



Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust

NEWSLETTER WINTER 1998-99

STDT RETURNS TO STIRLING FOR AGM

The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust returned to Stirling on 31st October for its second AGM. This year's meeting was held in the Golden Lion Hotel and was followed by a dance at the Albert Halls where the Trust began its life 4 years ago.

It was good to see so many of our members giving their continued support. For those who were not able to come we have summarised the events of the day.

Evelyn Hood, the Trust's Chair, welcomed members and also introduced the six new members of staff - including Liam Paterson, the Trust's new Co-ordinator - evidence in itself of the rapid expansion of the Trust and its work over the last year.

We were delighted that Jennifer Swanson, who left the Trust in September, was able to come to the AGM to report on events of the past year. As many of you will know the Trust was awarded £1/4 million from the SAC National Lottery Fund for our 3 year project, dance! Dance!! DANCE!!!, and also received £25,000 from Leader II Upland Tayside for work in Angus. The Trust is continuing to seek funds from other sources. We are still seeking sponsorship and hope that now the projects in Angus and the Borders are established, it may be easier to get support from local businesses. Membership is also bringing in money, and we have restructured the rates to offer Corporate Membership, a 10-year Subscription and a Concessionary rate as well as the Ordinary Membership.

The Trust is now recognised internationally as an information resource. We are receiving an increasing number of enquiries and exchange newsletters with dance organisations in Canada, America and Europe. We have also run an increasing number of events with the aim of breaking down barriers between different dance traditions and raising awareness about the variety of Scottish traditions of dance.

AGM REPORTS

Research & Education Sub-Committee Education

Alastair MacFadyen, Chair, thanked Joan Henderson for her continued support and hard work. He reported that one of the main tasks of the committee over the last year has been to establish links with partners in Angus and the Borders and to advise on the respective projects. Alastair remarked on the success of the "People's Dance" Exhibition which has toured Angus towns and villages, and of the Country-Early Dance Share Day in February. He also reported that the Trust is maintaining its links with Crichton College and UHI.

Our New Co-ordinator

The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust are delighted to announce the appointment as Trust Co-ordinator, of Liam Paterson - a Glaswegian with a wide experience of project management.

In 1988 Liam became founding director of Life's Rich Tapestry - a video production company specialising in programmes on different aspects of Scotland's heritage.

We welcome Liam to the Trust at a time of very exciting developments in our work and in the history of our country. The Board and staff look forward very much indeed to working alongside Liam and learning from his experience while, he says, he learns to dance!

Research

Joan Henderson reported on the ongoing research work in Angus and the Borders and talked about plans to take the research into its analytical stage. She also reported on the Trust's plans to start publishing some of its work. She and Evelyn Hood have already met with a publisher and hope to start work on this soon.

Events

Jimmy Spankie, Chair, reported on the success of events over the last year: Playing for Dance Forum at Celtic Connections; Teaching Traditional Dance Workshop; William Marshall Celebration Day in collaboration with the Elphinstone Institute; Dance Researchers Training Day in Fife; and Shetland Dance Workshops in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Eyemouth. Other events planned for the future are a Highland Dancers and Choreographers Day, a Quadrilles Share-Day and Teaching Traditional Dance for All Abilities.

Sponsorship

Jimmy Spankie spoke again as Chair of the Sponsorship Committee, reporting on fact-finding meetings he and Jennifer Swanson had held with the Fundraising Manager for the Scottish Museums Council and an advisor from the Association for Business Sponsorship in the Arts (ABSA), to get advice on fundraising. It will be a priority to follow this up in the coming months.

Finance

Bruce Wood, Chair, expressed his gratitude to

SAC for their support, but stressed the need to find other sources of funding quickly through sponsorship or other grants. He also appealed to members to hold fundraising events for the Trust.



DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS' REPORTS

Karin Ingram and Mats Melin reported on the work they have been doing since joining the Trust earlier this year. Both the Scottish Borders and Angus are proving to have an incredibly rich dance heritage which is still very much alive today in their active local dance scenes. A huge amount of information is being uncovered - and every new informant or piece of information seems to lead to further people to add to the interview list.

Karin's work in the Borders has led her to find out a lot of information about the strong Common Ridings tradition and associated dances such as the *Bull Reel*. Another particularly exciting discovery was regarding some old film footage held in the School of

(cont.)

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 5th March. We are always keen to hear the news and views of our members, and any letters, articles or suggestions you wish to send for the Newsletter would be most welcome. Please send all correspondence to: Liam Paterson, Co-ordinator, the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust, 54 Blackfriars Street, Edinburgh EH1 1NE. Tel./Fax.: 0131-558 8737.

Scottish Studies. Karin, along with Board Members Joan Henderson and Sheila Whyte, interviewed a Mrs Blackie and a Mrs Dodds who had appeared in this, one of the oldest known films of Scottish Dancing. More information about this can be found in Karin's report further on in the newsletter.

Mats reported on the success of the "People's Dance" exhibition and on the enthusiasm and willingness of local people to donate artefacts and information. The dances held in Angus in connection with the exhibition have also been a great success and have attracted a strong core of keen dancers. Next on the agenda is to take some of the local dances into the schools of Angus, and Mats and Maggie are working with Board Members and Local Education Advisors to put together a programme for teaching traditional dance in schools. Again, you will find more details in Mats's report.

After some of our members stayed on at the Golden Lion for high tea, a dance was held at the Albert Halls. Despite rather small numbers, everyone thoroughly enjoyed dancing to the Neil McEachern Band. It was a lovely way to round off a full and enjoyable day and offered a good opportunity for staff and members to meet informally.

Thank you to all who were able to attend. It is only with the continued support and enthusiasm of all of our dedicated members that the Trust is able to carry out the huge amount of work that is still to be done.



SEVENTY FIVE YEARS OLD and still kicking up its heels!

The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society celebrated 1998 in style, with events and promotions for young and old throughout the world.

As the Society was founded in November, the celebratory year began and ended with St Andrew's Day Dance Festivals for young people. Through the Young Scottish Dancers Association initiative, many primary schools in Scotland gave their children the opportunity to dance either in large festivals or in small gatherings. Other schools and groups in the UK and overseas also supported the venture with many thousands of children dancing on (or around) St Andrew's Day.

The network of locally organised branches is one of the great assets of the Society; they are the driving force for most of the dance activities. During 1998 branches were encouraged to join together to organise events - larger or with a higher profile than would have been possible for individual branches. There was also a selection of five dances that were suggested for inclusion in the dance programmes. These dances were chosen for their association with the early days of the Society, *The Triumph* from the first published book; *The Duke of Atholl's Reel*, from Skillern's Collection of 1776 and *Lord James Murray* (who became the Duke of Atholl in 1954 and was the first President), *Miss Milligan's Strathspey* and *Mrs Stewart's Jig*, devised in the honour of the co-founders, and *Sugar Candie*, a popular strathspey taken from an old handwritten manuscript. The knowledge that Scottish country dancers all over the world were enjoying the same dances and the same music brought a wonderful feeling of celebrating our common heritage together.

Dancing together with people who know and love the tradition was one strand of the Society's celebrations; the other was to bring the knowledge and enjoyment of dance to those who have never experienced it.

Mr Bill Clement, as Chairman of the Society, guided the planning of events with energy and enthusiasm and as can be seen from the following account attended and enjoyed many of them!

THE CHAIRMAN'S YEAR - BILL CLEMENT

1998 has been a most exciting year for The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, and as Chairman, I have been privileged to participate in many of the Society's 75th Anniversary special events which were organised by branches round the world, in addition to attending 42 committee meetings covering Publications & Research, Finance and Examinations and many others.

Following the Society's 74th AGM in November 1997 the first invitation was to my home town Perth, to enjoy the spectacle of one thousand children Scottish Country Dancing marking St Andrew's Day.

My wife and I were privileged to be present at a Grand Ball jointly organised by ten branches in the South East held in Watford Colosseum, with more than four hundred dancers attending. The same group of branches also held a Summer event outdoors in Hove for all ages, and our Vice-Chairman joined almost one thousand dancers on this occasion as I was in America at this time.

Accompanied by my wife, our first visit to an overseas branch was to Sydney Australia and its special Garden Party where a team of dancers dressed in the style of 1923 provided a unique display of dancing.

We attended three Weekend Schools; the first organised by the Falkirk Branch was held in Crieff. Three Ballrooms were used by three hundred dancers - in one a Formal Ball, in another an informal Country Dance and in the third a Ceilidh and Oldtime Dance.

Our second Weekend School was at Whangarei where we were pleased to meet and dance with many New Zealand dancers. We also enjoyed the picnic on Sunday after we attended a church service. Our third Weekend School, attended by 80 members, was in Japan and organised by our newest branch Tokai. This was held in a University outdoor campus and again was a most enjoyable event.

It is possible to mention only a few of the many branch events held in the UK which we attended such as Bournemouth, Perth, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Skye, Lanark, Hamilton and Clydesdale branches, the branches in the Borders, Fife, Aberdeenshire and Northern Ireland. There was also a Ball in Doncaster organised by the seven neighbouring branches.

On another overseas visit we attended special branch events in Washington, Northern Virginia and Boston where I taught the Sixteensome Reel.

All branches and Affiliated Groups in Ontario held a great Ball in Kitchener Waterloo where more than four hundred enjoyed a wonderful evening of dancing.

On our return from Canada on 1st July we had less than five hours at home before setting out for Stirling to attend a Reception, hosted by our President, The Earl of Mansfield.

Both the Earl and Countess of Mansfield spoke with many members who were present that evening in Stirling Castle, and with the others present enjoyed the entertainment organised by Stirling Branch.

The highlight of our year came next morning, 2nd July, when one hundred and forty members gathered in The City Chambers, Edinburgh for a Reception in the presence of our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen. Our Vice-Chairman, Linda Gaul, welcomed Her Majesty and introduced the short display of dancing by teams of High School and University students. The Queen spoke with the young dancers and with many of our members. It was a day we will all long remember.

Our Annual Summer School, the sixty seventh, held over four weeks in the University of St Andrews, was attended by more than one thousand of our members from Scotland and from twenty three other countries, for either one or two week periods. During this Summer School we had celebratory formal dinners, ceilidhs and garden parties.

To mark and celebrate the founding of our Society 75 years ago in Glasgow, the AGM weekend was held there with the Kelvin Hall as our venue. The AGM took place on Saturday afternoon, preceded on the Friday evening by a Founders Ball with more than seven hundred dancers attending. An informal dance was held on Saturday evening with similar numbers. The weekend concluded with many of our members attending a special Remembrance Day Service in Glasgow Cathedral at which both Miss Milligan and Mrs Stewart were remembered in the Minister's address - a fitting end to a truly memorable 75th Anniversary year.



PROJECT PROGRESS - The Borders

*Borders Development Officer - Karin Ingram
Project Assistant - Anne Brown*

At last the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust in the Borders has a Project Assistant. Anne writes ...

It was at the end of September that I cut my final ties with Edinburgh and left the world of property for the world of Scottish Traditional Dance. A big change of direction as you can imagine. This, as coupled with moving from the capital to St Boswells, a new home and a new husband - I'm still spinning from it all - or should I say birling?

It's been an exciting time trying to find my way around this beautiful part of the country and deciphering the local accents I hear in my ears as I type up people's dance experiences. All quite a challenge, but a very pleasant one. I'm looking forward to the future and developing my input to the Trust and exploring more of the history of the Borders in all its aspects including, of course, dance.

One of the first tasks that Anne tackled was contacting the people on my ever-growing list of potential interviewees.

One appointment that she made for me was with a Mrs Blackie, of whom it had been said, "she used to dance a bit". When I arrived at her home Mrs Blackie said, "I hope you don't mind, I've asked my friend Mrs Dodds to join us. She used to be a very keen dancer, and there was even an old film of her

dancing shown on TV!" When Betty Dodds arrived, the old photographs were brought out, and I immediately knew exactly which film they were talking about. The dancers were wearing Bondagers' costumes, so it had to be the well-known footage shot by Ion Jamieson at Langshaw!

This is one of the earliest extant films of Scottish dancing, and now we had the chance to speak to someone who was actually there! Betty was able to tell us that Ion Jamieson used an old cine camera, and filming took place behind his house at Langshaw and at a garden fete at Abbotshill, just outside Galashiels. She was sixteen at the time, so we could date it to 1934.

A tailor in Lauder made the Bondager costumes, and Mrs Blackie's granny, Mrs Noble, looked after them. The skirts were brown and made out of a coarse material called "drugget". Each of the four girls had a different colour of braid around the bottom of her skirt and a bright floral apron over the top. The blouses were called "Garibaldis" and had little frills over the waist. The bonnets were known as "Uglies", and Granny Noble made the frills for them which were called "ruchings". They wore black sandshoes, because Mr Jamieson thought that dancing pumps were too slippy. The men wore khaki shirts with brown bib and braces and "Nicky Tams" (pleated string tied around their trouser legs). Their sandshoes were brown. Betty thinks that a costume might be on display at the Scottish Agricultural Museum in Inghlston.

Betty also remembers the dances that they used to do, particularly *Langshaw Lasses*, *Roxburgh Castle* and the *Oxton Reel*. Mrs Blackie could clearly remember the step that was peculiar to the Oxton dancers. At this point I decided that a second visit with my video camera could be very productive.

I contacted Board members Joan Henderson and Sheila Whyte who both said that they would love to come and meet Betty Blackie and Betty Dodds. So I now have, in my video collection, film of Joan and Sheila dancing the *Oxton Reel* step! Definitely one for the next AGM!

One of the exciting things about this job is the feeling that a great discovery could be just around the corner. People are so keen to help, and it is becoming clear that we will easily have enough photographic and other material to mount a travelling exhibition in the Borders in the year 2000. The area is so steeped in dance tradition that twenty people could be doing my job for twenty years and still be constantly gathering new information.

Most dancers, when interviewed, tell me that the first dance of the evening was usually a *Circassian Circle*. They explain that it was danced in fours and at the end each four moved round the room together - in other words it was not progressive. I met a gentleman, Bill Easton, who can remember the whole of the dance (as it was done in Hawick; other places may have been different) and I have detailed it below.

THE CIRCASSIAN CIRCLE

Set Dance - 32 Bar Reels

Formation - Couple facing couple around the room, lady on man's right (Sicilian Circle).

Bars 1 - 2 Ladies walk diagonally across the set to change places with each other. (Four steps.)

Bars 3 - 4 Men walk diagonally across

the set to change places with each other.

Bars 5 - 6 Ladies walk diagonally across the set back to their original places.

Bars 7 - 8 Men walk diagonally across the set back to their original places.

Bars 9 - 16 Bars 1 - 8 are repeated.

Bars 17 - 24 Each dancer swings his/her partner for eight bars (count of sixteen).

Bars 25 - 32 All four dancers link arms side by side, with each lady on her partner's right, or put arms round each other's waists, and skip around the room in lines of four for eight bars.

The above thirty-two bars are repeated for the duration of the music, the same four always dancing together, but in a different part of the hall.

If any Borderer reading this remembers a different way of doing this dance (apart from the *Big Circle* figure, or the *Sicilian Circle* figure published by the RSCDS, both of which are commonly danced today) then please contact me.

Thanks once again to everyone who is helping with our research in the Borders, and Anne and I should like to take this opportunity to wish them and all members of The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust a happy New Year.

Keep dancing!

Karin Ingram

PROJECT PROGRESS - Angus

*Angus Development Officer - Mats Melin
Project Assistant - Maggie Patullo*

We are presently preparing an educational programme starting in January 1999 where we will start feeding back some of the local dances not always taught in the schools. Two primary target areas, Brechin and Kirriemuir, have been selected due to interesting dances found there. We are initially working with upper primary classes and secondary pupils. Preparations are underway for the production of a teachers' pack including dance instructions, teaching notes and suitable recorded music for the dances. Dances selected for the schools include Jacky Tar, Highland Schottische, Schottische Country Dance, La Russe (Forfar Reel) and The Lancers as known locally.

We have, however, already collaborated with Angus schools. Earlier we reported how primary 7 students from Inverbrothock Primary School performed the Playford dance 'The Black Nag' as part of the Arbroath Sea Fest and recently we helped sixth formers from Monifieth High School through their paces for their 'Final Fling' party. An encouraging sign was that more young men than young women turned up at these lunchtime dance sessions!!

The very successful exhibition 'The People's Dance' has now ended its tour round Angus. The STDT are presently setting up links with dance archives abroad, one of which is Arkivet för Folklig Dans (Folk Dance Archives) in Stockholm, Sweden. It is possible that a re-worked 'People's Dance' exhibition, including photographic and audio / video material only could be sent across to tour Sweden at some point in the near future. The idea of an exchange of dancers and

musicians between Angus and the Scandinavian countries for future Hairst festivities in the month of June has also been discussed.

We are presently planning a continuation of our popular Friday night dances round the district. The 6 dances held since June this year proved very popular and the last one was held in Brechin City Hall where the Ian Cruickshanks Band provided excellent music. The line-up had the added bonus of Bruce Lindsay from Fife on accordion. About 110 people attended and again our raffle proved very successful and our thanks go to Glenmorangie Distillery for providing excellent first prizes.

Eight dances are being planned for 1999, the first two being held in Montrose Town Hall on 19 February with the Ian Cruickshanks Band, and in Kirriemuir Town Hall on 5 March with the Steven Carcary Duo.

Alongside these dances we are setting up a series of dances in the smaller village halls round the district where we offer a short workshop of a few dances between 7-8 pm, before the dance commences at 8 pm. We are also planning a share day of dance in Glamis, where we hope that some of the older residents of the area will come in and show us how the old fashioned dances were danced in the area. More about these dances/workshops in due course.

Our research project is following several strands, interviews being the priority. We are meeting many interesting people and learning plenty about the social structure of Angus in days gone by and how important dance and music was. We also see how dance has declined as one of the primary entertainments and social meeting places over the years. Having said that, the interest in social dance, blending old time, modern and Scottish country dancing has picked up over the last few years. Much of this information is gained from our visits to afternoon tea dances and evening dance classes, where we meet up with many people who grew up learning dance from dancing masters or from family and friends at the local dance occasions.

Another strand is our growing photographic archive. Many people are now letting us copy their photographs, and recently we have acquired some real gems from dancing in Dundee and Forfar from about the turn of the century as well as in the 1920s and 30s. Our collection of newspaper and magazine articles is also building up as a result of donations and our systematic search through the old local newspapers of the district. It is a slow but often very rewarding process and slowly but surely a picture is forming of how dancers and musicians inter-related and how customs were passed on.

This brings us to the question of volunteer helpers. We would be grateful for any help in conducting interviews or going through old newspaper files etc. We offer training in interview techniques as part of our development plan. So far we have had interest expressed by four people in this field, but we do need more help. Please get in touch if you, or anyone you know, would be interested in helping us out.

A Dance Research Training Day is planned for the 19th January 1999 between 1 - 4.30 p.m. in Forfar Library. Joan Henderson is leading this training opportunity. All interested are welcome.

Mats Melin

The Amazing Mr Marshall

William Marshall, composer and violinist, born in Fochabers on December 27th, 1748, died a few miles away at Craigellachie in 1833 at the ripe old age of 84. Marshall, of extremely humble farming origins, had a very brief and rudimentary formal education, finding his first employment at the age of 12 in the Duke of Gordon's household.

The fact that William Marshall was largely self-taught but became eventually factor to the Duke of Gordon on his vast estates in Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, as well as a noted clockmaker, surveyor and agricultural improver, makes him an outstanding "lad o' parts". But he was destined to make an even greater contribution to Scotland's cultural heritage as a composer of dance tunes.

He is particularly important as a writer of beautiful strathspeys and dozens of his dance tunes - of which he wrote almost 300 - are in regular current use.

He loved to write slow strathspeys - fine airs of which one of his best known is *Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey*, a tune to which Robert Burns set the song "*Of A' The Airts the Wind Can Blow*". And if imitation is the purest form of flattery, it is difficult to know what to call the bare-faced thieving of some of Marshall's tunes by the great Niel Gow!

The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen working in collaboration with the Fochabers Fiddlers, the William Marshall Society, the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust and Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils held a 250th birthday celebration of William Marshall and his music on September 24th at the Fochabers Institute.

Over 100 devotees of Scottish music and dance took part in a splendid day of fiddle and dance workshops led by musicians Douglas Lawrence and Paul Anderson, and Jessie Stuart conducted her popular quadrilles and lancers workshops.

The day's celebrations began with an introduction to Marshall's life and music presented by James Alexander and Robin Stewart. The afternoon talks were given by Valentina Bold who elaborated on Marshall's development as a self-taught man. Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust Chair, Evelyn Hood gave a brief illustrated talk on contemporary social life and dance in Marshall's day. Musicologist and expert on Scottish fiddle music, Mary Anne Alburger demonstrated with music and film Marshall's extraordinary influence on Scotland's musical heritage - an influence which continues.

At 7.30 in the evening there was a splendid "Assembly" bringing together the workshop musicians and the Fochabers Fiddlers. The day ended with a dance led by Hallyracket - and immensely enjoyed.

The Elphinstone Institute deserve all congratulations for a happy day which the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust is proud to have helped them mark.

Evelyn Hood

Shetland Dancing

From 16th - 19th October, the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust held a series of performances and workshops to celebrate Shetland's folk dance tradition.

The workshops were led by native Shetlander, Maria Leask, who for the first two days was joined

by other members of Shetland Folkdance of which she is a founder member. This group was set up in 1992 to research and revive Shetland dances in danger of dying out. Maria is also Traditional Dancer-in-residence for Shetland Arts Trust.

The dancing began on the evening of Friday 16th October in the Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen with an event held in association with the Aberdeen Alternative Festival. It began with a lively performance by Shetland Folkdance with explanations about the dances by Anna Leask (Maria's mother) and accompanied by their own musicians. This was followed by a "come and try" session when almost all of the audience took to the floor to learn some of the dances they had seen performed.

On the Saturday afternoon the Trust held a Quadrilles workshop in association with Scottish Culture and Traditions in Aberdeen. Maria taught the Shetland Quadrilles while other members of Shetland Folkdance guided participants through the steps. These Quadrilles are fast and lively square set dances which are indigenous to the islands and still danced all over Shetland today.

On the Sunday and Monday Maria led workshops in Edinburgh and Eyemouth, accompanied on the fiddle by Alexander Hutchison, Shetland's Young Fiddler of the Year 1998. Participants learnt to dance the *Seven Step Polka*, the *Ledder'n Wheel Polka*, *Sister Jean's Polka*, the *Foula Reel* and the *Shetland Reel*, which included some interesting setting steps. Maria also told us about some of the fascinating history behind the traditions. Her depth of knowledge of the Shetland dance tradition, along with her enthusiasm and sense of humour must be unequalled, and the Trust is very grateful to her and to Shetland Folkdance for coming to share the Shetland tradition with us.

Katherine Hobbs

Fiddle '98

The Trust was delighted this year to be able to take part in Fiddle '98, a weekend fiddle extravaganza held during the last weekend in November in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, and now in its third year.

The line up over the weekend included names like Alastair Fraser, the Wrigley Sisters, Iain McFarlane and Alan Henderson who, along with other well-known and talented fiddlers gave performances, workshops and seminars demonstrating the rich diversity of Scottish fiddle music today.

Of course the story of Scottish fiddle music would not be complete without an element of dance - for which a large part of the repertoire was written and performed - and the Trust's task over the weekend was to bring together a Highland Dancer and a fiddler to create and perform a new piece. We introduced Andrew Purves, a very experienced Highland dancer who also did a student work placement for the Trust last year, and a talented fiddler, Jenny Gardner. Putting fiddle music and Highland dance together was a new experience for both Andrew and Jenny, but they both rose to the challenge admirably. They spent the best part of the day working together on the piece, which they performed during the weekend's Grand Finale.

We were pleased that Andrew was able to include in his choreography some steps which he had learnt from an elderly informant whom he had interviewed during his placement with the Trust. Christine Abercromby, now 94 years old, learnt these steps as a girl from Dancie Neill of Forfar but they have now more or less disappeared from the Highland repertoire. Jenny also composed new music for the piece - a Strathspey and Reel - which made for an altogether fresh and lively performance. We thank them both for their hard

work and enthusiasm. Thanks also to Fiddle '98 for the opportunity of taking part in their exciting weekend.

Katherine Hobbs



Video Review

Focus on Scottish Dancing

Produced in 1998 by Smith/Mearns Recordings, Knowehead Cottage, Guildtown, Perth, PH2 6DW Cover gives full details of tunes played for each dance but names of band members are not given.

We are here presented with almost an hour's worth of dance entertainment by Steven Carcary Duo playing for Old Time Dancing in Arbroath, Ian Cruickshanks and his Band playing for Scottish Country Dancing in Dufftown and in Helensburgh we Ceilidh Dance to the Tandem Ceilidh Band.

The first impression you get of this video is of the clear and high quality of the sound recording. It is a delight to listen to! The programme gives us a fairly broad range of dances within the old time, ceilidh and Scottish country dance traditions, ranging from the well known '*Gay Gordons*' and '*Strip the Willow*' to the modern country dance '*Bees of Maggie Knockater*'. This is not a dance tutorial and it is not filmed as such, but has good entertaining dance scenes interspersed with scenic views from around the country. It is a pity though that more is not shown of each location in question.

There is no lack of enthusiasm on the dance floor, but one feels there is a lack of dancers taking part in the Arbroath sections. These do not seem as lively as the other two locations, even though nothing is lacking in the standard of dancing. Jessie Stuart had her dancers certainly well drilled in Dufftown for the intricate patterns of a good choice of Country Dances including '*The Bonnie Lass of Bon Accord*,' '*Caddam Wood*,' and '*Monymusk*'.

So for dancers and non-dancers alike this is an entertaining hour.

Mats Melin

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Angus Dances

Friday 19th February, 8.00 - 12.00 pm.

Montrose Town Hall

Old Time dancing with the Ian Cruickshanks Band.

Friday 5th March, 8.00 - 12.00 pm.

Kirriemuir Town Hall

Old Time dancing with the Steven Carcary Duo.

Tickets: £3 (including light refreshments).
Contact STDT on 01307-468335.

Dance Researchers' Training Day

Tuesday 19th January, 1.00 - 4.30 pm.

Forfar Library, Forfar, Angus.

Anyone interested in researching their local dance traditions is invited to attend this training session run by Joan Henderson. Joan will provide an introduction to the theory of dance research and there will be an opportunity to practise research techniques. For further details and to book places, please contact STDT on 01307-468335.

Appalachian Dance - Beginners' Workshops

Challenge yourself with this fast and fun American Step Dance Style.

Thursday evenings, beginning on 14th January, 7 - 8 p.m..

Gorgie & Dalry Community Association Hall, 22 MacLeod Street, Edinburgh.

Please phone 0131-337 3252 for further details.