

Helensburgh & District RSCDS



UPDATE

<http://www.helensburgh-rscds.org.uk>

This year's nominated
main charity:
**Dementia Resource
Centre**

Birling at the Ball!



Who can you spot birling?

Message from the Chairman

Hello fellow dancers.

As much as I enjoy speaking with you all I find this task of writing difficult. I write as I think, and then I have to make sense of what I have written, and then try and shorten it. In these modern times communicating by texting in shorthand, makes us lazy!

It has been a good three months of dancing! I hope you have enjoyed your Dance Classes this term, learning some new dances, refreshing older ones. I am sure you are looking forward to the Christmas Parties in your own class and the Tuesday Club's Christmas Dance, in the Victoria Halls with Alan Ross. Lastly, the couples Dance on the 9th December at Cardross, dancing to Sandy Nixon, will be a great night. Guess what! "The Cuckoo Clock" is on the programme, you know the dance with Muirland Willie, your favourite dance sequence? Tickets are still available. (cont. on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Message from the Chairman	1
Bulletin 1974	1
Message from the Chairman (cont)	2
Hamilton & Clydesdale	3
Hamilton & Clydesdale	4
Society AGM	4
Lorn 60th Anniversary	5
Christmas Tree Festival	5
Old Friends Alistair Aitkenhead Jean Sim	6
Guess Who	6
Thanks from Botswana	7
Passing Thoughts Tuesday Club	7
Diary & Classes	8

Committee

- ♦ Chairman Pam Fennell
- ♦ Secretary Irene Smith

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- ♦ Treasurer David Reid
- ♦ Secretary 2 Helen Bain

Extract from RSCDS Bulletin No. 52 October 1974

Dunbartonshire West. While the Annual Couples Ball was its customary success, in some ways the outstanding event was the annual Junior Dance which catered for some 200 youngsters ranging from five to fifteen years of age and a wide variety of dancing experience and ability. As a result of the annual Charity Dance, the sum of £130 was donated to the Stewart Home, Cove.

There was the usual round of demonstrations — geriatric homes, garden fetes, ceilidhs, etc.

On the occasion of his retirement after 18 years of continuous committee service, 13 of these years as Branch Secretary, Tom Savage was presented with an inscribed gold watch at the Branch Annual General Meeting on 2nd May, 1974.

Message from the Chairman cont.

In October, we had our Mini Charity Dance in St Josephs Hall in the afternoon. This was a trial change from an evening dance to see if we could attract more dancers, especially local people who are not happy driving at night. Last year we had 58 dancers in the evening; this year 48 in the afternoon! Although down in numbers it was still a good dance, enjoyed by all. Several visitors came from Hamilton and Ayr. The music was provided by Roy Bain. This saved money in not hiring a band and actually increased the amount raised for the charity.

I am delighted to report that £478-80 was raised for the charity MS Revive and a cheque has been sent to the Charity. Thank you to all who donated raffle prizes and supported the charity.

On the following Friday afternoon, Helen Bain's Cove and Kilcreggan class held a very successful dance in Cove Burgh Hall. There was music from "Best of the Bands". The music and programme was enjoyed by the 48 dancers many who arrived by Bus from Helensburgh and by ferry across the Clyde from Gourrock.

Our next dance was the Ball, a great success with 73 dancers, including many visitors from Glasgow and other Branches. I enjoyed, as Chairman, welcoming everyone to the Ball and speaking with them during the evening and hearing their positive feedback. One of the pleasant duties of Chairman is to choose and present guests, at the end of the evening, with the flower arrangements from their table.



Are Your Lines Straight?



As well as supporting our local Branch several of us support other Branches. This autumn ten of us travelled to Oban for the Lorn (Argyll) Branch's 60th Anniversary Ball, a superb night. The friendly Reception, delightful Buffet and then an evening of dance with Marian Anderson made it a great event. This is an enjoyable way to socialise with friends from many Branches who support Helensburgh.

The third Ball was of course at the AGM in Perth which six of us attended. The venue is the huge Bells Sports Centre, dancing with hundreds of people from all over the world. It was most enjoyable, a very friendly, happy night! You should try it just for the experience. Think about it, you can just go for one night either to the Dance on Friday or the Ball on Saturday, or spend the whole weekend in Perth and enjoy the city.

2017

Now into the New Year we have the Members Dance to look forward to on Friday 13th January. The more of you that can come, the better the dance will be. The buffet is pretty good too! We bring it! Either a sweet or savoury dish depending on the colour of your ticket. I am saying no more! Note, the venue has changed to St Josephs Hall, and we are dancing to Nicky McMichan

The BIG charity dance is on Friday 17th February, in the Victoria Halls. The nominated charity is the Dementia Resource Centre, Helensburgh. Raffle books will be available soon and the tickets too. Please put the date in your new diary.

Then, of course, "The Weekend". The application forms are now available online and Helen Cameron is our Weekend Secretary. We would appreciate your early submission of the forms this year. Dates: Friday 31st March to Sunday 2nd April. If you have not attended before why not try one night this year and perhaps the class on Saturday

morning?

As Chairman I will visit all the classes to meet everyone involved in Scottish Country Dancing in the area and to discuss what dancers want in the future. I have so far visited three classes and will visit others after Christmas. I have tried to encourage a conversation about the RSCDS and the benefits this organisation provides to members around the world as well as in the UK. I realise that for some people the cost of membership of RSCDS on top of the cost of classes and attending organised dances can be a burden so it would be wrong of me to pressurise dancers to join the Society. All I wish to do is stimulate a discussion about the need to encourage as many people as possible to come and enjoy Scottish Country Dancing and hopefully understand that the Society should be recognised as the agency that supports us in everything we enjoy.

Finally can I wish you all a very happy and enjoyable Christmas.

Pam Fennell.



Pam speaking about the RSCDS and promoting the benefits of membership.

Hamilton & Clydesdale

When we have our Helensburgh and District Dance Weekend each Spring it's nice to share the event with familiar friends and those of other branches who come to join us. This year Catherine and I decided to visit the weekend school organised by another branch, so we booked ourselves in to the Hamilton and Clydesdale Branch Dance Weekend which was held at the Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry (30th September – 2nd October).



One of the benefits of this particular dance weekend is that it all takes place under one roof. When you book your place at the Hamilton and Clydesdale Dance Weekend your accommodation in the hotel is arranged as part of the booking and you make one payment to cover the event and your accommodation.

On arriving at the hotel we were offered a welcoming liqueur at reception. As we left the reception desk we were greeted by a gentleman who handed us a named and printed invitation to the chairman's champagne reception before dinner. During the reception the chairman spoke briefly, welcoming people from various branches. We had arrived at Pitlochry wondering whether we might feel a bit "on our own" or whether we would meet dancers we had met elsewhere. We needn't have worried. Immediately we fell into conversation with dancers we had met on SCD holidays and some who had been to a Helensburgh weekend dance – including the ladies from Thurso mentioned in the last issue of Update!

We found the Athol Palace Hotel to be both comfortable and convenient for the event. In the dining room (dbb) the dancers had an area to ourselves adjacent to the main dining area with waiter service; and after dinner we only had to retire downstairs to the function room for the dance each evening. No need to bother about outdoor clothing, transport, etc., etc. After the dance we only had to retire upstairs to our rooms.



The dance teacher was Janet Johnston who treated us to her usual good teaching laced with plenty of good-natured humour. The dances each evening were enjoyed in a relaxed atmosphere. Dress was optional both evenings. All dances were recapped and walk-throughs were not a problem if called for. The music both evenings was Gordon



Janet teaching

At the close of a very pleasant and comfortable weekend the dancers – about 80 of us – met for a group photograph to be published in a forthcoming edition of Scottish Field.

Did we enjoy Hamilton and Clydesdale’s Dance Weekend at Pitlochry? We sure did. Would we go again? We hope to!

Malcolm and Catherine Wright

Society AGM/ Conference Weekend 4th-6th November 2016

The Bi-annual Teachers’ Associations Conference was held once again this year in the Bell Centre, Perth. Roy and Helen Bain along with Irene Smith attended the full day session in the company of SCD teachers from around the world. Discussions ranged from how different associations could work together with the Society on projects that would benefit all dancers and a practical dancing session on low impact dancing. The conference allows teachers from different areas to talk about common problems in teaching various classes.

The Dance on Friday night was very enjoyable with music provided by Marian Anderson. There were fewer Helensburgh people attending this year but Helen and Roy Bain, Pam Fennell, Anne Thorn, Colin and Irene Smith represented the Branch. Saturday morning dawned with an Open Forum with Helen Russell, Chairman Elect,

reporting back on the RSCDS Business Plan and how HQ had taken on board some of the suggestions put forward by the Branches that had responded to papers previously sent out. The meeting was followed by a class taken by Heather Cowan with music from James Gray.

The AGM, a very short affair this year, was held on Saturday afternoon when Jean Martin was named as the new President of the Society and Jim Healy handed over the Chairman’s chain of office to Helen Russell. There was only one motion for delegates to vote on, the Management Board proposed that the basic full membership should remain at £20 for the next year. This was agreed. Prior to the meeting branches had voted for the next Chairman Elect and Andrew Kellett from London Branch was declared to be the new Chairman Elect.

Jim Lindsay provided the lively music for the Ball on the Saturday evening.

A Class was held on the Sunday morning for those people who still had energy to dance. Jim Stott was the teacher and Ian Muir provided the music.

Irene Smith

Guess Who is Trying Out an Alternative Way of Keeping Fit



Lorn (Argyll) Branch 60th Anniversary Ball 24th September 2016

The tickets were on sale and selling fast but our first opportunity to purchase them was when we attended the Dance at Tarbert on the 7th May. This was the celebration of the Lorn (Argyll) Branch 60th Anniversary and the Ball was to be held on Saturday 24th September 2016 at the Corran Halls, Oban.

The day turned out to be horrid with torrential rain all day and our journey up there from Helensburgh was miserable.

We arrived at the Hall in plenty of time for the Welcoming Reception at 6.00pm being greeted at the entrance by 2 young pipers of the Oban Pipe Band playing and inside by members of the Lorn Branch. The Hall looked different from usual as it had been divided into 2 specific areas for the evening's activity with the use of drapes. The first was to be used for the reception and the second for dining and dancing and it was lovely to meet up with friends and dancers from different areas while we enjoyed a glass of wine and checked the seating plan for dinner.

After a short time we were ushered through to the 2nd area where we found our designated table. The seating plan had been arranged so we dined with dancers from different branches which was an excellent idea. Before the buffet was served the anniversary cake was cut by Mrs Jean Campbell and Mrs Sue Porter. The buffet was excellent and was followed by coffee and a piece of anniversary cake.



During the meal we had become aware that not all the guests had arrived due to the weather conditions. The Helensburgh Branch members noticed that Nan Dearie and her sister Jess Dinning were not present nor was the Society Chairman Jim Healy and his wife and it transpired that there had been a landslip which

had blocked the road beside Loch Awe and prevented them from getting through to Oban. Nan and Jess turned back and Jim Healy and his wife had to wait for a car transporter for their car as it had been damaged in the landslip and they finally arrived in Oban at 10.00pm but regretfully missed the Ball. Jim had been on the programme to propose a Toast as Society Chairman and at short notice Gordon Porter kindly gave it instead.

Once the meal and speeches were over the evening continued with dancing to Marian Anderson's Band. As usual she played superbly and we all enjoyed the programme of dances chosen.



In all a superb evening and a very happy, convivial and most successful celebration of the Lorn Branch's 60th Anniversary.

Helen and Mike Cameron

Christmas Tree Festival

The Branch is once again taking part in the annual Christmas tree festival in United Reformed Church, West Princess Street, Helensburgh.

All trees are sponsored by local organisations.

The festival runs from Tuesday 13th December until Sunday 17th December. Please see the Community Advertiser for details and entertainment each day.



Old Friends

We're a group of Scottish Dancers
And our years are showing through,
Our ageing feet don't always
Do the things we want them to.
We sometimes don't remember
And we often take short cuts
And any youngster watching us
Would no doubt think we're nuts.
Our muscles may be bandaged up,
Our rheumatism bad,
But we'll think when we're really old
Of all the fun we've had.
The crippling agony of cramp
The drives through rain and sleet,
Assorted ligaments we've pulled,
The aching of the feet.
Ah happy days of jolly fun!
And when the season ends –
The main thing we are left with
Is a lovely lot of friends.

Pat Batt

Alistair Aitkenhead



Those of you who have been dancing in the Helensburgh area for a long number of years will be sorry to hear of the recent death of Alistair Aitkenhead, a long-time supporter of our Branch. Along with our later Honorary President Norah Dunn, he toured Canada and America on behalf of the RSCDS training and examining teachers.

He was one of the very early teachers at our Helensburgh Weekend teaching in 1980, 1985 and again in 1993. He was always full of vigour and promoted dancing as a fun activity.

Jean Sim



Another faithful supporter of our Branch, Jean Sim, passed away in October. Jean was accompanist for many years at the classes at Helensburgh Weekends and, in recognition of this, she was awarded a branch Award by us in April 2005. She had also been an accompanist for many years at RSCDS Summer School in St Andrews.

Guess Who



40th Anniversary—1992

Many Thanks from Botswana

Jamie Porter wrote a belated letter from Botswana to thank all the dancers who attended the afternoon tea dance and morning dance and contributed to his Project Trust Fund. The sum of £350 was raised.

Jamie wrote: Thank you for all the help you gave me while I was fund raising and actually planning and preparing to leave. It was extremely valued. I am sorry I didn't get a chance to say "thank you" before I left. If possible could you send my regards to everyone who came to the fundraising event and donated so generously. Because of them I have been given this absolutely incredible opportunity. I am in love with Botswana. My project is proving quite hard work but I knew that when I signed up.

I am working with some boys who are older than me. For five hours in the morning I am teaching maths and English in a variety of forms. For maths I have 3 groups consisting of 2-3 boys who particularly struggle in class. For English I take a whole class (standard 6) which is equivalent of our primary 6. As we are working with boys who have been put out of public school for a number of social reasons, they are not particularly keen on being taught all of the time. This is these boys' last chance to obtain a primary school level education and for some any education, as when they leave they are too old for secondary school education. The work the teachers and volunteers do is extremely valued. There are four volunteers at my school, two from Scotland and two from Germany. We also make bricks for school projects, supervise swimming and take an art club. Botswana is a beautiful country and the people are so welcoming. The wildlife is incredible. Thank you again.
Jamie Porter.



Tuesday Club Christmas Dance

Helensburgh SCD Club held a very successful Christmas dance on Tuesday the 6th December. Over 50 dancers attended—made up of both class members and visitors. Live music was provided by Alan Ross who played some super tunes including Christmas singalongs. The programme consisted of a number of old favourites and a few newer dances which proved popular including The Hoy Tensome, Staircase in Styria, The Blue Dragonfly and Kismul Cottage. A generous and tasty supper was provided by class members and the only damper on the evening was the horrendous weather outside.



Passing Thoughts

The names of Scottish dances are music to the ear,
Though some are quite unusual and many downright queer.
So, what did Wicked Willie do? Did Lady Auckland reel?
And what on earth are Partans all doing in the Creel?
Who was it made the Wild Geese wild? Why was Iona cross?
And why should any Jelly Roar? I'm at a total loss.
Did Maxwell Rant? Did Nancy Frown?
Did Jennifer Jig up and down?
Why did White Sergeant have to Dash?
Did he and General Stuart clash?
I wonder who pinched Arthur's Seat?
Perhaps I'll leave this incomplete...
Pat Batt

Christmas Challenge—would anyone like to try to make up a poem or story containing the titles of Scottish country dances for the next "Update"?

Guess Who Answers

Seated: Norah Dunn, Sue Ashby
Alma Traill, Anne Thorn, Dargie Henderson
Front Row: Dorothy Capstick, Dorothy Reid,
Carrie
Tudhope, Jessie Gilvear, George Rennie, Alan
Margaret Savage, Tom McNally, Tom
Back Row: Tom Savage, Moira Thomson,

For your Diary

Members' Dance	13 January	2017	St Josephs Upper Hall	Nicky McMichan
Charity Dance	17 February	2017	Victoria Halls	Lindsay Weir
Junior Dance		tbc	Victoria Halls (Pillar Hall)	tbc
Weekend Ball	31 March	2017	Hermitage Academy	Scott Band
Weekend Class	01 April	2017	Hermitage Academy	Ann Robertson & Susan MacFadyen
Weekend Dance	01 April	2017	Hermitage Academy	Jim Lindsay
Weekend Coffee Morning	02 April	2017	The Commodore Hotel	Ann Robertson

Branch Classes

General and Ceilidh

Helensburgh Parish Church
Mondays
8.00 - 10.00

Teacher: Roy Bain 01436 842695
Starts: 09 January 2017
Cost: £35 per term

Couples

Hermitage Academy
Thursdays
8.00 - 10.00

Teacher: Helen Bain 01436 842695
Starts: 12 January 2017
Cost: £35 per term (2 terms)

Junior Classes

Guide Hall, John Street

Tuesday

3.45 - 4.30 (5 - 7 yrs)

Teacher: H Rodger 07930156225
Starts: 10 January 2017
£20 per term (2 terms)

Guide Hall, John Street

Tuesday

4.30 - 5.15 (7 - 9 yrs)

Teacher: H Rodger 07930156225
Starts: 10 January 2017
£20 per term (2 terms)

Guide Hall, John Street

Wednesday

4.15 - 5.15 (10yrs +)

Teacher: H Rodger 07930156225
Starts: 11 January 2017
£20 per term (2 terms)

Other adult classes in the area

Cove & Kilcreggan SCD Class

Cove Burgh Hall
Tuesdays 10.00 Teacher: Helen Bain 01436 842695
Starts: 10 January 2017

Helensburgh SCD Club

Pillar Hall
Tuesdays 8.00 Teacher: Anne Thorn 01436 677474
Starts: 10 January 2017

Wednesday Morning SCD Class

John Street Guide Hall
Wednesdays 9.45 Teacher: Helen Rodger 07930156225
Starts: 11 January 2017

Thursday Afternoon SCD Club

Scout Hall, John Street
Thursdays 2.00 Teacher: Douglas Thomson 01436 679192
Starts: 12 January 2017

Rosneath SCD Club

Rosneath Primary School
Thursdays 7.30 Teacher: Douglas Thomson for further information contact Aileen Couper on 01436 831602
Starts: 12 January 2017

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