



the reel

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SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2003

THE DAY THE WORLD DANCED World Day of Dance, 14th June 2003

The World Day of Dance has been a resounding success with dancing throughout the day worldwide. The numbers dancing that have been reported back to us have been excellent.

The main purpose of the day was to bring an awareness of Scottish Country Dancing to a wider audience, to promote a younger element, to renew old and forgotten friendships, but also to make more people aware that Scottish Country Dancing is fun and also a healthy pastime.

Many reports that have been received mention that numbers had increased by two-thirds on the day. We have heard from Rogart in Sutherland that they danced on the day and have asked if they were the farthest group in the Northern Hemisphere. Are they? This small group had 12 dancers enjoying the day.

Stranraer branch of Royal Scottish Country Dance Society had a set dancing on the Castle Green. This included one of their regular dancers by the name of Willie Wallace – a sprightly 93 year old. Can that be beaten?

At Gorthleck in Inverness-shire, during the Gay Gordons, father, mother and their 5 month old son danced. Is this a record? The day included Step Dancing, fiddlers, accordionist, small pipes and belly dancers. This must be a first? This group has a membership of 12 but attracted over 50 dancers.

Over a hundred and ten dancers in Richmond, Virginia danced at their Silver Anniversary Ball attracting dancers from miles around. Everybody said that this ball was a great success.

In Vancouver there was dancing at 6 venues in and around the city - 144 danced the Jubilee Jig and 320 the Gay Gordons, as well as attracting approximately 300 spectators. Stave Falls, Mission, British Columbia had 60 dancers attending and have said that they want to do it again next year.

Vancouver were in fact in touch with Isle of Skye branch who were holding a dance at 8 o'clock that night in Dunvegan Village Hall at the very time that they were dancing in Vancouver. The Skye branch had 3 sets dancing.

Ottawa had 18 dancers performing. Kelowna, British Columbia, had 16 dancers joining in on the day.

Lisbon are feeling very pleased with themselves and rightly so with a tremendous ceilidh involving 70 dancers. Normally the group has only 18 members. The number was increased by one, who was worth his weight in gold having travelled from Madrid to Lisbon to be there for that special occasion. Well done.

Rayleigh Scottish Country Dance Group in Essex attracted 8 sets with dancers from Potters Bar Scottish Country Dancers in attendance.

Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh resounded to the music of Garry Donaldson, attracting 115 dancers, which including children, to Edinburgh's

RSCDS Day of Dance. There were also quite a number of spectators.

Glasgow RSCDS branch held their day in Mugadoch Park with 60 dancers and 200 spectators. There was also a lot of interest shown.

Perth and Perthshire RSCDS branch held a day of dance at Scone Park with a number of 60 including a number of children dancing. Dancing was to Neil Copland Band and they would like to do it again next year.

Another small group of dancers in Ellon, Aberdeenshire had 16 dancers performing followed by lunch in the local hostelry!

Bournemouth RSCDS branch had a very successful day with 16 juniors and 87 members dancing and a good many spectators.

Dingwall Scottish Country Dance Group included the Jubilee Jig in their evening programme with 88 dancers taking part.

In Inverness the Highland Festival finished with pipe bands in the Falcon Square with over 300 spectators. Many joined in the Gay Gordons and 2 sets of dancers displayed the Jubilee Jig - the end

have not yet sent in details.

Many have asked to have this day as an annual event. We will certainly look into it.

Finally a special thanks to BBC Radio Scotland and Robbie Shepherd for giving us time on the Reel Blend programme on the World Day of Dance.

Rob Sargent

... and at Polesden Lacey it was THE YEAR THE SUN SHONE!

Throughout history certain years have proved memorable, although not all as significant as 1066; but for those who dance, 2003 may end up being known as 'the year the sun finally shone at Polesden Lacey'! After a run of years when the weather has proved unkind – sometimes teasingly waiting until the band has set up and picnics are finished, sometimes being unrelentingly wet – we had a wonderfully sunny day for the London Branch's dance at Polesden Lacey.

To make it even more memorable we danced for the first time on the South Terrace. For those who do not know it, picture a rather square country house, set in a slight dip with adjacent formal gardens and shrubberies. To the south a broad flat lawn runs the length of the house, with steps and a grassy bank down to a fairly steep slope descending the valley. From the house and terrace one looks across to a parkland vista of grass and trees. This was the setting. Being able to sit around with friends having picnics on the grass or under the trees – and if you had time to spare there was always the house or the sculpture trail to survey – was all very pleasant. Add the music of Craiggellachie and a lively dance programme, and you have an idea of what you missed.

The dancers enjoyed a varied programme, which was quite demanding in the heat, as did the visitors, some of whom sat round to be entertained, especially by the 32-some, while others looked out from the windows whilst viewing the house. A large, eight couple Demonstration Team put on an impressive display which included 'James Gray' and 'Le Moulin Rouge' followed by part of a Sixteen-some. This turned the pattern into a giant windmill: a spectacular finish. Their dancing was rather more polished than the free-for-all (otherwise known as The Gay Gordons) that the spectators were encouraged to join on this, the World Day of Dance.

Unfortunately although the date was right for the weather, it clashed with other dancing events so attendance was not as high as sometimes. Those there though enjoyed it and for one group, seeing a roe buck between the house and car park as we left made a special end to the day.

Moira Strutt



Dancing in Vancouver

to a fabulous day.

Canberra Branch celebrated the World Day of Dance with a Scottish Village night organised by the Belconnen Scottish Country Dance Club.

Cumbrae had 38 dancers participating. This is a small group. However, they danced in 2 places. A number of children took part and was watched by a large group of spectators.

London Branch had a successful day with 102 dancers (*see below*). A number of visitors joined in, while many more watched. This was a very good advertisement for Scottish Country Dance.

Bucks, Berks and Hants (Borders) branch held their day in a beautiful rose garden in Hartley Wintney. Thirty-two dancers enjoyed the day with a number of visitors. Also a coach party arrived. Some joined in; all enjoyed the spectacle. Reading affiliated branch had 16 dancers performing in the main shopping precinct. Six of the public joined in the Gay Gordons while a number watched.

This account may exclude some groups who

COMMITTEE NEWS

Congratulations and best wishes to new Branch Secretary Pam Ellam, née Ray, on her marriage.

The Branch AGM on 20th June made a number of other changes. Simon Wales returns to the Committee as Treasurer after a year's absence. Margaret Catchick, Lindsay Merriman and Cherry West all join the Committee; they introduce themselves below.

Owen Meyer remains Chairman and Rachel Wilton Vice-Chairman. The following were re-elected to the Committee: Daniel Capron, Peter Knight, Davinia Miln, Jeff Robertson, Margaret Shaw, Caroline Sloan, Meryl Thomson and Angela Young.

Helen Brown, David Hall and Alexander McClintock, who did not stand for re-election, were thanked for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Branch.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Margaret Catchick

I first became interested in Scottish Country Dancing when I attended a ceilidh whilst on holiday in Brunei. When I returned home I heard about Wembley & District Scottish Association who met near where I lived.

I began attending various day schools, an RSCDS general class and eventually the RSCDS Borders Branch and London Branch Advanced Classes. I am now a member of Wembley, Gerrards Cross SCDC and S.E. Herts SCDS where I was Treasurer for three years having completed my term of office in May this year. In addition, Borders Branch is my second branch. I am also a member of the McClennan Scottish Group and have really enjoyed my two years dancing with them.

I have danced throughout the country and abroad and have made many friends on my travels. I hope that the administrative experience I have gained throughout my working life, together with my knowledge of dances and dancers, will be of benefit to London Branch. More importantly I hope to be able to inspire others with my enthusiasm and love of Scottish Country Dancing, which is without doubt the most sociable and enjoyable form of dance.

My first task on the Committee is organising this year's Day School. I would say to all of you that the best way of enjoying dancing is to take a little time to first learn the basics and then progress to a higher standard. By doing so you will not only find dancing more enjoyable for yourself but also for those with whom you are dancing. So start by coming to the Day School – excellent teachers, excellent musicians and a very enjoyable day altogether.

Lindsay Merriman

My dancing is based on our group at Dulwich which my husband Nicholas and I and a number of local friends set up about 11 years ago under the lively but patient instruction of Peter Knight. At first we met only once a month and, during the first two years, learned little more than six basic reels and jigs. Then we started meeting fortnightly and, finding it easier to retain what we'd learned last time, increased our repertoire rapidly.

At Peter's suggestion we started branching out from Dulwich, going to St. Columba's for the Little Ship Club where Peter also teaches and the Chelsea Reel Club. Once Peter thought we were safe to 'let out in public' he started inviting us to dance at balls with his group at the Hurlingham Club and to the RSCDS 80th Anniversary South East Ball in Watford. Some of us have also tried out day schools near London, the Argyll Scottish Dancing Group in Wokingham and the RSCDS Tunbridge Wells and even ventured abroad for a week of excellent teaching from Rachel Wilton in Spain and balls in Lyon and Montpellier. This summer, feeling that our repertoire is just about large enough for us to cope, we have begun going to 'Summer Tuesdays' at St. Columba's which we find an enjoyable challenge. Nicholas, after much pressure, has finally equipped himself with a kilt, in the ancient colours of the Lindsay tartan much to my delight, so now St. Andrews becomes a possibility!

Our Dulwich club thrives – we usually have four or five sets – and Peter has become a family friend to many of us. The group consisted entirely of couples at the start and is still largely that. This has prevented some of us from realising until rather late in the day the need for the women to learn the man's part too if they

Cherry West

In my career as a dress designer, manufacturing evening and cocktail dresses has always been a fairly fraught activity. In an attempt to understand my Greek-Cypriot out-door workers, I decided to take up modern Greek evening classes, and indulge in Scottish Country Dancing as a way of light relief (for an extra five shillings a term) at 'Mary Ward', central London. Some people are lucky – out of the blue I had chanced upon classes taught by that wonderful teacher Andrew Gillies. The out-door workers continued their usual practices, although I now understood a little of their telephone riddles; but you've guessed correctly, the delights of Dancing far outweighed the dubious appeal of Modern Greek. Dress manufacturing was no easier, but I gave up the Greek for the entertainment and technique of Andrew's classes, and the new social life it offered – such jolly delights as weekend schools, regular attendances at John Laurie's social Mondays, and 'Summer Tuesdays' at Pont Street.

Over the last few years I have danced with many different clubs in London and the Home Counties and have been to many dancing holidays and balls on the Continent. One meets such a variety of interesting people.

Having been a member of the RSCDS for some years and enjoyed many happy functions every season, for me it is now 'payback time'. Assisting in other events at Pont Street, one appreciates the amount of time, work and energy required to produce all these highly successful events, from teachers to selection of bands, and catering onwards.

In the new season I look forward to playing a larger part in the activities.

BRANCH MATTERS

With the start of the new season, we bid farewell to Alexander McClintock and thank him for his work on Publicity for the Branch over the past few years. We must also thank Helen Brown for stepping in as the caretaker Treasurer for the past year and coping with the complexities of the accounts. We welcome Margaret Catchick, Lindsay Merriman and Cherry West to the committee. We are fortunate to have them and will benefit from the skills they will bring.

We were fortunate this year to have had a lovely day for the Garden Dance at Polesden Lacey. This was the Branch's contribution to the World Day of Dance. Unfortunately, the numbers were down, but those who were there enjoyed the new location at this beautiful National Trust property.

To things ahead: two Open Air Dances have been arranged in Kensington Gardens on the 6th and 13th September. Do encourage your non-dancing friends to come. You never know!

All the regular activities will be under way as the season begins. We start with a dance on the 20th September with the popular Neil Copland and his Band. This should get the season off to a rousing start. The Day School is again at Lady Margaret's School in Parsons Green. Remember, the date is **Saturday 18th October**.

Do keep those ideas coming for events for next season, the Branch's 75th Anniversary. The committee is open to new ideas so that it will be a season to remember.

Owen Meyer

DEM TEAM REPORT

The team has just come to the end of another busy summer term. We had a return visit to the Bedford Park Festival. As well as being a glorious day, it proved to be a useful publicity event with some photos appearing on the festival website.

We performed on grass at Polesden Lacey, the first time outside for years. The large scale display required the services of almost the entire team and the gourmet picnic was appreciated by all. Thanks to Jeremy Hill for his assistance.

The team was out and about for the London Squares at Queen's Gate Gardens with the team performing and helping out. We had an excellent reception at the multicultural event for asylum seekers run by Chelsea and Westminster Education Authority and were able to sample various ethnic foods. Another scorching day! The team were also well received at their return visit to the Tower Road Care Centre.

The term finished with the usual end of season dinner where we thanked Sandra our class musician, Joan for her interim stint as teacher and Treenie who is stepping down as Team Secretary after five years. Our thanks to Gaynor Curtis for taking over this daunting role.

The Team is looking forward to performing at the Epsom Caledonian Club Garden Party in August and will also be helping at the dancing in Kensington Gardens in September.

Congratulations to Bevan and Fiona on their respective weddings and best wishes for the future.

The new season of classes begins in September and we are pleased to welcome back Ann Dix as the teacher, assisted by Joan Desborough.

We are always keen to welcome dancers of an advanced standard so anyone interested in joining the team please get in touch with Jeff Robertson on 01903 530750 (home), 020 7730 9633 (work) or e-mail jtr@ctg.co.uk.

Jeff Robertson

RSCDS MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Board has met once since I reported on its activities in the last issue of *The Reel*. Many of the projects outlined on that occasion are ongoing: revision of the examinations structure and new procedures for appointing examiners; children's medal tests; updated strategic plan, including guidelines for Branches; and a new look to the AGM from 2004. The RSCDS website has been redesigned and is well worth accessing (*see below*). The Society's financial year will in future run from April to March, which should mean that with effect from 2004 members in the UK will receive their Bulletin at the start of the dancing year in September, and not, as at present, just before Christmas if you are lucky! Sue Porter from Argyll has been appointed Youth Director. She will be a worthy successor to Fiona Turnbull, the first occupant of the post, who put terrific impetus behind the Society's commitment to children's dancing.

Discussion among Board members at the June meeting showed we were not really clear about whether the Society is trying to be a members' organisation or an organisation of Branches, and we suspect that the confusion is shared by members and Branches at large. To explain the pros and cons of each position and to help resolve the dilemma we are launching a Great Debate at the AGM in Perth in November. If you cannot get to the AGM, London Branch members and others will have the chance to take part in the debate through *The Reel*. More in the next issue.

Andrew Kellett

THE REEL

Contributions to *The Reel* are always welcome. They should be sent to the Editor at the address at the bottom of page 1. Material in electronic form is easiest to handle (if in the form of an attachment the format should be as an unformatted MS Word file, though other formats such as later versions of Works, WordPerfect, Macintosh or even a simple .rtx text file can probably be read). Typed or handwritten contributions are also quite acceptable.

Reports of enjoyable Scottish country dancing events are particularly welcome.

Photographs are also appreciated. In future we will give photographers' names where known, unless they wish to be anonymous. So when submitting photos please give the photographer's name so that it can be credited.

Potential **advertisers** should contact the Business Editor, Jeff Robertson, tel: 01903 530750, email jtr@ctg.co.uk. Advertising copy is best sent to the Editor. We particularly welcome advertisements from other Scottish Country Dance groups. Regular events and contact details can be listed on the back page, and special events such as balls included under 'Dance Events' at a cost of £10 per column inch (fractions *pro rata*), perhaps the cost of one ticket.

Issue 244

In the last issue the photographs on pages 3 and 7 were by Stephen Webb.

I am sorry that there were some errors in the text. On page 1, the penultimate line should have begun 'Issue 245...', not 'Issue 244'. In the caption to the picture on page 3, 'RSCDA' should of course have read 'RSCDS'. On page 9, in 'New Recordings', first paragraph, the dance to which Cock of the North is the original tune is Airie Bennan, not the Irish Rover. (Thanks to Jennifer Shaw of Cheltenham for pointing out an error here.) In the 'Subscribe to *The Reel*' box on that page, the email address should be rusmar.ashtead@virgin.com. And on page 11, first column, the Harpenden Highland Gathering venue was **Rothamsted** Park and the contact Coleen **Hutchison**.

Daniel Capron, Editor

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the RSCDS and London Branch costs £14.00 per annum for UK based members (£14.50 for Europe; £16.50 elsewhere). Current members of other Branches can join London Branch for £4.00 per annum if they live in the UK (£4.50 in Europe and £6.50 elsewhere). London Branch membership brings benefits including *The Reel*, while Society membership includes the annual dance publication, Bulletin and Newsletters. Membership applications and enquiries should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Owen Meyer, 50 Bunby Road, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BP. Tel: 01753 643461.

HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR REEL?

If you ever fail to receive your issue of *The Reel*, please advise our Membership Secretary, Owen Meyer, 50 Bunby Road, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BP, Tel: 01753 643461, so that the matter can be investigated and rectified. Thanks.

OBITUARY

Howard Booth

Howard Booth, a Vice-President of London Branch, died after a short illness in Lancaster Infirmary on 12th May 2003, aged 86.



Stella and Howard Booth receiving the Society's Scroll in 1986

Howard was born on 7th December 1916 in Bolton, Lancashire. The family moved to Colne and Howard attended Burnley Grammar School. He was in the RAF and spent some time in India. After the war Howard joined the Civil Service and moved to London. It was here that he met Stella and they were married in 1951. He was then told by Stella that he would have to learn to dance 'properly' and was sent to classes!

Howard served on the London Branch Committee from 1977 to 1986. He took over as Membership Secretary from Ted Shank, and kept meticulous records of over 1,000 members – before the days of word processors and computers. He was also the Branch representative on the Festival of Scotland in London Committee, which organised an annual concert, ball and Highland Games. Howard also helped Stella with the Branch bookstall, and together they inaugurated the Polesden Lacey dance, which they organised for a number of years. Apart from the first year, it was nearly always sunny and warm in those days, with attendances of over 200 dancers!

In 1987 Howard and Stella moved to Burnside, near Kendal, and in 1988 they became Vice-Presidents of the Branch. They were also awarded a RSCDS Scroll for their contribution to the work of London Branch. We always thought of them as "Howard and Stella": they were partners in the true sense of the word. Howard had many interests which he shared with Stella. He was a great walker and until recently spent many happy times on the Lakeland fells and the Scottish hills. He also enjoyed playing bridge, gardening and wine-tasting (and drinking!).

Howard will be remembered, by those who knew him, as a quiet, kind and thoughtful man. He held firm views, but always expressed them in a polite manner.

Howard was cremated in Lancaster on 19th May 2003, and a Memorial Service was held in Burnside Church. Stella continues to live in Burnside, so if you are passing, please don't!! She would love to see you.

Jenny Greene

ROUND AND ABOUT

ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MONDAY EVENING SOCIAL or Life after John Laurie

The evenings of social dancing at St. Columba's in Pont Street, SW1, will continue despite the retirement of the man who, in the Scottish Country Dancing world, really is a 'legend in his own lifetime'?

As the newly appointed Convenor I am lucky to have the support of St. Columba's Ministerial team, an excellent committee and four MCs. Together we are confident that St. Columba's on a Monday night will continue to be 'The Place' for Scottish Country Dancing in London.

The MCs are: Rachel Wilton, Sheila MacDonald, Denise Hora and Jim Cook, all 'weel kent' faces at St. Columba's. With their combined wealth of experience we look forward to varied and interesting programmes to suit all tastes and capabilities. John Laurie returns to MC on Burns Night (26th January) and again on 24th May for the last night of the season. Lindsey Rousseau has very kindly agreed to take monthly 'Step Practice' starting at 7.15. **However, beginners can start on any evening and may be assured of a warm welcome and friendly help.**

The 2003/4 season begins on 6th October and, with breaks at Christmas, Easter and the May Bank Holiday, continues until 24th May 2004. Bands have been booked for six of the 30 dancing Mondays: Craigellachie on 27th October and 24th May; David Hall on 8th December; Silver Cross on 26th January (Burns Night with haggis and neeps); David Hall and Judy Smith on 1st March and Green Ginger on 29th March. On 15th December a slightly shorter dance programme allows the traditional mince pies and Carols.

Except on Band Nights each evening closes with the Epilogue when all are welcome to join together for a short reading, a prayer and closing hymn.

What does it cost? Band Nights, including supper, £6. All other Mondays free.

Bob Harman

BUDAPEST INTERNATIONAL DANCE COURSE

1st - 4th May 2003

The 3rd Budapest International Weekend Course organised by the Budapest Scottish Dance Club took place at the Bara Hotel in Buda with about 100 dancers from all over Europe. It involved two evening dances – one a Ball with Sound Company – and four dancing sessions ably conducted by Alice Murphy with Pat Clark on piano. I came away from the course feeling I had benefited and enjoyed the experience. On the Friday we went for a cruise on the Danube to see the principal buildings under floodlights. It was a warm evening and everything looked really good. At the Ball Sound Company were very good and helped create a lively atmosphere.

The Club organised an optional holiday programme before the event. This seemed ideal as we had never been to Hungary and were interested to see more of the country. Each day we were taken to places of interest including the Hungarian Great Plain; Kecskemét, a Horse Ranch with displays of horsemanship; the Castle ruins at Visegrád; the Danube Bend and walks around both Buda and Pest – they are divided by the river Danube. On the Wednesday we had a go at Hungarian Folk Dancing with a local dance group. It was very energetic and full of style and we had fun with our efforts! Each day we had two club members as our guides and their enthusiasm made us appreciate the places we visited. We were given a Budapest Travel Card which gave free travel for three days on all forms of transport so we could explore Buda and Pest in our own time as well. Both are full of interesting places with plenty of riverside cafes.

More than anything the whole visit was a success because the Club were so friendly and helpful. They have in Gábor Turi the only Hungarian with the RSCDS Teacher's Certificate and he has inspired a high standard in the members. He taught a dance in Hungarian to show us what it is like for those at St Andrews Summer School who may not understand English! It was an eye opener. It is difficult for Hungarians to learn English (or us to learn Hungarian) as the language has different origins from English and most other European Languages but all the members could speak good English – time for us to learn Hungarian! We were very grateful to Szilvia Láng and Gábor for organising the event and to the whole club for making our week so enjoyable. They took time off work to ensure we had a good time. They achieved that.

Memories? Plenty, but Gábor singing the Wild Rover on the coach comes immediately to mind! We mean to go to the next Course in 2005 and recommend it.

Michael Copeman

ST. ANDREWS WON!

This will interest those who go to Summer School: The Group Travel Awards ceremony took place at the London Hilton on 5th June 2003 and in the category 'Best University Accommodation for Groups' with rivals such as the Universities of Exeter, Durham, Kent at Canterbury, Queen Mary's College and London School of Economics, London. St. Andrews University won the award – well done St. Andrews!!

Rachel Wilton

BRANDED GARMENTS

With the approach of the 75th anniversary of the RSCDS London Branch, the Committee considers that it may be appropriate to introduce a suitable range of garments e.g., Sweatshirts, Polo Shirts, Tee Shirts etc. all sporting the London Branch logo shown below.

Your comments or expressions of interest would be appreciated.

Jeff Robertson
Tel: 01903 530750



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Second Chord

Hove, Sussex

Dear Daniel,

It is planned to eliminate the second chord for future dances which commence with the third and fourth couples on the opposite sides of the set. This is not as controversial as it may appear.

One of the more popular Dances in 1650 was the Jig "Lulle me beyond thee" in which the third and fourth couples started on the opposite sides of the set. From the instructions and music published at that time it would appear that the couples formed up in those positions. It also seems that at that time there were no chords to commence, the band playing a four-bar introduction. Other popular dances of that period in which the dancers commenced in what we now regard as unorthodox positions include:

- ◇ Greenwood: a three couple dance with the second couple commencing on the opposite side.
- ◇ Confesse: with two men in first place, two ladies in second place and two men in third place.
- ◇ Daphne: a four couple dance, in which all four couples start on the opposite side.

Over the course of the following 250 years these dances with unconventional opening positions fell out of favour. When the Society commenced to revive old dances, all dances within living memory started with the men on one side facing their partners. It would appear that the Society adopted this starting position for "The Glasgow Highlanders" and introduced the second chord to enable dancers to move into the correct position before commencing to dance (rather than have an exception to the normal rule). I am unaware of a second chord at the beginning of a dance occurring any earlier. However, the version of the Foursome Reel published by the Society does have the men standing in the side lines alongside their partners to commence, with one couple facing the other and no second chord to move into the correct starting position.

Eliminating the second chord appears to mark a return to earlier custom and would seem to be less controversial than the introduction of the second chord.

Yours sincerely,

John Mitchell

[Other letters have been held over to the next issue. Ed.]

MANUAL LABOUR

The following piece of verse was written while I was doing the Candidates' Class recently run by London Branch. It contains some helpful hints for anyone aspiring to become an RSCDS teacher. The reference to Wallington is the place south of London where the Class, taught by Jenny Greene, was held between January and June of this year.

What on earth possessed me I shall never really know,
But every second Sunday now to Wallington I go,
And more precisely even, it's to the Girl Guide Hall,
Where Baden-Powell looks down on us from high up on the wall.
As inspiration during the class for us aspiring teachers,
They should replace his picture with Miss Milligan's fine features,
For teaching Scottish Dancing is what we hope to do,
Though the task is quite enormous and the lessons left are few.

To show your class what they must do your dancing must be right,
Your strathspey has to dip and glide, your skip change must have flight,
Your pas de basque must have three beats, your slip step mustn't bounce,
For we've been told quite clearly the examiners will pounce
On every imperfection and every little fault,
Bringing our teaching aspirations to a rapid halt.

But slowly I am finding out what's right and what is wrong,
For instance, women teachers mustn't wear their skirts too long.
I think it's so your class can see your steps, but then again,
It could just be the rules are made by lecherous old men.
And it's really very crucial that you use the proper word,
Though some of the distinctions may seem a bit absurd:
While few are going to quibble that that direction's 'down',
If you say that you're dancing 'back' your teacher's going to frown.
In Scottish Country Dancing it simply isn't said,
So do try to remember – you must say 'up' instead.
And something else important you never should forget –
No-one ever dances on the wrong side of the set,
Unless it's all gone pear-shaped in which case 'wrong' is right,
But otherwise it's guaranteed your teacher's going to bite
Your head off for loose usage – it's opposite you say,
Your speech must now be standardised the 12 Coates Crescent way.

And do try to remember, though tricky it might be,
There's no room on the dance floor for those things for brewing tea:
If you try to mention teapots your teacher will get cross,
So choose your words more carefully and call it hands across.
And if you talk of birling you really must desist;
You must pretend the word and what it means just don't exist.
The RSCDS won't ever entertain the notion,
That proper dancing can include that outlawed spinning motion.
For always dancing correctly is what it's all about,
Which means in essence that you must leave all the fun bits out.
You're now a PR person on permanent display,
And every dance you do has to be done the proper way.

So in the Duke of Perth you're going to find yourself in trouble,
If you decide to birl the turns so you can make them double,
Or if you're in the habit when you're doing reels of four,
Of putting in a twiddle in the middle of the floor,
Or if you find in Monty's Rant it really does appeal,
To join in all the setting and shadow every reel,
You'll have to stop that sort of thing if you aspire to teach,
For it's very much expected that you'll practise what you preach.

And then there is the Manual – you must know it inside out,
If you can quote verbatim it will help without a doubt.
Instead of spending weekends and free evenings simply lazing,
Bone up on the finer points of ... four couple allemande phrasing.
So if you really wish to boost your chances of succeeding,
That blue bound book of wisdom must become your bedtime reading.
You may well find this doesn't do your love life any good,
Half an hour on Chapter 2 and you won't be in the mood,
But it will all be worth it when you confidently stand
And turn to your musician and say, "Thank you. Ready, and!"

Margret Talbot

THE LUCY CLARK (AMERSHAM) SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

Autumn Dance

Saturday 11th October 2003 from 8.00 – 11.30 p.m.

White Hill Centre, White Hill, Chesham.

Dancing to recorded music. Tickets £3.00 plus "Bring and Share" refreshments, from Dick Field, Stonefield House, Clappins Lane, Naphill, HP14 4SL, tel: 01494 562231.

NEW RECORDINGS

The Society have recently issued six CDs. Four are transfers from earlier LPs/cassettes:-

- ◇ **Book 2. Bobby Crowe's Band.** All the dances except The Eightsome Reel by Colin Dewar.
- ◇ **Book 3. Bobby Crowe's Band.**
- ◇ **Book 4. Neil Barron's Band.**
- ◇ **Book 18. Colin Dewar's Band.**

When these were first issued I in general gave them high praise and do so again. Neil's and Colin's are immaculate in every sense; good tempo, lift and a very clean sound. Bobby's Book 2 disappoints as it did when first heard in 1982. The two fiddles do not seem to gel and the original recording quality is poor. His Book 3 is a much better recording and with two accordions and only one fiddle more like the real Bobby Crowe Band.

The Graded Book comes as a double CD. Twelve of the dances are culled from a 1984 recording of Rob Gordon's Band and twelve newly recorded by David Cunningham's Band. The late Rob Gordon tended to play in the style of Jimmy Shand and that means more high praise. Perhaps even higher praise for David Cunningham whose recordings are always excellent, in no small way due to the chemistry between the band members including that doyen of pianists, Graham Berry.

For Books 31 and 32 we have a new recording by Alastair Wood's Band. All 16 dances, including encores for three of them, are on one CD lasting almost 80 minutes. Can I reiterate that, although the sets of tunes for Book 32 are the same as played on Alastair's LP of 1985, this is a brand new recording. I like this CD a lot. As with all these good bands we have lots of lift and nice even tempo. There are three most excellent pastoral strathspeys composed by Alastair for Autumn in Appin and three more by fiddle player Andrew Knight for the encore. I see that back in 1987 I said "I do wish Alastair would use a pianist". I say it again, particularly as he has a double bass AND a guitar, and not least because his bass player Neil MacMillan is also a first-rate pianist. Nevertheless, enjoy this fine CD.

Peter Macfarlane has recently moved to the USA and is now married. Before he left he on fiddle and Lilian Linden on piano recorded a very delightful CD composed entirely of their own tunes. There are sets of reels, strathspeys and jigs of various lengths suitable for dancing. Some of them are especially good for step practice. There are also some nice listening tracks. For further details and to obtain copies call Lilian on 01252 629178.

Coming soon:

- ◇ A book of dances to celebrate the silver jubilee of Leicester Branch with a CD by David Cunningham.
- ◇ A book of new dances by Roy Golding for Leeds Branch 40th Anniversary, with CD by Keith Smith and Muriel Johnstone.
- ◇ CD for Book 43 by Iain MacPhail's Band.
- ◇ Also we hope to bring you some good 'listening' CDs for your Christmas present lists.

John Laurie

NEW MUSIC BOOK

Douglas Adamson at Deey Music has recently published "The Breadalbane Collection" of Scottish music with some 80 tunes by contemporary composers. There are a number by musicians well known to us here in the London area: Robin Ellis, Frank Reid and Ian Muir. There are three tunes in 10 bar phrases suitable as alternatives for "The Wee Cooper of Fife", one of which is by Frank. Ian inscribes tunes to fellow musicians Barbara Manning, Bill Farr, Ben Dorkin and Alex Firbes.

"Sandy Nixon's Compliments to Dave and Judy Hall" is also there. This is the original tune for the dance "The First of September" devised by Ann Dix for Dave and Judy's wedding on that date in 2001.

John Laurie