

TARRY AWHILE

MK RSCDS

March 2012

The Annual General Meeting will take place on **Monday 23rd April 2012 at 9 pm** in Bradwell Village Memorial Hall. On that evening we shall start dancing at **7.30 pm** until 8.45 pm and then the meeting will begin when everyone has their refreshments. Depending on what time the meeting concludes, we may dance afterwards. This year we have been existing with a smaller than usual committee. The Constitution states that the committee shall comprise “the Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, any other office-bearers appointed and six ordinary members”. We began the year with only three ordinary members and one has since resigned so you can see that we really do need some new blood on the committee. As well as carrying out the duties of treasurer, Terry has been taking the minutes at meetings and keeping an eye on the tea rota, which is really too much for one person. There are usually 6/7 meetings each year in various lounges around Beds and Bucks so it is not too onerous a task – the biggest difficulty is usually finding a time to suit everyone! As far as I am aware at the moment, the present members are willing to stand for re-election. Two people have

been approached and are willing to join us but we could really do with one more person. If you think you would like to give it a go but are not sure what it entails, have a word with one of the present committee who are Graham, Janice, Sarah, Terry and myself. So don't be shy – **your Branch needs you!**
Sheila

WINTER SCHOOL 2012



Lesley, Sara and myself left Milton Keynes early on the Sunday morning enjoying an easy drive up to Pitlochry. After the formal bit of registering and getting rooms sorted in the fabulous Athol Palace Hotel (which enjoys beautiful views of the surrounding scenery) we got changed for dinner and the first social dance of the week. This year there was just the one week and the days follow a similar pattern.

Monday started with two classes in the morning and a free afternoon followed by an evening dance after which one could retire to the bar with its luxurious sofas and log fire or you could be a little more sociable and join the Soirée in the lounge for music and chatting until the early hours.

The next day was the same format for the morning but with an optional talk on Gaelic music in the afternoon, again an evening dance followed by a social evening.

Wednesday morning, more classes with an optional highland dance class in the afternoon, the evening consisted of a traditional Ceilidh again followed by bar or music.

For me it would be worth going to winter school just for the breakfasts and evening meals! The hotel boasts a heated indoor swimming pool, a sauna, Jacuzzi and steam room, it even has its own museum! Top class musicians attend all classes, dances and soirees.

The last day as usual started with classes, followed by a free afternoon. The last evening was the Ball, held in Blair Castle, in the baronial hall with the week's musicians – George Miekle, Frank Thompson and Bill Ewan. David Cunningham seemed to be everywhere taking photos and movie clips. No doubt these will appear on the RSCDS website soon. All the trimmings, a piper to welcome the dancers and a wine reception to get everyone loosened up.

The whole atmosphere of Winter School is so good that it is difficult to do it justice in this résumé. I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys great company, a little hard work, a little luxury and lots of dancing.

Graham Wort.

Annual Ball – Lovat Hall – Newport Pagnell, 10th March, 2012

Attending one's first RSCDS ball in a new location always involves a mixture of excitement and trepidation – How dressed up will everyone be? Will people be stand-offish? Will anyone ask me to dance? How tolerant will they be of mistakes on the dance floor? I need not have worried on any of these counts, as I was made to feel thoroughly welcome and now consider myself fully inaugurated into the Milton Keynes Branch. Reassuringly, there were quite a number of 'kent faces' from my Monday evening class, in the form of our MCs (Graham and Sarah) and other hard-working committee members – all of whom did us proud. Nicol McLaren and the Glenraig Band led us enthusiastically through a stimulating programme of dances and seemed to enjoy themselves as much as did the dancers. I particularly appreciated their witty insertion of the Pink Panther theme and the inclusion of the Dundee City Police Jig on the programme. Curiously I had not encountered this dance during my term as a member and Secretary of the Dundee Branch, so resolve to rectify this glaring omission when next I dance with my old – sorry former – dance partners north of the border!

Rose Barbour.

*Hi, my name is **Lizzie McLeod** I have been going to Rita's Scottish Country Dance class for almost two years and I really, really enjoy it. When Rita first mentioned going to a Ball I was really excited. However, the closer we got to the Ball the more nervous I became. I only knew 3 of the dances on the list (Maxwells Rant, Miss Gibson's Strathspey and Mairi's Wedding) and I only knew the other members of Rita's dance class. I was a bit concerned about getting the dances wrong, and other people getting frustrated with*

me, and by Saturday I was really worried.

But I shouldn't have been! Everyone was really, really friendly, and didn't mind when I made mistakes (which was a lot!) they made a few mistakes too, which made me feel better. I ended up dancing with lots of people who I had never met before that night. I was having so much fun I stayed for the whole night instead of just until half past 10 when I had originally arranged to be picked up at. It was a really great experience and I can't wait till my next Ball!

I have been Scottish Dancing for quite a while now and really enjoy it.

Although I have completed my grades, I have been dancing on Saturday mornings to help with the younger dancers. When Rita had mentioned it, I was keen to experience my first Ball. I was excited and apprehensive at first about the Ball but after the first dance was over, I soon got caught up in the friendly atmosphere and started to relax. Everyone was really welcoming and kind even when I spent some of my time guessing the steps. Some dances went very well and I made mistakes in others, but either way there was a smile on my face and that of my set. Half way through we sat down for a delicious meal. I had a great time and the evening passed in a blur of laughter, dancing and music (and lovely desserts). I left very tired but also felt really happy after an enjoyable night. I look forward to the next Ball! **Katie Farnes (14)**

Children's Class

Our key objective of our **Taster Sessions** was to try to gain new young dancers for the Saturday morning classes. A lot of effort was put in to promote Scottish Dancing to this age group this winter and while

these sessions have been enjoyed by Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Cubs and Scouts etc, but as yet we have no new recruits. While this has been disappointing it was worth a try.

Enquiries continue to be made and bookings made but we will be reviewing the situation as to whether we continue them or change our objectives.

It's interesting to see how children differ in their levels of fitness, concentrations etc within the sessions and a steep learning curve for us as to what works and round the room dances definitely don't.

Also look to the notice board for the picture showing the successful children in their recent medal tests. A big credit to Rita for all her efforts! I'm pleased to report that 2 of the children are attending the Monday evening regularly and thanks to you all for being supportive and welcoming to them and I'll think you agree they're doing very well and it can only help them to improve.

Now for your bit, please put on your thinking caps to come up with any new initiatives that may boost numbers or encourage family and friends children to join and don't forget the free Picnic Dance on Saturday 23rd June which would be a perfect introduction to Scottish Dancing

Sarah.

Oxford Day School

Oxfordshirebranch of the RSCDS holds a day school on a Saturday in February each year. This year the school was held on 18th February, at Headington School in Oxford. Four dancers from Milton Keynes attended this year; Sarah, Martine, Ruth and me. The day school consisted of 3 sessions, 2 where there was a choice of dance classes at 3 different levels of

experience (elementary, intermediate and advanced) held in the morning and first half of the afternoon. The third session was a choice between classes offering different styles of dance (party dancing or general Scottish dancing for all levels). Finally, for those with energy left, there was the opportunity to stay to attend a dance in the evening!

I attended the advanced classes and the party dancing session. The advanced classes were taught by guest teachers from outside our area, Pat Houghton from Edinburgh and Eric Finlay from North Ayrshire. The quality of the teaching in both sessions was excellent and we were put through our paces while being kept fully absorbed in by the content, so there was no opportunity for day-dreaming! In the advanced classes, the teachers taught dances that were unfamiliar to the participants, so it wasn't a case of practising dances we already knew and we had to pay attention throughout.

Special mention has to be made of the party dancing session, though. I thought this would be an easy wind-down after the more taxing advanced classes, but I had not anticipated Eric Finlay's energy and enthusiasm for the topic. We did dances in that session that included a wide range of dance steps. Eric gave an impressive demonstration of the Charleston steps for one dance, at the end of a day's teaching, and then got the class to do it too. That was not one of my better attempts and will need more practice but there was some real talent for the Charleston amongst others in the class!

All in all, it was a really good day but pretty hard work. I enjoyed the opportunity to concentrate on dancing and the quality of the teaching that was on offer that day. I have attended this day school in the past, but 2012 was definitely the best yet.

Marie Montague

Forthcoming events:

Branch AGM: **23rd April**, dancing will start at 7.30pm.

June Social Monday dancing: **June 11th, 18th and 25th 2012.**

Picnic Dance on Green beside Bradwell Village Hall **23rd June 2012.**

Bedford Ball: 19th May 2012.

Silver Cross Dances first Saturday of the month.

Thistle Club - Musician's Workshop and Dance with Keith Smith at Wing on **September 1st. 2012.**