

Östadt

Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust

news

2002 *july* Issue

Dancing
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happy
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a tribute to Bobby Watson

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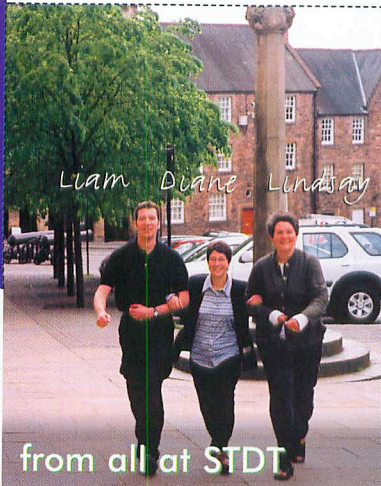


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Dancing days are happy days

Hello
& welcome from all at STDT

You can contact us any time by snail mail, or e-mail us on stdt.stirling@virgin.net with any thoughts and suggestions. As ever, you can phone and fax us too.

Well, what do you think? A brand new STDT News – new logo and all-dancing full colour and fabulous, isn't it? Anyway, the STDT Office Team appears above in all our glory, and we're so happy because we've moved (again)...next door...to our wonderful & welcoming new offices which we plan to ultimately develop into our archive & resource centre.

In this edition, we have a new section – Dance Profile – this is a profile of a key person in the traditional dance firmament – we kick things off with Mr Robert Cormack of the Orkney Traditional Dance Association.

We also have an insight into our own very successful (if the sell-out audience's comments are anything to go by) Tribute to Bobby Watson event in Aberdeen – by Marion Robson – one of the principal organisers of the whole thing.

I owe you an update on our plans – ok, the web site is delayed, but we're working on it – they're very expensive, you know. The conference festival's format is firming up, and I'll keep you posted on developments – for example, The Tolbooth have agreed to become a partner in the venture, and are willing to support us in kind – which is a huge contribution; our "Pleughsang" project in collaboration with Scottish Youth Dance will be happening in Eden Court in Inverness in July; our commission proposal is now submitted to the Scottish Arts Council, and we await an outcome with bated breath...in July. And that's just for starters.

So, remember to tell us what you think about the changes – of course, we are always interested in hearing from you – about events, thoughts, opinions or even a contribution for our 'Did you know?' section.

You'll find a membership survey card enclosed, and it would be extremely useful if you could take the time to complete and return it Freepost. Thank you.

I hope you enjoy this edition, and remember the next STDT News comes out in September.

Best wishes

Lindsay
Lindsay A Robertson
Director

STDT News asked Marion Robson, a Board member, and a principal organiser of the above event, to pen a background to the efforts which go in to organising something like this. Of course, Marion interpreted this request as selflessly as ever, and has written a celebration of the event itself, and everyone who took part – what can you do? Enjoy!

The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust's "Dancing Days are Happy Days" tribute concert and exhibition to Bobby Watson, took place in Aberdeen Arts Centre on Sunday 21st April at 7pm. It turned out to be very successful and a sell-out, so all involved were absolutely delighted.

Anyway, the date was chosen as it was Bobby's birthday and the great title was taken from a sign which used to hang in his Aberdeen dance studio, "Dancing Days are Happy Days at Bobby Watson's School of Dancing". Isn't that a lovely message? And judging from the memories of his pupils, Bobby Watson made their "dancing days" happy and memorable due to his inherent good humour and never-ending enthusiasm for dance.

The "Dancing Days are Happy Days" event went so well that we had difficulty in encouraging the audience to go home! That included the Lord Provost whose parting words were "Bon Accord", happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Following the tribute concert, teas were served and the exhibition of memorabilia of Bobby's life continued. People mingled and as there were so very many dancers and dance teachers present, acquaintances were renewed and memories rekindled. It was fantastic to be part of this lovely atmosphere. The one thing they all had in common was that great man of dance, Bobby Watson.

Plans & Performers

With Jimmy Spankie of the Trust Events committee, I was taken on board as his co-organiser and from then on the Edinburgh to Laurencekirk telecommunications line was well tested. Jimmy has a good sense of fun and humour, and I found him an absolute tonic to work with.

Over the months we have travelled a fair few miles and met many fine folk in association with Bobby Watson. We have met so many lovely people who were extremely helpful, kind, and so willing to be of help. The generosity of these folk and businesses was overwhelming.

Pam Dignan, who was a pupil of Bobby Watson's for 25 years, organised her dancing pupils to perform. She is a lady who quietly organises things, she makes no fuss and her dancers all appeared smiling, beautifully dressed and delighted to dance in the concert. Their performance was a delight to watch.

We were also fortunate to have on board Jean Martin from the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Aberdeen Branch. For the concert she organised both an adult and children's team to perform. "The White Cockade", an ancient dance performed by the boys and girls was especially pleasing.

The military dancers from The Queen Victoria School in Dunblane performed the Sword Dance in true warlike manner with four of them dancing together around their four crossed swords, uttering war cries on occasion. Accompanied by Piper Major Gordon Ross on bagpipes, they were spectacular.

Another spectacular act came from pupils of the Gordon School of Dancing in Montrose. Robyn Addison and Dean Brown performed a Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers act



4 July 2002

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Membership Information

Dear STDT Member,

Cross Party Motion – Scottish Parliament

As you will see below, STDT has a cross-party motion submitted to the Scottish Parliament and hope that you can help lobby for support, if at all possible. Perhaps you can get in touch with your local MSP in the hope that he/she will be 'signing up' to it, or whatever else you can think of to help things along.

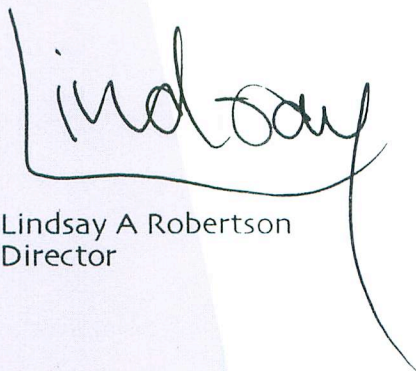
Motion:

"This Parliament recognises the importance of Scottish traditional dance and its contribution to Scottish culture; commends the work of the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust in representing the interests of all Scottish traditions of dance – Ceilidh, Country, Early, Hebridean, Highland, Military, Old time, Orkney, Shetland and Step – and promoting the benefits of participation in Scottish traditional dance particularly within schools; and calls on the Scottish Executive to encourage all schools to make available Scottish traditional dance as part of the curriculum."

This has been lodged as S1M 3268 as of 27th June. Any encouragement you can offer to MSPs– local or otherwise – to sign up to this would be tremendous.

Thanks so much for anything you can do.

Best,



Lindsay A Robertson
Director

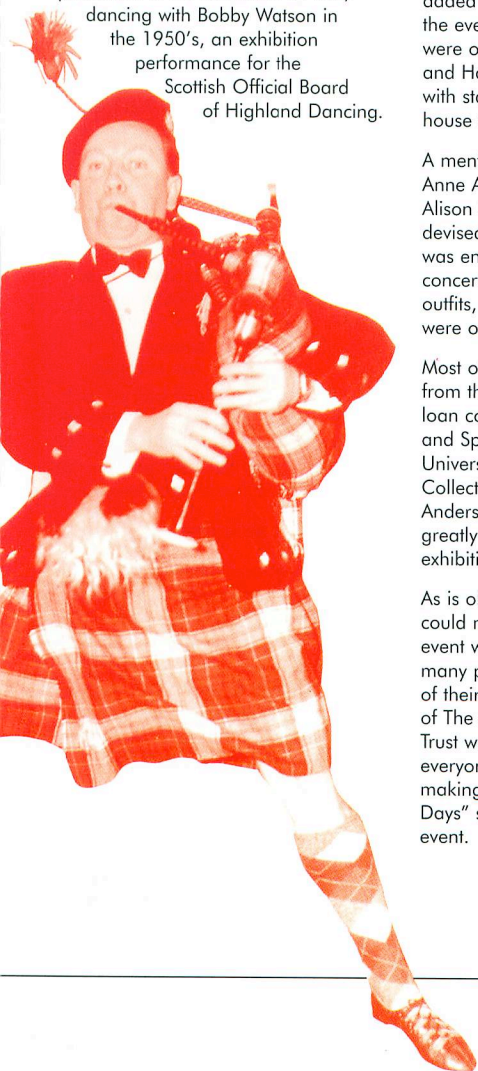
as Bobby Watson and his wife Mavis had done during their dancing days.

Bobby Watson's last Highland Dancing performance group came together again for the show and they, Alison Diack, Suzanne Callum, Gail Clark and Pamela MacRae, were a real credit to their dancing master. Seumas Grant with Puirt a beul (Gaelic mouth music)

A Tribute Concert & Exhibition to Bobby Watson

accompanied these dancers for "Scotch Measure", and it was one of the most beautiful performances I have seen.

The young Bobby Watson of the concert was nine year old Gordon Raeburn who got the night off to an excellent start by dancing the "Sailor's Hornpipe", one of Bobby's favourites. Gordon has dancing in his blood as his mother, father and grandmother are all dancers. Gordon's Granny is Betty Jessiman and it was a pleasure to have her with us. Betty danced and judged with Bobby Watson and was prominent in the exhibition on film, dancing with Bobby Watson in the 1950's, an exhibition performance for the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing.



David Low opened the concert with his piping, playing tunes which he particularly associated with his long contact with Bobby Watson. He also accompanied some of the dancing and he and Pipe Major Gordon Ross played magnificently together for the finale.

In addition to the pipers Frank Thomson and Dennis Morrison were musicians for the night as they played for the audience before the concert, and providing lovely music for some of the performances.

Simply a great night

The very happy and friendly atmosphere of the night was helped along by Jimmy Spankie and his co-narrator Alison Diack. Jimmy's opening words got the night off to a good start as he welcomed everyone to "Come in, come in, it's nice to see ye, how's yersel', you're looking grand." He added his good sense of fun and humour to his narration, whilst Alison, who was a pupil of Bobby's contributed tales which were both amusing and memorable.

Trust member Lorna McLaren had the great idea of playing her melodeon accompanied by Ken Carnegie during the tea and exhibition time which added beautifully to the atmosphere of the event. Other Trust members who were on board were Aileen Jamieson and Harold Kindness whose assistance with stage managing and front of house was invaluable.

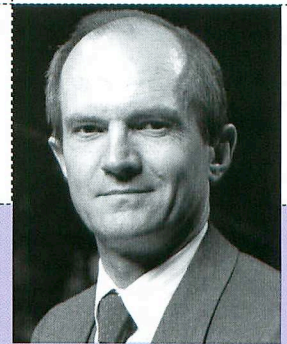
A mention is due to our own Dr. Mary Anne Alburger who along with Dr. Alison Diack and Mrs. Pat Ballantyne devised the wonderful exhibition which was enjoyed before and after the concert. Bobby Watson's dancing outfits, shoes, videos and memorabilia were on show.

Most of the artefacts and papers were from the Bobby Watson Archive on loan courtesy of Marischal Museum and Special Libraries and Archives, University of Aberdeen Historic Collection. Senior Curator Mrs. Myrtle Anderson Smith and many others greatly assisted Mary Anne and her exhibition team.

As is obvious, Jimmy Spankie and I could not have organised such an event without the great help of so many people who gave so willingly of their time and expertise. On behalf of The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust we are sincerely appreciative of everyone who contributed towards making "Dancing Days are Happy Days" such a memorable and happy event.

Dance profile

Mr Robert Cormack
 Orkney Traditional Dance Association



Q **What does your organisation do?**
a We do our best to encourage traditional dancing in Orkney through schools classes, workshops and dances.

Q **How long have you been involved?**
a Since the Association started in early 1998.

Q **What are your main plans for this year?**
a To get the Shetland Traditional Dancer Maria Leask here for a week in September to take school classes, workshops, and join in two ceilidhs which the Association organise during the Orkney Science Festival.

Q **What is your ultimate aim / hope / ambition for your organisation?**
a To get traditional dance onto the school curriculum, and have a traditional dancer in residence for an extended period.

Q **What do you enjoy most about your position?**
a The dancing.

Q **What is the most difficult thing about your position?**
a Finding a successor.

Q **Who or what has influenced you most?**
a The Black Watch Pipe Major who taught me the Regimental Steps for the Foursome Reel during my National Service.

Q **What has been your greatest accomplishment?**
a Teaching a group of non-dancers the Reel of the 51st Highland Division during a walk to the Battlefield of St Valery where the 51st capitulated in 1940.

Q **What's the best thing you've seen in the last year?**
a My grandchildren.

Q **What resource couldn't you do without?**
a Volunteers.

Q **If you had three wishes for the future of traditional dance, what would they be?**
a One will do – that every child leaving Primary School knows at least three traditional dances.

It was inevitable", mused one of Fife's newly appointed Traditional Dance Development Workers, "that Fife would celebrate the Royal Anniversary with a Jubilee Jig to be danced simultaneously by thousands of schoolchildren across the Kingdom - you just can't stop Fifers dancing!"

It's true - Fifers have always loved to dance. Long before the sorely missed Sir Jimmy Shand picked up his first box, Fife was noted both for the vigour of its country dance and for the elegance of its more courtly capers. Some of the earliest dance music extant is found in the Balcarres and Wemyss manuscripts.

Today the scene is still lively and vigorous. Highland, Step, Ceilidh and Scottish Country dance classes are all flourishing. There's the RSCDS Summer School in St Andrews, the Inverkeithing Stepdancers, Celtic Moves, The Young Fife Roadshow and a host of brilliant competition dancers, solo and group.

There's the dances at Letham and Windygates and the indefatigable Bob Grier who has organised a dance in Largoward Village Hall every Saturday evening for more than 50 years! People come from as far afield as Fraserburgh and Durham to dance the night away on nothing stronger than great music and the half time cup of tea!

Call in at All Saints Church in St Andrews on a Sunday afternoon and you can join the mix of tourists, students and locals who turn up to dance to the music of Bruce Lindsay and friends while Charlie Todd calls and gives instruction where needed.

And, of course, in November, there's the Fife Schools Scottish Country Dance Festival, an extravaganza which sees more than 12,000 schoolchildren dancing in some fourteen venues across Fife, not just an artistic feat but also a considerable feat of organisation.

So with all this going on already, when our job sharing Traditional Dance Workers turn up for their first day at their Rothes Halls base what is there for them to do?

Where do you want me to start?

Lorna Thomson, previously with STDT (and now proud mother of baby Isla) and Joyce Anderson, professional dancer, teacher and show director, are not even officially in post and already their diaries are crammed.



Dancing Fife

Today the scene is still lively and vigorous.
 Highland, Step, Ceilidh and Scottish
 Country dance classes are all flourishing.

Lorna has been putting her research background, and the time prior to Isla's arrival, to good use, reading widely and finding out about potential informants.

Joyce has been in several local schools helping with the Jubilee Jig project, has given a couple of workshops at historic Kellie Castle and will be teaching at St Andrews Summer School.



Joyce Anderson



Lorna Thomson

She is also working with my apprentice Karen Hannah on a couple of major events including the Youth Salute to Sir Jimmy Shand Weekend on 11th/12th October - at the Rothes Halls, Glenrothes.

Tickets and info on 01592 612121, since you ask!

Through email and the old-fashioned telephone, they have been making plans and I look forward with great excitement to seeing just what this interesting combination will bring to the Traditional Dance scene in Fife. But I'll leave them to tell you about that in a future article!

Sheena Wellington
Traditional Arts Development Officer
 Fife Council

Dannsa (Gaelic for 'dance'), is a fairly new traditional dance performance group whose core consists of Caroline Reagh, Sandra Robertson, Frank McConnell and Mats Melin. The group came about in 1999 when Mats was asked to put together a performance piece bridging traditional and contemporary dance elements for performance at Eden Court in Inverness.

From an idea based on the rhythm and sounds of a spinning wheel, a 15-minute piece, called the Spinning Reel, was created. They enjoyed dancing together so much that they continued to meet up, which in turn led to more performance requests where material has, over time, been developed.

They take traditional dances, or elements thereof, and create new arrangements.

On their recent tour, Mats kept a diary of the experience for STDT News...

Why do we do it?

So, a three week tour to 14 venues, and workshops, and ceilidhs. Bit of a challenge, but we're up to it. By way of background - Dannsa works by having the core of four dancers, and a flexible pool of musicians and singers. At any one time we will have at least two musicians and one singer with us. In rehearsals we had singers Mary Ann Kennedy, Fiona Mackenzie (Dingwall), Liz Roussin and Anna Murray; fiddlers Ronan Martin and Mairi Campbell, Kenny Fraser to join us later in Mull and piper Fin Moore. In addition to this we had employed sound man Gavin Ramsay from Aberdeen and Nicola Marshall to help us manage the tour. Depending on the venue, our show is either a straight performance of combined music, dance and song, or if in a suitable village hall we have the audience up to dance well known and new ceilidh dances in between our performance pieces. So our show was anything from 2 to 4 hours long!

Reflections on a tour

Our first performance was at the Lemon Tree in Aberdeen. It was the first time that a number of our pieces had been publicly performed. One piece in particular was a set of four walking songs to which we've created steps and movements. We'd been given a grant from the Scottish Arts Council to create a 15 minute piece based on the various rhythms of the work songs used when walking the cloth. At the time Mary Ann Kennedy worked with us to find the right songs and the movements to go with them, so this was the first performance for all of us

...if it had not been a weekday evening we would have continued dancing well into the wee sma' hours of the morning.

Danhsa

to see if the concept worked! It did, but the piece is a marathon for the singer, and even though we helped in singing in two of the songs, it was definitely pretty demanding stuff. The audience on the night was very appreciative.

From Aberdeen we moved on to Cromarty, and did the first Ceilidh Dance Performance of the tour and the crowd were very keen on getting on to the floor all evening. Fiona Mackenzie gave us some excellent songs, as did Mairi Campbell.

The next performance was at Carrbridge, and because of the size of the hall and the good acoustics we did the evening 'un-plugged', which was lovely and made for an intimate evening. The 70 or so strong audience was with us from the start and we had a great laugh.

The tour then began in earnest – you can always tell when you climb into the hired green mini bus! We headed for Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. We rehearsed in An Tobar, the Arts Centre in Tobermory, now incorporating Kenny Fraser for the first time in our line up. School workshops were given in Salen to both the Gaelic and mainstream pupils. Then on to a very successful An Tobar evening.

The weather changed for the worse as we headed for Barra and for those in the company who do not like the big swell of the Minch, it was a very long crossing.

The next day we taught in two primary schools and in the evening headed for Northbay Hall. 20 minutes into the performance, the islands suffered a complete power cut! So the candles were brought out and the most atmospheric night of the tour took place. Dancing, and singing in a candle lit hall was fantastic. Local singers gave us several beautiful songs, as did visiting Father AJ MacMillan from Cape Breton. A local lass also played beautiful tunes on the clarsach. We danced a Posties Jig and a few

waltzes, the last with Kenny, playing solo fiddle, walking up and down the middle of the hall with the dancers all around him. It was a night to remember and the hall was full almost to bursting point!

Next morning was beautiful and we had a great crossing to Eriskay and on to Uist. St Peter's Hall in Daliburgh housed a crowd of some 120. Attendance was fantastic. It was a big night especially for Liz, as she sang in public as part of a performance for the first time at home. Liz's port-a-beul (mouth music) that night for Frank's solo stepping was something really special! My own special moment was dancing the Quadrilles that night!

After Uist we headed north to Stornoway in the rain and wind, leaving Kenny and Liz behind to join up with Ronan Martin. Kathleen MacInnes was our singer. We had a respectable turnout for a Saturday night in Stornoway Town Hall. The crowd was again game to join us for dancing.

Week 2

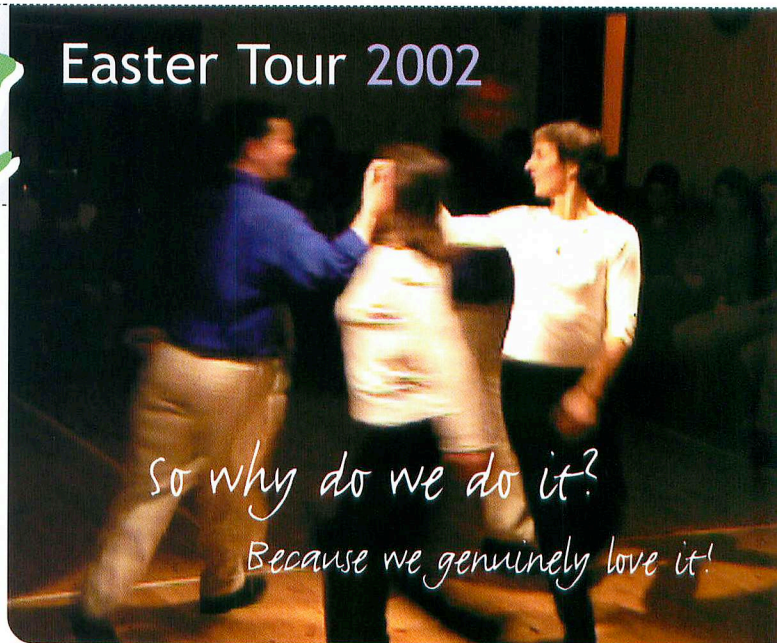
At last a day off – spent it sleeping and relaxing! Pouring rain and gusting winds anyway!

Monday saw us in Ness by the Butt of Lewis. We were to have performed in the small Arts Centre – Taigh Dhonnachaid – but as filming was taking place there we held our evening in the nearby Lionel School. We had our smallest audience of 14 that night, but what we did not have in numbers we had in enthusiasm and had a great evening, including another power cut!

On Tuesday evening we went to a private house ceilidh on the west coast of Lewis, the setting of the house is fabulous overlooking Berneray and Tolstachaois. The place has also got a sauna with the best view in the west looking south towards Callanish. Sore legs got some much-needed heat treatment! We had a good crossing to

Ullapool, then drove south to Achmore by Plockton, via the craft centre and coffee shop at Achnasheen, which comes highly recommended. We were accommodated by the organisers 'Lochan' in a castle, which looks like it's been there for centuries, but is actually only about 10 years old. It was a great pleasure to stay there.

The floor was full for the ceilidh dances. Mary Ann, who had managed to get off Shetland that morning, had rejoined us. We had a tremendous evening and if it had not been a weekday evening we would have continued dancing well into the wee sma' hours of the morning. We were all on a tremendous high!



This was our return to Achmore Hall, as we performed there in November last year, and we had another tremendous evening. Mary Ann had rejoined us, so the Ceilidh dances were done to fiddle, pipes and clarsach.

We went on to Skye for two performances, one at Sabhal Mor Ostaig, the Gaelic College in Sleat, and the other one at Aros in Portree. In the latter performance our line up was boosted by the singing of Arthur Cormack. Our sixth night on the trot was in Ullapool where Fiona Mackenzie, in great form rejoined us for a very enjoyable evening in the MacPhail Centre.

Sunday was spent sleeping and resting in the Ceilidh Place. Typically, being our day off it was raining and windswept yet again!

The last roundup

Two nights of our tour to go and we headed north to Lochinver, where to our surprise the floor had been re-varnished just for us – well, not quite but for a Monday evening in Lochinver we got a tremendous turnout of over 80 people which filled the hall. This included some 16 Slovenian climbers who had been driven off the hill by the bad weather. They joined in the dancing with great enthusiasm.

On our last day, the rain cleared away and we had a fantastic journey, via Durness to Skerray on Sutherland's north coast. The hall at Skerray is beautifully old-fashioned and has a lovely atmosphere. We arrived to a meal laid out in the hall and the sun was shining all evening as we were setting up for our final gig. Some 30 people turned out, which was good, as the area had been saddened by a terrible car accident the night before which took the life of a young man (something which we found out afterwards). Our tour finished on a dignified high. Our reception in Skerray mirrored those of most other venues – warm and welcoming and appreciative of what we're doing.

We had travelled some 1,800 land miles, gone on six different ferries in all possible weather conditions. We suffered no injuries (apart from self-inflicted!) or illnesses and we were still laughing together at the end – pretty good. We have learned a lot, and if we ever do this again, which we will in about 2060 when we've recovered, we'll definitely not do six nights on the trot!

So why do we do it? Because we genuinely love it!



The Scottish Executive & STDT

STDT recently contacted the MSPs responsible for arts & culture in each of the main parties for their view of Scottish traditional dance in the context of the current cultural strategy.

They all responded positively, and excerpts from their replies follow.

"SAC is committed to continue to work with STDT to ensure that all of Scotland's dance traditions are promoted..." from the Office of Mike Watson MSP (Minister for Sport, Arts & Culture);

"We also need to fund, support and encourage traditional dance in every part of the nation. I am glad that STDT is, through its work, seeking to maintain and strengthen all the strands that go to make up our unique heritage." Michael Russell MSP (SNP);



"...traditions are alive and well and being promoted to young and old alike. Again when we consider the National Cultural Strategy it is clear we would be failing in our duty if we did not support our indigenous traditions in dance..." Ian Jenkins MSP (Liberal Democrat);

"By being instrumental in promoting traditional Scottish dance, not only at home, but as far afield as Canada, the USA, Australia, Spain, France & New Zealand, STDT is to be congratulated for the invaluable role it plays in this most important objective." Brian Monteith MSP (Conservative).

STDT Partners

As part of our programme of collaboration and partnership, STDT has teamed up with Ydance (Scottish Youth Dance) for their Summer Dance Project 2002 at the Eden Court Theatre in Inverness from Mon 8th to Friday 12th July.

The week long workshop is entitled Pleughsang 2002.

"In all Scotland is ther sik aught?"

"Who's the best crew on the floor?"

In the 15th century, teams of ploughmen competed to be the best in Scotland. In the 21st century, gangs compete to be the best on the streets. Young people are invited to explore the differences and similarities through dance – traditional, contemporary and street dance forms. In association with the Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust, Scottish Youth Dance promises an exciting week for young people aged 12 – 21.

Scottish Youth Dance is a national organisation that encourages and supports the development of youth dance in Scotland.



Did you know?

A Scottish dance – The Branle d'Ecosse – appears in the western world's first book of choreography. Thoinot Arbeau – a French clergyman – produced this remarkable book, entitled "Orchesographie", in 1588.

He printed the Scottish version of the branle, or brawl, with the note that this dance had passed out of fashion in France some years before. The Scottish branle is a dance regularly taught and performed by the Edinburgh Early Dancers.

Evelyn Hood

An instalment of a

Douglas W Smith of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Branch of the RSCDS writes of his on-going search for the gift of a **Book of Country Dances from the Jacobite Duke of Perth, James Drummond, to Prince Henry Benedict, Cardinal York.**

In the course of some researches, my attention was drawn to a couple of letters amongst the Stuart Papers at Windsor. This collection consists of the voluminous correspondence of the Jacobite court in exile, bought for the Royal Archives after the death of Prince Henry Benedict, Cardinal York, himself the last of the dynasty.

Letters found included one addressed to the Duke, and is a "Thank-You" for the gift to Prince Charles Edward of a set of "complete (Highland) Dress" and a promise to wear it with satisfaction as a mark of esteem to his supporters. Prince Charlie went to the secretary to the Old chevalier, writing in 1727, "is an excellent dancer" (he would then be aged seven!) and in 1741 went to a "publick Ball", masked, in a fine complete Highland dress which "became him very well".

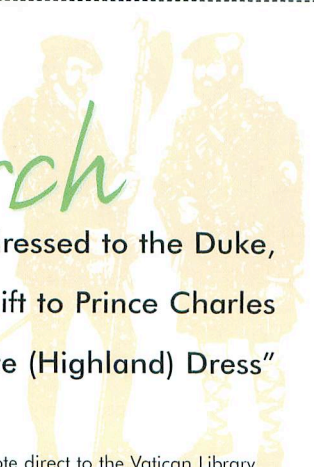
A second letter, another "Thank-You" from Prince Henry was likewise grateful to the Duke for Highland Dress, which he will wear "for your sake and others I have a great esteem for".

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Jacobite Search

Letters found included one addressed to the Duke, and is a "Thank-You" for the gift to Prince Charles Edward of a set of "complete (Highland) Dress"



But more than this: he extends his thanks for the Book of Country Dances that is to accompany this gift. Country Dances, then, would be known to the Jacobite court.

The search was on...

That letter was enough to set me off on the quest. For what did the volume contain? More particularly, could it be they were specifically Scottish Country Dances? And could it have survived the passage of time – might it still lie in the collection of books belonging to Cardinal York?

This library was held in his palace at Frascati. Though damaged by bombs during the war, the Prefect of the Vatican Library visiting the site shortly afterwards had found the books themselves unharmed and had them transferred to the Vatican for safety. They were still there. Could it be, by a remote chance, the library still possessed the Book of Country Dances?

I wrote direct to the Vatican Library, explaining that I was a member of the RSCDS – and that a principal aim of the Society was the collecting and preservation of early Scottish dances. That to have a record of any known to the Jacobite court would indeed be of interest to us.

Back came a prompt and gracious reply; hand-written and in English from no less a person than the Prefect himself. He reported that he could find no such volume in the catalogue of printed books. More than this, he had generously checked the actual books that came from Frascati and which were still held as a unit on the stacks. All these, he wrote, were entirely scriptural, Patristic, homiletic or moral treatises in Latin, French and Italian, adding "and not even one book in English or relative to Scotland". I have since learned that as some of Cardinal York's books with his bindings are to be found in this country, so it may be at some point the English language ones were displaced and became separated.

Questions, questions, questions...

Could that Book of Country Dances have been incorporated into another library – a collection perhaps that belonged to the earlier Jacobite court at St Germain-en-Laye? After all, the letter referring to it has survived, so why not the volume itself?

So another quest began, this time to the Bibliotheque Nationale, in an attempt to discover whether the books from St Germain were still to be found. They kindly provided me with the address of M Edward Corp who, they stated, was actually writing on the subject of the Stuarts at St Germain. Here indeed was the doyen of Jacobite studies in France, under whose editorship "L'autre exil – les Jacobites en France au debut du XVIII siecle" was published in 1993.

A delightful correspondence followed. In this M Corp mentioned that the music performed at St Germain was mainly Italian with some French dance music – possibly also some English country dances, though none of the music has survived. However, it was his insights into the person of James III & VIII that provided me with possible clues.

The Scottish Dimension

The Old Chevalier, it seems, was very conscious of being King of England. He would, incidentally, have reigned longer than Queen Victoria, and the very few Scots at court tended to be Anglicised or cosmopolitan, particularly after James' disappointment in Scotland in 1715.

Against this, the Duke of Perth seems to have made a conscious effort to associate him, and especially the two young Princes, with the Scottish dimension. Hence, perhaps, the gift of Highland Dress. Did this explain Perth's letter some years later (1744) to Prince Charles Edward – "you may remember the kind gift of clothes I sent you some years ago and I suppose you also know that I think it my greatest honour to be and to be looked upon as one of those that have a right to wear that garb. I hear with the utmost satisfaction that you have a particular esteem for those sort of people and I hope and dare answer for it, that they will answer the highest opinion you can have conceived of them".

M Corp pointed out that because of this attempt to maintain an association with Scotland, it might well suggest that the Book of Country Dances referred to Scottish rather than English ones, consistent perhaps with the gift of Highland garb. Or it may be they were set to Scottish traditional tunes and bore Scottish titles from these.

The search goes on. Perhaps one day further evidence will emerge to determine just which Book of Country Dances was acknowledged by Prince Henry.

In the meantime, it is of some satisfaction to learn that the Duke of Perth had enough enthusiasm for country dancing to send such a gift to the young Prince.



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2002 *July* Issue

Events

Folkdansgillet Stjärnan comes from Hjaltevad in Eksjö County in the highlands of Småland in the south of Sweden. Stjärnan (The Star) was formed in 1978 and is still going strong 24 years later.

The name 'Stjärnan' was taken from a dance formation. Many of the present members have been with the group from the start, which also accounts for the fact that some of us have reached a mature age. Some of our oldest dancers are in their 70's.

We dance traditional Swedish Folk dance, which consists of set dances with different numbers of dancers in each, featuring waltz, hambo, polka, schottis and mazurka steps. Being an active group we practise weekly, and often perform for specific occasions such as Nationaldagen (National Day) and Midsommar (Mid Summer). We wear national costumes distinctive to each county or district and the group feature costumes from almost the whole of Sweden.

Our demonstrations are most often outdoors (weather dependent of course) in streets and town squares and so forth. We have travelled far over the years, most notably to Poland, Austria, Finland and the USA. In the states we have danced twice in the Swedish districts (Svenkbygden). This summer we look forward to our visit to Scotland where we will perform in Portree, Inverness, Beaulieu and Edinburgh. We bring with us accomplished musicians playing fiddle, clarinet, accordion and nyckelharpa (keyed fiddle).



Folkdansgillet Stjärnan

Swedish Folk Dance Team • Scottish tour performance itinerary – July 2002

Further information from
Mats Melin **01575 572901**
matsmelin@enterprise.net

Dates & Times

Wednesday 10 July

AROS CENTRE – PORTREE

Lunch time performance 1-1.30pm

Friday 12 July

Scottish-Swedish Dance Evening

Ian Cruickshanks and His Band from Kirriemuir play for a traditional Ceilidh / Social Dance to celebrate the visit of the Swedish folk dance group - Folkdansgillet Stjärnan to the Scottish Highlands. The evening will feature demonstrations of Swedish and Scottish dancing.

Tea & Biscuits + Raffle

PHIPPS HALL – BEAULIEU

12 July 2002 at 7.30 pm

£5 (£3 concession) at the door

Saturday 13 July

12 pm - Street Performance - CITY OF INVERNESS

1 pm – City of Inverness HIGHLAND GAMES PARADE (from City Centre to the Games Field)

c. 1.30 pm – dance performance in the Traditional Music Tent at the HIGHLAND GAMES. Details t.b.c.

Sunday 14 July

Dance performance, EDINBURGH, details t.b.c.

YDANCE (SCOTTISH YOUTH DANCE) & STDT PRESENT

The Summer Dance Project.
For young people aged 12-21.

Monday 8 July - Friday 12 July

EDEN COURT THEATRE, INVERNESS

£40 per person (full week fee)

For further information call Scottish Youth Dance on 0131 556 8844 or visit www.ydance.org

For a list of Ceilidh and old time dances in and around Central Scotland (and beyond) and if you have access to, or know someone with access to the web, check Alasdair Graham's site at: <http://www.ceilidh.members.beeb.net>.

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Please indicate which Scottish Dance Traditions are of most interest to you, e.g. Scottish Country, Highland, Step etc.

Age range: under 18 18 to 30 31 to 45

46 to 60 over 60

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