

Dance Scottish for fun, fitness & friendship



Celebrating 100 years of RSCDS Edinburgh Branch

“Dancing Forth” is the regular magazine of RSCDS Edinburgh. The copy date for the next edition is 1st December 2024
contributions should be sent to: dancingforth@rscdsedinburgh.org





Dancing fun with our friends from East and West Lothian Branches kicked off our Centenary Celebrations with music from Sandy Nixon and his Scottish dance band.



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Special thanks to Bulloch Photography for the images from our Ball and Civic Reception. All other photographs were taken by Elizabeth Harry and Theresa MacVarish Clark.





It has been wonderful to see so many members and friends dancing with us in our centenary year.

The first six months have been memorable for so many reasons:

- Our first event in January with dancing friends from East and West Lothian joining us
- Making new friends with the Edinburgh Gilbert and Sullivan Society, sharing our dances and their songs
- Lots of fun at our ceilidh, hosting dancers from around the world
- Our Nice'n'Easy dance where many Beginners joined us on the dance floor
- Our Centenary weekend – first our friendly joint dance with many local groups, followed by our wonderful Centenary Ball, with music from the legendary Ian MacPhail
- Seeing our fledgling Children's Class gain great results in their first medal test, and then entertain us at our Centenary Afternoon Tea
- Meeting many dancing friends and having time to chat, both at our Afternoon Tea and our Civic Reception in the City Chambers

The highlight for me personally was being totally surprised by my Branch Award, presented at our Ball. Thank you for this. It has been my great pleasure to be part of this special year.

I am looking forward to seeing many more of you on the dance floor in the next few weeks, both at our Dancing Through the Decades event and at our classes.

Happy Dancing!

David Watson, Chairman

Membership of RSCDS Edinburgh allows you to be part of a community of dancers both locally and worldwide and supports Scottish country dancing in Edinburgh and beyond.



Members benefit from a range of discounts and exclusive deals, as well as helping the continuation of the Scottish country dance tradition.

Renewal of your membership for 2024—2025 is due now and you can do this online on

our website www.rscdsedinburgh.org/membership or contact us to pay by cheque.



David Watson, along with his wife Janet, being presented with his Branch Award by RSCDS Chairman William Williamson at our Centenary Ball.

Important

- Please inform us if you have moved or if any of your contact details have changed
- RSCDS Edinburgh does not accept any liability for goods and services advertised within our pages
- Members can access additional pages on our website: log in details are on the reverse of your current membership card
- Please contact us if you are a Life member and would like a Centenary membership card

The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (Edinburgh Branch) is a charity promoting the fun, fitness and friendship of Scottish country dancing since 1924.



Website: www.rscdsedinburgh.org
 YouTube: www.youtube.com/RSCDSEdinburgh
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A Trip to the Royal Garden Party

A Tuesday afternoon usually finds me in jeans and t-shirt typing at a keyboard, and Caroline in a yellow hoodie directing children and families around Scottish dances. But on the afternoon of Tuesday 2nd July we took a break from our normal activities and dressed up in our finery. Along with Lorna and Stuart (children of attendees aged between 18 and 25 are allowed to accompany their parents), we headed to Holyrood palace to represent Edinburgh Branch at the Royal Garden Party.

We began by spending the better part of an hour in a traffic jam through Holyrood Park, and then more time striding across the grass to the palace. On entering the palace grounds, we found a pipe band playing and countermarching in the area in the centre, marked out by the Royal Company of Archers in their role as the King's Bodyguard in Scotland. We admired a wind band in their bright red uniforms, then made our way round to the refreshment tents.

There, we were able to help ourselves to a wide selection of different cakes and sandwiches, accompanied by a choice of tea, iced coffee, apple juice or pear and elderflower. Plates in hand, we headed back to the centre of the garden, where the crowd was now nearly ten deep behind the archers. Unable to see anything notable happening through the spectators, we had the chance to look around and admire all the differing stylish outfits. Ladies were instructed to wear "Day Dress with Hat or Uniform; Trouser Suit may be worn", and for the Gentlemen, "Morning Coat, Lounge Suite or Uniform", although also "National Dress may be worn".



Caroline was able to repurpose her outfit worn for Lorna's graduation, with a hat made by Alex Muir who used to dance with the Edinburgh Gay Gordons. Lorna was elegant in a green dress with a white cardigan and a straw hat. Stuart looked smart in a new blue suit bought especially for the occasion. And I naturally wore my kilt with a black shirt, tie with thistles and day jacket. ('Men have it easy' says Caroline.)

The members of the Royal Company of Archers, standing marking the edge of the public area, looked very fine in their dark green ceremonial field uniforms, the eagle feather in each of their hats standing proud, and the most noticeable thing from our view at the back of the crowd. They each carried a bow, obviously, but I got chatting with one of them after they came off duty, and he admitted most of the bows were for show. Also, unlike when they formed the honour guard for the Queen's lying in state, they weren't carrying arrows. However, he did emphasise it was only "most" of the bows that were for show ...

The captain of the Archers started inviting a few people from the crowd into the open space, and shortly afterwards Prince Edward and his wife Sophie, now The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, started circulating and chatting. We were too far back to be able to hear what was being said, but the Duke appeared very animated and engaged when he was near us. I did

also get a brief view of The King from afar.

After the walkabouts, the Archers reduced the diameter of their circle, so we were able to get closer to the main tent and staff also started circulating with ice creams. We went round to watch and listen to the wind bands - there were two playing alternately - and found kind people to take some family photos for us, returning the favour to others.



The Duke and Duchess returned to the castle, and shortly afterwards the archers formed up ranks, marched down towards the castle and were then dismissed. Interestingly, they then spread themselves through the crowd, happily chatting to us on their way to find a cup of tea.

Although people began to drift away and the weather became chillier, the bands were still playing a wide variety of music, so we stayed to listen and enjoy the ambience. Shortly after six o'clock, we were amused to watch a fan trying to

engage the drummer in the wind band in conversation, and the drummer's efforts to extract himself so he could play the drum roll which started the national anthem. The anthem concluded the proceedings, so we headed back out of the grounds and home.

We would like to thank the Branch very much for giving us this opportunity and honour in this, our 100th year, and at a point where both Lorna and Stuart were at the right age to be able to join us. It was an interesting, enjoyable and memorable afternoon, and even the weather cooperated.

Ian Brockbank, former Chairman, with input from Caroline Brockbank, CeilidhKids





Dancing through the decades— Saturday 28 September

NEW VENUE — Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Savile Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 3HY

Dancing to **Iain MacPhail and his Scottish dance band**

Our Centenary celebrations continue, join us for a fun evening dancing through the RSCDS Decades.

Sunday Socials with Dunedin Dancers— Sundays 6 October, 10 November, 4 February and 3 March

NEW VENUE — Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Savile Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 3HY

Dancing to **Matthew MacLennan, Stuart Anderson, Ewan Galloway and Aidan Frost**

Join us for a fun afternoon with our friends at Dunedin Dancers. All ages are welcome at these events, so long as you have a reasonable knowledge of basic formations.



Christmas Dance—Saturday 7 December

NEW VENUE — Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Savile Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 3HY

Always a favourite on the dancing calendar! We've a programme of popular dances that we hope you will enjoy and fantastic music from **Matthew MacLennan** and his band. See you there!



Centenary Celebrations

Reaching the grand old age of 100 is no mean feat, so after years of planning we were delighted to kick off our Centenary Weekend with a wonderful **Combined Societies Dance** on the Friday night. A wide range of local Edinburgh clubs and societies – Dunedin Dancers, The Atholl SCD Club, Morningside Club, Trinity SCD Club and New Scotland Country Dance Society - contributed to creating the lively programme. On the Friday evening, this well-attended event in The Lauriston Hall included members joining us from all these groups as well as many dancers from across the globe.



A special cake bearing the Edinburgh Branch Centenary logo was cut by representatives from all the groups and later enjoyed with a glass of bubbly. Ewan Galloway Music provided a fantastic accompaniment to a fun programme of dances. We were especially delighted that at least a couple of devisors of dances on the programme were present!

The beautiful setting of Greyfriars Kirk hosted our **Centenary Ball** on the Saturday. It was very special to see our guests arriving, suitably attired, at the historic church, piped in by our piper, Jamie Crawford.

After a welcoming glass of fizz, the dancing began to the magnificent music of Iain MacPhail and his Scottish Dance Band. It was so fitting that Iain, one of our branch Vice Presidents and a life-time legend of Scottish dancing, led us through the programme.



The dancers came from all over the world – indeed there was a long waiting list for tickets – for the great programme of dances which had been chosen to have special significance to Edinburgh Branch. Around the hall vivid new banners were displayed giving fascinating insights into the history of the branch in pictures and words.

The Ball was attended by guests William Williamson, Chair of the RSCDS, and his wife Linda. We were delighted that Sebastian Wanless, Chair of Glasgow Branch was also able to join us. William presented Edinburgh Branch Chair, David

Watson, with a Branch Award for his outstanding contribution to Scottish country dancing and the RSCDS. There was great secrecy surrounding the presentation so that it would be a surprise for David on the night. Thankfully all went well and David was honoured without any prior knowledge!

The tables were beautifully decorated with small bouquets of flowers, special napkins, and commemorative menus and programmes. A lovely buffet was provided by MacKenzies and as usual, the staff at Greyfriars Kirk and our own volunteers did a marvellous job of ensuring a special event in the Branch's history was memorable and enjoyable to all who attended.





Organiser	Event	Venue	Time	Band/Musician	Contact	Telephone	Email
Aug-24							
30 Teachers Association of Scotland	Autumn Dance	Canon Hoban Hall, 34 Main Street Broxburn EH52 5JR	19.30 - 22.30	Matthew MacLennan	Anne Thorn		anne.thorn9395@gmail.com
31 RSCDS Edinburgh	Children's Classes restart	Greenbank Church Hall, Braidburn Terr	09.30-11.00		Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
Sep-24							
1 RSCDS Edinburgh	Music at the Museum an afternoon of music and dance	Scottish Fisheries Museum, St Ayles, Harbourhead, Anstruther KY10 3AB	12.30-13.30	Iain MacPhail	Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
7 RSCDS St Andrews	Workshop and evening dance	St Andrews Bowling Club St Andrews	14.00	William Williamson & Scott Band	Linda Struthers		l11ots@hotmail.com
11 Dunedin Dancers	Weekly Social Dancing restarts	St Matthew Hall, Morningside Parish Church Hall	19.30-21.30	Various	Caroline Brockbank		enquires@dunedindancers.org.uk
18 Currie SCD Club	Social Dancing	Juniper Green Village Hall, 1A Juniper Park Road	19.30-21.30	Iain MacPhail	Sylvia Dagleish	0131 449 6262	sjdagleish@hotmail.co.uk
19 RSCDS Edinburgh	Annual General Meeting	Murrayfield Church Hall, Ormisdale Terrace	19.00		Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
21 Trinity SCD Club	Club Night	Inverleith St Serf's, Ferry Road	19.30-22.30	Sandy Nixon	Alex Duncan		secretary.trinityscdc@gmail.com
23 RSCDS Edinburgh	Adult Classes restart	Mon - Int; Tues - Beg & AdvBeg; Thurs - Adv			Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
24 Atholl SCD Club	End of Term Party	Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Saville Terrace	19.30-21.45	Iain MacPhail	Ian Coulter	07804 919666	athollscdc.secretary@gmail.com
30 Morningside SCD Club	Weekly Club nights restart	Braid Hall, Braid Road	19.40-21.40	Matthew MacLennan	Sandra Shaw		secretary@morningsideclub.com
Oct-24							
6 RSCDS Edinburgh	Sunday Social with Dunedin Dancers	Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Saville Terrace	14.30-16.30		Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
11 RSCDS East Lothian	Monthly Dance	Aberlady Village Hall	19.30	Stuart Anderson	Iain MacNeil		events@rscdseastlothian.org.uk
12 RSCDS Edinburgh	Children's Classes MID - TERM	No classes this week			Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
12 Trinity SCD Club	Club Night	Inverleith St Serf's, Ferry Road	19.30-22.30	David Oswald	Alex Duncan		secretary.trinityscdc@gmail.com
14 RSCDS Edinburgh	Adult Classes MID - TERM	No classes this week			Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
17 RSCDS Edinburgh	Children's Classes MID - TERM	No classes this week			Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
26 Trinity SCD Club	Club Night	Inverleith St Serf's, Ferry Road	19.30-22.30	Graeme Munro	Alex Duncan		secretary.trinityscdc@gmail.com
Nov-24							
1 RSCDS Autumn Gathering	A weekend of activities for all dancers	Meadowbank Sports Centre	Dance	Gordon Shand			
2 RSCDS Autumn Gathering & AGM	including classes, Friday evening dance and Saturday evening Ball	London Road	Ball	Jim Lindsay	Moir Thomson	0131 225 3854	info@rscds.org
8 RSCDS Autumn Gathering	Monthly Dance	North Esk Church Hall, Musselburgh	19.30	James Coutts	Iain MacNeil		events@rscdseastlothian.org.uk
8 RSCDS East Lothian	Monthly Dance	Aberlady Village Hall	19.30	Stuart Anderson	Iain MacNeil		events@rscdseastlothian.org.uk
10 RSCDS Edinburgh	Sunday Social with Dunedin Dancers	Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Saville Terrace	14.30-16.30		Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
16 Trinity SCD Club	Club Night	Inverleith St Serf's, Ferry Road	19.30-22.30	Matthew MacLennan	Alex Duncan		secretary.trinityscdc@gmail.com
23 Dunedin Dancers	Summer Dance	Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Saville Terrace	19.30-21.30	Nicol McLaren	Caroline Brockbank		enquires@dunedindancers.org.uk
30 Trinity SCD Club	Club Night	Inverleith St Serf's, Ferry Road	19.30-22.30	Susan McFadyen	Alex Duncan		secretary.trinityscdc@gmail.com
Dec-24							
2 RSCDS Edinburgh	Adult Classes end	Mon - Int; Tues - Beg & AdvBeg; Thurs - Adv			Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
2 Morningside SCD Club	Weekly Club nights end	Braid Hall, Braid Road	19.40-21.40	Matthew MacLennan	Sandra Shaw		secretary@morningsideclub.com
6 RSCDS East Lothian	Monthly Dance	East Linton Community Hall	19.30	Graeme Munro	Iain MacNeil		events@rscdseastlothian.org.uk
7 RSCDS Edinburgh	Children's Classes ends		09.30-11.00		Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
7 RSCDS Edinburgh	Christmas Dance	Reid Memorial Church Hall, West Saville Terrace	19.30-22.30	Matthew MacLennan	Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
9 Morningside SCD Club	Christmas Party Night	Braid Hall, Braid Road	19.40-21.40	Matthew MacLennan	Sandra Shaw		secretary@morningsideclub.com
10 RSCDS Edinburgh	Christmas Party Night	Barclay Viewforth Church Hall, 1 Wrigit's Houses	20.00-21.45		Elizabeth Harry	07505 703828	info@rscdsedinburgh.org
11 Currie SCD Club	Christmas Party Night	Juniper Green Village Hall, 1A Juniper Park Road	19.30-21.30	Iain MacPhail	Sylvia Dagleish	0131 449 6262	sjdagleish@hotmail.co.uk
13 RSCDS Dunfermline	Summer Dance	Abbeyview Community Centre, Dunfermline		Phill Jones	Trish Paton		secretary@rscds-dline.org.uk
18 Dunedin Dancers	Weekly Social Dancing ends	St Matthew Hall, Morningside Parish Church Hall	19.30-21.30	Various	Caroline Brockbank		enquires@dunedindancers.org.uk
21 Trinity SCD Club	Club Night	Inverleith St Serf's, Ferry Road	19.30-22.30	Marian Anderson	Alex Duncan		secretary.trinityscdc@gmail.com



Not content with the Centenary Weekend itself, the celebrations continued into the next week, with a **Civic Reception** at Edinburgh City Chambers marking the contribution of Edinburgh Branch to the City and hosted by our Honorary President, The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Robert Aldridge.

The European Room was the splendid setting for this event which saw many members of Edinburgh Branch meet up and have a chance to socialise in a non-dancing occasion. Drinks and canapes were served as The Lord Provost and David, our Chair, outlined the history of Edinburgh Branch in relation to the city. There was also a small display of interesting archive material available for browsing and reminiscing.

It was wonderful to have the opportunity to renew friendships and catch up with members who no longer dance but for whom Edinburgh Branch is a special part of their lives.

Celebrations will continue throughout the year with further events.

Theresa MacVarish Clark

The photos on pages 7–10 are a from these special events. More photographs are in the gallery in our members area on our website You can access this by logging in as a member.



Above and right, members and friends listening to the speeches before enjoying catching up with friends at our Civic Reception



Our Honorary President with past Chairmen



Past and present members of our Demonstration Team



Members of Edinburgh Branch raising a glass





Mass to our Centenary at our Civic Reception





135 guests joined us at our Centenary Ball in May 2024 in Greyfriars Kirk. It was a great opportunity to raise a toast to the next 100 years of dancing.



Dancers representing New Scotland CD Society, Dunedin Dancers, Trinity SCD Club, Morningside Club and The Atholl SCD Club cutting our celebratory cake



Find us on Social Media





Class	Day	Time	Venue	Teacher	Musician
Beginners	Tuesday	8.00— 9.30 pm	Barclay Viewforth Church Hall 1 Wrights Houses, EH10 4HR	Andrew Nolan	Roddy Johnston
Advanced Beginners	Tuesday	8.00— 9.30 pm	Greenbank Parish Church Hall Braidburn Terrace, EH10 6ES	Theresa MacVarish Clark	Seonaid Lynn
Intermediate	Monday	8.00— 9.30 pm	Murrayfield Parish Church, Ormidale Terrace, EH12 6EQ	Yoshi Shibasaki	Ewan Galloway
Advanced	Thursday	8.00 — 9.30 pm	Murrayfield Parish Church, Ormidale Terrace, EH12 6EQ	Elizabeth Harry	Tim Macdonald & Peter Shand

Pricing Structure (10 week term). Beginners classes includes a two week free trial with no obligation to continue beyond the free classes.

Level	Beginners	Advanced Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced
Edinburgh Branch Member	Centenary Offer £56	Special Offer £70	£70	£70
Non-Member			£85	£85

Being a member of Edinburgh Branch helps us to promote traditional Scottish country dancing and music for current and future generations to enjoy. Members also benefit from discounts at our classes and events.

New dancers are encouraged to join our classes at discounted pricing and as you progress with your dancing we encourage you to join as a member.

Our Beginners classes are ideal for new dancers. Become an ambassador and encourage a friend to come along and give Scottish dancing a try.

The first two classes are free for Beginners and there is no obligation to continue. It's a great offer!

Which class is for you? If you are unsure which class is best for you visit our website to check our class descriptions, speak with any of our teachers or contact us for advice. Our teachers will be able to suggest which of our class would be most suitable and give you the most enjoyment. We are happy for you to transfer between classes to find the right level for you.

Want to dance in two classes? We'd love you dance on multiple nights. Claim a 50% discount at the second class and enjoy double the fun!

Beginners	Open to all who have little or no experience of Scottish country dancing. You will learn basic steps and simple formations including reels and some corner formations. By the end of the term you will be able to dance many Scottish country and ceilidh dances.
Advanced Beginners	Aimed at Dancers who have previously completed a Beginners class, or who are returning to dancing after a long period, and have limited footwork and knowledge of formations. You will want to improve your technique, learn more complex formations and increase your own ability.
Intermediate	This energetic class is designed for dancers who are already familiar with core movements of Scottish country dancing and who have attended at least one Advanced Beginner class or been dancing regularly for over two years. You should be able to dance the steps and many of the key formations such as Allemande, Promenade and Ladies chain.
Advanced	This class will improve your footwork, rhythm, phrasing and technique so that your dancing will be of a high standard; this will involve some constructive critiquing of your dancing.

**Our classes for Young Dancers are back at
Greenbank Church Hall on Saturday mornings**

P1 and above 9:30 - 10:15 am

P5 and above 10:15 - 11:15 am

**Join us online and enjoy soft shoe Step Workshops
from the comfort of your home**

Saturday mornings 10.00—11.30 am UK time

Sunday evenings 6.00—7.30 pm UK time

Adult Classes restart during w/c 23 September for 10 weeks with a mid term break during w/c 14 October
Find out more at www.rscdsedinburgh.org/classes

Pay online or at your first class



In this, our centenary year, **Manako Yabe**, a Japanese deaf dancer, joined our Beginners Class. Inspired by learning one of our strathspeys, *The Rakes of Glasgow*, she realised that it related to a fascinating and moving piece of deaf history, linking Japan and Scotland. Here, she traces how the dance connects to her research into the training of the Japanese engineer Yamao Yozo in Robert Napier's Glasgow shipyard in the 1860s, which led to the introduction of sign language and deaf education in Japan.

The Rakes of Glasgow and Japanese Deaf history

Yamao Yozo (1837-1917) was one of Japan's famous 'Choshu Five'. These five young Japanese noblemen defied an existing ban on overseas travel from Japan and risked their lives to travel to the West, coming back with knowledge essential to the development of modern Japan. Their story is told in the 2007 Japanese film *The Choshu Five*. Born in a village in Choshu domain (now Yamaguchi prefecture), Yamao was one of the five who were sent secretly to London in 1863 to study at University College.

In 1866 he moved to Glasgow to receive technical training at Anderson's College (now University of Strathclyde), while working for two years as an apprentice in Robert Napier's shipyard on the Clyde (Govan East Shipyard). At the shipyard, he met deaf workers who were using sign language. This, his first contact with deaf people, led him to the idea for deaf education in Japan. On his return there in 1868, he proposed to establish Japan's deaf and blind education, leading to the setting up of the School for the Deaf and Blind at the University of Tsukuba.

Coincidentally, my brother is an alumnus of the deaf school, and I myself became the first deaf faculty member at the University of Tsukuba. Last September, I joined Heriot-Watt University, the world's first Mechanics' Institute, as a research associate. My manager here shares a surname with Yozo's shipyard manager – Robert Napier. These various coincidences led us to celebrate the 160th anniversary of Japan's Choshu Five in November 2023. We invited guest presenters from the University of Tsukuba's School for the Deaf and a deaf worker from Glasgow's Dockyards. On the 4th of November, we were honored to interview Frank Phelps, a 90-year-old deaf worker from Alexander Stephen & Sons. This was the same exact day when the Choshu Five first arrived in London in 1863.

Yozo's Japanese sign name is the handshake of a sash, as seen in his famous portraits. On Burns Night of 2024, I wore the sash, in Napier's clan tartan, and I joined in the Scottish dance/song, *Auld Lang Syne* for the first time. This song has been adapted in Japan as *Hotari no Hikari* (Light of the Fireflies) and is traditionally sung at high school graduation ceremonies. It is said to have been introduced to Japan by Yozo who learnt it in Glasgow. It is this experience that made me to eager to learn about the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. In the first class, wearing Napier's clan tartan, I

RAKES OF GLASGOW		8x32 S	
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Preston, 1806, RSCDS Book 11.11

3C/4C longwise set

was privileged to dance *The Rakes of Glasgow*. This is a very early dance, published by John Preston in *Twelve Favourite Country Dances* in 1806, so was certainly known at the time of Yozo's residence in Scotland. My soul was smiling when I danced this step!

I have now discovered another connection between Yozo and Scottish Country Dance, in John Drewry's *Thomas Glover's Reel*. Glover was a Scottish merchant from Aberdeenshire, who moved to Nagasaki in 1859 and set up his own trading company. He was instrumental in helping the Choshu Five travel to London in 1863, and became a key figure in the industrialisation of Japan. In Scotland he came to be known as the 'Scottish Samurai'. John Drewry named his dance after Thomas Glover, devising it in 1998 'for the dancers in Mr. Miyakawa's Group in Japan' who had invited him to visit them. I am continuing to research all these connections and hope eventually to develop a dance display in celebration of Japan-Scotland Deaf History.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Manako Yabe at m.yabe@hw.ac.uk.



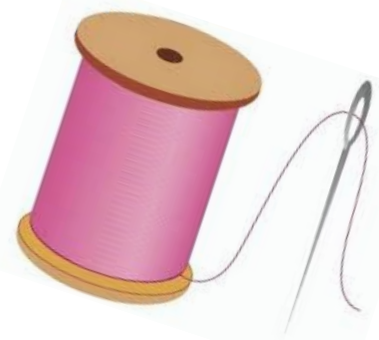
Can you help us?

We are looking to replace some of our ladies demonstration dresses and are looking for dress makers to help us.

It's a simple pattern and we have all the fabric, thread, zips etc all ready to go.

If this is something you, or someone you know could help us with we would love to hear from you.

Contact us at info@rscdsedinburgh.org





Sadly Missed

Valerie Smart 1937-2024

We were sad to learn of the sudden passing of Valerie, she has been part of our Branch for many years as a dancer, teacher and part of our Demonstration team.

Valerie was one of those people who, when you met her, put you completely at ease. You felt that she was totally interested in everything you had to tell her. Later on at a birthday or Christmas you would receive a present, which was just exactly what you had mentioned all those months ago. She had the gift of listening and acting on what she heard. With her warm and kind personality, she would go out of her way to help people; nothing was ever too much trouble for her.

Valerie was a talented lady in a lot of ways and certainly with a needle and thread. She made many costumes for shows over the years and beautifully embroidered Christmas decorations for children. These are still cherished by the children, now adults!

Val gave up hours of her time volunteering at the Open Door in Morningside. She was also a keen Guild member at Greenbank Church for years and was President there for two years. In the Edinburgh Presbyterial Guild Council she held the position of Convener and Treasurer.

Valerie was educated at the Mary Erskine School and when she finished went on to become a teacher. She taught for several years in Edinburgh schools before accepting an exchange abroad for a year.

However, Val was a devoted wife and mother and so eventually gave up teaching to look after Alasdair and all the family: Hamish, Dougal, Kenneth, and Kirsty. Her life was made complete when a few years ago Kenneth's wife had a baby girl and so Val became a granny!!

In the 1980s Alistair and Valerie bought a beautiful holiday house in Rannoch and they spent many weekends and holidays there in the peace and quiet of the country side. They both embraced the local community and did much to help with summer fairs, sales of work and Church events.

At the Mary Erskine Former Pupils 125th Anniversary celebrations in the Merchants Hall in 2009, Valerie danced in the country dance team along with the sixth form girls and although there was a huge age difference Val was as light on her feet as the seventeen-year-old pupils.

Valerie loved country dancing and was an excellent dancer, so neat, and petite. She enjoyed doing demonstrations and was very generous with her time by turning out for Church and care home events. She led a full and happy life, thinking of others and doing all she could to help people. We are indeed very fortunate to have known her.

Thank you for your friendship, Valerie. Rest in Peace.

Noel Proven

Ian Stirling who died recently had a long history with the RSCDS. I first knew him when he lived in Cumbria and attended RSCDS Summer School. He then moved south and was involved with BHS Branch before moving to Skye to run a Post Office and then to Cruachan, Loch Awe to work for Hydro Electric, and danced in Oban. He eventually came to Edinburgh to work at the Traverse Theatre and attended many of our events.

He was a very private person but did enjoy meeting other dancers and attended functions regularly in Edinburgh. He wished to be remembered as "he tried his best".

Robert H Mackay

Also, sadly missed is:

Sylvia Davie — A lovely lady who enjoyed dancing with lots of the clubs in Edinburgh. She will be sadly missed by many in the dancing community.



Valerie pictured bottom right in the 1970s



Production on our **new Centenary book** of dances and music has started. Over the past few weeks a willing group of dancers, led by Margo Priestley and accompanied by music from Peter Shand, danced through some of the dances to ensure the movements and words match perfectly!

Our musicians are getting ready to record our new CD with many new tunes to delight us and lots of new dances to challenge us on the dance floor. The music for the CD will be recorded by our outstanding group of musicians: Muriel Johnstone, Pete Clark, Tim MacDonald and Peter Shand.

Watch our for more information, and get ready to pre-order your copy later in the Autumn.





Children's class Medal tests

Our children's class was slow to restart after Covid. Most of our previous children were now teenagers and no longer able to dance on Saturday mornings. Others had found alternative activities.

We decided to take this as an opportunity to review the class and were able to move location to an area where there are lots of local primary schools. We also split the age groups and now run two classes aimed at P1 – P4 and at P5 and above.

Recognising that we are competing with lots of different activities – including dance, acting and gymnastics – we wanted to offer all our young dancers the opportunity to be involved in competitions, performances and displays. We felt this would be an excellent way to boost their confidence, build their teamwork skills and give them a chance to perform in front of an audience.

The primary weekly focus in our classes is for all the children to have fun, whilst learning. Fiona, our helper, and I always try to ensure a balance of engaging with new formations, practicing steps and learning new dances. We wanted to incorporate preparation for the medal tests into this class ethos and practice, rather than seeing it as a separate activity. Initially, I found the preparation more of a challenge for us as teachers, than for the children. We wanted to ensure that we were teaching them to a good standard of dancing.



Setting up the exams was demanding, as there are lots of rules to be taken into account. We had to consider choosing suitable dances; who dances with who; is the room suitable for the exam; whether we should ask one of our musicians to play or stick

with the recorded music that we use every week. I had much heartache with our P5+ class: would I enter them at Grade 1 for a good pass, or stretch them to Grade 2?

Eventually, we were ready to submit the application and, once it was in, practicing the dances for the tests almost became a religion at the class. With the test set for late March, about midway through the term we became aware that we were no longer having fun. But a week off from “exam dances” gave us all a break and we came back to them refreshed in the following week's class. A practise in our usual room for our very supportive Mums and Dads went really well. We sat back on our laurels and gave ourselves a pat on the back!

As we were holding the test in a different hall, so that we could have more space, we arranged to have a practice in it the week before.

We were quickly brought back to earth as our Introductory group would easily have convinced a passerby that they had never danced before. In the new environment they could barely remember the dances and skip change quickly became skipping. We are in the lucky position of having more boys than girls, but it became clear that our careful partner selections were also not going to work. Most of the girls did not want to dance with a boy, and the boys really didn't care. Letting them choose their own partners was a winner: the boys were thrilled to dance with their friends and the girls were equally happy to dance with each other.

Seeing the shambles of this last class before the test, the Mums stepped in and after-school “play dates” for extra practices were swiftly arranged. The girls were all thrilled to get to wear our “demonstration” dresses, though the boys weren't so keen on the idea of getting dressed up. Our older group played it cool, taking it all in their stride and were delighted to have some of our Branch members join them to make up a set of four couples.

The day of the exams was exciting, with many Branch members stepping in to help. Mums and Dads were kept calm with tea and coffee, children were ready and in the right order at the right time. Fiona and I were probably more nervous than they were, especially when we thought we couldn't connect the speaker to the iPhone.

Mrs Wilkinson put us all at our ease and created a lovely, calm atmosphere for the children to do their best. The morning flew past, and we all (almost) remembered our dances. Our older children were a delight to watch. They are a lovely group who I hope will continue dancing for many years. All of our parents were very impressed by the challenges of the syllabus and the professionalism of the conduct of the exam and the children were ecstatic by the end of the morning. Their nervousness at the start had become victorious celebration, as they felt they had all achieved something. Even the most timid child overcame their nerves to sit the test.



We had 14 children, all sitting medal tests for the first time. Everyone passed and we had five distinctions and four credits. Fiona and I are so proud of the children, who have worked hard to achieve this over the past few months.

I would recommend any teacher to promote these tests to their class. It helps to give the class an aim and a good structure, and we will focus on ensuring we deliver ongoing opportunities for them to perform ahead of their next Medal Test.

Elizabeth Harry



Following their successful Medal Tests, some of the young dancers from our Children's class were delighted to come along and dance for us at our Centenary Afternoon Tea. We had beautiful music to dance to from Peter Shand (piano) and Tim Macdonald (fiddle). Many of our members shared their memories of dancing in the 50s and 60s. Special thanks to all of our members who helped to make this such a successful afternoon, the baking was outstanding!



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Join us for a celebration of Scottish music and dance on Sunday 1st September from 12.30pm. Part of Anstruther Harbour Festival we are delighted to be returning to the Scottish Fisheries Museum with Iain MacPhail and his Scottish dance band, Katie Moore (Highland dancer) and Jamie Crawford (Piper). Everyone is welcome at this free event which is a delightful performance of the best in Scottish entertainment.



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Thank you to the many members who contribute to make each edition of Dancing Forth possible.