

## WHAT YOU DID ON YOUR SUMMER HOLIDAYS

### A WEEK IN FRANCE

Camaraderie, sunshine and dancing – all in the Rhone Valley with its spectacular scenery and wonderful wine! To arrive on the 7<sup>th</sup> September, a group of Scottish dancers had made their way by 'plane, bus, caravan, van, car and even bicycle to the area around St. Marcellin.



We were to spend some time seeing the sights, but most of our thoughts were concentrated on the dancing. Graham and Lorna Coles were to blame – having fallen in love with this region some time ago they thought it would be good to enable some friends to learn about the area, and to introduce the locals to Scottish Dancing.



After much thought they had finally decided on four different venues and worked through the year to ensure that each town would welcome a programme of dances

originating from Scotland, including the Hebrides, and England.

Despite Scotland beating France at rugby that afternoon there was a great welcome from the people of Pont en Royans, and having worked through our first evening performance the Mayor handed us a photographic history of the town.

In St. Nazaire we collected a crowd as we walked through the streets following our trusty piper, Stuart.



The children loved the dancing and joined in gladly when invited but I did wonder what the local men did to have so much damage to their knees, ankles and backs that prevented them from joining me to dance!



Hostun was warm, both with the sun, and the reception we received as we danced in the middle of the road! The huge crowd clapped as

we worked through Papa Stour, and enjoyed Dalriada so much they assembled their own orchestra to play some Scottish tunes for us.



We had been invited for aperitifs afterwards but were overwhelmed when the villagers walked in with a variety of home-baked pies, breads and cakes for us to sample. After the feast (well, to refuse would have been churlish ....!) we still managed to eat an enormous amount of pizza that Lorna had ordered for supper!

On the final evening we danced in the main square in St. Marcellin. Alan and Lesley Cottle delighted everyone with their pas-de-deux, the men performed The Reel of the 51<sup>st</sup> effortlessly, and the medley of reels, jigs and strathspeys were delivered with panache! We were led to a café for a drink afterwards where the café owner delighted in painting French flags on as many of us as he could!

### This issue:

**Chairman's Letter.  
Legless in St Andrews!  
Dancing our way  
around the World  
A week in France  
Demo Team  
Christmas Quiz  
Society's AGM**



The good French speakers impressed us all with their introductions, explanations and directions that were delivered throughout the performances, the chefs of the party were much appreciated by everyone, and the after-dinner entertainment was ably organised and managed to involve us all and ensure we left with a smile on our faces.



As a couple of first-timers, we were thrilled to be part of a group who seemed to work so well together and appreciate each member's strengths and abilities, even if it did mean we had to endure Brian's jokes! Wonderful friends, wonderful place, wonderful holiday.

Patricia and Brian Machin

**LEGLESS IN ST. ANDREWS  
(Well sort of!!)**

This year the RSCDS Summer School was different in so many ways.

Due to the refurbishment of University Hall, St Salvator's, (Prince William was based here while at the University, Scotland's oldest, so there was a lot of speculation as to who might be sleeping in 'his' room!) as well as David Russell Hall, and others, were pressed in to service. For those not familiar with St Andrews, 'Sallies' as it is known to generations of students, sits in behind the Younger Hall.

So what? I hear you ask, but bear with me- the juxtaposition has some relevance. I get ahead of myself, as the use of the word 'oldest' reminded me. Another (James) Senior (of St Andrews) moment, possibly?

The holiday started with an archaeological/historical trip to Aberdeen, the granite city, on the way eyeing up the Brechin lassies (don't bother - although the cathedral and detached round tower are interesting), passing through Inverbervie, the birthplace of Hercules Linton, the designer of the 'Cutty Sark' (wait for Burns Night) and just missing Mrs Milne of Kineff. Nearby, Dunottar castle is also well worth a visit. Over the Dee and over the Don on my way to pay my respects to the Torphins lassie, I visited the recumbent stone circle, 4000 years old, at Tomnaverrie.



According to the information board, "the two tall pillars command a view of Lochnagar, twenty miles away." The weather was good and sure enough, there it was! Then followed a walk round the policies at Monymusk, with one of Lesley's sisters.



At St Andrews, the Highland gathering and games had been cancelled, either due to the summer rain or competition from the Ladies' Open, held on the Old Course.

Both my classes were large, but not unwieldy, and largely enjoyable.

The first was with Elinor Vandegrift, with Mike Williams on accordion in the Students' union (*aka* 'the black hole', due to its sombre decor). The second, in the Town Hall, with a good floor, was with Geoffrey Selling, accompanied by Mr Robert H Mackay on piano. Both teachers were from 'across the pond', and Geoffrey in particular was very energetic and enthusiastic.

This is more than I can say about my right leg. In June, with the Radyr dancers in S. Wales, I had torn a muscle in the calf. Despite physiotherapy with the University in Bristol I had to severely pace myself, hence the benefit of proximity to the Younger Hall. There were a variety of evening functions, but I favoured those nearby with George Meikle and Gordon Simpson.

A visiting local physiotherapist provided some top-up treatment. She recommended walking along the West Sands in the sea, which was pretty cold, but it did help; however by the end of the week she was concerned that a DVT might be developing. The last day was largely spent between St Andrews and Dundee hospitals, but there was no dancing in the street to be missed. Despite an optimistic diagnosis a full-length support stocking was supplied. Being unable to feel the swing of the kilt against my leg when I went for a walk round the park was rather disconcerting!

It was good to meet old friends from previous years, and they were very supportive, which was very much appreciated. Once again an enjoyable time, albeit very different from previous years, and an experience that I would recommend, but preferably with two good legs!

Andrew Smith

**CHRISTMAS QUIZ**

Come one, come all, and test your dancing knowledge or just try your luck. How many dance names can you spot in Andrew's 'Legless in St Andrew's' article. He assures me there are over 20 (it would be too easy to give you the exact number). So jot them all down on a piece of paper with your name and post them in the box near the notice

board closing date Jan 26th. There is a huge tin of delicious goodies, to see you through the long winter nights, for the person who finds most dance titles (if it's a tie we will draw one correct entry out of the hat).

## DANCING OUR WAY AROUND THE WORLD

Many of you may know that Gordon and I have enjoyed dancing in various countries, both in Europe and many other places around the world. This year saw us at the "Teachers' Association of Canada" (TAC) summer school which is held alternately on the East and West coasts of Canada.



This year it was in Shawnigan School beside Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island. The Summer school was great, though physically very demanding and we had a few aches & pains here and there during the week. The standard of dancing was much higher than we had experienced in Halifax two years ago, so this was a big plus for us, and both the music and teaching standard were top class.



We had 3-hour sessions of dancing on each of the 7 mornings, 5

evenings of social dancing, a ceilidh, and also chose a couple of extra sessions in the afternoon, so we certainly made the best of it. The venue also was excellent – an independent school in lovely surroundings, very close to the Lake – we had our own room with private facilities, so we were very lucky – however the walking between the various halls was tough on tired dancing legs, fortunately the weather was dry!



We were made very welcome by the many nationalities involved, the whole event was extremely efficiently organised, and we came away with many very happy memories, having made some new friends.



Also at TAC was Fiona Grant, indeed we were all in the same morning class, as were Maureen Haynes, Derek's widow, Pat and Peter Clark from Scotland and a few others we have come across in other venues. These teachers also stepped out of the class to teach a morning session, which proved to be a very successful formula. We both enjoyed Fiona's class, which took place in the Gym, a very large and difficult room in which to teach, but she did an excellent job, congratulations, Fiona.



In the evenings we all gathered for social dancing, generally about 96 of the 175 dancers attending the week, whirled around the floor enjoying the music and each other's company. There were beginners and intermediate dancers, but all joined in happy camaraderie the more experienced helping as necessary.



One evening was a themed evening, which brought out all sorts of ingenious costumes on the Harry Potter theme. Fiona was awarded the prize for best "non-human" character – the phoenix bird – cleverly suggested with the skillful use of a few feathers. On the last night there was a banquet in the elegantly decorated dining room, followed by a splendid ball. We certainly recommend this event to any dancers thinking of going to a summer school.

Patsy & Gordon Patterson

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

I find it hard to believe that we have nearly finished the first term of the dancing year and that we are getting ready for Christmas.

It is good to be able to report that many activities and events have taken place this term and I am sure that you will find detailed reports of some of these in this newsletter.

The move of the class to St Monica's hall has been a success and we have been left to our own

devices by the staff there. From time to time we have had spectators on the balcony and we hope that they have enjoyed watching our class.

It has been good to have Barbara taking the main class for three weeks this term and I would like to thank both Peter and Barbara for their flexibility in agreeing to the committee's request for a small change in the teaching pattern. We have also welcomed Cheryl as an associate teacher and we look forward to her teaching from time to time. It has also been good to see some new faces at the classes and if you are a newcomer I hope that you are enjoying the experience and exercise but also having good fun. Feedback is always important and we should like to hear your views.

The usual events have taken place with the New Season dance in October and the Day School in November. I hope that the Day School was enjoyed by all the participants.



We were grateful that David Hall's flight from the USA arrived in time to enable him to get to Bristol on time for the first session. We were also pleased to welcome



Ken Martlew who, at very short notice, came to play the piano for the two classes. Hugh and Dalriada kept us all dancing through the evening and I think it is significant

that most dancers stayed until the end.

The dancers who went to France for a week in the summer recently held a reunion where we enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by all followed by two hours of dancing to the music of Hugh and Elizabeth. This is a private arrangement amongst some members of the Branch. If you think that this sounds fun then why not offer to arrange an informal social event for the club?

The last class before Christmas is on 13<sup>th</sup> December. I hope that you have this date in your diary and will join us for dancing to the music of Peter and Edna Russell and also to enjoy the mulled wine and mince pies.

I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Marcus Ashman

### DEMO TEAM

The Monday class is well attended by enthusiastic dancers. We had one evening to prepare a dance for Peter's birthday, and are now working on a repertoire for St Andrew's Night at St Monica's and Burns' Night with the British Legion. We are hoping to find time to do some highland and ladies' step dancing.

A team of 12 dancers represented Bristol RSCDS at the Festival of Scottish Dancing (planned for the Roman Amphitheatre) at Caerleon. This is a very popular event in the dancing calendar, but weather dependent, and unfortunately Wales was under water on June 30 so the festival and evening dance were held inside the local community centre.



The team danced a newly choreographed medley, which was much appreciated by the audience

and festival organizers who commented on the patterns, choreography, and apparent enjoyment (not a nerve showing!). George Meikle played for the display and we were fortunate that he played for the Thursday class on his way to Caerleon so we had been able to have a dress rehearsal! George was joined by Ian Robertson for the evening dance after the Bristol and Westbury teams had enjoyed a gourmet American supper.

Everyone is welcome so if you would like to take part in displays or are interested in finding out more please come along.

For more information on dates venues and times please contact Barbara de Winton.

### NEW SEASON DANCE

The New Season dance for 2007 was held on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October, and fifty-one of the fifty-four people who bought tickets came along to the St Monica Trust hall to enjoy a good programme of dances, from "Roaring Jelly" right through to "Mr Iain Stuart Robertson".



There was apparently a counter-attraction on the evening of one of those games where some really big men chase an oval ball and a few smaller and quicker men, around a field. They are not often very successful, so that is probably why, when they do score, they call it, maybe somewhat sardonically, a "try". One of our members seemed to be very assiduously looking after the urn for the hot water for tea and coffee before suppertime. At first it was thought that the thermostat must be faulty, and it could not be left unattended. Eventually, however, it all became clear to the Ticket Secretary why there seemed to have been some pretty lame excuses for not buying a ticket, some time having elapsed before a miniature television set was noticed, tucked round the corner. Names

are not mentioned to protect the innocent.

There were other devious ploys to keep up with the evening's other event – it seemed that the game was of some importance – but the majority concentrated on having a good time to the music of Green Ginger. Barbara de Winton was the M.C. for the evening and took us smoothly and efficiently through the programme, which included the first public outing of her latest dance, "Torphins Lassie", devised in memory of Lesley Terry.

It is a pity that a few more dancers were not able to come, especially from the Branch. The hall just



avoided seeming under-utilised, and we are very grateful to those visitors from neighbouring groups who gave us their support. We are also grateful to Margaret Chambers and her helpers who co-ordinated the laying out and clearing away of the, once again very successful, American Supper.

It is a well-worn cliché, but a good time really was had by all.

Andrew Smith

## RSCDS AGM & MEMBERS FORUM

### MEMBERS FORUM

For the second year, Bristol organised the Members Forum, held on the Saturday morning of the AGM weekend, in the Bells Sports Centre; a rather overlarge hall. This is a chance for members to discuss round the table topics of interest suggested in advance by members of the Society.

The 125 participants were seated randomly and despite this discussions seemed to go well, being lively and interactive and everyone seemed to contribute. Each table took two topics to discuss and after about 1 ¼ hours a plenary feedback session took up the remainder of the time. Peter will

summarise the feedback for our website and hopefully the RSCDS website. We had many positive comments on the organisation and format and we hope another branch will take it forward next year.

### AGM

On the Saturday afternoon the AGM itself was held. Following the welcome from the Chairman, Irene Bennett, the Earl of Mansfield read a message from Her Majesty The Queen, the Society's Patron and presented The Society's Scroll of Honour to 7 people

The Annual Activities Report was updated by Jim Healy and Elspeth Gray with a brief overview of the year's activities.

Lawrence Boyd, Convenor, General Purposes & Finance Committee and Treasurer then presented the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts. He spoke of the need of good governance of the Society, of the need for a strategic plan and of compliance with risk management requirements and the myriad of regulations now imposed on charities. He clearly felt that the present state of affairs was unsatisfactory and declared that he was resigning from his position; standing down a year early from his office. It was obvious to the meeting that his resignation came as the culmination of his sense of anger and frustration at what he considers to be the Trustees' inability or unwillingness to deal with the Society's problems.

The financial state of the Society is a matter of great concern as expenditure is outstripping income to such an extent that without remedial action the Society could be insolvent in a matter of a few years. Jim Healy stood to address some of the issues raised by Lawrence Boyd and stated that the Trustees were trying to address the issues and that Alex Gray, Chairman-Elect, had put in place a small group to consider the problems and find solutions.

There followed the election of members to the Management Board and Management Committees. Bristol's own Andrew Smith was elected to the Management Board and Peter Wright to the General Purposes and Finance Committee, with Rhona Chalmers still on the Membership Services Committee,

Bristol now has a strong presence in the governance of the Society.

The meeting then addressed the two motions -

Firstly: To raise the annual membership subscription from £10 to £15. The motion was carried by a two thirds majority. It is interesting to note, for Bristol purposes, that many groups charge quite extensively for Branch membership in addition to the Society's membership, sometimes £10 or £15 as opposed to Bristol's £2.

Secondly - The motion relating to the Society's processing of Disclosure Applications (which are the Scottish equivalent to the English CRB) was put to the meeting and passed following extensive contributions from Scottish delegates regarding their experiences.

Bristol delegates voted as mandated by the membership at our AGM.

Irene Bennett then thanked the Earl of Mansfield for his many years of support as President of the Society with a short history of his life and involvement with the Society. After discussion as to a suitable gift, the Society has purchased a Cedar of Lebanon tree to plant in the grounds of his ancestral home, Scone Palace, to mark his time as President. Dr Alastair MacFadyen was then appointed as the new President of the RSCDS and gave a short speech.

It would seem to be a given that the Society is in need of some modernising and restructuring – there may be other Bristol members who would be interested in being involved in the committees and if so, do let the Bristol committee or Elspeth Gray at HQ know.

In addition to the formal business of the weekend, those attending enjoyed a Ball on the Friday evening, dancing to David Cunningham and his band and an informal dance on the Saturday night to the Marian Anderson Band (which included Keith Smith on the violin). There were about 600 dancers on the floor at both occasions, including many young dancers. There were also classes and workshops available and the opportunity to visit Scone Palace.

Caroline Dunn & Clive Robinson

## RSCDS HQ EVENTS

**RSCDS Winter School 2008**  
21<sup>st</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> February  
Pitlochry

## BRISTOL BRANCH EVENTS

**Burns Supper & Dance**  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
Band: Hugh Ferguson & Dalriada  
Venue: Redland High School

**Newcomers Dance**  
9<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
Band: Scottish Measure  
Venue: St Monica Trust W-O-T

**Haytor Weekend**  
14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> March  
Band: Hugh Ferguson & Dalriada

**Summer Dance**  
10<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
Band: Ian Robertson  
Venue: St Monica Trust W-O-T

## THURSDAY EVENING CLASS

Join us for fun nights of Scottish  
Country Dance on the following  
dates:

**2007-2008**  
13 Sept – 13 Dec  
10 Jan – 13 March  
3 April – 26 June

**Thursday nights for all**  
7.30 – 10.00pm  
**With weekly beginners sessions**  
7.30 – break  
**Venue:** Main Hall, St Monica Trust,  
Cote Lane Bristol.

## TEACHERS 2007/08

Peter Wright: 01761 462874  
[peterwri@mac.com](mailto:peterwri@mac.com)

Barbara De Winton: 0117 962 2724  
[dewinton@talk21.com](mailto:dewinton@talk21.com)

Cheryl Ayers: 0117 959 0970  
[cheryl.ayers@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:cheryl.ayers@blueyonder.co.uk)

We hope that you are enjoying the  
new venue, class structure and  
teaching schedule. If you do have  
any comments please do not  
hesitate to speak to a committee  
member.

## BRISTOL BRANCH COMMITTEE 07/08

Below are details of the Branch  
committee, we are all happy to hear  
from you if you have any comments  
regarding the Branch.

Chairman:  
Marcus Ashman 0117 968 2949  
[mashman@freenet.co.uk](mailto:mashman@freenet.co.uk)

Chair elect:  
Joan Ferguson 01934 852091  
[handjferguson@beeb.net](mailto:handjferguson@beeb.net)

Secretary:  
Ruth Illston 0117 973 7833  
[rscdsbristol@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:rscdsbristol@blueyonder.co.uk)

Treasurer:  
Brian Machin 00117 962 3775  
[brian.machin@btinternet.com](mailto:brian.machin@btinternet.com)

Catering:  
Margaret Chambers 0117 923 2919  
[margarechambers@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:margarechambers@blueyonder.co.uk)

Publicity:  
Fiona Thompson 0117 944 6946  
[F.Thompson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:F.Thompson@bristol.ac.uk)

Membership Secretary:  
Lynn Robinson 0117 967 7073  
[Lynn.rr@btinternet.com](mailto:Lynn.rr@btinternet.com)

Ticket Secretary:  
Graham Cole 01275 854782  
[graham.coles@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.coles@btinternet.com)

## RSCDS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Rhona Chalmers: 0117 950 6508  
[rhona.chalmers@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:rhona.chalmers@blueyonder.co.uk)

Peter Wright: 01761 462874  
[peterwri@mac.com](mailto:peterwri@mac.com)

Andrew Smith: 0117 962 9533  
[afsmith@talktalk.net](mailto:afsmith@talktalk.net)

## USEFUL WEB LINKS

Don't forget our own website which  
will help to keep you up-to-date with  
the branch, classes and events.

RSCDS Bristol Branch  
<http://www.rscdsbristol.info>  
Webmaster: Peter Wright

**Others sites of interest:**  
RSCDS Headquarters  
<http://www.rscds.org>  
(Ask a Committee member for password)

Grand Chain  
<http://www.scottishdance.net/>

Strathspey Server  
<http://www.strathspey.org/>

## NEWSLETTER

As always I would like to take this  
opportunity to express my gratitude  
to all the contributors who have  
willingly provided their articles and  
fantastic photographs for this  
edition. It certainly makes my job as  
editor, incredibly easy and I really  
do appreciate your help. I can take  
no credit for any of the articles  
above but I am sure you will agree  
we have some very talented  
members in the branch.

Thanks to all members who  
contributed to Peter's birthday  
collection. We had enough to buy  
Peter gift vouchers from Highlander  
Music (rather selfish I know since  
we will all benefit from his choices)  
and a lovely bottle of his favourite  
tipple. The remainder was used as  
a contribution towards the wine and  
nibbles during the break. I for one  
thought that the evening went very  
well and I know that Peter was  
delighted that we marked the  
occasion in that way. I did notice a  
marked effect due to alcohol  
consumption on the quality of  
dancing after the break – did you?

I would like to end by reminding you  
that as ever no news submitted  
means no newsletter!! So please  
get in touch with all your news and  
adventures over the upcoming  
break. I wish you all a Happy New  
Year and the very best for 2008.  
Slàinte Mhor!

Editor: Fiona Thompson  
Next Issue: Spring/Summer 2008  
Submissions by May 2008.



Bristol members enjoying the  
Society's AGM Ball.