

THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY
YORK AND NORTH HUMBERSIDE BRANCH

BROUN'S REEL

December 2021

A NEWSLETTER

No. 167

Editorial

Throughout the various lockdowns I was kept going by the weekly treat from the RSCDS online with "Dance Scottish at Home. Then from February until June this year I loved doing hard-shoe step dance online with Morag from Dunedin, which I first came across at the first two Strathspé Away weekends in Kingussie, possibly in 2004 and 2005. At the same time I started doing Highland and Stepdance online with Andrew and Mechthild Timmins in Tübingen. These two classes were the highlight of my week for 5 months – thank you, Morag and Andrew!

And excellent as they were, it was nowhere near the same as being able to dance again with real people in real places with live music. First was our September dance at North Newbald, where we were joined by some younger dancers from North Newbald who had done some ceilidh dancing there. They danced our dances, and we danced theirs, they were willing to try anything and added an enthusiasm and energy to the evening. Robert Whitehead and Alan Brown played superbly – I don't think I've ever heard Robert play better, or seen him grin so much. They said it was just so great to be playing real Scottish music for a Scottish dance crowd. They loved playing for us, and we loved their playing.

Again, at our Day School Dance at Stockton on the Forest in October, we had a wonderful time, with dancers saying that it was their first dance since the pandemic and how wonderful it was to be back. Everyone really appreciated the live music from The Braes of Wansbeck, and I loved their woodwind-driven sound, which reminded me of that Californian sound going from Reel of Seven right back to Fiddlesticks and Ivory, and the Berkeley Players.

The Annual Dance was the next highlight of the year. A varied and accessible programme, a good turnout, and once again outstanding music, this time from Màrtainn Skene and his Highland Dance Band. Once more, they really enjoyed playing for us, and we thoroughly enjoyed dancing to their music. Very traditional, but with a distinctive Màrtainn Skene sound; appearing upbeat and driving, yet performed at a standard dance tempo. Great music for inspiring you to dance!

I discovered new bands during the 18 months plus without dancing together, and I acquired new CDs just for my own pleasure. Australia seems to have produced some outstanding duos, and I'd really recommend that you listen to The Black Bear Duo – for my group, that's our warm-up and cool-down music – and to Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt. At some online Celtic Connections concerts in January, I discovered more great Scottish music.

The people, the social interaction, and the dances themselves matter too, not just the music. Just being able to meet people, dance with them, smile at them, talk to them – no longer just "nice", this has now gained a greater importance. I reckon that my group are much more aware of each other these days and so have a better sense of dancing together as a set.

Events like our branch dances and balls wrap music, dancing and social interaction all into one glorious bundle, made all the more special because of our enforced abstinence from these dances. We've got some good programmes coming up to recorded music and to great live bands. If you haven't got back to dancing yet, do consider it. It may make such a difference in your life too.

Joyce Cochrane

My Lockdown Project

Even though for many years I've enjoyed helping Joyce teach some dances at our Monday night

class, and have benefited from her feedback and encouragement, I've had no desire to do the RSCDS 5 Unit Teaching Certificate.

However, I was inspired by the Dance Scottish At Home Zoom classes delivered by expert teachers from all over the world. What an opportunity!

I took part in every one of the 64 classes and then repeated them, making notes on their different ideas for warm-ups, how to teach particular steps and formations and hints on technique. (All classes are still available on the website).

By chance, in November 2020 I read that applications were due for the RSCDS Teaching Certificate Unit 1 Written Paper. 'What a good idea for a lockdown project', I thought.

After encouragement from Malcolm and Joyce, and the loan of a copy of the latest manual from Helen Russell, I checked out past papers on the website and even found my old lucky pencil case from those long-gone A-level days.

I set about reading the manual, making notes, then notes of notes, and finally post-it notes of notes!

I found the History, Music and Technique sections particularly interesting. However, the detail in the Formations section really tested my memory. Thankfully I wasn't tested on formations such as the Spurtle, Swirl or Targe but from Advance and Retire to simply Turn with Both Hands, I had to learn explanations for no less than 98 Formations.

I sat the two-hour exam in June under strict exam supervision from Branch officers Joyce and Helen. The paper was sent away to somewhere in the world to be externally marked and I was proud to achieve an 86% pass.

I thoroughly enjoyed my lockdown task, although true to my A-level experience, I'd forgotten most of the detail when the exam was over!

I may start another winter project and apply for the new Core Training for Instructors course which equips people, through a personalised programme, to assist a teacher and lead a class.

Are any other Branch members interested in taking the CTI? Or maybe the Unit 1 exam, which is not a requirement but will prove very useful.

After studying and taking the exam I really commend all our dance teachers for their knowledge of steps, formations and music, their skills with technique and their wonderful enthusiasm, all provided free because they just love Scottish Country Dancing.

Lynne Brooks, Cottingham

Notes to dancers

In advance of our previous dances, the committee has published guidance notes to dancers on the actions being taken in light of the Covid situation. The advice has been reviewed ahead of each dance. The committee would ask people to read through these notes and let them know of any way these can be improved.

Additionally, following some queries, it is felt that there is a need to clarify what actions dancers may expect from the committee. These additional notes will be emailed to members, or printed and posted to those who do not have internet access. There is a committee meeting next week.

Annegret stepped down as chairman in October, and the new Chairman is Rachel White. Thank you, both of you.

New Year's Eve Dance, Dunnington – 31st December

Our New Year's Eve Dance takes place as it used to pre-pandemic at the Dunnington Reading Rooms, beginning at 8.00 pm. Tickets are £5 per person, and the music is recorded, chosen by Malcolm to include music from his online Allsorts programme.

Given different ideas and preferences on food during the Covid pandemic, you can choose to either bring contributions to, and share in, a Faith Supper, or else you can bring your own picnic for your own consumption.

Malcolm has chosen the programme, which is as follows:

Hooper's Jig	J	8x32	RSCDS MMM2
Mrs Macpherson of Inveran	R	8x32	Drewry/Bon Accord
Braes of Breadalbane	S	8x32	RSCDS Book 21
Links with St Petersburg	J	8x32	RSCDS Book 46
Da Rain Dancin'	R	8x32	30 Popular 2
Bonnie Lass of Bon Accord	S	8+56	Drewry/Bon Accord
The Chequered Court	J	8x32	RSCDS Book 42
Royal Wedding	S	8x32	RSCDS 5/82
Saltire Society Reel	R	8x32	RSCDS Leaflet

Interval

Shiftin' Bobbins	R	8x32	30 Popular 2
St Andrews Fair	J	8x32	RSCDS 5 for 82
The Birks of Invermay	S	8x32	RSCDS Book 16
Postie's Jig	J	4x32	30 Popular 2
The Sailor	R	8x32	RSCDS Book 24
Culla Bay	S	4x32	30 Popular 2
Machine Without Horses	J	8x32	RSCDS Book 12
The Lea Rig	S	6x32	RSCDS Book 21
Reel of the Royal Scots	R	8x32	RSCDS Leaflet

All Lang Syne

Ladies' Fancy	J	8x32	RSCDS Book 13
Miss Catherine Anne	S	3x32	Queen Collection
Deil Amang the Tailors	R	8x32	RSCDS Book 14

BRANCH DANCE, GATE HELMSLEY, 22ND JANUARY 2022

Our January dance takes place on Saturday 22nd January at the village hall in Gate Helmsley, to recorded music. Remember – this is an **afternoon** dance and will begin at **2.00 pm**. Please note that this is no longer a Burns Dance and Supper.

At the moment I cannot give you the price for the dance, nor information about refreshments. This information will be sent out through class teachers, via email, and again by post where needed, following decisions at the committee meeting.

The programme, drawn up by Rita, is as follows:

Maxwell's Rant	Reel	RSCDS Book 18
Kendall's Hornpipe	Jig	RSCDS Graded 1
The Duchess Tree	Strathspey	RSCDS leaflet
Ladies of Dunse	Reel	RSCDS Book 26
Joie de Vivre	Jig	RSCDS Book 39
Bedrule	Strathspey	RSCDS Book 33
Plantation Reel	Reel	Moretti/Pinewoods 2
City of Belfast	Strathspey	RSCDS Book 48
Deil among the Tailors	Reel	RSCDS Book 14

INTERVAL

The Sailor	Reel	RSCDS Book 24
Mrs Stewart's Jig	Jig	RSCDS Book 35
Argyll Strathspey	Strathspey	RSCDS Book 35
Lothian Lads	Reel	Drewry/Brodie
Laird of Milton's Daughter	Jig	RSCDS Book 22
Anna Holden's Strathspey	Strathspey	RSCDS Book 42
Scott Meikle	Reel	RSCDS Book 46
The Minister on the Loch	Strathspey	Goldring RSCDS 30 Popular 2
Reel of the Royal Scots	Reel	RSCDS leaflet

BRANCH DANCE, COTTINGHAM, 26TH FEBRUARY

The last of our afternoon dances for the season, our dance in February takes place on Saturday February 26th at the Darby and Joan Hall in Finkle Street, Cottingham, beginning at 2.00 pm. As for the previous dance, I cannot give you information on refreshments or price just yet.

The programme (to recorded music) has yet to be finalized. Rachel and I are basing the programme on dances from Books 1 – 11, all historical and traditional dances. Some are still very current, but others have disappeared – but, we believe, they have a valid place today. The tradition is wider than you'd think – come along and sample it!

RSCDS MEMBERSHIP

Understandably, several people did not renew their membership last year. Locally, you still got Broun's Reel, which didn't cost very much apart from my time, which is priceless. [To me, anyway.]

Lynne writes in her article about the huge effort nationally and internationally to keep people dancing at home, and to promote and maintain interest in Scottish Country Dance. The RSCDS, with much of its income missing over 18 months, did a fabulous job not just with financial investment but with time and expertise given willingly by many volunteers from all round the world.

At home, you now get again the expertise and enthusiasm from RSCDS-trained teachers, Broun's Reel, and reduced admission costs at some dances. Centrally, RSCDS HQ gives us online material, dance books, music, and the beautifully produced magazine, as well as the drive to keep Scottish Country dancing going.

I would really urge you to join or re-join the Society if you haven't already done so. (Membership subscriptions were due on 1st March). Rejoining after a year of lapsed membership will soon become much more difficult, so please consider rejoining soon!

COULD YOU HELP WITH THE COMMITTEE?

We have had a few years now where we have gone from crisis to crisis as people have stood down at the end of their time of service on the committee and have not been replaced. New blood has been really welcomed with Annegret, David and Rachel all coming on to the committee and bringing new ideas and enthusiasm. This year, Helen Jennifer and Joyce re all due to retire. Please do think about helping us out!

AND FINALLY..

As they say with a lighter news item at the end of the news on TV. Another little puzzle for you. Some easy, some not so! Answers and anecdotes would be a great response.

A Can you name three dances with "Argyll" in the title?

[Note to self – the answer to that is yes or no, as I'm sure Douglas would tell me. Start again!]

A Name three dances with "Argyll" in the title?

B Name three dances with "Braes" in the title?

C Name three dances with the word "country" in.

D Where does any dance beginning with the word "da" come from, and can you think of one?

E **Without looking them up**, how many dances can you think of which are connected with Edinburgh? [Malcolm and Helen, you have just 30 seconds!]

F Famous Grouse is both a whisky and a dance. Name any others with alcohol in the title.

123... Name three dances with a number in them. More if you like!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please note that if the situation with the coronavirus pandemic changes, there may have to be changes to this listing. At present we only have a planned programme from our branch.

December 31 Y&NH Branch Hogmanay Dance, Reading Rooms, Dunnington – recorded –
TICKET ONLY

2022

January 22 Y&NH Branch Afternoon Dance, Gate Helmsley Village Hall – recorded

February 4-6 Harrogate Weekend, Cairn Hotel, Harrogate – Rachel Shankland;
Neil Barron, Alan Ross; Marian Anderson.

19 Leeds RSCDS Branch Dance, St. Chad's – Sandy Nixon & Musicians' Day Band

26 Y&NH Branch Afternoon Dance, Darby & Joan Club, Cottingham – Recorded

March 26 Y&NH Branch Annual Dance, Stockton on the Forest – Scott Band

26 Leeds RSCDS Club dance, St. Chad's – Ian Slater

April 9 Y&NH AGM & Dance, North Newbald – recorded

May 14 Y &NH Branch Dance, Pickering – Leonard Brown

July 9 Leeds White Rose Festival, Gateways School, Harewood

September 18 Y&NH Branch Dance, venue t.b.c. – recorded

October 1 Y&NH Branch Afternoon School & Evening Dance, venue t.b.c.

November Date & venue t.b.c. – Leeds RSCDS 60th Anniversary Dance

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Wishing you all
a very happy Christmas
and the very best for
New Year

HAPPY CHRISTMAS