

the reel

Published by the LONDON BRANCH of THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY
Registered Charity number 1067690

No. 240

MAY TO AUGUST 2002

DANCING IN THE LAND OF THE COSSACKS

Welcome to the Kuban Scottish Dancers!

Your Editor first met Ilona Gumenyuk dancing at St. Andrews in 1999, and then in Budapest in 2001, learning of her enthusiasm to establish Scottish Country Dancing in her home town of Krasnodar on the Kuban Steppe of Russia, near the Black Sea. I was pleased to visit her group in March but, first, here is Ilona's story...

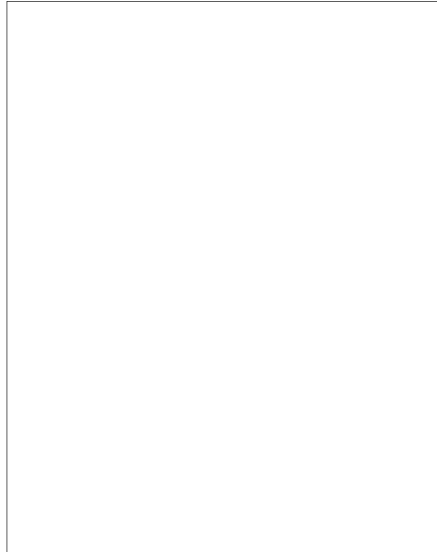
This story is like a fairy tale about an ordinary Russian girl who has found herself in a land of her dreams gaining happiness and friends all over the world.

About five years ago a Russian lecturer, teaching at Bristol University, went to her first Scottish Country Dance class. Who would have thought, at that time, that not only would she stay in the class and participate in various events, but would also fall in love with Scottish Country Dancing and Scottish culture so much that her passion would acquire such an international scale? Nobody could have imagined that Krasnodar would not only get to know about the existence of such a hobby, and such a world renowned organisation as the RSCDS, but would become a centre of Scottish Country Dancing in Russia? How did it start?

Since my childhood I have been very interested in dancing. At the age of five my mother took me to my first ballet class and I have been dancing ever since. I took up ballroom dancing at the age of ten and danced it competitively until I was 18. I am really grateful to my mother, together with my grandfather and my grandmother. My mother not only started me off as a dancer, but also supported me along the way, making my dancing costumes and taking me to various dance competitions and demonstrations all over Russia. As she says, it has always been her own dream to dance – the dream which came true in her daughter. She is now dancing in my group in Krasnodar and takes an active part in all the activities and supports all my new ideas and projects.

As a ballroom dancer, I was so much involved in the dancing world that I even thought of choosing this as my career. I always wanted to dance at a real ball, and to teach others. But when I finished school, my other passion – for languages – outweighed and dancing remained my hobby. As a student at school, and then later at the University, I studied in the USA where I carried on with my hobby. These first trips outside Russia developed my interest in travelling, getting to know other cultures and people and broadened my international outlook.

I got a degree in English and German and stayed at the Kuban State University in Krasnodar to teach at the Department of Linguistics. It was then that I was invited to come to Bristol as a lecturer at the Russian Department of the University for the 1997-1998 academic years.



Ilona leads Svetlana Batisheva down the middle in Good Hearted Glasgow at the Ceilidh

My teaching and dancing in Bristol was the starting point of my Scottish Country Dance saga, which, I hope, will never end. RSCDS Bristol Branch accepted me as a member of their family and I am grateful to all its members who took care of me and helped me all these years. Special thanks to Fiona Grant who not only supported me but also accepted me as a part of her own family, and is now my dancing "guardian angel". I also want to thank all my dancing friends all over the world who believed in me and are always there to help.

When in Bristol, I took part in various dancing events – day schools, social dancing, weekend schools. I remember my first social dancing very well, when I was in sheer terror of making a mess of all the dances because I didn't know any of them. But by the end of the evening I found myself dancing with a big smile on my face feeling extremely happy to be surrounded by friendly dancers who helped me through.

The peak of my dancing at that time was participation in the RSCDS Summer School in St. Andrews in 1999 and 2000. It was a gift of fortune, of the RSCDS and the Bristol Branch, to me! I started in the beginners' class and then moved to the advanced level of dancing and was privileged to dance in the demonstration team. It was there that I felt the overwhelming warmth of the RSCDS international family and its individual members, which is so important especially when one is far away from home. I am proud to say that now I have my second home – this is where Scottish dancing is. I fell in love with Scotland and can understand now why Robert Burns once wrote "My heart's in the

Highlands wherever I go" – my heart is with Scottish Country Dancing, wherever I go!

Last November I was lucky to be present at the 72nd AGM of the RSCDS in Perth, which was the first AGM in my life. It was exciting to be at the event which is so important in the life of the Society and which is so well discussed among its members. Being there helped me to understand how the Society works, and opened up my mind to what prospects it has. It showed how keen lots of members are on its present and future development. Since then I have a strong feeling that I would love to be among these members and would like to do something for the Society to make it prosper.

(Continued on page 2)

The Land of The Cossacks (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Day after day and year after year I felt more confident in my dancing and I realised how important it is to have a proper training and an opportunity to practice. When I came back to Krasnodar in 1998 I missed Scottish Country Dancing. I was teaching at the University and my students heard a lot from me about how great it is and how much I enjoyed it. They were very keen to try Scottish Country Dancing themselves and the first group was set up from the students who used to listen to my lectures. The Kuban Scottish Dancers were very successful and became an affiliated group of the Society, supported by the Bristol Branch. We have performed several demonstrations and made TV appearances. However, my former head of the department did not want other people to join the group. I could not and did not want to break the welcoming principle of the Society – Scottish Country Dancing should be accessible to everybody!

I had to leave the University, but I didn't give up the idea of Scottish Country Dancing in the South of Russia. Our countries have so much in common – the similar landscape, mountains, hospitality of people and their joy and vivacity. I wanted to create little Scotland here, in the Caucasus. So, in December 2001, after my next visit to the UK, the Kuban Scottish Dancers became active again and have now received a great deal of public recognition. I know that Scottish Country Dancing easily attracts people. But I was still amazed to witness how quickly more and more people came to the classes without any special advertisement on my part. First my friends came (we started with 4 or 5 people in the group), then their friends, relatives and neighbours. There are now about 40 people dancing in the group and more people come every week. [I have heard Ilona complain about the constant stream of new young male adults that keep on coming. I am sure all those members of groups with a high age profile will sympathise with her plight! Ed.]

Very soon we had to find a new, larger hall to dance in and we moved to the Centre of Culture where I used to dance as a small girl. The place itself is gorgeous – a modern well-ventilated building with several dance halls. And the hall we dance in is the largest in the building and one of the best in the South of Russia. You will be able to see it with your own eyes and even dance here when you come to visit us! The Administration of the Centre of Culture supports us and helps us to organise our various events.

In March we held our first Ceilidh. About 80 people took part in it, including guests. We were glad to have Jim Cook, member of the RSCDS London Branch, and the Editor of "The Reel", among them. He was the first person brave enough to come all the way to the South of Russia and dance with our group. It was an unforgettable weekend for all our dancers! We would be happy to see everybody who is interested to come and dance with us.

Within the last couple of months our group "Kuban Scottish Dancers" has become very popular and has aroused the interest of the mass media. We have had four appearances on TV, including a 30 minute live programme, and a piece shown on the national news. There is a constant interest about our group on the local Internet site and articles about us are published in local newspapers.

As one of our dancers once said, soon, even when you switch on the iron, you'll see us dancing!

People who dance in our group are very interesting and very different. They like jokes

and often laugh at themselves. Kilts were at first the cause of shyness and awkwardness for many of the male dancers, but gradually turned into objects of distinction – there are more male dancers than kilts (we have only two proper kilts and at least ten men!). They have to have their wits about them in order to be the first to obtain the cherished treasure for the demonstrations! This so called competition turns into a show which attracts the newcomers and TV commentators who are eager to try the kilt even if it is only for a couple of seconds while they are making a report on us.

We have a life full of interesting events here. We have also set up the Club of Celtic Culture which allows our dancers to meet and talk and find out more about the history of dancing and the history and culture of Scotland. We also plan to have a Ball of the Clans in Krasnodar and a weekend school in the Caucasus in May, a summer school at the Black Sea coast in June and are happy to see Fiona Grant from Bristol visiting us in August.

As you see, with such a rapid growth, our group is in great need of dancing equipment especially dance shoes, which are impossible to find in Russia, and any sort of financial, informational (books on dancing, Scottish culture, food, music, etc.) and any other support. We would be happy to accept any contributions made to us for our future development. [If you have anything to contribute, contact me, Jim Cook, tel: +44 (0)20 8948 5637, as I can probably arrange collection from you anywhere in the UK and possibly in parts of Europe, and dispatch to Russia. Ed.]

We enjoy our life as a lively dance club and invite everybody to join us. Contact me at ilona@kuban.net or at my address in the next column...

...and, from my reception, you will be made very welcome! There are quicker ways of getting from London to Krasnodar than taking eight days by train – it can be done in four! But sane people can head directly for Krasnodar or Anapa airports.

Ilona's enthusiasm and drive are self-evident and this was brought home to me whilst attending the group's first Ceilidh on Saturday 9th March. A splendid array of musicians, dancers and singers were amassed for our entertainment, interspersed by country dances for all to join in. Perhaps I shall gloss over the game we played where the man gets to hold the girl and almost, but not quite, gets to kiss her. I was pleased to be invited to conduct the assembly of about 80 people through two simple country dances "Welcome" and "The Borrowdale Exchange" with instant translation into Russian by Ilona. Ilona had successfully tempted the national TV news cameras to attend and it was daunting to be interviewed, the worst part being to remember to pause so that Ilona could catch up with the translations.

Classes are held on Sunday afternoons. I firstly joined in Ilona's Children's Class where a well behaved, and keen set of children, were put through their paces. The set included one boy, Dima, amongst the girls. (Hello Dima! I shall make sure you receive a copy of this.) Dima's parents, Irina and Andrey, were in the sidelines waiting for the following adults class. Step practice was followed by yours truly teaching the children "A Reel For Jeannie" from Book 40. As ever, Ilona was at hand to help translate but the nature of the dance with its casting and arches allows easy coaching by hand movements. When asked if they would like to do the dance again, thankfully the children said "Da".

The following Adults Class attracted three sets of mainly young adults with a good proportion of men. One wonders if the future of Scottish Country Dancing lies in Russia? Ilona's step practice concentrated on reel/jig time steps, with emphasis on pas de basque. Consolidation of rights and lefts was high on the agenda. After Ilona taught "Wild Geese", I was invited to teach "Machine Without Horses" again with its scope for coaching by hand movements. The TV cameras were still with us.

The following day, Monday, would we appear on the TV news after all? As in the UK, the serious news is followed by a couple of lighter items and after an item about pancakes, it was "us" beamed from Moscow to Vladivostok. The whole of Russia now knows about the Scottish Dancing in Krasnodar. And now you have a chance to sample it. Ilona continues ...

Your chance to join in ... A DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES SUMMER 2003

Fiona and I are organizing an International Scottish Country Dance Holiday in the South of Russia (Krasnodar and the Black Sea coast) in late August/early September 2003, probably encompassing two weekends and the intervening week. The Black Sea Coast and foothills of the Caucasus can be thought of as the Riviera of Russia. It is a favourite holiday destination for Russians. Our plan is to combine a holiday with dancing, holding Scottish Country Dance classes, informal dances, a ball, with perhaps a chance to try traditional Russian dance and a little ballroom dancing. Then there will be picnicking in the mountains, the vineyards and tea plantations to visit, swimming in the Black Sea and visits to other local attractions. The local Cossack dancers have been approached to demonstrate. The Kuban Scottish Dancers look forward to welcoming everyone and invite dancers from any part of the world to join us. Additional information about this project will be available very soon. You can contact us now at office@dancetour.co.uk to let us know if you are interested. More conventionally, Ilona Gumenyuk lives at 131 Kostylev Street, Krasnodar, 350002 Russia. Fiona Grant is at 7 Maurice Road, St. Andrews Park, Bristol BS6 5BZ, UK. We shall be pleased to send you more details.

Having the last word in my last issue of "The Reel" as Editor, I hope I shall see you all in Russia in Summer 2003. Seeing the planning that is going on over a year and a half in advance, and with Ilona and Fiona at the helm, this holiday will clearly be well organised and worth attending. I know at first hand that the idea is catching on by word of mouth, and email, across Europe. Should you be tempted, book early when the time comes so as to avoid disappointment. Come dancing in the land of the Cossacks! I thank Ilona and the Kuban Scottish Dancers for all their hospitality.

Ilona Gumenyuk and Jim Cook

BRANCH MATTERS

IT hardly seems possible that three years ago I was writing my first Branch Matters and now the time has come for me to write my last. I would like to thank my fellow officers and all the members of the Committee over those three years for their support and their hard work. Our President, Mary Stoker, has been a source of ideas and support, as have all the Vice Presidents, and not only for their wonderful teas at AGMs! Thanks are also due to all the many dancers I have had the pleasure of meeting in my capacity as Chairman – I can only encourage you all to keep up the good work on behalf of the Branch, Society and the wider Scottish dance world.

Plans are starting to be made for next season's events — day school, branch dances, etc. Any member of the Committee would be grateful to hear of any ideas and suggestions for events we can run, or to improve existing events. Also if you have ideas and are not averse to a bit of hard work, then how about helping out on the Branch Committee? There are likely to be a couple of vacancies to be filled on next year's committee, so please do consider it seriously.

We will again be out in force at the London Squares Day on 9th June – there will be dancing in Edwardes Square in the morning and in Queens Gate Gardens in the afternoon. Why not come along, support the dancing and at the same time see some of these London Squares which are not generally open to the public? You can get a ticket which covers all the squares which are open, and there is a wide variety of entertainment.

Despite reports to the contrary, Rosalind Zuridis has decided not to take on the editorship of the Reel – this onerous task will instead be taken over by Daniel Capron who has shadowed Jim Cook on this issue and will assume responsibility from Reel 241.

Looking further ahead, the RSCDS will be 80 in 2003 and the Southeast Branches are planning to celebrate by having another Ball in Watford, on Saturday 5th April with Sound Company playing. The one complaint we had from the last Watford Ball was about the food service, and we are planning improvements in this, designed to cut down the queuing time. Tickets will be available from Autumn 2002 to members of participating Branches in the first instance, as they will be underwriting the event, and then subsequently to others. Get the date in your diaries now – it will be an event not to be missed!

Simon Wales

[On behalf of all our readers, thank you, Simon, for all your hard work during your term of office. Ed.]



FEATURED DANCES 2002-2003 AND NEW RELEASES

HQ has devised the following list of Featured Dances for 2002-03. Perhaps groups will like to include at least some of these in their programmes for the year.

The Earl of Mansfield	R	} Leaflet Dances Book
Broadford Bay	R	
Mrs Stewart of Fasnacloich	R	
The Reel of the Royal Scots	R	
Fræ a' the Airts	M	
Fair Donald	S	Book 29
Braes of Breadalbane	S	Book 21
Happy Meeting	J	Book 29
Muirland Willie	J	Book 21
Teviot Bridge	J	Book 5

All of the dances will be featured in forthcoming CD releases:

- Leaflet Dances Vols I and II are at last in stock.
- The length of the Book 21 recording has been problematic, but it should now be available in March as a double CD.
- Books 5 and 29 are just beginning the process of transfer and will be available for Summer School.

Work is also underway on re-recording Books 36 and 37, "Fræ a' the Airts" Volumes 1 and 2. These should be available later in the year.

ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY



Patron - H.M. The Queen

HEADQUARTERS:

12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7AF.
Tel: 0131 225 3854; Fax: 0131 225 7783.
E-mail: info@rscdshq.freeseerve.co.uk.

LONDON BRANCH

Hon. President
Mary Stoker

Hon. Vice-Presidents:
Howard and Stella Booth, Mary Barker,
Ellen Garvie, Bill Ireland, Jenny Greene,
Marie Jamieson, John Laurie, Rosemary Tilden.

Chairman:
Simon Wales,
14 Blakes Green, West Wickham,
Kent BR4 0RA. Tel: 020 8777 8915.
e-mail simon_wales@talk21.com

Vice-Chairman
Owen Meyer
50 Bunby Road, Stoke Poges,
Bucks SL2 4BP. Tel: 01753 643461.
e-mail: owen@meyer.fsnet.co.uk.

Hon. Secretary:
Margaret Shaw,
RSCDS London Branch Secretary, PO Box
18325, London EC4V 3PX. Tel: 020 8568 8072.

Hon. Treasurer:
Daniel Capron,
74B Thurlow Park Road,
London SE21 8HY. Tel: 020 8670 6918.

STRUCTURE OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Children:	Angela Young
Classes:	Rachel Wilton, David Hall, Owen Meyer, Pam Ray, Caroline Sloan.
Dances:	Peter Knight, Simon Wales, Jim Cook, Davinia Miln.
Demonstrations:	David Hall, Simon Wales, Catriona Stewart*
Publicity:	Jim Cook, Alexander McClintock, Jeff Robertson, Rita Marlow*.
Membership:	Owen Meyer
Bookstall:	Ian Anderson*
Branch Rep. to Headquarters:	Rachel Wilton
Central Council of Physical Recreation:	Marie Jamieson*

Hon. Archivist: Iris Anderson*
Southeast Group: Simon Wales
Combined Societies: Simon Wales/Peter Knight
*Indicates a non-Executive Committee member.

Branch Web Site
www.scdlondon.freeseerve.co.uk.

Objects of the Society

- To preserve and further the practice of traditional Scottish Country Dances.
- To promote and encourage the formation of Branches.
- To provide, or assist in providing, special education or instruction in the practice of Scottish Country Dances.
- To promote/publish by all available means information and music relating to Scottish Country Dancing and in particular to publish, or cause to be published descriptions of Scottish Country Dances with music and diagrams in simple form and at moderate price.
- To collect books, manuscripts, illustrations and other memorabilia relating to Scottish Country Dancing and to the Society.
- Generally, to do such other things as are or may be considered by the Society to be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects above stated or any of them.

THE MacLENNAN SCOTTISH GROUP

NEARLY 23 years ago, a small intrepid band of dancers and a piper set off on a journey which none thought would still be in progress today. Those dancers included a number of Branch members and others, and they were on their way to an international dance festival, called Europeade in Antwerp. This was the 16th Europeade, with the 39th being held this year, coincidentally also in Antwerp.

year's in Antwerp will be the thirteenth we have attended. They were the brainchild of a Belgian, Mon de Clopper, who felt that if the peoples of Europe danced together, then they would start to get to know each other and would be brought closer together. He often talked about a 'Europe of the heart' rather than the political structures which were being constructed. 1964 saw the first festival, and in the intervening 38 years it has grown to such an extent that in Zamora last year there were nearly 200 groups and about 5,000 participants.

The festival takes place in a different European town each year and the event has been enriched over recent years with the arrival of dancers from the Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – whose dancing kept their culture live in the dark days of the Soviet occupation. In fact, there are so many Estonians who want to come each year, that there is a quota system to try to achieve some balance.

The first Europeade scheduled to take place in the Baltic

republics will be in Riga, Latvia in 2004. The Europeade lasts five days, and involves quite a feat of organisation to house, feed and generally co-ordinate 5,000 foreign dancers. Accommodation can be quite basic, but no-one seems to mind as we are all there to dance, make new friends, and meet up with old ones. Each group is guaranteed a three minute showcase performance in one of the two big shows, usually in a football stadium, but in Martigny, Switzerland, these took place in a Roman amphitheatre! As well as this, there are street performances, a choir concert, a parade through the streets, a folk ball, an ecumenical church service, and many more informal activities, which just seem to happen when so many dancers and musicians are together.

Last year, there was a second Scottish group taking part – we were pleased to welcome Manchester RSCDS to their first Europeade, and are delighted that they will also be in Antwerp this year.

We have been fortunate to make friends with many overseas groups and have had great fun with them at their festivals. There are very few mainland European countries we have not visited over the years, but Belgium is the most active in organising such events. Most villages in Flanders have a dance group, and most organise a festival, which can attract an audience of up to 2000! Would that the interest in folk culture were as vibrant here as in Flanders. I know that the purists will say that Scottish country dance is not "folk" dancing, but it is regarded as representative of the national culture of part of the UK, and we are proud to be taking this to a wide audience across mainland Europe.

It soon became clear, that reciprocity is the name of the game when attending dance festivals organised by groups on the continent – a return invitation is expected once a visit has been made. Thus, the MacLennan International Dance Festival was born, and this year sees the 21st.

The Festival has been held in various locations over the years, originally in Sidcup, then Bromley and now in Beckenham, at the Langley Park School for Boys, but the basic format has remained the same. One or two overseas groups attend each year, and local groups dance at it too.

Apart from The MacLennan Scottish Group, one group has danced at every Festival: the Upland Scottish Dancers from Bexleyheath, under the guidance and tuition of Wendy Kellett. Anyone who has seen these young dancers at Branch Children's Dances can understand why they have been a regular feature at our festival!

Over the years we have made firm friendships with many UK based groups who have danced at a number of festivals each – Wadard Morris (who have also travelled with us to festivals abroad), Metelyk Ukrainian Ensemble, London Latvian Dancers, Lyra Greek Dancers, and Duna Hungarian Dancers to name but a few.

This year, as well as the Upland dancers, we will be hosting a spectacular Russian group from Estonia, called Lootos, a Spanish marching band from Valencia, called Pilpirrana, a local Morris side, Frog Island Morris, and a group of Irish dancers, Henaghan James. We will all be dancing in Bromley High Street on Saturday 1st June, and there is a folk dance in the evening when everyone will have the chance to join in and learn some dances from the other groups. The main show is in the afternoon of Sunday 2nd June, when all the groups will be performing. All these events are open to the public and we would be very happy to welcome as many readers of "The Reel" as possible – please contact our Secretary, Gillian Wales on 020 8777 8915, or gillian_wales@talk21.com for details of tickets. You would be surprised how many faces you would recognise from dancing in London and the south-east area.

The festival is not our only activity in this country – we also run a dance in the autumn, and perform at a Burns night in Westerham, both of which are to raise funds to put towards the festival which is the biggest drain on the group's funds. We have also started going to an annual Morris festival in Tenterden, Kent which is also great fun, and this year will be appearing at the Scottish Tattoo in the Albert Hall on 21st April, with the Branch demonstration team and others.

None of the original group would have imagined that, 23 years on, the Group would still be going strong, with three overseas trips this year and two booked already for next year – it is quite a tribute to the dedication and commitment of many individuals over those years, especially those with the foresight to get the Group off the ground in the beginning.

Simon Wales, Dance Director

The MSG in Borgosesia, 1999

The event was such a success that those dancers decided to form a group to attend overseas festivals such as Europeade, but also some of the smaller scale weekend events around Europe – after all, there were already enough Scottish country dance groups in the UK. What is unique about the MacLennan Scottish Group, as it became, is that musicians and dancers join on equal terms, with each providing their own skills and input to the joint venture.

The Group took its name from Iain MacLennan Brown, long time leader and now Honorary President of the Group, and his principal collaborator in those days was the late Pipe Major Bryan Bredin who, as Music Director, ensured that there was a ready supply of pipers and drummers willing and able to play for dancing. Robin Ellis is another musician who has been associated with the Group for many years, coming on numerous trips and playing at lots of our own festivals and dances.

The Group has grown to 34 dancers, pipers and drummers and we are often joined at our festival and abroad by some of our associate members. Over one hundred people have been associated with the group over the years, and at a party to celebrate our 21st anniversary, over eighty of these attended. Our repertoire varies according to the abilities of the dancers available, and it currently includes not only Scottish country dances, but also Highland and step dances, and Shetland and Hebridean dances too. Programmes and routines are worked out by the Dance Director who is appointed by the Group, but there is usually plenty of input from members of the Group at the monthly practices, and most of it is useful, for which the current Dance Director is very grateful.

The Europeade (pronounced so that it does not rhyme with 'lemonade') dance festivals are still the highlight of the year for the Group. This



NEW RECORDINGS

These new recordings are all on CD only.

Music for Leaflet Dances, Volume 1 (RSCDS CD028).

Drumtochty Glen, Fraser's Favourite, From Scotia's Shores we're noo awa', Queen Victoria's Visit Quadrilles, Silver Tassie, Saltire Society Reel – *Bobby Crowe's Band*.

The McCulloch Strathspey, My Spouse Nancy, Miss Catherine Allan – *Andrew Rankine's Band*.

The Reel of the Royal Scots – *Pipers and Drummers from the Royal Scots*.

Music for Leaflet Dances, Volume II (RSCDS CD026) - *Neil Copland and his Scottish Dance Band*.

A Trip to Glasgow, The Earl of Mansfield, Frost and Snow, Leandor's Jig, Frae a' the Airts, Miss Allie Anderson, The Sauchie Haugh, The Reel of the Royal Scots, Miss Gibson's Strathspey, Tribute to the Borders.

The Edinburgh Castle Reel (TAC 004CD) - *The Bobby Frew Four with Ian Powrie on fiddle*.

The Edinburgh Castle Reel, Roaring Jelly, John McAlpin, J.B. Milne, The Starry-Eyed Lassie, The Anniversary, The Luckenbooth Brooch, From the Broomielaw, The Australian Ladies.

An Aberdeen Collection - *Frank Thomson's Band*.

Haddo House, Mrs Ernest Allan's Strathspey, Miss A.O. Cumming, Lochindorb Strathspey, Duthie Park, Durrisdeer, The Langstane Kirk, The Beechwood Strathspey, Gladys McDonald of Glencoe, Welcome to Queen's Cross, The Blooms of Bon Accord, Bonnie Banchory.

Reels and Wheels (FAL CDS 001) - *Gordon Shand's Band*.

Sarah's Favourite, Welcome to Callum, The Falkirk Bairn, The Falkirk Millennium Wheel, Old Spedling Castle's Ghost's Dance, Charlie's Silver Jubilee, The Wellington Connection, Miss Frances Martin Medley, The Civil Engineer, The Crieff Hydro, A Tribute to Patsy Rennie, The Holywood Romance, Luckenbooth Brooch, Irene McLean of Duns, Mrs May Anderson's Strathspey, The Jubilee Quadrille, The Chas Reel.

Ceilidh Round the Steeple (FAL CDS 002) - *Gordon Shand's Band*.

20 old time and ceilidh dances.

THE MUSIC on Leaflet Dances Volume I has been culled from earlier recordings on LP/cassette and it is now good to hear them on CD. The production of the CD has been sponsored by the ten Society Branches in the south-east of England.

Volume II is a brand new recording and is a first (of many, I hope) from Neil Copland's Band which has a family flavour. Neil and his brother Allan play accordion, his wife Maureen Rutherford is on the fiddle and her sister Ann plays piano. I must say that the strathspeys are on the slow side compared with other recent Society recordings, but this is compensated by a tremendous drive and a good strong first beat in the bar. Indeed this CD has much to commend it; nice bouncy jigs and flowing reels and a great set of marches for the Earl of Mansfield. I also particularly like the pastorals/airs for Miss

Gibson's Strathspey.

Bobby Frew's CD is a re-issue of an LP first issued in 1986. I applauded it then and I do so again, not least because of the strong but sweet fiddle playing of Ian Powrie.

The Aberdeen CD has been issued by the Branch in that city to accompany a book of dances to celebrate its 75th Anniversary. There are also two John Drewry dances. This is another good recording but it would have been even better with a fiddler! I must, however, mention how well the piano (Dennis Morrison) and double bass (Douglas Cargill) blend together.

Now, not one but two CDs issued by Falkirk Branch. Both include instructions for the dances. The country dances are said to be previously unpublished so I do not know why the Luckenbooth Brooch, published in 1968, is included. The ceilidh dances include a few not

known to me, e.g., Robin's Easy Circle and Sons of the Rock. This is indicative of the popularity of this type of dancing in Scotland at present. Turning now to the music, Gordon Shand gives a fine lead on accordion and, as ever, Graham Berry's piano playing is delightful especially in the strathspeys and waltzes. Sadly, Tom Hamilton's fiddle is barely audible (at least to my ears) and I could have done with a little less of Jim Lindsay's rather boisterous second accordion coming through the overall texture. Despite my personal preferences and prejudices these CDs are well worth a listen and there is a feast of new dances for those who are always seeking new ones. Well done, Falkirk.

John Laurie

P.S. The Society has a number of CDs in the pipeline. Hope to be in a position to let you have some details in the September issue. **J.L.**

OBITUARIES

ANDREW GILLIES — 4th August 1920 - 8th February 2002

*Adapted from the eulogy read at Andrew's funeral on 22nd February 2002,
enhanced by extracts from the Clan Macpherson Newsletter.*

Andrew Gillies always maintained that his birth in Glasgow was an accident because his mother was on a shopping expedition. Sharing the day of his birth with the Queen Mother, he was totally surprised to have received a letter from Her Majesty wishing him her best wishes on his 80th as she celebrated her hundredth.

One of five sons, Andrew is now only survived by his youngest brother, Tom, and his nephews Tom, Ian and Colin.

He had an active life up to his 80th birthday celebrations when his previously diagnosed prostate cancer developed and caused many changes to his life. In October 2000, he was admitted to St George's Hospital where he remained until his discharge to Park Lodge.

Throughout this period he bore his pain, lack of mobility and the need for constant care stoically and without complaint.

He was very proud of his Scottish roots, and spent many holidays there, especially around Dunoon, where the family settled. He enjoyed visiting family, friends and neighbours.

Andrew showed enthusiasm for Scottish music and dancing from the age of two and five years later he was selected by his then teacher Miss Milligan, also founder of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, to be a member of the Dundee based children's Scottish dance team. Andrew enjoyed his schooldays, worked hard at his studies and continued to dance for pleasure.

When he was based in Forres for National Service in the Royal Air Force in 1939, he was billeted with a family whose daughter taught the local Scottish demonstration team. Andrew joined the team and spent many evenings contributing to the war effort by entertaining the troops.

National Service in the RAF took Andrew to Africa and India, where he seemed to be prone to all sorts of accidents and happenings that led to a fund of stories, such as "pump and jump" when he took to his parachute instead of lowering the undercarriage? Or when he opened the bomb doors and killed a cow?

On service in India in 1940 he found himself in an isolated Services community with no entertainment. He suggested starting a movement and dance class. Forty men turned up and the class was a great success. Andrew had just two dance records in his possession at that time and Miss Milligan arranged for a further twelve to be sent out to India. He carried these preciously around as he moved around the continent during the war. His next posting was in Dumdum and the Scottish group he started there went on to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1990.

During this time, Andrew also developed his skill as a Bridge player. Unfortunately, it also meant that he became a smoker, because the Servicemen always played for cigarettes, and he won so many that he decided to use them instead of giving them away. Smoking he managed to give up – Bridge remained a passion.

When the war ended, Andrew went to Alnwick to train as a Primary School Teacher, then to London, working for the County Council in schools in Earls Court, North Kensington and Notting Hill Gate. Andrew made London his home, never

returning to live in Scotland. The children were also the source of many of his stories, and some of his pupils were bright enough to know when they could ask a question that would set him off on one of his tales – "When I was in India..." They certainly became expert at drawing red herrings across his lesson plans!

Andrew continued his dancing throughout his college and teaching years. He took his RSCDS certificate and taught and danced his way around the world. He was famous for his enthusiasm for dance, encouraging countless people to join the family of Scottish dancers of which he was so proud.

He spread his talents widely over a long number of years, teaching at classes at Mary Ward, Morley College, Croydon, Wallington, Putney and Shene, to name but a few. He taught at numerous weekend schools in the UK most notably for the Argylls, and abroad in the USA and Australia. All shared the pleasure of Andrew's charm and wit.

He was President of the Croydon & District Branch of the RSCDS, and in 1988 received the Scroll of the Society from the Earl of Mansfield in recognition of his valuable services over many years. Andrew continued to attend classes at St. Andrews until

2000. Many newcomers to St. Andrews have reason to be grateful for his welcoming presence. His room parties were legion.

Somehow, Andrew managed to appear on TV at the opening of the Los Angeles Olympics and the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games. It was joked at the time of any Olympics Opening Ceremony, "I wonder if we will see Andrew?" Even on the cinema screen, in a non-speaking part, Andrew can clearly be seen during "Four Weddings and a Funeral" saying to Sheila Jupp, "Would you care to dance?"

He had a long association with the Cairngorm Dancers. One lovely memory of Andrew was when, at a social weekend at Cobham Hall, they did a skit on the TV series "Upstairs Downstairs". Andrew took the part of Hudson the butler, and raised much ongoing laughter by ascending and descending an imaginary spiral staircase. This pretty well wrecked the other players' contributions.

John Mortimer wrote the following of Laurence Olivier after seeing him in a bit part which could equally have been written for Andrew, with his sense of fun and the giving of pleasure. "He played the smallest part, and although the lights didn't brighten at his entrance or dim at his exit, it was a singular exercise in attention grabbing because when he was on stage the audience could not look at anyone else. The great quality was danger, and no one could be sure what the butler was going to get up to next."

Many teachers of Scottish Country Dance can have their pupils in tears. Andrew had that ability, but the tears were always of laughter.

Andrew was a lovely man – kind, generous and caring. He had many friends from all over the world and was famous for his sense of humour. However those who knew Andrew well knew of his sense of dignity and correctness and they knew of his pride in Scotland, in being a Gillies and a member of the Clan Macpherson. A true Scot, he had an excellent palate and knew his whiskies well.

He will be sadly missed and remembered very fondly.

REFLECTIONS ON ANDREW FROM THE ...

ARGYLL SCOTTISH DANCE GROUP

Andrew's long association goes back to the sixties when the group held classes in Argyll Street and had weekends away at Pendley Manor near Tring. Andrew's enthusiasm and interest in the group never faltered. A revered member of the committee, he gave freely of his experience and knowledge, keen to encourage those starting out on the path of teacher or musician. He brought out the best in people. Ceilidhs, late night parties and get-togethers would be memorable for his ready wit and raconteurism. His rendition of the origins of the kilt will be wryly remembered by many.

The Argyll Committee both past and present owe him a deep vote of thanks and gratitude for his friendship, his dedication to and love of Scottish Dance so freely shared with so many. He will be missed.

Anna and Alan Crawford

CLAN MACPHERSON ASSOCIATION

Andrew was an early member of the Association. He actively supported the England and Wales Branch as a Committee member and served loyally in many official capacities.

Andrew became the Clan dancing master and was enormously popular as MC for the Clan Balls in London and Scotland. He drew many members into Scottish dancing with his enthusiasm and encouragement. Many of his RSCDS friends enjoyed the warmth of the Clan welcome at the annual London Ball.

He was a particular friend of Cluny (Sir William Macpherson) who as Clan Chief marches the Macpherson men over the River Spey for the opening of the Newtonmore Highland Games every August. Andrew marched proudly behind his chief in this spectacular tartan army and was one of the few who was always in step! He attended the Clan rally every year – breaking his stay at St Andrews in order to spend a few days with his Macpherson cousins. It usually coincided with his birthday so it was the occasion to have another party!

Lindsey Jane Rousseau

CROYDON AND DISTRICT BRANCH

With sadness Andrew's dancing days are over. But I believe he would want us to celebrate his life and contribution to Scottish Country Dancing rather than mourn.

I knew Andrew for around 30 years and, like many of his friends, shared his love of Scottish Country Dancing which for us both started in childhood in Scotland. As a result of his persuasion to join his class over 25 years ago, I took my Preliminary Test, and he can claim credit for generations of girls in Crieff, Aberdeen and now Croydon enjoying the fun of dance.

We kept in touch through AGM weekends, St. Andrews, weekend schools and get-togethers in Scotland, the most memorable, for me, being a Highland Ball in Blair Castle.

The characteristics making Andrew much loved were his sense of fun and ability to tell

a story. Classes were lively, technically demanding, with clear instructions, highly sociable and always enjoyable. Humour would enlighten many a warm-up or step practice. Andrew was in constant demand for teaching tours around the world. He enjoyed Australia, where this could be combined with a family visit. His dancing technique remained exemplary into his late seventies, and Miss Milligan would have been rightly proud of one of "her boys".

Andrew gave much to Croydon and District Branch as a teacher, committee member, MC, President, and most of all as a loyal friend and regular dancer. We in Croydon were especially lucky to have him as "one of us".

Scottish Country Dancing has lost one of its best ambassadors — a real "Dancing Master" in every sense of the word.

Lorna Ogilvie

President of the Croydon and District Branch

GREENWICH CLASS

Andrew was the first teacher for the London Branch's Greenwich Class. As complete beginners in the main, his message was enjoyment of Scottish dancing should be our first priority and that expertise would come in time. He hosted the Burns' Night celebrations on many occasions adding his own unique touch. He had a wonderful sense of humour and was a born performer. I remember his participation in the ceilidhs at the Argyll Weekends at Easthampstead Park and at the St. Andrews Summer School. This kind and thoughtful man will be greatly missed.

Jackie Bogue

MARY WARD GROUP

Andrew gave much time and expertise to the Mary Ward Group, now sadly no longer meeting. He taught the evening class enthusing all with his infectious joy in the dance and music. On weekends away he loved to be with others sharing in the joy of life. On a Saturday morning, off on an excursion, he would be quietly at the back of the coach with the Telegraph crossword, which he could complete! His passing leaves a gap in many people's lives.

The Mary Ward Group

SHENE SCD GROUP

Andrew was our teacher at the Shene Scottish Country Dance Group from 1992 until ill health prevented him. He last visited us in January 2001 when he addressed our 50th Anniversary Haggis. Initially he shared the role until John McDonald's untimely death in 1996.

He never came abroad with us when we "twinned" with Fontainebleau and Konstanz, but he put together some of our dances and rehearsed us. He could be a hard taskmaster, but he would soften the blow by saying something like "you have to get it right, it's my reputation you're dancing with."

He taught us through the seasons and helped us with our Celebratory Balls and Summer Garden Dances. He is a hard act to follow.

Denise Hora

CLARE COX: 1922 – 2002

With sadness I report the loss of Clare Cox, teacher of the Wednesday afternoon London Branch General Class. I am indebted to the Croydon and District Branch for allowing "The Reel" to reproduce their obituary. Ed.

It is hard to imagine anyone whose loss would leave a bigger gap on the Croydon Scottish Dancing scene than Clare Cox. It must seem that she had always been there, even to those whose dancing memories reach back some 25-30 years. Her dancing activities embraced every conceivable aspect: she attended several classes a week and a social dance on most Saturdays, she ran her own class in Hayes for many years until diminishing numbers made it unviable, and for the past couple of years she taught an afternoon class at Pont Street. She obtained her Preliminary Teaching Certificate many years ago, and was always willing to stand in for people during holidays.

A member of the Branch since 1975, she served on the Committee almost uninterruptedly from 1983 until 2001, acting as treasurer for 12 years and serving on the Programme Sub-Committee, where her extensive knowledge of dances enabled her to make constructive criticisms. She prepared crib sheets and tapes, this last a very time-consuming exercise. She acted as MC for Branch dances and at our weekends and five-day holidays, which she supported without fail. She regularly went on winter Scottish dancing holidays in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, often taking on the role of MC.

Clare also devised dances, eight of which have appeared in Croydon's two Books of Dances, including York House, Dunster, Yarn Market and Song of Spain.

Clare was always ready to share her knowledge and expertise, whether in lending dance instructions and tapes, in elucidating the finer points of a dance, or in guiding less expert dancers on the floor. Her energy, enthusiasm and joie de vivre were prodigious. Not only did she continue working until well past the age when others take life more quietly but she played tennis, enjoyed concerts, sang in a choir, and travelled abroad frequently – to her family in Canada at least once a year, and usually twice on SCD trips – returning from France only the day before undergoing tests which lead to a major operation last autumn, from which she appeared to be recovering well.

Clare and her husband Tim, also a Scottish dancer for many years, had celebrated their golden wedding before his death some five years ago, following which she continued to lead an extremely full life. It is surely fitting that she died on holiday in Cyprus, having started to resume her normal active life.

Our sincerest sympathy goes to Clare's sister Jean, her children Graham and Carolyn and to her grandchildren.

Christine Evans

JOAN GILBERT: 1915 – 2002

Joan died peacefully in her sleep on 9th March at the nursing home where she had lived for the past two years.

Joan was born in Lewisham in 1915. At the age of 16 she won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, gaining her LRAM at the early age of 18. Her career began as a soprano. She was a protégé of Sir Henry Wood, toured the country with the Sadlers Wells Opera Company, and was the soloist at the last Promenade Concert in the Queen's Hall before it was bombed.

Joan played piano regularly for Branch classes from the early 70s. She played for the demonstration class and for classes held at Marlborough School. She also played at Branch Day Schools, Ladies' Step Dance, classes held at Morley College, keep fit classes in Sutton, the EFDSS and the Royal Ballet School at White Lodge.

Joan was a very accomplished musician, playing the piano, organ and accordion, and had her own band, The Uplanders. She composed tunes for both English and Scottish Country Dances, the tune for The Ennismore Strathspey (London 1979) was composed by her. Her reel "Elderberry Wine" was included in the book of music produced by the Branch in 1998.

Joan was a great character and will be sadly missed. We extend our sympathy to her daughter Charmian, and to members of her family.

Jenny Greene

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ceres, Cupar

Dear Jim,

I wish to thank most sincerely a number of your readers for their generous donations to the Sir Jimmy Shand Sculpture Project. The Project is progressing quite well having been ongoing since 1st October 2001. Several Scottish Country Dance Bands, Entertainers and other Shand lovers have organised Project fund raising functions and others have given undertakings to organise events. A very successful Cabaret Dance was recently held at the Hilton Dunblane Hydro when the Jim MacLeod Band, Iain MacPhail Band and the Alexander Brothers all gave their services free and the magnificent sum of £2,121 was raised. Several RSCDS Branches have had fund raising events and made generous donations, as have several Accordion and Fiddle Clubs. At present the Project fund is just over £10,000 but, as £25,000 is required to complete the Project, a great deal of hard work has still to be done. Should any of your readers, who have not already contributed to the Project, feel that they can take any action which would help to raise funds, the Project Working Group would be most grateful.

Kindest regards from Scotland,

John Thomson, Secretary

[Please send any donations to John Thomson, 'Samairi Cottage', Moor Road, Ceres, Cupar, Fife KY15 5LR. See page 4 of the last issue for details of the project. Ed.]

Hutton, Essex

Dear Jim,

As any dancer who started their Scottish Dancing with an Imperial Society (Scottish Branch) dancing teacher will tell you (I had the privilege of being taught by Edna Russell or Mrs Mitchell as she was known to us), we were always taught to cover with our corners in the reels in question in Douglas Dean's letter in the last issue.

It is only since becoming RSCDS qualified that I have had, most unwillingly and unmathematically, to cover with my partner. This involves dancing, if not out of time, certainly unevenly and means you are not communicating where possible with other members of the set and makes every reel the same when they are not. Incidentally it was not necessary for men to start on the left foot for a reel/jig poussette either, something I still find difficult unless I have a strong lady partner.

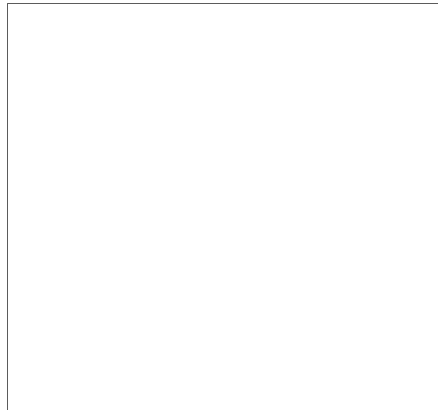
With regard to looking at each other it would be nice if we all acknowledged each other much more often, as sometimes we seem to have no contact with some partners at all; but maybe we can blame this on the reserve of the English as a great many Scottish dancers come from this side of the border.

Yours sincerely,

Daphne Baker

ROUND AND ABOUT

SUCCESS IN NEWCASTLE



Mixed team win the cup

In the first weekend of February members of the demonstration team represented the London Branch at the 18th Newcastle Festival of Scottish Country Dancing organised by the Newcastle Upon Tyne and District Branch. The Festival attracts teams from a wide area including Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds and of course Newcastle. There are competitive classes during the day for mixed, ladies and children's teams. It was an inspiration to see so many children dancing so well and with such obvious enthusiasm.

For several weeks before our departure to Newcastle, Dave Hall put the team through its paces with considerable attention to detail on technique to ensure that we gave a team performance and minimised our individual eccentricities.

Most people were able to travel north on Friday and we gathered at the Travel Lodge just south of Scotch Corner. We found a local pub, The Traveller's Rest, in Skeeby and by 9 p.m. we were enjoying a tasty meal in delightful surroundings. The publican realised that we were staying locally and invited us to return for breakfast. So, at 9 a.m. next morning, the team were back in the pub, but this time feasting on a traditional English (Yorkshire) breakfast. I think we would all recommend this pub if you want to break your journey north on the A1. It has one room for B&B too.

We arrived at Emmanuel College about 11 a.m. and found a quiet moment in the large sports hall to rehearse our demonstration. As usual at such

events, there are friends to greet, dancing to watch and many different musicians to hear and the day flew past.

Our ladies' team danced first to the music of Dave Hall on piano. I watched them dance, as I was in the mixed team, and I particularly enjoyed their Margaret Parker's Strathspey. Their second dance was a lively performance of Anniversary Reel. The adjudicator, Graham Donald, was impressed by their dancing and awarded them first place. Angela Young played for the mixed team who did the same dances as the ladies' team. Neil Grant was the adjudicator for this class and he placed us first. We were delighted when the London Branch team was presented with the Rose Bowl for gaining the most marks for a performance during the day.

Late afternoon brings the opportunity for each of the teams to present an eight minute demonstration. These were varied and interesting to watch, often involving some complicated choreography using large team numbers as well as good dancing. Neil Esslemont travelled to Newcastle and piped for the London Branch Demonstration, which involved 18 people. The audience clearly enjoyed our efforts, but Neil Grant chose Alba SCD (Glasgow) as the winners again this year and we were able to enjoy their performance a second time at the evening dance.

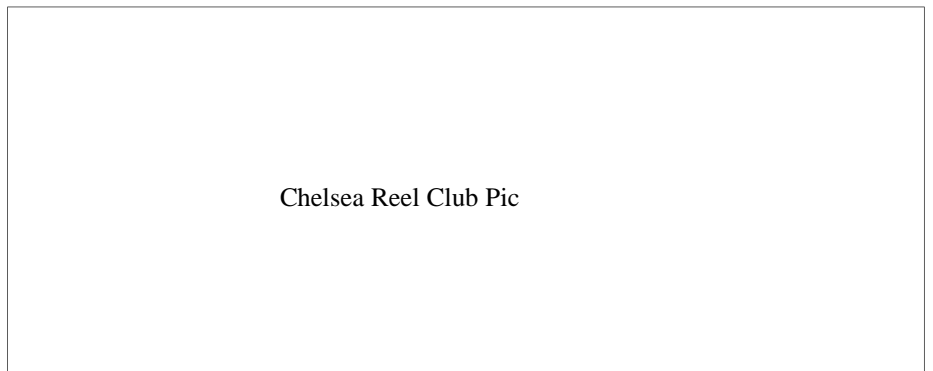
The busy day's dancing left a happy team with only a short break for a meal at the pub opposite the college before reassembling for the evening dance to Colin Dewar and his Scottish Country Dance Band. The uninspiring venue of a large sports hall was filled with a few hundred enthusiastic dancers of all ages and everyone had a wonderful evening's dancing.

Weary but happy, we retired to a Travel Lodge in Newcastle to celebrate before sleeping soundly. Sunday morning found us gradually departing for the journey home, but looking forward to returning next year. Thanks to mobile phones three cars travelling south found the excellent School House Tea Rooms in Carburton, a further opportunity for twelve of us to enjoy the company of friends before completing the journey home.

A happy, successful trip like this would not be possible without considerable effort from the whole team, both those on the trip and those unable to make it this year. In particular our thanks go to Angela Young and Catriona Stewart who made the travel arrangements and Dave Hall who inspired us to dance well enough to add the bonus of winning to a convivial weekend.

Joan Desborough

CHELSEA REEL CLUB



Chelsea Reel Club Pic

The Chelsea Reel Club, celebrated the 70th birthday of their Chairman, Robert Freer, on 6th February at St. Columba's, Pont Street. The MC was Ian Adams, birthday cake made by Moira Strutt, music by Yvonne and Michael McGuinness, photo by Stephen Webb.

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING IN MY LIFE

Dancers at St. Andrews' Summer School, and at events at home and abroad, will know pianist Jack Judson of Harrogate. Having discovered his interesting life as a dancer and musician (and railway enthusiast ...but that's another story), how could I not invite him to tell his tale to "The Reel"? Ed.

IN MID August 1959 a new dimension entered my life. A telephone call asked me to perform some piano solos at a concert in aid of a local church's missionary project. Amongst other artists were a set of Scottish Country Dancers. I naively thought they had travelled from Scotland. Conversation proved otherwise, as they were members of the local club. I watched them closely and thought, "Here's teamwork, style, and moving patterns." Having done much ballroom dancing and become disillusioned (the beebop and jive were still in full swing) I was soon hooked. So in September 1959 I enrolled with them.

Learning steps and flowing patterns all at once proved difficult, yet the first dance I mastered minus the footwork was The Duke of Atholl's Reel. One of the club's members was a Miss Elizabeth Fraser of Dunbar, who had known Miss Milligan, Nan Main and Miss Carny. She taught a thorough grounding of steps and movements at the Adult Education Centre in Leeds. Being anxious to progress, I joined her weekly class. Years later having danced under Miss Milligan I came to know that Miss Fraser certainly had the demeanour and some of the characteristics of our co-founder. Her classes were most instructive and enjoyable. Miss Jean Drylie, a one time pupil of Mrs Goodyear of Manchester, continued to run the Harrogate Club successfully and the social dancing opened up to me became enjoyable.

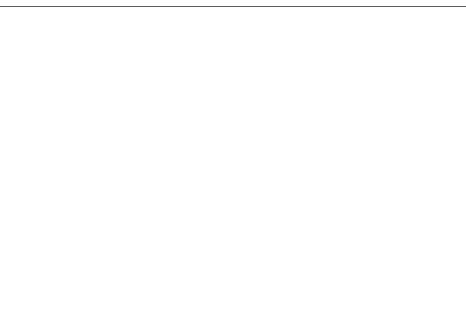
Three months after attending classes in Leeds our pianist left. Finding a replacement was difficult, and Miss Fraser became despondent, not liking the prospect of teaching with tapes. It was our wont after class to call in at the Kardomah Café. So over coffee I casually let the cat out of the bag. Coffee was forgotten. I was whisked back to the Warden of the Centre to be signed on as an official pianist for the class. This was my debut and I am still at it 42 years on.

But I had paid for dancing instruction for six months and, being Yorkshire, value for money was required. Miss Fraser showed her true colours. For months she came an hour earlier. She could play a little herself. I was taught the steps at home, danced them whilst she observed me and played. Then reversing our roles she then danced whilst I played under her guidance.

23rd November 1960 was the date of my first Ball held in the beautiful Georgian Assembly Rooms at York. In full evening dress with a lady on each arm, dancing the Glasgow Highlanders and with Jimmy Shand Senior and his band playing, it was indeed memorable. In November 1961 I attended my first RSCDS AGM, housed in an old RAF hangar, tastefully decorated but with a floor as hard as granite! No crib sheets allowed and, feeling nervous, one was mentally and physically on one's toes. Staying at the Gartferry Hotel I could actually see Goat Fell on Arran without raising my head off the pillow.

The Leeds Branch of the RSCDS was formed in the summer of 1962, and it was a joy to dance and play for all kinds of classes, newly started. I found one plays better if you are a dancer, though oddly, my first class was playing for men's Highland, organised by Miss Shirley Shields of Dewsbury. Most enjoyable.

The Leeds Branch, of which I have always been a member, put me on my pianistical path, and I shall always be grateful to many friends on and off the committee for giving me every opportunity to play for them. With Avril Jones, a



Bill Ireland teaches, while Jack plays, at the York and North Humber-side Branch Day School, 5th October 1991

very accomplished pianist of the Branch, we played for the Branch's Scarborough weekend for over 20 years. I must also pay tribute to Brenda Burnell, a pillar of the Branch along with Avis Harrison. I have had the privilege of playing for both ladies.

The 1980 Summer School was the first I attended as a dancer. But in December 1983 Miss Muriel Gibson phoned asking if I would like to be a possible pianist for the 1984 Summer School (the usual piece of pink paper never reached me). Being at Summer School was very different as a pianist. But I had a wonderful fortnight. A welcoming lady showed me to my room. I remember saying how I was nervous as a first time pianist, that I was to play for a whole fortnight for a Nancy McClaren, and would we "get on together"? The gracious welcomer looked at me closely and said after a pause, "I think we will!" It was Nancy herself and she had been wondering who I might be. She was so caring the whole fortnight and put confidence in me straightaway. To her I shall be forever grateful. During the second week one of the dancers, an Irishman, received his calling up papers for the Irish Army and had to leave straightaway. He gave us all a farewell drink at Kate's Bar. I found myself with a pint of shandy to be downed on an empty stomach. Before commencing the second half, Nancy exclaimed, "Jack, you are drunk in charge of the piano!" I was but, bless her, she forgave because she understood.

I record my gratitude to all those teachers I've had the pleasure of playing for: Bill Ireland, Jenny Greene, Bruce Frazer, Ian and David Hall, Bobby Watson, Alice Murphy, George Lawson, Marjorie Duffield, Avis Harrison, Anna Holden, Christine Mair, Irene Fidler, Anita Mackenzie, Alistair MacFadyen, Linda Gaul, Lesley Martin, Atsuko Clement, Derek Haynes, Dorothy Leurs, Bill Zobel, John Wilkinson and many more.

Bill Zobel invited me to play for the Georgia and Florida Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1983. This led to a number of happy returns. Twice the opportunity to play "down under" in Australia and New Zealand has come my way. Invitations to play in Holland, Germany, and around the UK have been my good fortune.

Since retiring I have never travelled so much. My neighbours suggest I should let my bungalow and merely return as a lodger from time to time.

Whilst playing for George Lawson's Intermediate Class at Holy Trinity Church Hall for the 1986 Summer School, a Mary Miller, of engaging enthusiasm and much organising ability, invited me to play at Falmouth and Truro

sometime in the future. Two years later whilst playing for Brenda Burnell at the Bath Day School she repeated the invitation. By then one of the preliminary certificate candidates from the Truro area was ready to take her exam at St. Andrews, but had never taught with a pianist. So began many happy visits to Cornwall, which still continue. The candidate passed her exam. So they now had two qualified teachers to form the Cornwall Branch. As a thank you I was made an honorary member.

One amusing memory of the Cornwall Branch occurred during a 9-strong teachers' course taken by George Lawson. Commenting on leading your partner down the middle and up, he likened it to gently leading my Jack Russell, Ross, on the lead, with tongue in cheek of course. Behold! Right on cue Ross walked into the hall alone. We all laughed, though I froze at the piano and Mary retrieved the Cornwall Branch's "mascot". One dancer works at Truro cathedral and a number of times I have been allowed to play their magnificent Willis III organ. A lovely "spin off". Being a National Trust pianist and organist the Cornwall dancers have done a number of demos in the long gallery at Lanhydrock House near Bodmin, with a magnificent Steinway concert grand to play on.

A few years ago the then Society Chairman, Wilma Miller, was invited to do a "missionary" tour throughout schools in Cornwall. As pianist and chauffeur we started at Saltash, worked at ten schools and four halls down to below Penzance. Wilma's teaching ability was accomplished and very adaptable. She had to encourage children from 7 to 16 years in 45 minute classes. In the end I left the music in the car, doing a Wilma myself at the piano and improvising in the style thereof, to suit the very varied situations. An amazing duo experience.

To accompany a teacher nurturing candidates for their full certificate or prelim exam week by week and then have the satisfaction of playing in the final examination is most gratifying. It has been my joy to play for many such courses run by Mrs Moira Stacey, leader of the Doncaster Branch. For some years she took me to the W.I. Denman College, where she became a much respected and admired teacher. Denman are very selective in their tutors, and they look after pianists very well too. Mrs Stacey afforded me many opportunities to play for her including on the island of Gigha. On another occasion I found myself playing duets at a party with Muriel Johnstone. An honour indeed.

I find class psychology very interesting. One has a dual role at the piano. You are one with them, yet you are also in the "wings" observing the interplay 'twixt teacher and class. Thus at my age, if I have a chance, I now play because you are giving a service for the encouragement of happiness and enjoyment.

One final honour was bestowed on me by Jim Rae for whom I have played many times. In recognition of our happy partnership he composed a reel "Gentleman Jack". Pat Clark, another of our very accomplished musicians, wrote the tune "Out of the Doldrums" for it. Thank you and for your very comprehensive book "Scottish Country Dancing MUSIC NOTES".

As our Miss Milligan said "Music is the stimulus of the dance, and the dance should be the expression of the music."

Jack Judson

“JACK POINTS”

And Jack continues...

Over the years I have formulated a few homespun precepts as a guide for myself on the piano:

1. To provide and *perform* in a suitable manner for the *pursuance* and *perfection* of the art of Scottish Country Dancing.
2. To accompany as one would a (professional) soloist, the teacher at all times, whether playing or silent.
3. To be aware singularly and groupwise of the corporate mood of the class and to help accordingly if unobtrusively.
4. Note the acoustics of the hall if any, piano, teacher's voice projection, (class's background chattering if any) and adjust your touch and volume to fit.
5. Ideas! Teacher (inadvertently) off on wrong foot figuratively and/or literally, help in style to brighten the class and relieve tension.
6. Work sensitively. Don't bang on the piano as some organists/pianists do.
7. Watch closely tempo variance, however slight, your own and the teacher's. Whatever the tempo keep it absolutely consistent if possible.
8. Beware of anticipating the teacher. Aim for accuracy and don't misinterpret, e.g. number of bars, alteration of tempo. Watch for emergency stops.
9. Cueing in and out. Don't make cue note too long. Play straight after teacher's "AND" particularly if AND is given rhythmically.
10. Watch accent in strathspey and adjust where required.
11. Beware of using embellishments. Use them to enhance, not "over sugar".
12. Watch pianistic humour (twiddly bits). Apply judiciously and don't get in your own light. As a pianist you are a means to an end and not an end in yourself.
13. Try to know your dance; it helps in light and shade of dynamics, e.g. bright or louder for group movements and softer for solo movements and tracks.
14. Pick suitable alternative tunes. Care required.
15. Acquaint yourself with the Society's metronome markings.
16. In the names of empathy and sympathy, play with your soul, and keep integrity to the art.

Jack Judson