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Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust

news

2003 November Issue



STDT Annual
General Meeting

New James Scott,
Skinner's Website

Angus Summer
Arts Festival
The Hairst

Linlithgow
Scotch Hop

Scottish
Dance the
Day Away 2

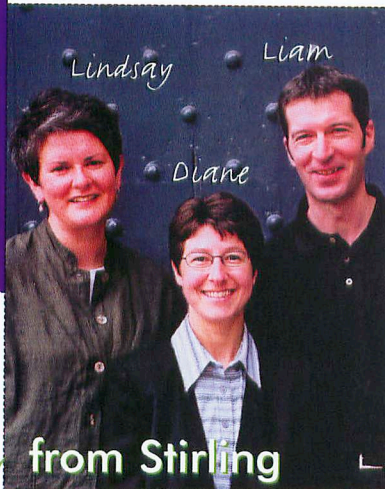
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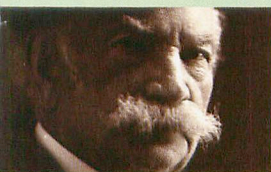
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Hello
again from Stirling

It's with some reluctance that I am writing this, my farewell update. I leave to take up a new post in Edinburgh at the end of September.

I've been with STDT for the last 18 months or so, and have enjoyed all of that time. Everyone involved has been just great. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their fantastic support and positive input to all our activities - established, and new.



So, I thought it might be interesting to look at some examples of developments so far :

Our new logo and print has all been exceptionally well-received; our new partners like the National Museums of Scotland, Tolbooth, Celtic Connections, Burns and a' that Festival, Dance Base among others have been a wonderful development for STDT, and we hope it all continues to contribute to the exciting direction all our dance traditions are taking; we have our commission 'Generating Heat' and working on developing another to tour with 'Heat' next year; new events have been introduced like the Fringe and the Dance Festival in Stirling; our next development project to take place in Glasgow is on line; new projects like the inter-cultural schools project, again in Glasgow are always a priority; we now have our liaison network initiative in place; and are looking at developing our first Instruction Video/DVD - all this alongside our on-going events calendar which has taken off over the last year or so, and our support of new work by professional dancers across Scotland. The Stirling office continues to provide advice, information and support to all enquiries as well as

input to programming for other events. Our networking knows no bounds! Our latest new contacts are in the US, and link sites are now up on our website, so check it out!

Anyway, STDT continues to promote and advocate all our dance traditions, and to live up to our national remit, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of that.

As ever, we always want to hear from you - it's always great to receive your feedback, and I wanted also to thank you, for all your support, and wonderful positive input and comments.

With very best wishes

Lindsay

PLEASE NOTE

Any individual articles in the magazine can be sent to individuals who may require larger type.

Sunday 21 September 2003

The Space, Dundee

Scottish
Dance the
Day

The events committee broke new ground by taking our second "Scottish Dance The Day Away" to Dundee. There in The Space, the custom built dance venue of Dundee College, an exciting day of dance and music was held.

We made full use of the dance studios, seminar rooms, theatre, generous public areas, catering facilities and bar and thoroughly appreciated the open garden areas which surround The Space. The building is modern, has lots of natural light and was a first class venue for the event.

People of all ages and abilities were welcome to join in the day's activities and with first class tutors on board the dancing was both educational and great fun. Anita Mackenzie led Country and Old Time, Mats Melin the Highland choreography and Lancers, Morag Johnston footed the Step class, John Carswell called Ceilidh as did Lorna MacLaren in catering for Ceilidh beginners and the new addition of Early Dance with Jackie Tully-Jackson proved a great success. Jackie and two of her Edinburgh Early Dancers gave performances throughout the day and were a joy to watch with their centuries-past costumes and dancing grace.

Photo > courtesy of National Museums of Scotland





▲ *Birling in the Ceilidh class*

Dance

profile

Fraser MacDonald

Young Ceilidh Enthusiast



Q How long have you been dancing?
a Since November 1999.

Q How did you start dancing?
a It was the Advent Fair in Linlithgow. John Carswell and my mum were organising dancing outside at the Cross. It looked good fun so I joined in with one of my friends.

Q What do you enjoy most about it?
a Whizzing up and down!

Q In your view, are boys or girls more interested in dancing?
a Both the same.

Q How do you think we could get more of your friends to try traditional dancing?
a More chances to try dancing in school.

Q What event(s) have you really enjoyed recently?
a Scotch Hop and definitely when it is outside.

Q What's your favourite dance?
a Orcadian Strip the Willow.

Q Any other comments?
a My favourite band is Gordon Shand. Very energetic. Good for mixing with other nationalities.

Away 2



◀ *Happy Early Dance class National Museums of Scotland*

Our founder Chair, Evelyn Hood, is always on hand as she was on this day when she delivered a talk on "The History of Scottish Dance" which was extremely well received and actively discussed.

Lorna MacLaren took an afternoon workshop on 'Calling for Scottish Dance' and this was greatly appreciated by those who attended. It is interesting to note that a couple of the participants were the two Ballantyne girls from Aberdeen who although still at school certainly look as if they are to make their mark in the Scottish dance scene...well done girls.

Well-known Angus musician and Scottish dance band leader Wayne Robertson led a session in 'Playing for Scottish Dance' and later played with fiddler Ron Kerr for the Ceilidh dance which brought the day to a successful close at 7.30pm.

We had hoped for a greater attendance although the day could not have been more enjoyable and the question at the end of the day from the participants was "When and where is your next Scottish Dance The Day Away being held?".

Marion Robson

Confidance

formerly known as
Blind Dance

One of our members, **Alison Guthrie**, has asked us to highlight the recent name change of **Blind Dance to Confidance**. Following the **retiral of June Mackay**, **Alison has taken over responsibility for much of the teaching of the group**. **Alison is a qualified RSCDS teacher and was involved in Early Dance, where she met June Mackay.**

Many types of dance are taught to a mixed ability group with the added challenge of visual impairment, eg Scottish, Early, Ceilidh, Old time and Folk. Perhaps you can help Alison: she is looking for new material to use with the group, in particular simple international folk dance. If you have any information, contacts or other assistance for this worthwhile project, Alison may be contacted through the STDT office.

Traditional Dance Development in Fife

Following the success of Traditional Dance Development in Fife from 2002/03, funded by the Scottish Arts Council and Fife Council Arts Development, I am delighted to be continuing with the project for a further two years, with the support once again of SAC.

I have established a strong and enthusiastic interest in Ceilidh dance, with pupils within Primary and Secondary schools, and youth community groups throughout Fife, and owing to the demand for workshops during the school curriculum and also after school clubs, I would like to ask if anyone would be interested in tutoring during these workshops. Please contact me by telephone or writing to:

Fife Council Community Services
Arts Development
Auchterderran Centre
Tower Block
CARDENDEN
Fife KY5 0NE

Tel: 01592 414836

Thank you!

Joyce Anderson
Traditional Dance
Development Officer, Fife

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Billy Forsyth (Vice-Chair)

Mary Anne Alburger

John Drysdale

Pat Harrower

Gareth Mitchelson

Annabel Oates

Lindsay Robertson

Sheena Wellington

THE HAIRST

www.thehairst.com

Angus council proudly presented another season of Scottish music and dance with the opening words in their brochure reading "The Scottish Traditions of Dance Trust and the Hairst present a season of Scottish music and dance." This year's Hairst opened with STDT's Grand Granary Dance at the Reid Hall, Forfar on August 1st. Dancers joined in the fun of the dance and were introduced to the heritage of dance in Angus with a taster exhibition to kindle their interest. Music was provided by Wayne Robertson and his band who played the dancers through the reels, jigs and couple dances of the night.

Our next date of activity took place in Kirriemuir on the 16th when a full day's programme was planned. Ian Cruickshanks led a well attended and very successful workshop on "Playing for the Dance" and the participants were invited to play with the band for the dance at night. It was quite a spectacular sight and sound with the twelve plus musicians all on stage playing for the dancing.

Lovely "jigginjess" in the form of Jessie Stuart took an afternoon workshop in "Dancing for the Dance" at which almost 70 attended. Folk from near and far attended the afternoon's tuition and came back for more when they attended the dance at night. The combination of Jessie's dancing and Iain's music made for a record crowd of 94 at the dance. STDT's final contribution to the Hairst found us in Edzell in the historic Inglis Memorial Hall. The day started with a tour of the hall by local librarian Moira Edwards whose knowledge is such that she made it both informative and humorous.

Following the tour came two workshops which ran simultaneously. One was led by the skilled mouth

Angus Summer Arts Festival



^ Final Fling at Edzell
< Gavin Piper

thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. It was good to see so many of the workshop families join in the dance.

As always it is very pleasing to be involved in promoting the Scottish traditions of dance and even more so when this involves introducing it to people who have never danced. What

organist Bryce Johnston who had his pupils 'sook-blavin' for a couple of hours and still they wanted more. This was the first mouth organ workshop which we have held but it will not be the last. The other workshop was Ceilidh Dance where Annabel Oates put 30 dancers of all stages through their paces. It was a very happy workshop which was family orientated and worked very well. The favourite dance of the afternoon was the Virginia Reel.

Gavin Piper joined us at night when he played for the dance which was extremely well attended and

Robert Ferguson wrote all those centuries ago continues to ring true today "For nought can cheer the heart sae weel, As can a canty Highland reel; It vivifies the heel to skip and dance: Lifeless is he wha canna feel It's influence".

STDT thoroughly enjoyed their involvement in the Hairst and it is hoped that we will be able to continue and expand our input in years to come. We have to thank Colin Dakers of Angus Council for his help throughout.

Marion Robson

citymoves dancespace

citymoves is the dance agency for the North East of Scotland.

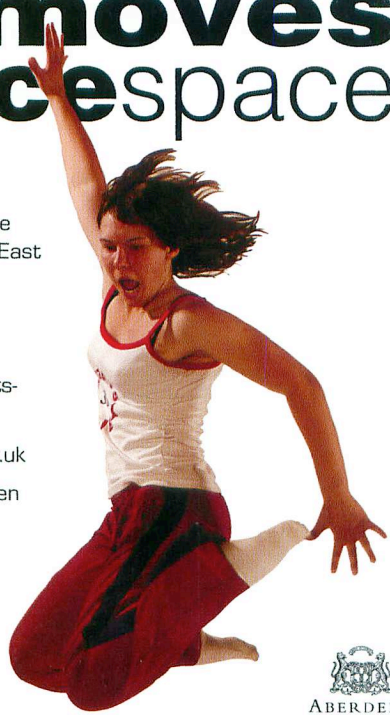
Tel: 01224 523705

Fax: 01224 649157

E-mail: citymoves@arts-rec.aberdeen.net.uk

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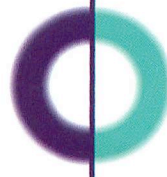
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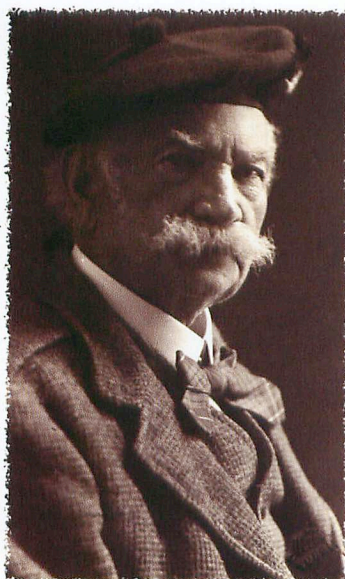
Report from the Smithsonian

Our Director, Lindsay Robertson, visited New York City and Washington DC around the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in July to make new contacts; promote STDT with key individuals; and to attend the Festival which featured Scottish traditions.

In her role as a "Special Visitor" to the event, she saw performances by Scottish dancers, musicians and singers all of whom were of high quality and reflected well on Scotland's performers. The dancers in particular were superb - providing excellent demonstrations and encouraging participation - in extremely hot weather conditions. It quickly became apparent in her meetings with key players that STDT had made a positive impression and would therefore be remembered in the event of appropriate opportunities for partnership; event involvement; or making connections in Scotland.

As a result of Lindsay's trip, STDT successfully took the opportunity to make new connections; gain an insight into the Scottish dance situation in NYC; experience Scottish work in a US Cultural Festival context; disseminate Trust information to key individuals; create a positive impression of our work and place an emphasis on the role of the traditions in the modern world.

The next challenge is to maintain these contacts and identify projects which could be useful for the further promotion and development of STDT.



This multimedia website features a searchable database of several hundred images, comprising music, letters, photographs, articles and other documents, with commentaries to place them in context. It also includes eighty examples of Skinner's own recordings and a video of dances performed as he taught them.

A complete section of the site is devoted to dance - Skinner was a dancing master for thirty years and produced two dance manuals. This section includes excerpts from Francis

The University of Aberdeen has launched an exciting new multimedia web resource:

The Music of James Scott Skinner.

NEW James Scott Skinner's Website

Peacock's Sketches, various dance manuals and a late Victorian essay on Highland Dance - but not as we know it today.

Whilst looking for dance-related material to include on the site, I came across two unsigned notebooks compiled by Skinner and his own dancing master, 'Professor' William Scott. These notebooks were probably part of A Guide to Fashionable Dancing, published around 1884 by Charles Middleton of Keith. In addition to various quadrilles and country dances, they include simple dances, such as 'Long Live the Queen Country Dance', composed by Skinner in 1868 for Queen Victoria's tenants at Balmoral.

Providing an extra dimension to the site are dance video clips, interpreting most of the dances in The People's Ballroom Guide, which Skinner published in 1905, and performed by the Aurora Dancers (Aberdeen).

You can read the dances and then watch our interpretations - greatly assisted by Mats Melin. It is fascinating to see how some dances, still well known today, have developed over the past hundred years. Although Skinner described the Highland Fling in enough detail for us to perform it, we had to turn to D R Mackenzie's Guide to the National Dances of Scotland for the other Highland Dances. As Mackenzie's guide was intended as a manual for teachers, it includes such useful aspects as metronome speeds and a guide to foot positions. It was great fun to perform the Highland dances at twice the customary rate. This also enabled us to see how the Highland Fling got its name - the foot certainly does 'fling' around the leg!

Have a look at the site at: www.abdn.ac.uk/scottskinner

Pat Ballantyne

Linlithgow

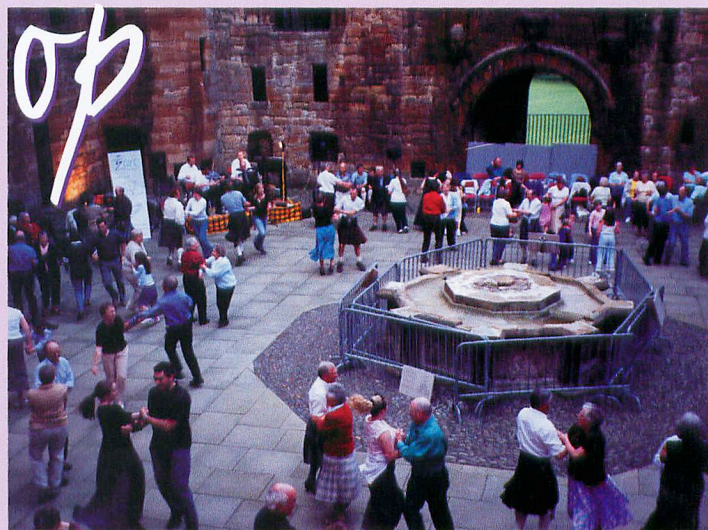
Scotch Hop

We had to wait 14 years for a summer like that but it was worth it! This year we managed to dance outside in the Palace Courtyard for four nights out of the five planned. With more than 1,500 dancers turning up altogether, we could do with a bigger Palace! There can be no better place than the Palace Forecourt for "Beating the Retreat" and once again our local Pipe and Reed Bands put on a fine display.

I am not sure how many pairs of left feet were there or how many cups of tea or gallons of squash were made by the Linlithgow Scottish Country Dance Club but 3,200 fingers of Walker's Shortbread were eaten!

These events came under the umbrella of STDT for the first time this year, and we are also grateful for the support of West Lothian Council. However, there are a great many people involved, directly or indirectly, in running Scottish dancing events such as this and I would like to thank everyone who helped in any way.

John Carswell



▼ Dancing in the Palace courtyard

Our 7th Annual General Meeting was held on a drizzly Saturday morning in the Apex City Quay Hotel, Dundee, but despite the rare occurrence of rain, spirits were high.



Annual General Meeting

20 September 2003

The AGM was planned for Dundee this year not only to coincide with our Scottish Dance Day the Day Away in The Space the next day, but also because we were keen to add another "J" to the list which makes Dundee famous - Jute, Jam, Journalism...and Jigging!

The venue was ideal and the meeting went very smoothly under the Chairmanship of Marion Robson and Vice-Chairmanship of Billy Forsyth. It was Marion's first AGM as Chair of the Trust, and she carried out her duty with her usual efficiency and humour.

Before the main business of the meeting, presentations were made to two outgoing members of the Board: Mike Thomson, who has acted as STDT Finance Director for many years; and Jimmy Spankie, who has been the driving force behind many STDT events, and indeed will continue to be a member of the Events Sub-Committee. Both were thanked by Marion for their past efforts and continued support of the work of the Trust.

It was also announced that Gareth Mitchelson, Lindsay Robertson and Sheena Wellington had been invited to join the Board of the Trust and had accepted.

Peter Royston, Dance Director of the School of Contemporary Dance at

The Space, provided an interesting insight into the development of the custom-built dance building, his work, and the requirements of the dance students who undertake the available courses. He was particularly proud of the fact that Dundee provides the only contemporary dance course which includes training in traditional dance. This section has been taught in the past by Mats Melin and Maggie Moore.

The Open Forum for members covered a variety of topics, including:

Links with International Bodies - a question was asked as to whether STDT had any plans in future for formal links with international bodies, eg CIOFF (folk dancing), as there could be financial advantages or other benefits. National Traditional Dance Group - we are lacking a performance group in Scotland, a

traditional dance group specifically for public performance of all dance styles and acting as ambassadors for Scotland's traditional culture.

The meeting was informed that STDT is gradually developing international contacts while consolidating its work throughout Scotland. There is a need to look at the international perspective of Scottish dance which tends to concentrate on Highland or Scottish Country and if we can expand that to cover all forms of dance it will be a good thing. It may be possible to find funding to allow us to expand on these contacts and develop a traditional dance company for Scotland.

It was pointed out that Lindsay Robertson's recent trip to USA to develop contacts and raise the STDT profile, partly funded by the SAC, had gained more recognition for the Trust in the USA. There are so many

Scots abroad who have introduced their traditions to other countries, and we should be in regular touch with their organisations.

Events Listings - it was asked whether the Events diary on the Website could be developed further. At present we cover mainly STDT events and pass on events information provided by members. On our current staffing levels, it would be too ambitious to attempt to provide a regularly updated nation-wide events listing. However we will continue to investigate further possibilities.

After the Open Forum and an enjoyable lunch, everyone joined in the afternoon dance to the music of Wayne Robertson, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

See you all again next year in Glasgow!

Diane Dixon

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Events



Dance Your Socks Off

DICKSON HALL, LAURENCEKIRK
Thursday nights
6, 13, 20, 27 November
 7.30pm - 9.15pm
 With Marion Robson and the Laurencekirk Ceilidh Dance & Reels Group
 All 8 classes £25 per person or £5 per class
 For further details, contact Marion on 01561 377501 or e-mail: mearnsvet@hotmail.com

Ceilidh Dance Class

PENICUIK TOWN HALL
Thursdays 25 September - 11 December 2003 and 15 January - 25 March 2004
 With Annabel Oates.
 8pm - 9.30pm
 Adults: £2.70; Child/Student: £1.40
 For more info, tel: 01968 672631

Strathspey Away with Dannsa

KINGUSSIE
14-16 November 2003
 A weekend of classes and performances in various dance styles from step to quadrilles. Further information from Sandra Robertson, Tel: 01540 661594 or e-mail: sandra@dannsa.com

Oldtime/Ceilidh Dance Group

THE DEAN TAVERN, NEWTONGRANGE (NEAR DALKEITH)
Every Wednesday evening starting 22 October
 New dance group/class being held 7.30pm - 10pm. Cost £3 per night (£1.50 under 16s). Live music, old favourites and some new dances too! Further details from Karin Ingram, e-mail: karin@northbeat.co.uk

Events at National Museum of Scotland

CHAMBERS STREET, EDINBURGH
Sunday 30 November
 Dannsa will present a set of dance styles demonstrations and participation for everyone in Main Hall, Museum of Scotland. Drop-in event (40 mins). FREE admission - suitable for all ages.
Sunday 4 January
 Bella McNab Dancers will put on a hooley for all and a demonstration of Ceilidh dancing at Museum of Scotland, Hawthornden Court. An absolute must for New Year recovery! Drop-in event (40 mins). FREE admission - suitable for all ages.

Visit **STDT's** web site at **www.stdt.org** for more traditional dance information and for links to other interesting listings and info sites

A Tribute Concert & Exhibition to Scott Skinner

WOODEND ARTS CENTRE, BANCHORY
27 & 28 March 2004
 Following the success of the Bobby Watson event last year, STDT now presents a great evening's entertainment and exhibition celebrating the life and achievements of the "Strathspey King", Scott Skinner.

STDT at Celtic Connections 2004

Plans are underway for an expanded programme of events at Celtic Connections 2004, including performance, workshops and another popular Ceilidh Night at St Andrews in the Square. Information will be sent out to members as soon as it is confirmed.
For further details on any of these events, please contact STDT.

PLEASE NOTE: The magazines in 2004 will be published in January, April, July and October

Finlayson Dancing Family

One of our STDT members, William Laidlaw from Dingwall, sent us some information about the dancing family of Finlay, Mary and John Finlayson of Kishorn (pictured), who were taken to London to dance before Queen Victoria and also performed in concert halls of the day. If you know anything more about the Finlaysons, please let us know!



> Finlay, Mary and John Finlayson

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