

# Östätt

Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust

news

2002 *October* Issue

**Dancing Fun In  
Fife, Perth & Kinross  
& Edinburgh**

**Early  
Dance  
An Update**

**History in Vancouver**

**And More...**

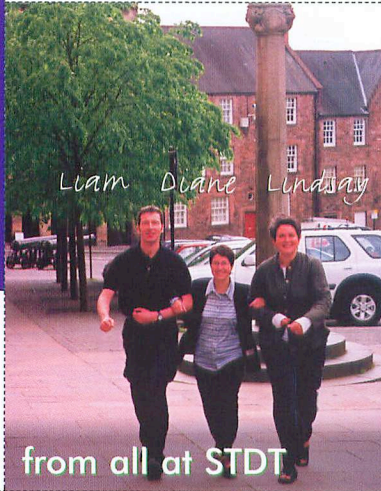
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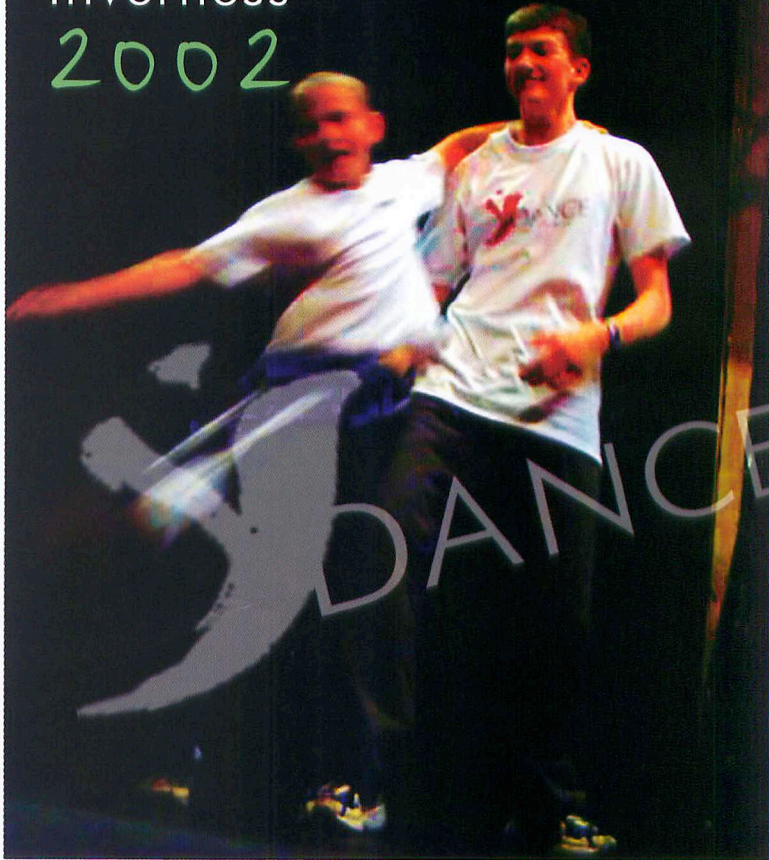


from all at STDT

Hello  
again

# Pleughsang

Inverness  
2002



**T**his edition of STDT News covers the last 3 months of 2002. So, wishing you a Happy Christmas and New Year!

Aside from our future wishes, I'll take this opportunity to briefly update you on the previous 3 months (July to September). I'm delighted to report that we've received a proportion of the funding needed for the proposed Conference from the Scottish Arts Council. We plan for it to take place on the 20th and 21st of March 2003 in the Tolbooth in Stirling. We'll keep you informed on progress and details. As far as the new logo and STDT News are concerned, we've had extraordinarily positive feedback on all the recent developments. We have submitted our Core Funded Organisation Review and Application to the Scottish Arts Council. The review forms part of the SAC's internal monitoring and development mechanism as well as providing them with a comprehensive picture of STDT's plans and aspirations. We continue to network and hope to pursue new work developments in the coming months.

STDT would also like to thank everybody who lobbied on our behalf as requested in the last STDT News enclosure letter. Every effort helps to put all Scottish traditions of dance on the political and education agenda and contributes to our continuing to form an important part of the cultural future.

We also now have a completed Report document available for perusal in the archive in Stirling on the STDT **dance! Dance!! DANCE!!!** National Lottery Project.

So, this edition. A main theme is to report on current traditions development activities in Scotland - the piece from Andy Howitt of YDance gives an insight into our collaboration with them in Inverness in July. We also have pieces from the STDT Perth & Kinross Research & Development programme; from the Traditional Arts Officer in Edinburgh; and an update from Fife's Traditional Dance Development Workers. All this and a piece from Vancouver too!

I would like to take this opportunity to ask that those of you who have not yet returned the Freepost Membership survey card (enclosed in the last issue) - could you please take a moment to complete & return them, as we hope the results will form a very important part of the decision making for the future direction of STDT.

Please do get in touch with any pieces, suggestions, opinions or anything else you can think of, and we all hope you enjoy this edition of STDT News.

Best wishes,

*Lindsay*  
Lindsay A Robertson  
Director

## Pleughsang

"One of the earliest dances for which we have music is the Pleughsang. This 15th century ploughman's ritual was known throughout Europe but Scotland offers the only surviving text, music and movement. It has never been danced in modern times. Basically, a team would come into the castle or farmyard with a plough and drag it about whilst singing and no doubt performing appropriate actions. They praised their oxen, they praised themselves, and they named all the parts of the plough and displayed their strength. "

JOHN PURSER

## YDance Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust Collaboration

# Project

### The Project

Eden Court Theatre hosted the Project which took place from Monday 8th until Friday 12th July this year.

The development of the creative method over the first couple of days with the participants' input was very effective, and the young people undoubtedly enjoyed working with the various tutors.

Artistically, the Pleughsang theme worked well and provided a sound basis sustaining the young participants' creative interest. The mixture of dance styles (Step Dance, Contemporary, Hip Hop, Street Dance) complemented each other successfully, and the tutors were able to work simultaneously with participants allocated into manageable groups. The week was very positive in that it introduced the young people to an eclectic range of dance styles which were merged in a variety of interesting ways. The Pleughsang theme dominated the performance development. The Ydance (Scottish Youth Dance) team & the young people themselves created a wonderful dance performance using effective

integration of dance forms and rhythms. An excellent collaborative project and performance.

Rick Bamford & Quee MacArthur, provided an atmospheric addition to the overall creative process – their influences include world music and jazz. This mix blended well with the dance combinations. The Pleughsang Project broke new ground with live music accompanying YDance summer school performances.

YDance & STDT await the outcomes of the evaluation results from the young participants. The tutors and musicians are agreed that the Pleughsang Project was a genuinely successful working process which could very effectively be repeated. Tutors were also very impressed with the achievements of the young people over the period of just a week. The process of starting with no preconceptions, and developing such a comprehensive dance piece, thereby gaining so many different skills, was an impressive outcome. There is no doubt that the experience also engendered friendship and trust amongst the young group.

**Andy Howitt**  
YDance Artistic Director

### Pleughsang Project team

**Tutors:** Allan Irvine, Dawn Hartley, Daniel Aing (Marseille break dancer), Andy Howitt, John Sikorski  
**Musicians:** Rick Bamford, Quee MacArthur

### Project Facts

**Numbers:** 40 participants  
**Age range:** 12 – 21 years  
**Funding partner:** Highland Council

### Project Week – Development Format

Day	Time	Activity
Monday – Thursday	10 – 11.15	Class
	11.30 – 12.30	Group work based on a Dance Style
	1.30 – 3.30	Split up into groups to create
Friday	3.30 – 4.00	Showing of work
	10 – 11.15	Class
	11.30 – 12.30	Technical for music and lights
	1.30 – 4.00	Technical Run and Dress rehearsal
	7.30	Performance



## Dancing Fun in

An update by  
**Lorna Thomson**  
& **Joyce Anderson,**  
Fife's Traditional Dance  
Development Workers

# Fife

**L**ife here in Fife has been very hectic as our traditional dance project really gathers momentum. Since joining Fife Council's Arts and Celebrations team as Traditional Dance Development Workers in June our diaries have been full and our dancing feet tested to their limits as we travel throughout the Kingdom to develop and expand Fife's already vibrant traditional dance scene.

Joyce has been busy planning workshops, demonstrations and events. She visited local primary schools to assist as they prepared and practised the Scottish Country Dance – the Jubilee Jig – 'Between the Bridges' which was danced by all of Fife's primary school pupils on Friday 14th June – a truly exciting and rewarding day for everyone involved with the project.

She met with local teachers during the preparation of this year's Schools' SCD Festival held in November, and joined them during the filming of their dance teaching video. She has also been involved in several dance workshops at Kellie Castle, Auchtermuchty and the RSCDS Summer School in St Andrews, as well as dance demonstrations at ceilidhs, local hospitals, Age Concern and concerts. Many youth organisations, sports' centres, day centres and over fifties clubs have now shown much interest in holding taster days/workshops. (We've included some dates for your own diary on the STDT News events page!) A leaflet

has also been compiled giving information on Traditional Dance Development in Fife.

On the research side, Lorna has been very busy sourcing potential informants, visiting local libraries, researching in local newspapers and distributing questionnaires, as she begins to build what will eventually become a traditional dance archive resource for the people of Fife (and beyond!!) If you think you can help or have memories of your dancing days in Fife and would like to share them with us – please contact us at the address below.

All of this in only a few short months! It certainly has been quite a busy, interesting and enjoyable time for both of us, and we look forward with excitement to the coming year. With traditional dance flourishing in the Kingdom at present we feel very proud and privileged to be a part of Fife's dancing community at this truly exciting time.

We also look forward to hearing from you and hopefully meeting some of you at our events during the next few months. Watch this space and we'll keep you up-to-date with what's happening in Fife through STDT News.

Until then, take care and happy dancing!!

Lorna Thomson and Joyce Anderson  
**Traditional Dance Development Workers**  
Fife Council  
Rothes Halls, Rothes Square,  
Glenrothes, KY7 5NX.  
Phone: 01592 612121  
Fax: 01592 612220

## Traditional Arts Officer in Edinburgh

**S**teve Byrne was appointed Traditional Arts Officer by the City of Edinburgh Council in February 2002. (Some readers may know him from the folksong group 'Malinky').

STDT News asked him to update us on the story so far...

### Some background

My post is new, and is part-funded through the Scottish Arts Council's Dance Department. It was brought about mainly through consultation with the local traditional arts community, following the emergence of such posts elsewhere in Scotland, and in keeping with the commitment made to the traditional arts by the Scottish Executive in the National Cultural Strategy.

Originally from Arbroath, I studied traditional arts at the School of Scottish Studies, so while I confess to not being a particularly great dancer, I know one or two things about traditional dance and its social context. One of my main traditional dance interests is the inextricable link with traditional music, and how the music has shaped the dances and vice versa.

### Current activity

I'm now working with traditional arts groups in the city, as well as the national traditional arts organisations, to help promote, support and develop the various traditional Scottish art forms of

music, song, dance and storytelling in Edinburgh's communities.

One of my main roles is to co-ordinate all existing traditional arts activity in the city, helping to raise the profile and develop audiences. To this end, I'm holding a skills development weekend in November 2002, and will implement a co-ordinated marketing campaign for traditional arts in Edinburgh, Easter 2003.

I hope that STDT will be a major player in the development of traditional dance in Edinburgh, working with the many other traditional dance providers in the city who attended the first Dance Forum successfully hosted by the Adult Learning Project's Scots Music Group, in March 2002.

As a City of Edinburgh Council Officer I can offer guidance in numerous areas, such as sourcing funding and making grant applications, and am also a contact point for any other queries relating to traditional arts in the city.

Steve Byrne  
City of Edinburgh Council's Arts Development Section  
T: 0131 243 1442  
E: steve.byrne@edinburgh.gov.uk

Mary Michie tells about the lively country dance scene in and around Ballachulish & Onich.

## Ballachulish & Onich

# Scottish Country Dancers

**I** have been asked many times recently "when does the class start?". And the answer is **14 October and each Monday until Easter in the Ballachulish Village Hall.**

Ballachulish & Onich classes joined forces several years ago and on average 24 dancers attend almost half of whom are, I'm delighted to say, men. Throughout the year we travel to lots of local rallies (local being a round trip of 70 miles). This enables us to meet and enjoy the company of fellow dancers, and return armed with crib sheets and rise to the challenge of "new to us" dances.

Many have also enthusiastically travelled to the islands of Lismore, Islay, Skye, as well as further afield to Jersey, Cyprus and Majorca, and wherever we visit, we have always been made very welcome. Dancers from this area visited the USA last year and had a fantastic time.

We have welcomed dancers from throughout the world to our class, a local lady brought many foreign students to learn about some of the traditions of Scotland and we enjoyed encouraging them to try Scottish Country Dancing. We then had a wonderful time trying the traditional dances from their various countries.

A local children's class is held in Onich, and they have successfully competed at various festivals. Regular attendances in excess of 30 is good news for the future of Scottish Dancing, and hopefully, for keeping dancing traditions alive.

Our Annual Rally will be held this year on 23 November, 7.30pm in the Ballachulish Village Hall, music provided by the fabulous Drummond Cook & His Band. All will be made most welcome.

**Mary Michie**  
Tel: 01855 821202

## Perth & Kinross

**STDT News asked Heather Benes McGadie, one of our development officers in Perth & Kinross, for her update on the STDT project there.**

### Perth and Kinross

Our project's activities have been steadily growing as local groups and individuals have heard about it and met myself and Mats Melin, my job share partner on the project.

### Work with young folk and wee 'uns

Mats conducted 2 days of dance work together with drama teacher Graham Trotter and artist June McEwan at The New School, Butterstone. Gillian Urquart and myself and her dancers at the Kinross High School after-school club are working together on a ten week collaboration.

Local groups enthusiastic about workshops in country/ceilidh dances to younger children invited me to Rattray Primary School. Two nursery classes of over twenty children under 6 yrs and fantastic teachers and assistants proved indisputably that given the right environment even such wee ones can dance without flagging, and can learn not only steps but whole dances!

### Memories

The area has a colourful heritage of traditional dance culture. I wish I could mention all, but here are a few random snippets for now of generously shared memories: Nora Walker and Margaret Culbard remember, "...Quadrilles and Lancers at the Farmer's Dances and Masonic Balls in Comrie and in a coffee house in Lochearnhead respectively in the 30s. Nora later went "to Killin,

Auchterarder, Crieff, by charabanc for a good band like Jimmy Shand, Ian Powrie or Jim Cameron.

Joan Anderson, respected SCD teacher in Crieff remembers a great teacher in Sheila McFarlane at the George Hotel, whose Highland dance experience gave her a very particular style.

Malcolm Gomme-Duncan hopes his memory serves him right that he was taught as a child by Pipe Major (Dancie) Reid, the classes were at Duplin in 1938/9 and were the start of a life full of reeling and Balls. He wonders if there exists any recorded music for the Perth Medley, as he has yet to come across any.

David Noble leads the Tibbermore Band; a non-professional Scottish Country Dance Band giving young people the opportunity to play for a variety of charity, social and schools events. The Trust and the Band have collaborated with the result that copies of the Band's first recording

will accompany the Trust's teaching pack for use in local primary schools beginning in the Autumn.

Finally, thanks to the Perth and Perthshire Branch of RSCDS for kindly agreeing to circulate to their members our questionnaires, where the richness of people's dance experience and knowledge can be recorded and shared.

All the best,  
**Heather**

**For information on all our events and activities contact :**

Heather Benes McGadie & Mats Melin  
Crieff Learning Centre, Lodge Street, Crieff, PH7 4DW

**T: 01764 657103**  
E: heather.stdt@virgin.net and mats.stdt@virgin.net

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Annabel Oates wrote this piece for us describing a recent happy coincidence.

## International relations

**A** chance phone call from the STDT office involved me in a most enjoyable evening of informal music and dance recently.

An Israeli television company, filming a series of culture profiles of cities of the world, arrived in Edinburgh to film for a programme entitled Y-in-the-World. The series is targeted at a young audience and the producer was keen to include informal Scottish dancing.

As luck would have it, I was presenting a ceilidh for 100+ foreign language students on the

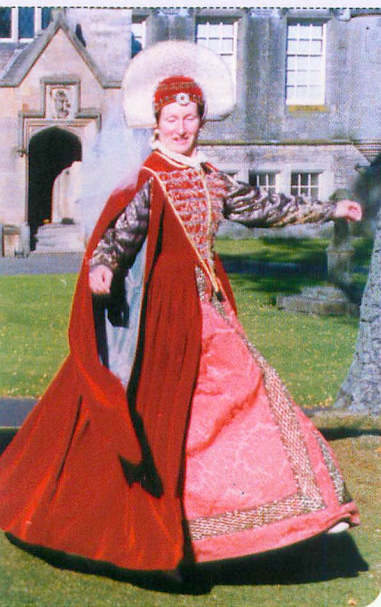
evening the film crew were in town. Unaware they were about to be filmed, and oblivious to what a ceilidh is, the students arrived at the same time as the film crew. No time for a rehearsal!

What followed was two hours of international fellowship and fun. With the expertise of a group of talented, local teenagers, the students and our Israeli friends enjoyed an authentic ceilidh – pipes and drums, Highland dancing, fiddle playing and unaccompanied Scots song. The evening was interspersed with popular ceilidh dances. How

wonderful to see the floor packed with dancers of so many nationalities.

Gouri Alfi, the programme presenter, was an enthusiastic participant. With a kilied highland dancer on one side, and a stunning Italian student on the other, I don't think he'll forget his first Dashing White Sergeant!

Gouri and his film crew hurried away to film a late night item in the International Jazz Festival, delighted with their coverage. They left behind a happy buzz of international comradeship – captured through dance on a sunny August evening in Edinburgh.



## Early Dance in Scotland

A brief update on recent early dance activities

in Scotland by Jackie Tully-Jackson

**Performances at Stately Homes and Castles as part of Historic Scotland events**

Teaching in primary schools in Edinburgh and East Lothian

**Charity performances**

Delivery of Early Dance as part of curriculum at Telford (Edinburgh) and RSAMD (Glasgow)

**Performances with various music groups - Edinburgh Renaissance Band, Edinburgh Barock, Feathered Edge and Suzuki Violin Group**

Preparation of teaching aids for Scottish Primary schools through the National Trust

**Early Dance courses**

August 2002 - lecture demonstration on Baroque dance for the participants of the Piano Teachers Summer School at Napier University (Edinburgh). Music supplied by Edinburgh Barock.

The lecturer demonstration session was so successful that the group was asked to consider making a video to help young musicians appreciate the link between the music and dance. We would appreciate any guidance on how best to pursue this & would be grateful for any suggestions and advice – especially on appropriate funding sources and the best approach to this.

Other advocates of Early Dance are June McKay who works with the blind dance in Glasgow and Nicolas Broadbridge who runs Playford classes, in Edinburgh (every second Thursday of the month).

We are always interested in hearing about any Early Dance developments or related activity & would be delighted to hear from anyone with any info via the STDT office.

## A Jacobite search

**I**n the July issue of STDT News, Douglas Smith wrote of his search for a book of country dances given by the Duke of Perth to Prince Henry Benedict, Cardinal York.

Readers might be interested to hear of a MS book of dances written for the Duke of Perth in 1737 by David Young who styled himself W.M. (Writing Master) and Accomptant (Accountant).

It was discovered in Drummond Castle in 1954 by the historian Dr H G Farmer. It is a manuscript of some 170 pages, bound in ornately tooled leather with beautifully illuminated lettering. It is divided into two parts containing music and instructions for 48 country dances, and is entitled A Collection of Country Dances Written for the use of His Grace the Duke of Perth by David Young. The second part is entitled A Collection of the Best Highland Reels, Written by David Young. W.M. & Accomptant.

My husband and I were granted access to the MS in 1967 and were given permission to reproduce extracts by the then Right Hon. The Earl of Ancaster. Details of the dances were discussed in articles written in Scottish



Studies, vol. 11, parts 1 and 2 in 1967. An illustration of one of the title pages is reproduced here and a set of eleven archival quality prints has been deposited in the STDT archive.

**Joan Flett**

**STDT would like to take this opportunity to thank Joan Flett for her kind and generous contribution to our archive.**

# Scottish Country Dancing in Vancouver

**T**he STDT office recently received some fascinating articles from Rosemary Coupe, of the Vancouver Branch, RSCDS.

The articles covered a comprehensive introduction to the history of the Branch and detailed histories of key individuals such as Mrs Thomas Bingham. To do all this information justice in our small STDT News is just not possible, but we wanted to carry a summary of at least one of the pieces to give some idea of the wealth of information available. If you're interested in finding out more, please contact us here at the office, and we'll put you in touch with Rosemary Coupe.

**Mary Isdale MacNab:  
 Teacher and Choreographer**

Vancouver dancers can enjoy the good fortune, rare in North America, to look back over a seventy year span of Scottish Country Dancing. The organisation and teaching of dancing here was spearheaded by emigrant Scots, among them one whose name is familiar to dancers everywhere, Mary Isdale MacNab. Her work served to cement the link between country and highland dancing, and between the Vancouver dance community and the SCDS, later the RSCDS, in Scotland. She formed the Prince Charles Scottish Country Dance group, and led the Braemar group, a demonstration group consisting mainly of the parents of her Highland pupils.

Mrs. MacNab's professional life centred on her work as a teacher of Highland dancing, which spanned more than forty years. This long career had a spectacular public side: she put on annual dance displays ("The Gathering of the Clans"); toured with her group of young dancers, the BC Highland Lassies; was invited to be director of dancing at the Edinburgh Tattoo in 1964; and founded the Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band, who continued to wear the MacNab tartan until their dissolution in 1996. Mrs MacNab's former pupils remember her as a kindly teacher who emphasised the joy of dancing rather than competition.

But her main contribution is in her dances. They bring together the Highland and country dance traditions, and cover a great range – from pure country dance to dances consisting almost entirely of highland stepping, such as sword dances. Most characteristic of all are her set dances: "Bonnie Anne," "McLaine of Lochbuie," "MacDonald of Sleat," and others. These are danced in formations, with many country dance figures as well as passages of highland stepping; they are remarkable for their fluid choreography, with one formation melting into another, which makes them superb demonstration dances.

The origin and development of these dances provoke interesting questions. Most are based on dances originally collected by Mrs. MacNab from a variety of sources – some from

Scottish emigrants in Vancouver and Nova Scotia, some from sources in Scotland. Mrs. MacNab seems to have lent an open ear to anyone willing to teach her a dance, especially old people describing dances they knew as children. Several of her dances were learned from her Canadian teacher DC Mather, a piper and dancer, and from Mrs. Bain, a Vancouver high school teacher whom Mrs. MacNab (Mary Isdale as she was then) met during World War I.

Mrs. MacNab's collecting was not that of a scholar, however. Since she began recording dances while still a student, as many as thirty years might elapse between the collecting and the reconstruction of a dance. Hugh Thurston writes from first-hand knowledge of her method:

...Mrs. MacNab reconstructed dances from her notes - or, rather, not entirely from her notes (which were very brief) but from a combination of the notes, her memory, and her experience of, and feel for, the kind of movement that is a valid part of Scottish dance tradition. (Thistle No. 33, October 1967 - a memorial issue for Mrs. MacNab)

The finished dances appear to have evolved also from the collaboration between Mrs. MacNab and her class, rather as plays can evolve in a workshop process. They also owe much to Mrs. MacNab's artistic feeling for dance as spectacle, her flair for organizing an effective and varied performance. Her theatrical

instincts may be seen in her published instructions, for example in the last eight bars of "Because He Was a Bonnie Lad".

Mrs. MacNab's work was widely recognized in her lifetime, both in Vancouver and in Scotland. When Miss Milligan visited Vancouver in 1961, "she saw a performance of Vancouver's own dances, arranged by Mrs. MacNab. The highlight was the scintillating performance of 'The Eight Men of Moidart' and 'Lovat Star' by sixteen dancers" (The Thistle No. 1, November 1961). Mrs. MacNab subsequently taught her dances at St. Andrews. A number were published by the RSCDS.

Despite their comparative difficulty, several favourite MacNab dances became established in the Vancouver party and ball program repertoire. "The Shepherd's Crook" and "The Royal Salute" are still regularly performed by the Branch Demonstration Team. The frequent recording of the dances (for example, "Bonnie Anne" was recorded by the Gordon, Johnstone, and MacLeod bands in Scotland as well as the Teuchters and Schiehallion in Vancouver) shows their popularity throughout the Scottish Country Dance world.

With thanks to Hugh Thurston, Editor of The Thistle and Mary Wattum for their helpful comments on this article.

**Rosemary Coupe**  
 Vancouver Branch,  
 RSCDS



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**Perth & Kinross STDT Project Events & Activities**

**Saturday 9th November**

A Dance for All  
 Aberfeldy Town Hall  
 7 - 11pm  
 Pre-dance Workshop for all from  
 4 - 6pm

The programme is to include ceilidh dances and reels.

**Saturday 23rd November**

Family Ceilidh Dance  
 Pitlochry Town Hall  
 7 - 11pm  
 Tickets at the door: £4 (£2)  
 Family Ticket: £10

**For information on all our events and activities contact:**

Heather Benes McGadie &  
 Mats Melin  
 Crieff Learning Centre, Lodge Street,  
 Crieff, PH7 4DW  
 T: 01764 657103  
 E: heather.stdt@virgin.net and  
 mats.stdt@virgin.net

For web info on ceilidh and old time dances in and around Central Scotland (and beyond) take a look at: <http://ceilidh.members.beeb.net>  
 For interesting info on Scottish traditional dance, check out:  
<http://www.scottishdance.net>

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**Further info from the STDT office.**

**Traditional Dance Events in Fife**

If you would like information about Fife events, are interested in arranging a class or demonstration for your group, or would like to have a chat about your own memories of dancing in Fife, you can contact us at this address: Rothes Halls, Rothes Square, Glenrothes, KY7 5NX.

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**For info: 01968 672631**

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**Angus People's Dances 2002-03**

**2002**  
**November 1st**  
 Brechin - City Hall  
**November 15th**  
 Kirriemuir - Town Hall

**2003**  
**February 28th**  
 Forfar - Reid Hall  
**March 28th**  
 Montrose - Town Hall  
**April 25th**  
 Edzell - Inglis Memorial Hall

**May 23rd**  
 Kirriemuir - Town Hall  
 All dances 8pm - midnight  
 £4  
 Contact: Marion Robson  
**01561 377501**

**Hungarian Festivals - Call for Interest**

**Mr Karoly Miklos, Director of International 'Village-Wandering' Festival & International 'Country-Wandering' Festival in Hungary is looking for amateur folk dance groups who may wish to take part in either of the above festivals.**

He is looking for groups of any age range who could pay their cost of travelling and accommodation, since the hosts do not have funds available for this. Should anyone be interested in finding out more about these events, please write to Mr Karoly Miklos on Fax: (Int) 36-62-481-430

E mail: mikloskaroly@freemail.hu  
 Web: <http://falujaro.uw.hu>

**STDT GENERAL BOARD**

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**STDT News Subscription & Membership Form**

Please complete this form with your credit card details or cheque (UK only), made payable to STDT Ltd. and send it to: Membership Secretary, Freepost, Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust, 18b Broad Street, Stirling, FK8 1EF.

**T: 01786 849247 • F: 01786 849248 • E: stdt.stirling@virgin.net**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Individual membership (1 year)  £12.50

Individual membership - concession (1 year)  £10.00

Concessionary rate is available to anyone who is receiving benefit, unemployed, a student, under 16, over 60, retired & Entertainment Union member.

Individual membership (10 years)  £100.00

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**CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS**

Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please note that the information you have provided will be held by STDT in accordance with the Data Protection Act.