the tutors.

*Diana Hastie*

## Tokai Branch



Tokai Branch celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2022. Our first dance book and CD will be issued to commemorate this. All dances submitted were devised by Branch members and twelve dances were selected by the committee after initial screening by Branch teachers. The criteria were: Is the dance enjoyable? Do the movements flow naturally and pleasantly? Does the dance have tasteful ideas and impact? Is the dance not too tiring? Will it be danced widely and repeatedly? The

four jigs, three reels and five strathspeys are fun to dance at intermediate level. They include new formations such as 'set and stroll'. Descriptions are accompanied by diagrams, and sheet music for the tunes, some of which are specially composed.

The CD recording was led by music director and Branch member Akiko Kasama and is played by The Bluebell SCD Trio. The book and CD will be available globally in early 2023. The cover features the Japanese symbol, beautiful Mt Fuji and cherry blossoms, which will be a delight to your eyes.

*Masahi Kondo*



Does your branch or club have a new book which you would like reviewed? If you teach a class and are interested in reviewing books from a teaching point of view, please be in touch: [mag.editor@rscds.org](mailto:mag.editor@rscds.org)



## Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

### The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

This lovely book reads as a series of essays on topics related to Queen Elizabeth II, as well as her relationship to Scottish country dancing and the

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, including our recognition of her through our dance and music. The combination of history and photography with the dances provides a coherent whole, while also allowing each small section to stand on its own.

In 1947, HRH Princess Elizabeth became the Patron of the Scottish Country Dance Society. Three years later, in 1951, her father King George VI bestowed the title 'Royal' on the Society. Since her succession to the crown in 1952, the Queen has remained the Society's Patron, so this book, *Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a Celebration through Scottish Music and Dance*, celebrates her Platinum Jubilee this year through a number of dances recognizing aspects of the Queen's life. Repeatedly throughout the book we are presented with vignettes of the Queen's love of Scottish country dancing.

The book provides many photographs on topics related to the Platinum Jubilee, beginning with the Duke and Duchess of

Edinburgh, as the Queen and Prince Philip were titled prior to her accession. It includes not only a history of the dukedom, but also tidbits and quotes related to the Prince, the couple, their dancing experiences, information about the dance *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*, and the complete notes and music for it. This is followed by a rich section on the history of Balmoral Castle including many photographs, as well as the notes and music for the dance *Balmoral Strathspey*. The following section focuses on jubilees, both royal (Victoria and Elizabeth II) and that of the Society, again with fascinating information and photographs on a number of these historical events. We are then taken to another palace, Holyrood House, with notes and music for the dance *Holyrood House* included. The book then moves to the last royal yacht, with history and photos followed by the dance notes and music for *The Royal Yacht Britannia*. There is a lovely essay on *The Ghillies Ball*, followed by a section on *The Eightsome Reel*, including a photograph of the Queen and her party dancing it. The book concludes with a recognition of the Queen's titles and other appointments, as well as her patronage of an extremely large number of charities and other organizations. The book also includes charming quotes from both Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II.

'I recommend this book to you, as a reflection of both respect for the late Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee and as part of our dance history.'

*Karen Sollis, Boston Branch*



## Sir Walter Scott: The Heart of Mid-Lothian

### The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

In May 2022 the Society released a new publication of some old dances to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Sir Walter Scott's

birth. The booklet, written by a team under the auspices of the Membership Services Committee, is accompanied by a CD of music arranged to be appropriate to the period.

The focus of the booklet is a leaflet of dances that appeared in 1820, inspired by Scott's popular novel *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, published in 1818. The leaflet contains six dances, and all draw their names from the novel and its characters. The Society publication also includes two other dances from the same period named after other Scott novels, along with a wealth of background information on Scott, the novels, and life, music, and dancing in Edinburgh at that time. For those interested in the history behind our dancing, it provides a fascinating look at the roots and the way things have changed over the years.

In an innovative approach to republishing old dances from manuscripts, the new booklet includes the text from the original leaflet describing the dance and compares this with a modern reconstruction, alongside some accompanying notes on the interpretation. The dances are all basic in comparison to most modern compositions, but that doesn't mean the original descriptions are easy to understand; they are very terse and open to a variety of interpretations, there being a lack of contemporary diagrams and videos! A section at the back has

additional notes on the formations, some of which vary from modern practice.

The writing team consulted period dance manuals and made their best guesses. In certain cases, the same wording in the original leaflet is interpreted in different ways in the reconstructions. Sometimes this is a result of context; for example, 'poussette' is rendered as the modern progressive formation in quick time if it is obviously the means of progression in the dance. However, if the first couple has already progressed to second place and then is to dance a poussette, it is interpreted as a waltz poussette right round, similar to the modern strathspey poussette. Another example is the instruction 'set cross corners', which appears in four of the dances in the leaflet. The notes discuss various suggestions for translating this phrase to modern practice. Rather than settling on one of these uniformly, the team allowed some variation in rendering it in the different dances.

Another point of interest is that two of the leaflet dances were previously published by the Society, *Madge Wildfire's Strathspey* in Book 9, and *The Laird o' Dumbiedyke's Favourite* in Book 12. The team reinterpreted both dances and I think the new versions avoid some awkward aspects of the previous ones, so you might give them a fresh look. I taught the new interpretation of *Madge Wildfire's Strathspey* recently and the class approved, including a couple of people who remembered less positive experiences with the version in Book 9.

The two dances included in addition to those from the 1820 leaflet are *Kenilworth* and *The Pirate*, both of which date from 1822. These were both originally 24-bar dances. The writing team, realizing that 24-bar dances are seldom seen on the dance floor now, suggested in both cases an 8-bar formation that could be added to flesh them out to standard 32-bar length. That might

be controversial to some readers but may enable these dances and their tunes to find wider application socially.

The accompanying CD, which has the same title as the booklet, I found to be very enjoyable listening and it was well received by the class in which I test-taught a couple of the dances. The music is performed by Alistair McCulloch (fiddle), Andrew Forbes (piano) and Màrtainn Skene (cello), who did the arrangements. All the tunes used are either traditional or compositions contemporary to the period, and the style attempts to recreate the experience of dancing in the early 19th century. Like the dances themselves, the music may not appeal to everyone's taste, but if you enjoy the historical sound of a string trio, I think you will find it highly satisfying. The tempos seem reasonable for dancing without requiring adjustment.

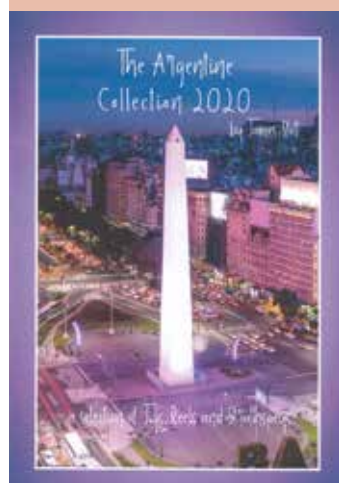
The CD includes 8x32 renditions of the six dances in the 1820 leaflet; for the two additional dances, there are 8x24 renditions as well as 4x32, if one chooses to teach the version with the suggested additional formation. This is the only criticism I have of the choices for the CD: if the team is trying to encourage dancers to enjoy these two dances, 8x32 format would find much wider application. It's hard to believe that space constraints were a consideration because there are four bonus tracks that also use tunes appropriate to the period, 8x32 jigs and reels, 3x32 strathspeys, and 4x32 waltzes. I expect teachers will readily make use of these tracks for dances lacking recorded music, but this comes at the expense of promoting *Kenilworth* and *The Pirate*.

This is a comprehensive effort to recreate some ancient dances, make them accessible to modern dancers, and provide background about the literary context, the historical setting, and the choices made in the reconstruction. Kudos to the Membership Services Committee for tackling a project that is a bit different and recruiting a team of knowledgeable writers, editors, and musicians! As I've indicated, it may not be popular with all teachers or dance groups, but if you enjoy the historical aspect to our dancing or are looking for some quite approachable dances your group hasn't seen before, give it a try.

*Alan Twigg, San Francisco Branch*

## The Argentine Collection

Jim Stott



The first thing that strikes one about *The Argentine Collection* 2020 of dances and music is how lavishly it is appointed. It's a 32-page A4 book in full colour throughout, with stunning photographs and graphics on virtually every page, and the labour involved in its layout and production must have been staggering. As such the collection seems very much like a joint effort between Jim Stott, who wrote all 14 dances except one and much of the original music, and Charly Candia of Buenos

Aires, who dealt with the visual presentation and co-authored the final dance with Jim. According to the Foreword, the inspiration for the book was Jim's October 2019 trip to Argentina, and the book itself was produced during lockdown in 2020.

The dances in the book include three jigs, three reels, seven strathspeys, and one medley. All quick-time dances are for three

couples in a four-couple set, while some of the strathspeys are three-couple set dances and one of them plus the medley are for a square set. They include a wide variety of formations, some not seen frequently, and range in difficulty from intermediate to advanced. The Frankfurt general class quite enjoyed them, identifying some – like *Welcome to Argentina*, *On the Tropic of Capricorn*, or *Charly's Strathspey* – as potential favourites for social dancing. Others – such as *The Four Spoons* or *The Barolo Palace Tower* medley – would probably do well in a display. Overall, the class failed to identify a dance that they were not prepared to do again, which speaks to the high quality of the dance devising in the book. The dances are clearly and succinctly explained, with only a few slightly puzzling aspects, and my copy of the book came with a convenient set of Keith Rose diagrams on a separate sheet of paper. The dance descriptions also include brief notes on their back-story or inspiration, often with photographs, which is a very nice addition.

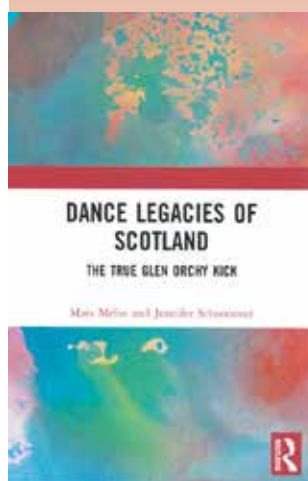
Every dance in the book comes with an original tune (two in the case of the medley), eight of them by Jim and the balance by other notable composers such as Scott Band, Drummond Cook, Bill Ewan, or Walter Rutherford. Some of the tune titles also allude to Jim's Argentina trip. Music for the dances has been recorded on CD by Susan and Shona MacFadyen and Ewan Galloway, and the sets provide a nice mixture of modern and some traditional SCD tunes that fit the dances well. (One dance, *The Jacarandas of Buenos Aires*, was inexplicably recorded eight times through even though it is a three-couple set strathspey, but as it is easily tweaked to work in a four-couple set, no music needs to go to waste!).

All in all, this book/CD combination has a lot of potential and could prove quite popular. We certainly enjoyed it and hope that Jim will keep taking inspiring trips abroad in the future!

*Anselm Lingnau, Mainz, Germany*  
*Frankfurt SCD Club*

## Dance Legacies of Scotland: the True Glenorchy Kick

Mats Melin and Jennifer Schoonover



This important book addresses a key issue in the history of Scottish dance: the part played by percussive dancing in which the sounds of the feet match the music. Melin and Schoonover have amassed a huge amount of evidence for this style as a main thread running through Scottish dancing for the past 400 years. They rely not only on scholarly research, but also on first-hand authority based on Schoonover's work as a Boston-based teacher and dancer and Melin's extensive experience as Dance Development Officer for the

Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust.

Percussive dancing as illustrated in this book is frequently performed in hard shoes and can be improvisatory. Heuching and finger snaps may accompany sounds made by the feet. Melin and Schoonover believe that percussive dancing lost its prominence in Scotland because of the Victorian preference for a smoother and more 'genteel' style of dancing. This was followed by the rise of standardizing organizations like the RSCDS and the Scottish



Official Board of Highland Dancing which both promoted a balletic style and soft-soled shoes. Despite denials by some Scots that Cape Breton step dancing with its strong percussive and improvisatory style had originally come from Scotland, through encounters in several parts of Scotland Melin was able to elicit traces of a similar style within living memory.

Rather than 'tradition', the authors use the term 'legacies' to emphasize the diversity and constant evolution of dancing practices and the creative contributions of many people who danced, taught, or influenced others. In keeping with that approach, they give details about many individuals, and extensive quotations which convey the excitement and vigour of this dance form.

Included in the book are thorough discussions of the anatomy of the foot, footwear historically used for dancing in Scotland, posture/stance, and surfaces for dancing. The language applied to step dancing is also critically analyzed: words used to classify step dances and dance music, and words used for the elements of a dance including onomatopoeic terms. Terms like 'fleup', 'fleg', and 'skiff' may be obscure to us now, but fortunately key terms like 'treble' and 'shuffle' have come down in unbroken transmission.

Readers may be surprised to learn that Scottish step dancing may not be indigenous in origin. Drawing on Gaelic sources found by the scholar Michael Newton, the authors trace the percussive style and quick, precise footwork to the 17th century Highlands. Through contacts with mainland Europe, the Gaelic élite absorbed Renaissance ideals of courtly dancing as a display of social grace, dexterity, and control. Rhythmic dancing on a wooden floor was especially valued. This style of dancing, though often with bare feet on bare earth, became typical of all Highlanders and was picked up by dancing masters like Thomas Peacock of Aberdeen.

Country dancers may also be surprised to learn that (as previously documented by Tom and Joan Flett) the percussive style of 'treepling' or beating out the rhythm with the feet once extended to popular dances like 'Petronella' in some parts of rural Scotland. They are described as danced mainly by men wearing 'tackety' (hobnailed) boots.

Generally, Scottish country dancers may feel that the book does less than justice to our own form of Scottish dancing. We have kept energy and excitement, together with rhythmic emphasis, through our response to enlivening Scottish music. In this part of the world at least, heuching and rhythmic handclapping can erupt, especially when we dance to live music. Also, the practical advantages of standardization for a worldwide form of dance may be implied in the book but are not stated.

One minor quibble: In the heading 'Mr John McGill, dancing master, Girvan, Ayrshire, 1752' the authors follow George Emmerson in one of his hasty assumptions. True, the dance manuscript summarized in a brief Notes and Queries article in 1953 and the full McGill manuscript recently given to the RSCDS Archive overlap in content, but they are not the same. The John McGill of the full MS is identified on its title page as 'dancing master of Dunse' – he was not the fiddler of Girvan. However, the overall point that percussive step dance was in the repertoire of a southern Scottish dancing master is valid. This MS also shows that a native flavour was appearing in the country dance in the mid-18th century, as it includes Scots terms like 'oxter' and 'cleek'.

The authors refer to the 'active exchange of dances and fashions particularly between France, England, and Scotland' in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It would be interesting to know what they make of the *MS Contre-Danses à Paris 1818*, probably a draft manual of Scottish dances, in English, written by a dancing master resident in Paris. It describes reel and strathspey steps using the balletic terminology of the newly popular quadrille, with three reel steps identical to the quadrille steps also described

in the MS and the others very close. To indicate extra hops, the strathspey steps are described with compounds like 'strath-assemblé' and 'strath-sissonne', reflecting the author's characterization of the strathspey as 'strictly national and peculiar to Scotland'. Is this an attempt to transfer the dignity and prestige of the ballroom quadrille to the traditional Scottish steps, while asserting stylistic differences?

Perhaps because it comes from just south of the Border, the evocative description of Scottish dancing in a letter by the poet John Keats is not included. He watched a country dancing school at Carlisle and note his use of the term 'scotch'. '[T]hey kickit & jumpit with mettle extraordinary, & whiskit, & fleckit, & toe'd it, & go'd it, & twirl'd it, & wheel'd it, & stamp't it, & sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad; The difference between our country dances & these scotch figures is about the same as leisurely stirring a cup o' tea & beating up a batter pudding'.

Rosemary Coupe, Vancouver

## RSCDS Cheltenham



### Sapphire Ball

Cheltenham Town Hall - 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023

Dancing to **Craigellachie**

**£25.00** with Buffet Supper

Info [www.rscdscheltenham.org](http://www.rscdscheltenham.org)

or email [tickets@rscdscheltenham.org](mailto:tickets@rscdscheltenham.org)

Leeds Branch Annual

## Musicians' Workshop

Saturday 11th February 2023

at St Chad's Parish Centre, Otley Rd, Leeds LS16 5JT

**Workshop: 9.30 - 4.30** Tutor: Kevin Lees  
(all instruments welcome; lunch included)

Kevin joins us from Denmark where he is based. He is a multi-instrumentalist with an academic background in folk and traditional music, and considers his own music tradition to be Scottish and Northumbrian, particularly music for dance.

Application form and enquiries from the organiser Heather Foote at [heather@feete.org](mailto:heather@feete.org)

For further details see the website [rscdsleeds.org.uk](http://rscdsleeds.org.uk)



  
**rscds**  
Leeds Branch

# Prinny goes to the Ball

On 21 August a ball was held at one of Scotland's grandest houses, Hopetoun House, South Queensferry, to mark the 200th anniversary of the visit of King George IV to Edinburgh in August 1822. Hopetoun House was chosen, not only because of its magnificent 18th century ballroom, but also because it was from there that the king left for London at the end of his visit. Scottish country dancers along with Regency dancers in authentic dress enjoyed a programme of period dances, including some from the recent RSCDS *Heart of Mid-Lothian* booklet. Libby Curzon and Jimmie Hill were the MCs and here Jimmie gives us some background to the two balls attended by the King in 1822.



*Regency dancers outside Hopetoun House*

Great Britain dates from 1707 with the Union of England and Scotland. King George IV was the first reigning monarch to visit Scotland since Charles II's visit 170 years earlier in 1651. It could be argued that George invented 'The Royal Visit'. The Regency had ended in 1820 with the death of his father, George III, and the next year, the new king visited Ireland, the first Royal Visit there since Richard II in 1399. Although reported as 'The Royal Visit to Scotland', it was more accurately the King's visit to Edinburgh. He didn't venture anywhere else. All the official events took place in Edinburgh, with His Majesty staying with the Duke of Buccleuch at Dalkeith Palace, eight miles to the south. At that time Holyrood Palace was not in a fit state for the King.

From leaving Greenwich on Saturday 10 August on board *The Royal George* to arriving back took three weeks, described by John Murray, the 4th Duke of Atholl, as 'one and twenty daft days'. Some clan chiefs boycotted the entire visit, viewing the whole affair as a travesty of Highland culture, but those who attended and the population of Edinburgh and surrounding towns greeted every appearance of the portly monarch with great enthusiasm. There was a bonfire on Arthur's Seat the evening after his arrival and fireworks at the west end of George Street. St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh Castle, the Theatre Royal, and Holyrood Palace had all been spruced up for the occasion. Poems and songs were composed specially for the event:

*Hark! The pibroch's martial strain  
Ca's the clans to Lothian's plain:  
Scotland's got her King again;  
Welcome, royal Geordie!*

The Scottish clan chiefs and aristocracy, and representatives of the most important Scottish institutions including the Church of Scotland and the universities, attended a levée at the Palace

when the King appeared in his £100,000 tartan outfit with the now famous comically short kilt and pink tights. For us as dancers the most interesting aspect of the visit was his invitation to attend no fewer than three balls. He attended two, but had a previous engagement at the Theatre Royal for a dramatic performance of Scott's *Rob Roy* on the evening of the third.



*The Grand March at Hopetoun House*

The first mention of dance was on the evening he arrived. During dinner at Dalkeith Palace, the music was provided by Nathaniel Gow. The King announced, "From my earliest years, I have always been fond of Scottish music, and have often listened to it with pleasure, but have never had so great a treat as this evening. I am happy to see the representative of Niel Gow in this place; and long may he live to delight his friends!" For the King to call Gow's son, Nathaniel, a friend had such an effect on him that he was said to have announced, "I'm perfectly contented to die now."

Nathaniel Gow provided the music for the two balls held in the Assembly Rooms on George Street – the venue for the Society's 100th Anniversary Ball next year. The first, on Friday 23 August, was the Peers' Ball, organised in his honour by the Scottish aristocracy. From the account by Robert Mudie, we know that the Ballroom had been cleaned and painted, with new blue curtains. A throne, hung with rich crimson drapery, had been erected at the east end of the main ballroom. Mudie tells us that the floor was 'fantastically chalked', referring to the practice of covering the wooden floorboards in extravagant patterns in chalk. People began arriving around eight o'clock and by nine the room was filled with 'nearly all the rank, beauty, and fashion of Scotland.' The ladies were in elegant white dresses with plumes of ostrich feathers, their plumage in constant undulation'. The men were either in full court or Highland dress. The *Caledonian Mercury* noted that the ladies were 'richly bespangled' while *Jackson's Oxford Journal* reported sadly that the Countess of Sutherland could not attend because she had left all her jewels in her London home!

The King arrived around 9.45, the vestibule lined by the Yeomen of the Guard and Lords of the Bed-chamber. A great disappointment was that he had decided against wearing his kilt in favour of his uniform as a Field Marshall. One report tells us that, as he arrived, the King was received 'with the most profound and respectful silence'. 'He immediately went into the great room, and clapping his hands, called out for Scotch Reels, which instantly began.' We know from *The Caledonian Mercury* that the ball opened with a Scots reel and a country dance, both danced with 'spirit' and to





*King George arrives!*

'sprightly airs'. The king was greatly pleased by the dancing and 'snapped his fingers' in time to the music. We know that 'a lady and a gentleman in a Highland dress danced a strathspey with much taste, which the King so much admired that he clapped his hands in token of appreciation.' This was clearly a showy dance for one couple. The historical dancer, Alena Shmakova, thinks this could have been a Strathspey Minuet, as danced on stage in Edinburgh and London in the 1810s. [Ed. Alena has reconstructed a fascinating interpretation on Youtube: Strathspey for Two, 1822.] Dancing was also organised in the back ballroom, now known as The Music Hall. This was where quadrilles and waltzes took place. The King did not go into that room because he only wanted to watch Scottish dancing – reels and country dances! And after all the preparations, he did not go into the supper room either! He retired after about an hour, around 11 o'clock, but the dancing continued till well into the morning. The main ballroom will comfortably fit around 200 people in country dance sets, but there were many more present. One report said that there was 'less dancing than of promenading'. With such a huge crowd only a few could dance in the centre of the room: people had gone to see the King and be seen, not to dance. The report goes on to remark on 'the closeness with which they were wedged together, but there was no confusion; and though a guard of cavalry was in readiness, it was not in the slightest degree required.' One thing is clear – the King did not dance. If he had, it would have been reported!



*In the ballroom at Hopetoun House*

On the Sunday George attended a Church of Scotland service in St Giles Cathedral, putting £100 in cash in the collection plate – c. £14,000 in today's money. On Monday 26th he attended his second ball, again in the Assembly Rooms, but this time organised in his honour by the Caledonian Hunt. He arrived at 9.30 in his uniform as Colonel of the Guards, again no kilt or pink tights! He had asked to see only Scots reels and strathspeys. "I dislike seeing anything in Scotland that is not purely national and characteristic". We know that Gow played the tune *Brechin Castle* for the first reel.

Again George kept away from the back ballroom where 'foreign' quadrilles were being danced. After speaking with various of the aristocracy present, he sat on the throne and watched the dancing. *The Caledonian Mercury* reported that the ballroom had been divided in two 'to render the dancing less exposed to obstruction.' It was reported that, when the King left around 11 o'clock, the country dances began and continued till 7 the next morning. Again, there are no reports of the King actually taking to the floor.

The third ball in the King's honour was held at the Assembly Rooms on Tuesday 27th under the patronage of the Duchesses of Atholl and Montrose, but the king was unable to be present as he was attending a Royal Command performance of *Rob Roy* at the Theatre Royal.

Thursday 29th was the King's last day in Scotland. He was treated to a 'déjeuner à la fourchette' by Sir John Hope, the 4th Earl, at Hopetoun House prior to joining *The Royal George* at Port Edgar for the voyage south. We know he dined on turtle soup and fortified himself with three glasses of wine before embarking. After the meal, using Lord Hopetoun's sword, he knighted Sir Henry Raeburn, the Scottish portraitist, and Sir Adam Ferguson, Keeper of the Regalia in Scotland. The two balls, along with his visit to the theatre, had been the three main social events of the King's visit, when he mixed with people in a more informal atmosphere. There is no question that George was greatly interested in the Scottish dancing that he saw, and in the music of Nathaniel Gow.

But what of the visit as a whole? Politically, the visit put Scotland back on the map. Robert Mudie wrote, 'after the Union (of 1707) Scotland was doomed to entire neglect; or, if the attention of government was occasionally directed to that country, it was in the spirit of vengeance, to devise the means of chastising its pride and subduing its spirit.' Though some maintain that Sir Walter Scott's stage-managing of the King's visit presented a highly romanticised, not to say entirely artificial, view of Scottish culture, it had the merit of having to some extent modified the Lowland view of the Highlands. Forbidding Highland landscapes became brooding and romantic; the military prowess of the Highland Clans found an outlet in the Highland Regiments; and Scotland found itself with a unifying iconography of tartan, music, and dance.



*1822 cartoon by Cruikshank showing the king on the Royal Yacht, wooing a married Scottish lady (the turtle dove), while being served turtle soup by the Mayor of London*

There is no question that King George was very warmly received in Edinburgh by all ranks of society, in stark contrast to his unpopularity in London, where his carriage was routinely mobbed, pelted and hissed at while cartoonists ridiculed him on a regular basis. On his voyage south George must have pondered on the enthusiasm of his Scottish subjects compared with the insults of the London mob. The visit was summed up in a contemporary press report, 'His Majesty is quite delighted with Scotland, and Scotland is as much delighted with his Majesty.'

*[Ed: As a young man, then as Prince Regent, George had led a very dissolute life. 'Prinny' was his popular nickname.]*

*(Refs: A Historical Account of His Majesty's Visit to Scotland, Robert Mudie, Oliver and Boyd, 1822; The Caledonian Mercury; Jackson's Oxford Journal)*

# Letters to the Editor

Any opinions expressed in the letters below are personal to the writers and do not reflect the views of the RSCDS or the Management Board.

Dear Editor

## A Royal Encounter

I danced with the Duke of Edinburgh...

Well, not quite... but I was in the same set at the RSCDS Jubilee Ball, held in Edinburgh's Assembly Rooms on 12th July 1973. A relative newcomer to the Newcastle upon Tyne and District Branch, but not to the RSCDS, I was fortunate to accompany a member of the Branch committee who had an invitation but no partner (there were several single ladies in the group, and they had already snapped up the other eligible men).

The dance in question was *Hamilton House*, then a regular item on RSCDS programmes and still popular with Reelers now. When it was announced, the Newcastle contingent swept onto the floor and positioned itself below the set containing the Royal Party – the Queen and Prince Philip were not dancing together. There was, however, a problem with the counting, as the Duke found himself first couple in a set with us... and, as he clearly looked uncomfortable, I asked him if he would like to change places.

Although the Queen is Patron of the RSCDS, the Royal Family follows the Reeler tradition, where sets are usually made up of five couples, so I guess that Prince Philip thought he was at the bottom of the 'Royal Set' for *Hamilton House*. The person counting down the lines was doing it our way, however, so it must have come as a nasty shock when HRH discovered he was first couple in a set of strangers! He certainly seemed very happy to relinquish the position of top couple when I offered to swap.

Some of the Newcastle dancers were shocked that I spoke in such a matter-of-fact way to such a grand guest without tugging my forelock or addressing him as 'Your Royal Highness' – but there wasn't time for that, as we didn't have recaps in those days and the band was about to start...

Tim Bolton-Maggs, Edinburgh Branch

Dear Editor

## Dance Through the RSCDS Decades

The Membership Services Committee has selected *Ladies' Fancy* as the representative dance for 1943-52. In this jig, I am curious about whether the 1st woman turns by the right or left at bar 12 to face the top. *Book 13* does not describe in which direction the 1st woman should turn.

In some groups, the 1st woman turns by the left, as in *The Glasgow Highlanders*. In other groups, all turn by the right, as in *Glasgow Country Dance*. I like the style of all dancers turning by the right as in *Margaret Parker's Strathspey* and *The Highland Rambler*. *Ladies' Fancy* is a two-couple jig that I think looks particularly lovely when all the dancers in the room turn in the same direction at the same time. Please could we have a clear indication as to which direction the 1st woman should turn in this dance? Or is the instruction to do 'just as you like'?

Tom Toriyama, Tokyo Branch

Dear Editor

## RSCDS Obsession with Teaching

Oluf Olufsen, Chairman of the Teachers Association of Scotland, recently encouraged RSCDS teachers to review how they conduct their classes. He was responding to remarks made to him to the effect that the RSCDS spent most of its resources (human and financial) on teaching people to dance who could already dance, and that the future of SCD lay with encouraging beginners. Geoffrey Selling, in the previous issue of this magazine, is bold enough to say that there is too much standing and walking around in RSCDS classes, and that if teachers used the music more and there was more dancing done in classes, we might attract more recruits. I would very much agree with them, but will we do anything to improve matters?

I have never been happy with the RSCDS management focus on the needs of teachers rather than the encouragement of

participation in dancing. We talk about preserving dancing for future generations, but we have already destroyed enjoyment in relaxed, social dancing by the introduction of too many books of dances (possibly for teaching and financial reasons). I want dances that are easily accessible to offer my grandchildren.

More recently I have been disappointed that we have not come up with some new innovative ideas for our planned centenary celebrations to recruit new dancers: such a golden opportunity for branches to put on a local event! For example:

- Promote dancing in the street in every town at New Year: As inspiration - Pitlochry High Street is closed for an afternoon party to celebrate the beginning of the new year each 1 January.
- Every branch to run summer dancing events in a local park for children and adults.
- Celtic Connections and other festivals: there should be SCD workshops and parties at such events, so that new and younger dancers can be introduced to SCD.
- Royal Highland Show: where are the dancers? Ian Muir and his band were playing this year, but there was no dance display, or audience participation.
- The Edinburgh Tattoo/Festival fringe: there needs to be regular dances with a band, advertised as accessible to all, especially beginners. And dancing displays at the Tattoo.

The Society structure and objectives require looking at to move the focus away from servicing existing members. Could we have, instead of Membership Services, a Dance Services committee for all dancing, incorporating marketing and coordinating events? I think we, the Society members, must act, and fast, as our membership numbers are decreasing at an alarming rate.

John Carswell, Linlithgow

Dear Editor

## Ageism in Scottish Country Dancing

I write to highlight the growing problem of ageism in Scottish country dancing, and I don't mean the ageing of our members, but the way in which some groups are discouraging, and turning away, older dancers, in the drive to attract younger members.

For me, the heart and soul of SCD is the traditional ceilidh, where all ages, and all abilities, dance together, just for the fun of it. In Paris, we had one old lady dancing until she was 94 years old, and it was generally acknowledged that it was SCD that kept her going. Now the drive for younger members is leaving older dancers feeling discouraged. I heard of one lady turned away from a SCD group on the continent because she was 70 years old. I can imagine how rejected she must have felt! Some teachers too do not show consideration for less nimble dancers.

Some years ago, Antoine, from my Paris branch, wrote in this magazine how the young dancers were encouraged to join in and participate, and this has been a tremendous success in Paris, and elsewhere on the Continent, but we still have some older dancers who come for the fun of dancing, and this provides a good mix of experience and ability. There will always be a place for the elite athletes, who want to treat SCD like an Olympic sport, but don't let's throw the oldies out with the bath water! SCD should be for all ages and abilities, to enjoy the fun of dancing together.

Marcus Moore (an adolescent 70+ year old!) Paris Branch

Dear Editor

## Sympathy for the MC

I must take issue with John Marshall (April 2022 letter) and his solution to perceived unfairness when a fifth couple is added to a four-couple set where fours and fives dance once each. His maths may be correct in that the second couple is a little short changed on the deal if the fourth couple do not go to the bottom after their turn, but his solution - to object with a loud voice to the MC - is entirely incorrect. Most likely a dancer who has given up his or her evening's dancing to host the event, the MC will already have spent considerable time working on their recaps and other necessary pre-dance admin. If you disagree with their handling of any part of the evening, the solution lies in your own hands. Swallow your chagrin at a lost bit of dancing and volunteer to MC the next event, which you can then run to your own satisfaction. Any heckling of an MC is ungrateful and inappropriate. The only thing they require is your thanks at the end of the evening.

Cindy Clarke, North West Craven Branch



# In My Opinion



**Jill Andrews describes herself as an ordinary member of Edinburgh Branch, for whom the music for Scottish country dancing is key to her enjoyment, although she does not play an instrument herself.**

I remember my first experience of attending the children's class at Bournemouth Branch, as there were only three of us, and I would end up dancing with the teacher. We learned to recorded music only, the teacher using either LPs or tapes. I am not even sure that

musicians were available to play for the day schools or informal dances then. Not until I attended summer school in St Andrews was I able to experience the delights and thrills of dancing to live piano and band music.

Like many teachers, my mother spent many hours selecting music from LPs for her classes. She would annotate the back of them and record the relevant sections on tape: a lot of preparation! However, it meant she could choose the tunes she particularly liked for step practice. She often had to slow the record player's speed as the recordings were often played so much faster than today. In my opinion, as dancers, we do not appreciate the amount of time and effort our teachers put into preparing for classes, not only when choosing the formations and analysing dances for their classes, but in selecting the accompanying music and recordings. If we are lucky enough to have a class musician, we need to appreciate the tunes they choose to play for us, and the amount of time it takes to put a set of different tunes together, and then practise these for the class. Having listened to several talks on music for dancing, with explanations of which tunes can follow the first, I admire the talent of our dance musicians immensely.

No matter where the dance is, whether to recorded music or a live band, the music is key to my enjoyment of Scottish country dancing. Some tunes immediately transport me back to dancing with the Bournemouth Branch, especially recordings by John Ellis and Stan Hamilton. When I hear music I like, I find myself wishing very hard to be first couple for the tune that moves me the most! For class, the piano is still my favourite - Muriel Johnstone, playing one of her beautiful strathspeys, really succeeds in reaching the depth of my emotions.

For me, the style of the band and the playing of a particular tune often evokes memories. I recently attended a special Paris Branch event, in memory of a good friend, Jerry Reinstein. Despite the sadness felt by all when dancing *The Gentleman*, it was inspiring to hear and dance to their youthful Paris Band. What a sound! A cello, three fiddles, a keyboard, a clarinet, and a recorder: completely thrilling! I found myself filled with more energy than I thought possible! Whichever tunes inspire or move us, be it recorded or live music, each one of us will hold their own favourite tunes which evoke memories or simply the joy of the dance.

## Creative in Lockdown

**Gaye Collin relates her story about creating unusual dance figures and devising new dances.**

To start at the beginning. During the first lockdown in NZ, with the morning sun shining into the room I sit and devise in, my thoughts went to the 'ideas sheet' in front of me and two things jumped out straight away: my new formation Flirt & Cast and the formation Weasel Reel.

So, first things first, I emailed the creator of this unique Weasel Reel: Barry Skelton, to ask his permission to use this NZ-devised formation in some dances. During the following couple of days two emails arrived. One from Barry saying: "Yes, you can use it. I devised it 1st July 1990 [see *The Weasel* in *The Kiwi Book*. Ed]. Another dance, *The White Rabbit*, contains the same movement. Cheers, Barry". Another email came from Jim Stott, who lives in Ellon outside Aberdeen in Scotland. It was a lengthy email, but Jim's request was: "One of your dances *The Flowering Heather*, has a lovely 8 bar phrase, the second 8 bars of the dance. Would it be acceptable to you for me to include these 8 bars in a Strathspey for my dance book?" I emailed Jim back straight away to give him my blessing for

using the formation, which had just been named recently as Flirt & Cast. How very excited I felt having one of my formations picked up and used in a dance in a city as far away as Aberdeen. It spurred me on to put the finishing touches to my two new dances: *Flirt in Isolation* and *The Isolated Weasel*.

Later, when we were out of lockdown but still not allowed to travel to our family in Australia, Damon and I decided to take our electric bikes and explore the city of New Plymouth for a week. Leaving this very pretty place at the end of a great week of biking and walking, we sat at a set of traffic lights and my eyes were drawn to a sign that read: *Drop Your Pants Here*. During the drive home to Lower Hutt another dance started to appear in my mind, and later that week it was committed to paper.

In March 2021 the borders finally opened and let us travel again to see the family that we hadn't visited for 18 months, in Coff's Harbour in New South Wales, Australia. Well, the rest is history. While we were in sunny Sawtell, minding our own business and having quality family time, the borders

were closed, and we were **stuck**. Delta had arrived big time in Sydney and all New Zealanders in New South Wales, were denied flights home. So, we stayed put with the family.

Glenna James from Te Awamutu suggested I should be devising, and could she have a dance with a Bourrel and an Espagnole in it please? What could I say? I had the time! During a rather relaxed lockdown in Coff's, we were allowed to visit the beaches and as the temperatures (mid-winter) were between 18 and 25C most days, *The Lookout at Sawtell* was a wonderful place to visit. *Fish and Chips* looking out to sea, and walks on the beach and hill tops, were wonderful ways to spend our time with the grandkids, not to mention watching the bird life. My dance for Glenna is based around wave movements, and we chatted about names for the dance and music via emails. So, *Stranded in Sawtell*, (Glenna's dance in the book) and *The Seagulls @ Sawtell* were dances hatched.

When putting a dance book together, I believe you need variety and a range of levels, and the dances need trialling. At this point I have to say a huge thank you to teachers around NZ and Oz who are happy to try out my dances and get back to me with excellent feedback.

# Sadly Missed

We would appreciate it if obituaries were of 150 words or less, and sent from branch or club secretaries.

## Robert Bruce Cameron

Robert Cameron, aka 'boB', was an active member of the Dunedin Scottish Country Dancers in Dunedin, Florida having held multiple positions on the Board of Directors, including Chairman. Prior to moving to Florida in 2015, he had danced with Buffalo, New York Branch and Washington, DC Branch. boB suffered through multiple health problems but was always there to provide support where needed. His cheerful personality and knowledge of all things Scottish will be greatly missed.

*April Gayle Gausman, Dunedin FL Group*

## Pat Clark, Dumfries

Pat started dancing aged 6, continuing at Leeds University where she met her husband, Peter. She also played piano for several local classes. At Leeds Branch she took her teaching certificate, and on the day of her exam, played the piano for other candidates! In 1966, Miss Milligan invited Pat to play for Summer School, which she continued to do until 2013. After retiring from school teaching, Pat accepted invitations to play for Scottish dance courses all over the world. She composed over 200 tunes for friends and published books of her own dances and music. Pat served on the Education and Training Committee, and in 2006, she was awarded the Society Scroll. She and Peter were Life Members and have been stalwarts of Dumfries Branch, where Pat contributed to the teaching and played for a children's class. She was always one of the first to extend a hand of friendship and welcome new dancers to the floor.

*Janette Kirkpatrick, Dumfries Branch Chairman*

## Anne Dejean Dussud, Lyon

After a year of illness, Anne Dejean Dussud lost her battle against cancer. She was mother of two young teenagers and is greatly missed by her family and friends. Anne was an excellent dancer, and a patient and encouraging teacher. She helped the SCD groups near Grenoble develop and was a keen member of Lyon Branch. She was always smiling and positive, even during the past year. She very recently organised a demonstration in her hospital, to show the staff what SCD was, and even got them to dance! She was a prolific deviser, and published several dance books. Her last book, *The Remission Book*, dedicated to the medical staff who helped her during her illness, is available in pdf. Feel free to request a copy and dance a few dances in her memory! She loved chocolate, so enjoy some chocolate afterwards!

*Lyon Branch committee*

## Rik de Vroome

Henderikus de Vroome, always known as Rik, learnt to play the violin as a teenager. When he moved to Eindhoven a colleague introduced him to British and American folk dancing, where he met Scottish dancer Claire, who later became his wife. They were founder members of the Thistle Club. Rik soon gained teaching certificates in Scottish country and Highland dancing. He travelled with the Tilburg Dutch Pipes and Drums to demonstrations and tattoos abroad, choreographing dances to put on flawless shows. Rik also devised dances in honour of friends or their children and wrote tunes to go with them. He took a course on playing for folk dancing and, as band leader of the Dutch Taverners, accompanied the English dancing at Vodawiko. He was an amateur member of the Kempisch Chamber Orchestra until their practice clashed with the Scottish dance evening! Rik had strong views but was always fair-minded.

*Margaret Lambourne, The Swilcan, Utrecht & Claire de Vroome, The Thistle Club, Eindhoven*

## Regina Freinbichler

For many years until just a couple of months ago, and despite having been forced into retirement through her illness, Regina was the co-admin of the English Speakers in Salzburg Facebook

group and worked tirelessly making sure the group was a good and informative place. She had such a passion for the English language, for Scotland and for Scottish country dancing, and published a useful little book: *Scottish Country Dancing with Beginners*. As well as being a member of the International Branch, Regina was a dancer with The Flying Scotsman Scottish Country Dancers, Salzburg. Regina always thought of others before herself: even in her last days she showed solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

*Graham Crewe, English Speakers in Salzburg (Facebook)*

## Elizabeth Fulton, North Ayrshire

Betty was a well-known figure in Scottish country dancing in Ayrshire. She was born and lived her whole life in Irvine. Betty started dancing in the 1960s when she joined the Branch class in Saltcoats. Her love of dancing led her to take her teaching certificates and she became class teacher, retiring in her mid-80s. Betty was an active member of the Branch committee for most of her dancing life, holding the positions of secretary and vice-chairperson. Organisation was Betty's forte, and she took great pleasure in organising and running our weekend schools on the Isle of Arran. In her later years she was appointed as Honorary Branch President. Betty continued to dance till in her 90s, supporting the Branch and encouraging dancers. She passed away peacefully at home aged 94.

*Sandra Mollison, North Ayrshire*

## Derek Hamilton

Derek Hamilton was a long-standing and very supportive member of Kilmarnock Branch which he joined through his association with class teacher Annie Parker and Janey Barr, the pianist with The Fleming Band. Derek was a talented and well-respected multi-instrumental musician, who regularly played with several of the local bands who provided the music at many of the Branch dances. He also enjoyed joining his many musician friends in the balcony at the weekly summer dancing in Troon to listen to the various bands that played there.

*David Pinkerton, Kilmarnock & District Branch*

## James Taylor Healy

Jim was a larger than life personality, a natural dancer and a great partner. However, it was off the dance floor that he made his biggest contribution to the RSCDS. At local level Jim served as Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman of Perth & Perthshire Branch. He started and edited the Branch newsletter, and was heavily involved in the production of the 2008 *Perth Book of Dances*. Jim served on the Executive Council, General Purposes Committee and Membership Services Committee, eventually as Convener. He pioneered the use of email to involve branches in selecting dances for new books and handled the administration and communication. He helped begin the revision of RSCDS books in A5 format, including experienced teachers from around the world, and was involved in standardising the terminology for describing dances. His most recent achievement was the publication of the *Imperial Books* – a formidable task! When Jim was Honorary Archivist, while the basement was being refurbished, he supervised the transfer of all items to their permanent places. He encouraged the creation of an alternative teacher training scheme that eventually emerged as the Core Training for Instructors. Jim served as Chairman of the Society from 2014-2016 and was awarded the Society's Scroll of Honour in 2020.

*Linda Gaul, Perth & Perthshire*

## Concetta (Connie) Powell

Connie Powell was born in Newark, NJ and danced with the New York Branch. She danced in demonstrations in the New York area with the Loch Leven Dancers. In 1975, she completed her RSCDS teaching certificate through the Teachers Association of Canada (TAC). She continued to teach and perform in the New York area until early 1994 when she moved to the Dunedin, Florida area and joined the Dunedin Scottish Country Dancers. She became a regular teacher, held positions on the Board of Directors, and managed the demonstration team for many years. She was recognized for her precision, phrasing, and attention to detail while teaching and dancing. She was also an accomplished bagpiper and a life member of the Scottish American Society of Dunedin.

*April Gayle Gausman, Dunedin FL Group*



# Day School Diary - October 2022 – July 2023

The Day School Diary is compiled by Ian Brockbank. Please send details to [ian@scottishdance.net](mailto:ian@scottishdance.net). Issue 36 will cover events from April to December 2023.

## October 2022

- 1 York & North Humberside Branch half day school, Stockton on the Forest
- 7-9 RSCDS Youth Branch Weekend Away, Bologna, Italy
- 7-9 Southern Fling weekend for 18-40s, Sydney, Australia
- 15 London Day School and Musicians' Workshop, Paddington Academy, London, UK
- 21-23 Sutton Coldfield Branch Weekend of Dance, Symonds Yat, Herefordshire UK

## November 2022

- 4-6 Asilomar Weekend Workshop, Pacific Grove, California, USA
- 11-13 Argyle Weekend, Northern Virginia (Washington, DC area), USA
- 11-13 Croydon and District Weekend School, Cumberland Hotel, Eastbourne
- 12 Norwich Branch Day School, UK
- 12 Carlisle and Border Branch Beginners and Improvers Workshop, Thursby, nr Carlisle
- 12 Bristol Branch Day School, Bristol, UK

## February 2023

- 3-5 York & North Humberside Branch Weekend School, Harrogate, England
- 4 Carlisle and Border Branch Day School, Longtown, Cumbria
- 10-12 Edmonton Workshop and Ball 2023, Edmonton, Alberta.
- 11 Leeds Branch Annual Musicians' Workshop, Leeds, UK
- 17-19 Wight Weekend School, Shanklin Hotel, Isle of Wight
- 17-19 Hawaii Aloha Winter Weekend School, Honolulu
- 18 RSCDS Oxfordshire Day School and Dance, Headington School, Oxford
- 19-24 RSCDS Winter School, Pitlochry, Scotland

## March 2023

- 10-11 RSCDS Oban and Lorn Branch Weekend School, Corran Halls, Oban

- 11 RSCDS Dundee Branch Half-Day School and Dance, Morgan Academy, Dundee
- 18-21 RSCDS Tokai Branch 25th Anniversary Weekend Camp and Party, Japan
- 25 Frankfurt Annual Day School and Dance, Germany
- 25 West End Workshop, Mississauga/West Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- 26 West End Teachers Workshop, Mississauga/West Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## April 2023

- 21-23 Winnipeg 60th Branch Anniversary Workshop and Ball, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

## May 2023

- 19-20 Isle of Skye May Weekend, Portree High School, Skye.
- 19-21 Duns May Weekend, Scotland, UK
- 19-21 New York Branch 60th Annual Pawling Weekend, Copake, NY

## June 2023

- 9-11 Midwest Scottish Weekend, Ripon, Wisconsin, USA

## July 2023

- 28 – 30 TAC Teachers Conference Weekend (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada)
- 30-Aug 6 TAC Summer School (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada)

The Day School Diary just has space for day and weekend schools. For other events in your area, please check <http://www.scottishdance.net/events/> or:

- Scotland and Cumbria: <https://scotdancediary.co.uk/>
- Europe: <http://www.celtic-circle.de/events.html>
- Canada and USA: <https://intercityscot.org/eventList.php>

**2023 TAC Summer School**  
at King's and Dalhousie Universities,  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

**July 30-Aug 6, 2023**

Welcoming, supportive classes  
For dancers of all levels  
basic | intermediate | advanced

SAVE  
THE  
DATE



**tac-rscds.org**

Sponsored by Scottish Country Dance Teachers' Association (Canada)



# WHAT'S ON?

Help us celebrate 100 years of the RSCDS with the Centenary launch at Autumn Gathering in 2022 and a range of exciting events and activities throughout 2023!

4 - 6 NOVEMBER 2022

Autumn Gathering, Glasgow

19 - 24 FEBRUARY 2023

Winter School, Pitlochry

24 FEBRUARY 2023

Flying Scotsman, Edinburgh  
Waverley Station

25 MARCH 2023

RSCDS Centenary Ball, Assembly  
Rooms, Edinburgh

14 - 16 APRIL 2023

Edinburgh Spring Fling

26 - 28 MAY 2023

Toronto Spring Fling

16 JULY - 13 AUGUST 2023

Summer School, St Andrews

30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Dances through the RSCDS  
decades, worldwide

3 - 5 NOVEMBER 2023

Centenary Autumn Gathering,  
Glasgow

26 NOVEMBER 2023

Celebration at the Athenæum,  
Glasgow

Are you a Branch or Affiliated  
Group? Tell us what you're  
planning for the Centenary!

Check the website for all the  
latest updates!

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



# 100 YEARS

CELEBRATING DANCE SCOTTISH