

Royal Scottish
Country Dance
Society
June 2011



Dates for your Diary

From the Office

Another season draws to a close but the dancing doesn't stop. We have Summer Tuesdays from 19th July to 23rd August at Holy Cross Centre to look forward to and if you feel like travelling a little further a field then Coventry Thistle Club have two summer tea dances at Wolstan on Thursday 9th June and 14th July.

More details can be obtained from Ivan Chapman on 0797 3243869. or their website, www.coventrythistleclub.co.uk

'The Sunday Class' will continue to meet at Castle Bytham, usually on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month throughout the summer, but check their website, www.thesundayclass.org.uk, or contact Amanda Peart for confirmation. Amanda says these classes are for anyone above beginner level.

So where do you go if you are a beginner? Well, we are planning on holding a beginner's class on Thursdays at the start of next season, so please spread the word to friends and acquaintances who might be interested.

The biggest problem with running a beginner's class is numbers. We really would like a minimum of eight although we will never turn anyone away. This means that either we have to 'poach' members from their preferred class, thus reducing that classes numbers to sometimes below a workable number, or we have to 'feed' beginners in to the classes we have.

We are lucky in having the facilities of Holy Cross, with its choice of rooms; many branches do not have sufficient space or dancers to run more than one class. Indeed, our own Tuesday class works very well catering for all levels of dancer.

Whatever happens I know that you will always extend your traditional Scottish dancer's welcome to all, and offer a helping hand and a smile to those who are less experienced than you.

Have a good summer, whatever you choose to do; I hope to see you at the August dance and Rutland Weekend.
Barbara Sharp.

For details of classes, local dances, programmes, maps, etc, try our website

www.leicesterrscds.org.uk

Committee Matters

Minutes of the committee meetings are available for you to read on the notice board.

4 June Market Harborough SDS

Robert Whitehead
Assembly Rooms, Welland Park Road,
Market Harborough.LE16 9DR
Tickets from Sally Gardner
01858 464247 or Janet Marchand
janet@marchand.me.uk

9 July Leeds White Rose Festival

Afternoon + evening dance inc. supper
Band Marion Anderson
The Gateways School, Harewood, Leeds
Contact Doris Buchanan info@leicesterrscds.org.uk

Summer Tuesdays

19th July – 23 August 1.30- 3.45
Holy Cross Centre
LE1 6HW
Everyone Welcome

13 August Leicester RSCDS Social Dance

Glenfield Church Hall, Leicester.
LE3 8DP

Contact Doris Buchanan info@leicesterrscds.org.uk

6 Sept. & 8 Sept.

Leicester RSCDS Tuesday afternoon & Thursday evening dance classes resume Holy Cross Centre
LE1 6HW

**BEGINNERS WELCOME ANYTIME
CLASSES: BEGINNERS TO ADVANCED**

Contact: Doris Buchanan
info@leicesterrscds.org.uk

9, 10 & 11 September Rutland Dance Weekend

English, International & Scottish Dancing
Starts Friday evening
The Community Hall
Cottesmore Rutland LE15 7DH
Contact Doris Buchanan doris.buchanan@virgin.net

24 September

Market Harborough SDS

At the Congregational Church Centre
Bowden Lane
contact janet@marchand.me.uk
Sally Gardner 01858 464247 24

1 October

Leicester RSDCS

Band David Hall
Avenue Primary School
Leicester.LE2 3EJ
contact Doris Buchanan
info@leicesterrscds.org.uk

David Turnock

We were all shocked and saddened to hear the news of David's sudden death and Marion's severe injuries following a car crash just as they were setting out on their holiday to Italy together.

David joined Leicester RSCDS when he moved from Aberdeen University to join the Leicester university's geography faculty in 1969. He and Marion seldom missed a Thursday night. Always a busy and active man, he would regularly cycle from the university to Holy Cross, to be met by Marion, who had his tea ready. The bike would go in the boot of the car and then they were ready for dancing.

In his professional life David was one of the leading scholars on Eastern European geography, particularly Romania, and was awarded the Royal geographical Society's Edward Heath Award for contributions to European understanding. Out of this grew a love for the country and David, with Marion, made many trips to the Partarlegele villages where they did so much to help raise funds and awareness of the plight of these impoverished people. The Romanian Villages Appeal dance was a regular feature of our annual programme.

The branch has received many tributes to David from throughout the dancing world; David Page, from Nottingham RSCDS, writes 'A man in whose presence it was good to be. Quite apart from our interest in all things Scottish and our university links, both of us being Cambridge men, we shared a deep interest in the history of the steam railway and despite my attempts to subvert him with e-mailed photographs of LNER locomotives and remarks about whose engines won the war, he remained LMS to the core! Hardly surprising since he hailed from Wigan where there was little else on the railway scene!'

We extend our sympathies to Marion and her sons, Graham and Andrew, and wish her a speedy recovery from her injuries.



Land's End to John O'Groats

(Uphill, the hard way!)



John enjoying a sunny moment near Tintern Abbey.

As most of you know by now, John is doing a marathon cycle run for two charities: LOROS and Cancer Research. He says - 'I have decided to dedicate this ride to the memory of David Turnock, a Leicester Royal Scottish Country Dance Society member and friend, who was tragically killed in a collision recently. He and his wife, Marion, were stalwarts of the society and we are all wishing Marion a speedy recovery from her injuries sustained in the same crash.'

John has recently undergone a successful operation for bladder cancer (no, I'm not going to repeat all those saddle sore jokes) but decided to go ahead with the journey

In his blog he tells of eighty to ninety miles a day of uphill struggles, gales, heavy traffic, strong headwinds, pouring rain and drunks falling in front of his path. Also of wonderful hot chocolate, ham sandwiches to die for and the loyalty and support of all the team. You can read more about his adventures at www.johnlongslejog.wordpress.com. Or you can wait for the edited version in the next edition of this newsletter.

At the time of going to press John has just said goodbye to the Moffat Weavers and is on the last gruelling section of his journey. He expects to be home on Friday 3rd June and I think he might be making that journey by car.

Lyon Weekend

Luxury travel; all the way from Leicester to Lyon and back by train in a nice big seat with lots of leg room in much the same time and for about the same price door to door as it takes to fly. No funny business with see through plastic bags, no bleeping x ray machines that can spot holes in your underwear, no hanging around a crowded airport for two or more hours, no worrying about your luggage getting lost or damaged and then finding yourself miles from the city you want to visit.

It sounds too good to be true. Add into the equation the chance of spending the weekend dancing with Chanterelle, the Lyon branch of the RSCDS, one of the friendliest groups of people it's possible to meet – all right, I know, ALL Scottish Dancers are friendly – and three days of wall to wall sunshine and you have a perfect weekend.

My Hotel was only about half a mile away from the venue so a brisk warm-up walk got me there for the Ball on Friday night. I was surprised by the number of familiar faces, and enjoyed dancing to Calum Mitchell on box and Andrew Nolan on keyboard. Great relief when the recaps were called in English, and great shame when I noticed a wee boy ably translating for some of the locals.



David Queen enjoying the dance



Gina Brindley and Barbara sharp following The Alternative Allemande

Saturday dawned bright and sunny and I enjoyed the walk to the morning session. The teachers' names are familiar to Leicester members, Mervyn Short and David Queen have both taught at Leicester Day School.

Even more shame when I noticed the wee boy dancing in class. Footwork, timing, phrasing were all there, plus the biggest smile you ever saw. OK, so the Allemande was adapted a little, but, hey! I discovered his name is Noa, which is Japanese for 'respect' and dancing is his passion. During the afternoon break one of my new-found friends invited me back to her flat for lunch and then took me on a guided tour of her beautiful city. Two hours and five miles later we were ready for the sumptuous celebratory meal (with wine, naturally, we are in France, after all) that the branch members had prepared for us to celebrate their 25th anniversary.

Then more dancing. More wonderful music and somehow the feet kept working, but not the brain, unfortunately,

At least Sunday's classes didn't start until ten o'clock. Mervyn was taking a highland class at a different venue some half a mile further down the road. I opted for David's Country Dance class, not just because of the extra walk. I thought David might be gentle with us after yesterdays punishing schedule but no, Wylde Thing – some of you may recall from our day school, followed by Fireworks! Once again, thank goodness the class was in English. I think the only one who got it right was wee Noa! I had the honour of being invited to dance by him and we were certainly 'The Best Set in the Hall'

A celebratory lunch – more wine – then it was time to catch the train back home. I had a good book but didn't read much of it; I was either reliving wonderful memories or sleeping!
Barbara Sharp



Sheer enjoyment!

HOW DO THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE?

.....that is to say, how do folk hear about Scottish Country Dancing in Leicester?

Well, yes, we have our own excellent web site but also we have YOU the members! Our society needs YOU as the man said, to spread the gospel and tell everyone what good fun and social interaction this dancing PROMOTES. Also you can pick up some of our LEAFLETS and leave them around in various places. Any committee member will tell you about these.

So talking about the committee, what does it do to advertise our events? Good question and equally good answer TO FOLLOW.

Every 6 weeks you may read an ad in the Community section of the Mercury and various free papers – A FREE ADVERTISEMENT.

Every quarter you can read about us in The Leicester Link – ANOTHER FREE ADVERTISEMENT.

And, most recently, a magazine entitled "Little Know It All" has included us in every edition of what's on. They have a new web site www.littleknowitall.co.uk for which they are anxious to generate lots of hits. It is possible to secure various coupons and vouchers on this for lots of different products. Please give it a try as this is ALL THEY ASK of us in return for this, ALSO A FREE ADVERTISEMENT.

Prior to the start of the new session in September leaflets are delivered to various Libraries and also taken up and displayed at St. Andrews.

Finally, all our events are displayed in 2 annual publications – The ACSDS Book and the Birmingham Newsletter and you should also read about the dates of our Day Schools in The Scottish Country Dancer magazine.

So, I guess the Committee are doing their bit. Over to You for any more suggestions, please!!"

Pam Hood

I googled 'dancing in the East Midlands' and our own website was top of the list. That's free advertising, too. Thank you, George, for keeping the website topical and up-to-date. Ed

Autolycus

The Story behind the Dance - Ian Powrie's Farwell to Auchterader

Born at Bridge of Cally, in Perthshire on May 26, 1923, Ian Powrie began playing the violin at the age of five. His father played the melodeon and was well known on the Scottish country dance scene as The Angus Ploughman, but Ian Powrie's teachers forbade him to play Scottish music in favour of the classics.

Classical studies gave him command of his instrument and resulted in him making his first broadcast, playing solo violin on BBC Radio's Children's Hour at the age of twelve. The pull of traditional music, which he heard at spontaneous gatherings in houses and in the nearby fields on summer evenings, proved too much, though, and before long he was playing with his father's band.

After war service with the RAF, where he became a pilot and completed his training on the latest twin-engine planes in Canada, he returned to his father's farm at Bankhead, working in the fields by day and playing at dances with his father's band at weekends.

Presently, Ian took over the band, with his brother Bill on the button box and his sister Mary on the piano, and made his first broadcast as a bandleader in April 1949.

The Ian Powrie Band, with Jimmy Blue replacing Bill and accordionist Mickey Ainsworth helping to create its signature sound, became a popular attraction, travelling all over Scotland. After building a huge following, the band got its first big break when Robert Wilson, whose Personal Appearance programme regularly featured Ian Powrie's band.

Their recording Bothy Ballads for the Gay Gordons became a best seller and when the band turned professional in 1960 it became one of the mainstays on BBC Television's iconic White Heather Club, appearing on eighty-six of its one hundred-show run. Ian Powrie also became musical director for entertainer Andy Stewart, branching out into pop music and touring Canada, New Zealand and Australia, where, in 1966, he started a business and decided to settle down with his family. Before emigrating, he enjoyed one of the highlights of his career, playing solo fiddle at the opening of Pitlochry Festival Theatre on a bill including the legendary singer Jeannie Robertson.

Once in Australia any thoughts of retiring from music disappeared and he became much in demand, both as a fiddler and as a judge of fiddle competitions in America and Canada.

In 1986 he returned to Scotland and continued to delight his many admirers with his fiddle playing until, in 1999, at the age of seventy-six he decided finally to retire, still a master of his beloved Scottish slow airs.

But I'm sure you knew all that, anyway!

Skye News

Olive is well and enjoying her long summer days on Skye. She sends her love and will be back with her ever entertaining 'News' in the next edition due on October 4th. If you have any stories, articles, details of forthcoming events, photos or other items that you would like included please let me have them by September 20th either by hand or by email.

barbara.sharp@virgin.net