



Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust

*researching, conserving, fostering and promoting
all of Scotland's traditions of dance*

Newsletter March 2001



Cool dancing - Japanese Style - thanks to the STDT! (See page 3)

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From The Chair

Now that the Lottery-funded *dance!Dance!!DANCE!!!* Projects in Angus and the Borders are nearing their conclusion, the time to analyse the results is upon us.

Even the most cursory glance at the photographic collections and the transcripts of the taped interviews, not to mention the feedback we have had from dancers, teachers, children, musicians, indicates how worthwhile this venture has been for the Trust and its work. It has also been interesting in demonstrating quite conclusively how diverse our dance traditions are, even when comparing two apparently similar rural communities.

The final reports will make fascinating reading and in due course these will be available for everyone interested to read. We'll keep you posted on this.

What we can promise right now is the availability from March 20th of the first publication to stem from *dance!Dance!!DANCE!!!* - a selection of photographs from the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust's Angus Collection. Entitled *Tak Yer Places!* the book contains over one hundred photographs taken over 150 years of Angus dancers, Dancies, and musicians.

Preparing *Tak Yer Places!* for publication involved many entirely pleasurable hours trawling through the transcripts of the taped interviews with informants from all over the county in order to find some quotations to match some of the pictures. Sadly there simply wasn't room for very many of these reminiscences and we've had to leave out some real gems.

There is, for instance, the recollection of an Arbroath lady that "we were a big family, there was 10 of us. My father played the fiddle so there was always music in our house...we all had to get up whether you could dance or no'...in the kitchen. We danced when we were wee...but then my mother was left a widow with us 10 and I was only 8, so there wasn't really any money for me to go to the dancing until my older brothers

were working. That's how we started to dance. If there was music and nobody dancing, my mother thought it was an awfy waste o' music!"

A retired farm worker, also from the Arbroath area, recalls - "the single men working on a farm used tae gang into the bothy and there's maybe four or five of us in the bothy and...there's someone plays the fiddle, ither anes will play the accordion or something like that and I used to get an auld basin and turn it upside down and that was the drums."

A Kirriemuir musician came up with this story. "Will Cameron - the less-well-known fiddle playing brother of Jim - used to tell that one of pals in the bothy had taken a girl to a dance and next day Will asked his pal how he'd got on at the dance? Was the girl a good dancer? 'Well,' came the reply, 'you've seen a coo on a slippy road - well, that's what she danced like!'"

Dancie David Kydd's grand-daughter remembered him as a meticulously dressed person, a great shot, who bred dogs and grew lots of vegetables in his garden beside his house.

A former pupil of the same Dancie remembered, "Dancie Kydd would cycle round the country with his fiddle on his back, tied on with a piece of string and that's how he got to Cortachy where the classes took place. I have very happy memories of those days. Dancie Kydd playing the fiddle and dancing at the same time, jumping up and down and playing the fiddle. If we weren't doing it properly he would tap us gently on the head with his bow."

Curiously enough a grandson of Dancie Kydd remembers that if "dancers made a mistake he **hit** them over the head with his bow!"

Can it be that the Dancie reserved harder whacks for his grandson?

In any event it was someone's recollection that Dancie Kydd always called dancers on to the floor by announcing "Tak yer places!" that gave us the title for the book.

Tak Yer Places! will be launched at a reception in Forfar to mark the end of three happy years of partnership between the Trust and Angus Council. On the back page of this Newsletter you'll find details of how you can purchase copies direct from the Edinburgh Office.

And, in case you think we've forgotten the Borders in all of this, not so! A similar book is planned for that area in the very near future.

Exciting times!

Evelyn Hood.

THE SAINTS CAME DANCING IN!

Saint Andrews In The Square (SAINTS) is a truly stunning 18th century church just off the Saltmarket in Glasgow's Calton area. This long neglected gem has been most beautifully restored and converted for use as Glasgow's Centre for Traditional Music, Dance and Song.

As a prelude to the official opening on December 1st, there was a St. Andrews Night Ceilidh hosted by the Scottish Buildings Preservation Trust with 300 dancing all night to the music of Cloud Howe Ceilidh Band. The SBPT are the people responsible for carrying out the restoration work and they had every reason to celebrate.

Sam Galbraith, Scotland's Minister for Culture, performed the official opening on Friday, December 1st. One of the highlights of the opening ceremonies was a new dance, commissioned for the evening, called the *St. Andrews Jig* - a kissing dance. Its creator was Bob Blair, former member of the Board of the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust, who demonstrated and called the dance just after the opening speeches and for a while there was confusion as 'volunteers' found themselves on a steep learning curve in front of a large audience!



Rehearsing the *St. Andrews Jig*

They made it, though, and a new dance was born. Perhaps it was the kissing bit that won them over! More likely it was the fine tune commissioned for the dance from Eddie McGuire and played by Eddie,

Rob Wallace, Judith Peacock and Mark Heywood. In the evening there was the first ever *Tradition Bearers* concert when Bob Blair, Heather Heywood, Tam Speirs and Alison McMoreland proved in fine style that St. Andrews has first class acoustics for singing. After the official concert the singing continued for a further two hours at least in the Café Source - a facility in the building that is proving an extremely popular rendezvous for a meal, a snack, a coffee or something a bit stronger.

On Saturday, December 2nd, the ceilidh band, Cloud Howe and Glasgow's Eurydice Choir got together for a great evening of dance, choral music and solo turns. The initial dancing was followed by two sets of songs from the choir and the pattern of the evening alternated dancing with songs and music from Adam MacNaughton, Joe O'Neill, Ellen Mitchell, Tom Laurie, Jill Laurie, Jennifer McGlone and friends from Easterhouse. Such was the success of the evening that it is hoped to host more of these Eurydice Ceilidh Concerts during the year.

The following day the Glasgow Festival String Orchestra gave a concert which must have been a very touching moment for the players who had often given concerts in the church before the restoration. They were delighted to find this much loved space in all its glory and with the fine acoustics unaffected by the restoration.

Since the opening the building has been in constant use. For instance, the Senior Studies Institute held the latest of its Architectural Seminar programme there on December 7th and the Scottish Architectural Heritage Society met there on December 9th. Several hundred people enjoyed Christmas Lunch or Dinner at the Café Source.

Already the diary is filling up with private and public events, dances, seminars, not to mention weddings and receptions. The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust hope soon to launch a series of dance workshops for the local community, encouraging folk to get to know this building and appreciate what it offers to the community.

Starting on March 15th, over five Thursdays, Barbara Maxwell will be conducting introductory classes in Scottish dance - see the Events page for details of this.



Eight hands round

The superb ceilidh band, Cloud Howe, has agreed to play for dancing at St Andrews In The Square on a regular basis. At the time of going to press we don't have their future dates but if you want further information on this and on the other facilities offered at SAINTS, please telephone 0141 548 6020 or contact STDT Co-ordinator Liam Paterson on 0131 558 8737.

Cool Customers!

In February, Cooool (sic) Communications, a Japanese television company based in London contacted the Trust to seek help. They were planning to come to Edinburgh for some location filming for a feature on Scotland's culture and traditions...could the Trust help set up a dance for them in a pub? At a *very* few days' notice?

Trust staff in the Edinburgh Office turned up trumps once again and on Saturday 10th February, Edinburgh's Deacon Brodie pub on the Royal Mile dirlled to Stewart Warrender's accordion playing for a lively *Gay Gordons* and *Strip the Willow*. Annabel Oates and an enthusiastic group of ceilidh dancers from her popular class in Penicuik delighted the Japanese presenters and film crew. (see cover).

The Trust would like to thank everyone who took part, including the staff and management of Deacon Brodie.

A member of the Trust living in Midlothian has sent in the following.

From "Radio Times" for September 30th to October 6th 2000

Choice

There was a chap at Oxford paid to research diligently the sources of human happiness. He established that we require congenial company, music, uncompetitive physical activity and a little non-scary sexual interest: the answer is, obviously, Scottish dancing. In 1976 a graduate of Birmingham University called Thomas Baggs founded THE HAPPINESS LECTURES (5.40pm R4). His bequest funds an annual public speech in which prominent individuals have a shot at the same problem. Many of the original speakers have been invited back, to condense and revisit their earlier, more prolix offerings into just 15 minutes: first off, happily, is Peter Ustinov who identifies respect for the individual, balance and order - has he discovered Scottish Dancing?

ANGUS AND BORDERS dance! Dance!! DANCE!!! Projects

As the Lottery-funded Project approaches its conclusion - officially on March 31st, we are very busy tying up loose ends and putting a programme in place that, hopefully, will see our work continue.

During the autumn and winter terms we continued our teaching programme in Angus schools. The Arbroath High School primary school "cluster" had a six-week teaching block which culminated in a share day in the High School's games hall. One hundred and ninety youngsters in Primary Seven had a very happy day dancing to music provided by Ian Cruickshanks Band.

We attended several school ceilidhs, share days and end-of-term parties and had the satisfaction of dancing along with young Angus folk who have discovered the real fun and friendliness of traditional Scottish social dances. A significant factor in this has undoubtedly been the enthusiasm of Angus teachers for our work, and we are in the process of producing a simple teaching resource in the form of a video of the dances included in our Angus Dance Pack for Teachers.



Dancing at Eassie, the generations all together

To continue on the educational theme, our dance classes at Eassie, Ruthven and Southmuir have all been attracting excellent attendances. These classes will be kept up to the end of the Project. Plans for their continuation are under discussion.

In collaboration with George and Wilma (Tolmie) Mitchelson, we have been involved in a series of Lancers and Jig-time Quadrilles Workshops in Monifieth on Sunday evenings. These have been highly successful and enjoyable. Perhaps there will also be a means of continuing these when the Project ends.

Two other significant events in the winter calendar were both interesting and rewarding. The Adult Learning Project (ALP) in Edinburgh held workshops on March 3rd where Angus dances were taught as part of the day's activities. And on November 25th last

year Karen and Nicola Millar from the Wilma Tolmie School of Dancing performed on the Trust's behalf at the Saturday Night concert of Fiddle 2000 in Edinburgh's Assembly Rooms. They danced *Callum Brougach* as taught by Dancie Neill of Forfar and *Delvineside Highland Fling* as taught by Dancie Reid of Newtyle. The fiddle accompaniment was by Mairi Campbell and the performances earned loud and prolonged cheers from a capacity audience.

Also at Fiddle 2000 STDT Chair Evelyn Hood gave a talk on the dancing masters and musicians of Angus, and Board member Mary Anne Alburger lectured on the Reid Collection of historic instruments at the University of Edinburgh's Reid School of Music.

Tak Yer Places! (the dance)

The last three "People's Dances" of 2000 were all well attended. Again local bands provided great music. We also held a Country Dance in Kirriemuir to Ian Cruickshanks Band and at Memus to Deirdre Adamson's music. On November 11th the John Ellis Dance Band played for a "Hairst Hoolie" in Forfar's Reid Hall - an event organised in collaboration with Forfar Farmers' Market.

We invite you to **Tak Yer Places!** for the final dance of the *dance!Dance!!DANCE!!!* Project on the Project's very last day - March 31st. The venue is the Reid Hall in Forfar. Dancing is from 8pm to midnight. Music will be by the Alan Morrison Duo and Jim Lang will, as ever, be our caterer. Tickets, priced at £3.00 are available from the usual outlets or by phoning the Forfar office - 01307 468335. We intend to go out if not with a bang then certainly with a great evening of favourite dances.

And Marion Robson has agreed to run five more "People's Dances" for 2001 on behalf of the Trust. The dates and venues are: April 27th, Inglis Memorial Hall, Edzell. Music by Wayne Robertson; August 31st, Wharnclyffe Hall, Newtyle. Music by James Coutts; September 21st, City Hall, Brechin. Music by the Alan Morrison Duo; October 26th, Montrose Town Hall. Music by Gavin Piper; November 23rd, Kirriemuir Town Hall. Music by Ken Stewart.

Tak Yer Places! (the book)

Tak Yer Places! - a selection of photographs from the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust Angus Collection will be published towards the end of March. We have had a busy month or two checking on copyright, identifying people on old photographs and generally marvelling at the variety and quality of the photographic and written material which has come to light during the Project. And we are well aware of how much research work has still to be

done and are most grateful to our research volunteers two of whom Mrs Maureen Moir and Mrs Jane Scott are busily engaged right now on newspaper research and are handing in a large amount of material every week.



Dancie Reid and pupils

So now we are in the last stretch with a very full schedule of work in hand. Mats is working on the Final Report and Marion is concentrating on the Artefact database and related aspects. A major task already well underway is the preparation of copies of all material for transfer to Head Office and to the Angus Archives as the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust Angus Collection.

The Scottish Borders Project

Up to the last possible minute the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust had hoped to find the additional funding required to allow us to extend Dance Development Officer Karin Ingram's contract to the end of March from the original termination date of November 30th. It was not to be and, with the work in the Borders relatively incomplete, we have had to bid Karin farewell. Such are the vagaries of the financial life of an organisation like ours!

However, we have been able to retain the services of Project Assistant Anne Turnbull until March 31st and Anne is now working in close liaison with members of the Research and Education Committee drawing up the final report on the Scottish Borders Project. A book of photographs such as *Tak Yer Places!* for Angus will be produced in the near future.

We are happy to report that our links with the Scottish Borders Council will continue, with their newly appointed Traditional Arts Officer, Alyne Jones, working to a remit that includes the fostering of Traditions of Dance with Trust involvement. A pack of Borders dances for use in schools and including a new dance for children composed by Karin - *The Reivers Rant* - is in preparation.

And we are delighted that G Wallace Lockhart, a well-known author and member of our Publications Committee

has agreed to continue the research work in the Borders, concentrating in the first instance on the dancing in the "Big Hooses". His first report on Mellerstain House in Berwickshire is printed in this edition of the Newsletter.

The Borders' Dance Exhibition tour came to an end in Peebles in November and has proved to be one of the most popular exhibitions to do the rounds of the Borders' galleries in recent times. As with the exhibition in Angus, the Borders' Dance Exhibition has prompted a number of people to come forward with fresh information and more photographs. The exhibition has been carefully stored and will go on show once more - starting in Selkirk in the spring.

Mellerstain House - a home with a long tradition of dance as G Wallace Lockhart has discovered.

Mellerstain House, in Berwickshire, a home of the Earl and Countess of Haddington, is one of the great Adam houses of Scotland. William Adam built the two wings of the house standing today in 1725, while the central block, which replaced an old tower block in the 1770s, was constructed by Robert Adam, William's more famous son.



Mellerstain House

As befits such a house, there is much to be seen on a visit - an original copy of the National Covenant, Adams fireplaces, some marvellous Queen Anne furniture, a library with a ceiling of breathtaking delicacy and beauty. And, in a glass case in the gallery, to bring joy to the heart of dancers, a copy of Playford's "The Dancing Master" of which more later.

The most famous resident of Mellerstain was Lady Grisell Baillie or Hume as she was before her marriage. Today we remember her primarily for her songs and forget her adventurous early life when she carried political messages into the Tolbooth prison, and food to her father who was forced by circumstances to hide in the family vault at Polwarth.

In due course she was to share exile with her family in Holland, where it is recorded that her father stipulated, "They ought not with right to pass a week-day without dancing; for lost estates can be recovered again, but health once lost by a habit of melancholy can never be recovered."

In due course Grisell married George Baillie of Jarviswood and Mellerstain. She

had known him in exile. It is from her "Household Book of 1692-1722" that we find the first references to dancing in Mellerstain House.

On 12th August 1696 she paid the sum of twelve pounds and shillings Scots to a dancing master to cover his services for a three month period. It was common practice for the children to go to balls given by their dancing masters.

Additionally, fiddlers were brought in to play for dancing.

Such entries as, "4s10d was paid to Thomson the violer for playing to the bairns a day, and 9s8d was paid for the Kelso fiddlers two days at Mellerstain" indicate dancing was considered a necessary accomplishment for the young.



View over the lake at Mellerstain

Dancing in a good education.

On the 16th August 1705 Lady Grisell passed the following instructions to a governess regarding a daughter - "to rise by seven o'clock and goe about her duty of reading etc, and be drest to come to breakfast at nine, to play on the spinet until eleven, from eleven to twelve to write and read French. At two o'clock sow her seam till four; at four learn arithmetic, after that dance and play on the spinet again till six and play herself till supper and to bed at nine." A pretty full day for a youngster one would think.

There is another and later record which indicates how much dancing is in the blood in Scotland. The family's grandfather was ill but was carried downstairs to where fourteen of his children and grandchildren were dancing.

"As mirth and good humour; and particularly dancing had always been one characteristic of the family, when so many of us were met, we had a dance...though he could not dance with us, he could yet beat time with his foot, which he did, and bid us dance as long as we could; that it was the best medicine he knew, for at the same time it gave exercise to the body, it cheered the mind."

As for the dances performed at that time, it does not seem too bold an assumption to ally them to the dances contained in the house's copy of Playford's *The Dancing Master*. This book includes the music and instructions for three hundred and sixty dances. Playford was an Englishman whose book of collected dances was first published as *The English Dancing Master* in 1651 and

ran to many editions. The dance instructions given under the music, rather surprisingly, are couched in terms familiar to us today. "Cast off, up or down, cross over; four bands round." - all have a modern feel to them and bridge the gap over three hundred years.

The next of the family to give us information about dancing is MT Baillie in her notes from the late 19th century. "What I have been told concerning my great grandmother and great grandfather and grandmother Lady Polworth."

Kilts but no quadrilles.

The year is 1822. King George IV is paying his famous visit to Edinburgh and the kilt is now being recognised as the national dress of Scotland. The occasion was organised, indeed masterminded, by Sir Walter Scott and it is perhaps not surprising that his name and those of some of his family, figure in the notes.

A letter dated 21st August includes the passage - "I went to a ball last night with Sophie Lockhart (a daughter of Sir Walter who married John Gibson Lockhart) where there were feathers and no feathers; reels and country dances and very few quadrilles. The King has expressed a wish that there may be no quadrilles or foreign dances at the Caledonian Hunt Ball, where he intends to go."

The notes are not without humour - "Two old gentlemen, one a biglander; had been dancing a foursome reel with two ladies for about a quarter of an hour; the King came from the other end of the room to see them, so that the poor gentlemen had to go on for as long again to show off; I hope neither of them has died of the fatigue since."

A letter of 26th August suggests the Scots of the time were perhaps less nationally minded than their sovereign - "The King at the ball on Friday, was much amused watching the Scotch dances, Strathspeys and English dances; he said he did not like foreign dances."

Unfortunately, from now on Mellerstain provides little more in the way of dancing information. The family preferred to spend most of their time in East Lothian, a bonus being, according to Tony Ashby, the present Mellerstain administrator, that the house retained its Georgian aura and escaped Victoriana. Indeed it lay virtually empty until 1905 when its use was resumed by shooting parties.

During the Second World War the house was converted into a hospital when accordionist Ian Johnson, still associated with the estate, played regularly in the library at dances for the nurses and mobile patients. In 1987 the Earl of Haddington established a Charitable Trust to take over future responsibility for Mellerstain. It is difficult to foresee its dancing days returning to the great house.

SIR JIMMY SHAND - A TRIBUTE



Jimmy Shand and Jim Cameron pictured in Orkney in 1938

**There's an old chestnut that goes like this -
Q. How do you torture Scots?
A. Nail their feet to the floor, and then
put on a Jimmy Shand record!**

There was something **very** special about Jimmy Shand and his music and Scots all over the world mourned his passing in December 2000, at the age of 92.

The sum of the many tributes to Sir Jimmy is that in his passing Scotland lost not only a beloved son but also, in his fine music and unassuming ways, a great ambassador.

At the STDT the work has begun on analysing the hundreds of dance reminiscences that have been recorded during the *dance!Dance!!DANCE!!!* Projects in Angus and the Scottish Borders. When people reminisce about dancing in the 1940s and 50s a great number of them mention Jimmy Shand and whether or not they had the experience of being at a dance where he played.

As our own tribute to him, here are extracts from some of these recorded memories.

From the Borders...

"Yarrowford booked very good bands...we had Jimmy Shand, and I've seen often after they took your money [at the door] they had to put their shoulder to and shove you into the hall, there was such a crowd!"

"I mind Jimmy Shand talking to Bill McCue once and Bill asked him about singing a waltz-time tune in a quicker tempo and Jimmy Shand turned round and said, 'But a waltz is a waltz man!' He had the right sense of rhythm for the dance."

"I can mind the first time he [Willie MacVicar] seen Jimmy Shand was at Greenlaw at a dance at Greenlaw, that would be one of the first times Jimmy Shand played in the Borders. Willie used to take a

couple of cars away to dances a' round about that he [Jimmy Shand] was playing. I can mind too...Jimmy Shand had broke his leg and John Lamb was driving his car. I've still got it, a £1 note I got frae Jimmy Shand. I had to take his car round to the garage and Jimmy says, 'I'll have to give you somethin'. I've never seen so wee a boy driving' a car.' I must have been eight or nine."

All, however, was not sweetness and light!

"I mind once going to Yetholm to Jimmy Shand. He was at Yetholm and I think he was at Jedburgh as well, but I minds o' going to Yetholm, when he was there, and he wouldnae come back because somebody shoved a tattie up the exhaust o' his car and it wouldnae start. As a prank."

"Walter Beattie, Eskdalemuir, had a fantastic ear...anyway he got a new accordion frae Forbes o' Dundee...and he claimed the keys wasnae right. So he sent it back, twice I think, and got a very impertinent letter at the finish frae the firm sayin' that [the accordion] was electronically tuned. They had asked him what was wrong and he said that his ear tell him...Jimmy Shand was comin' doon to Eskdalemuir. He came a lot in they days...so Walter took [the accordion] up to the dance that night. (Jimmy Shand tried Walter's accordion)...and said, 'That'll never dae', shut it and took it away. I mind Walter showing him the letter and Jimmy apologising profusely."

"If we had so many of us we hired a car and went to Jimmy Shand if he was in Selkirk or somewhere. He was grand - he really was."

And the Angus memories...

"Jimmy Shand - he was a sort o' messiah in the [accordion] music... he lifted it...wi' Jimmy Shand working as an agent for Forbes and that, he had a lot o' the

mechanics o' the actual accordion. He knew a lot about them because he repaired them and he styled his ain accordions like they Morinos. He styled a' that on whit he was needin' for the dance."

"Jimmy Shand used to come to Inverkeilor...this would be a big dance, a real special dance...and you sold plenty tickets for the like of that. Of course, the balls only held about 150...200 maybe, packed in."

"There was nobody actually teaching Scottish music at that time. Jimmy Shand [was] very, very helpful to anybody young and especially a female because there weren't many female accordionists you know...he really was keen to pass on his knowledge."

"In Frickheim Hall they had all the big bands come here, Jim Cameron, Jimmy Shand, every week a company of about 300 people...buses came in from Arbroath, Brechin, Forfar and Montrose, every Saturday night...Frickheim was the hub of Angus for the dancing on Saturday night."

In his memoir of Dancie John Reid of Newtyle, James Kirkpatrick of Alyth wrote, "In the 1930s [John Reid] played the leading part... in running the Alyth Fiddle and Accordion Music Festival. The first prize was a trip to London to record for the Edison Bell Gramophone Company. This attracted players from all over Scotland and drew packed audiences who were entertained by the cream of Scots musicians.

"But a far better show went on behind the scenes where the players were warming up and a frantic man was stationed at the door to keep it shut and keep the noise in.

"Among the competitors were pupils of John Reid. Adam Rennie and the three Cameron Brothers. (Will went on to win the prize.). Amongst the others were the young Jimmy Shand, and the Powrie brothers. Bedlam it was in the room as they gathered in little groups trying out their pieces with one another. And, although each was there to do his utmost to win, there was a warm sense of camaraderie in the atmosphere.

"Some of them played only by ear but these men had the gift that they had only to hear a tune played over a time or two and it was captured for life. Some were not too sure of the bass notes and a few approached Jimmy Shand - 'Hey, Jimmy! Let's hear the bass for this tune!' and he would oblige and play it over a time or two for them till they had it. Great sportsmanship! Great nights!"

"You hear folk say he played slow, like. Well, in the 50s I remember once the great excitement that Jimmy Shand was coming to play for the annual Farmers' Dance. When he started up, we all looked at each other not very happy and thought to ourselves, this pace is just over slow. But no! What happened was that everybody was up for every dance. It was the best dance I was ever at. The pace was perfect for a long night's dancing. He knew just what he was doing, Jimmy Shand. The perfect dancer's musician."

Jimmy Shand - the perfect dancers' musician. A heartfelt tribute from Scottish dancers in every corner of the world!

Scots Abroad - Hooch Olé!

G. Wallace Lockhart writes on a recent trip to Spain.

A hunger for sun coupled with a desire to see an old friend currently over-wintering in Spain, recently prompted a visit to Nerja, a town of 20,000 souls, an hour's drive from Malaga. Within 24 hours of arriving I was prancing around to the strains of Seaton's Ceilidh Band and *Mhairi's Wedding*.

Some nine years ago, Jean Rennie and Helen Fulton, with the inevitable and traditional vigour of the Scot abroad, decided to form a Country Dance Club in Nerja. The fact that neither had been involved in Country Dancing in Scotland was of little consequence to them! Books and music were scrounged and pressure applied to English ex-pats and local Spaniards (yes, they have kilts!) to make up numbers.

Today the club, or, rather, class, meets weekly and is an accepted part of local life. From this dance class has grown: a monthly Scots night based on ceilidh dances, a St. Andrews Night function, and, of course, a Burns Supper. On an annual basis, a special function is held for residents from other countries. After whisky and shortbread fortification, Scottish dances are demonstrated. Once a year, too, some nine Country Dance clubs or classes in Spain and Portugal come together for a dance. This is held at a different venue each year with the host club devising a special dance for the occasion.

Scottish culture gets a genuine welcome in Spain. Mike and I gave a half-hour banjo/concertina/song performance in the Spanish Pensioners' Club when a pop-star reception was followed by an avalanche of kisses planted on both cheeks. Tartan is considered smart wear - "cool" is probably the preferred word - and some girls' schools incorporate tartan skirts in their uniform.

With Jean and Helen at the helm, one can only see the Scottish contribution to Spanish life in Nerja continue to grow. But the opening of the doors to other nationalities does present some minor difficulties.

I am more than happy to act as a post-box if any of our members would like to help the Nerja people by handing on to me any unrequired cassettes or CDs of Scottish dance music, tartan sashes, books of dances and so on.

And one final thought. I hope I haven't given the impression that a few Scots in Nerja are creating a parochial ghetto. Nothing could be further from the truth. These active folk are fluent Spanish speakers and are involved in a very constructive way in the overall life of Nerja.

(If you can help with cassettes etc. please contact Wallace c/o our Edinburgh office.)



Mats Melin and children from Airlie and Eassie schools

Publications Order Form

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Tak Yer Places! Photographs from the STDT Angus collection	STDT	£5.50	£1.00			Credit card no: _____
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Monographs Series - STDT is planning to publish a series of monographs on traditional dance themes, based on the format of the AGM 2000 souvenir booklet. If you would like to suggest topics or submit ideas for consideration, please contact **Liam Paterson** in the Edinburgh office.

EVENTS

TAK YER PLACES!

- final dance of the *dance!Dance!!DANCE!!!* Project

March 31st, 2001 in the Reid Hall, Forfar.

Dance from 8pm to midnight to the Alan Morrison Duo
Usual refreshments by Jim Lang.
Raffle.

Tickets, priced at £3.00 are available from the usual outlets or by phoning the Forfar office - 01307 468335.

STDT "People's Dances" in Angus for 2001

April 27th, Inglis Memorial Hall, Edzell. Music by Wayne Robertson;

August 31st, Wharncliffe Hall, Newtyle. Music by James Coutts;

September 21st, City Hall, Brechin. Music by the Alan Morrison Duo;

October 26th, Montrose Town Hall. Music by Gavin Piper;

November 23rd, Kirriemuir Town Hall. Music by Ken Stewart.

Tickets will be available from the usual outlets and at Forfar Library.

Ceilidh Dances

Friday evening Ceilidh Dances at Royal Overseas House, 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh are proving to be a perfect introduction to Scottish dance and music. All the dances are walked through and called. Tickets are £5.00 each. Remaining dates are March 30th, 27th April, 25th May, 29th June. For more information call 0131 - 339-5374 at any time. If you have visitors dying to learn about Scottish dance and you don't know where to take them - this is the perfect solution!

New England Contradance

American-style ceilidh dancing, 2pm. 4th Sunday of the month in the Calton Centre, Montgomery Street (Easter Road end) Edinburgh. £3.00 per session. Caller and live music. Tel. 01368 864023. www.kda79.dial.pipex.com

Busy,busy Jiggin'Jessie!

For details of Jessie Stuart's regular dance classes and dance events in Dufftown, contact Jessie at Tulloch Ard, Seafield Park, Keith, AB55 5AJ. Tel/fax: 01542 887616. E-mail: jigginjess@hotmail.com

Jessie is having an Old Time Dance Weekend from Friday 17th to Sunday 19th June, 2001, at the Highland Way Hotel, by Loch Lomond, near Drymen. Weekend inclusive special prices offer two dance evenings, instruction, and bed, breakfast and evening meal - £49.00 to £68.00. Phone Bruce McKenzie at 01360 870270

The University of Stirling's Summer School Programme for 2001 includes a Scottish Country Dancing course from 29th June to 2nd July and Old Time Dancing from July 3rd to 6th. Jessie Stuart is the tutor for both and there will be some live music for dancing by Freeland Barbour and Colin Dewar. Further details from Margery Stirling, Summer School Co-ordinator (DPR), DAICE, Airthrey Castle, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA. Tel: 01786 467931 Fax 01786 463398. E-mail: m.j.stirling@stir.ac.uk

A note for fiddlers...

Crossing Boundaries is the title given to the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention being held at the University of Aberdeen from July 25th to 29th. Under the patronage of Aly Bain, *Crossing Boundaries* is devoted to traditional fiddlers and fiddle music from countries around the northern seas, combining an international conference with performance events and workshops, as well as opportunities for informal sessions. The convention will focus on the way the fiddle, fiddle music and styles of playing, cross

boundaries of all kinds - geographical, political and personal - creating new styles and fresh musical insights. If you would like further information please contact either Ian Russell or Mary Anne Alburger, at The Elphinstone Institute. Tel: 01224 272996 or E-mail: elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk

A holiday idea?

The Dolmetsch Historical Dance Society runs a summer school each year at Hengrave Hall, a beautiful 16th century manor, just outside Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. This year the school's theme is *Minuet to Mazurka, 1745-1845*, and one of the three main classes will concentrate on Scottish dance of the period. Newly researched material from Scotland will be taught by Anne Daye, a Senior Lecturer in Dance at Middlesex University.

There are also choral sessions, clog dancing, pantomime, theatre and a forum on the teaching of historical dance.

The residential school runs from 27th July to 3rd August, however, attendance for the week on a non-residential basis, including camping, is also available, as is a weekend "taster" course for beginners.

For details of fees and options, please contact The Summer School Administrator, 17 Well Lane, Stock, Ingatstone, Essex CN4 9LT Tel: 01277 840473 or e-mail: SaundersCr@aol.com

To be a dancer is the answer!

Barbara Maxwell is holding introductory classes in Scottish dance at Saint Andrews in the Square (see page 2). Initially there will be 5 weekly sessions - starting on Thursday 15th March. The cost is £3.00 per person, per session. All ages are welcome. For further information telephone 0141-548-6020



Help us to research, conserve, foster and promote all of the Scottish traditions of dance - join us now or introduce a friend!
Please complete the form below with your credit card details or cheque (UK only) made payable to STDT Ltd., and send to Jean Hannah, Membership Secretary, Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust, 54 Blackfriars Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1NE

Name: _____
Address: _____
phone: _____
fax: _____
Email: _____

Credit Card details

Credit card no: _____
Name on card: _____
Expiry date: _____

rates

	(please circle)
Individual membership (1 year)	£12.50
Individual membership - concession (1 year) (senior citizens, students, unwaged)	£10
Individual membership - (10 years)	£100
Corporate membership - (1 year)	£100

Please indicate which Scottish dance traditions are of most interest to you: (please circle)

Highland	Country	Shetland	Orkney	Hebridean	
Military	Old Time	Step	Ceilidh	Early	ALL
Other: (please specify)					