

TARRY AWHILE

MK RSCDS

September 2012

Welcome to another new season of Scottish Country Dancing. Despite the unseasonable weather during the past weeks, I hope you have had a relaxing and restful summer and are raring to go with renewed enthusiasm for the dance.

I'm afraid the Picnic Dance was a victim of the unpredictable weather in June. After a wet week leading up to it, it was dry in Milton Keynes on the day but it was very cloudy with a cold and blustery wind so the decision was made to dance indoors. The number attending was disappointing and there could be several reasons for this. Did people stay away because they didn't want to be dancing outside on such a blustery, possibly showery day, or because they just don't like dancing on grass or they were on holiday or what? Who knows- if you have any thoughts on the matter perhaps you could let a committee member know. We like to provide what people want.

As I write this, the next event on our calendar is the walk and Sunday lunch on 19th August organised by Sarah and Harry. Unfortunately, Tony and I will be unable to attend due to having to entertain the family from USA, but we hope the weather is kind to you. The next date for your diary is Friday 7th December when we plan to have a Beginner's Dance but experienced dancers will be welcome to come along as well.

After a great deal of uncertainty and with the co-operation of Andrew and Wendy Kellet in Kent, the children were able to take their medal tests on July 14th and I am glad to report that they all passed, so well done to them and thank you to Rita, Janice and Marie for all their hard work.

The new term starts on Monday 10th September at 8 pm and I hope to see you all then.

Happy Dancing, **Sheila.**

Wing Walk Sunday 19th August 2012

On the hottest day of the year so far, 24 of us and two dogs amassed in the car park of the Cock Inn in Wing on a Sunday morning. We set off for a 5 mile circular walk through spinney, paths through wheat fields and across cute little bridges and over stiles encountering British wildlife along the way. Some decided to take a well earned rest in Mentmore (to be collected later) while the others returned to Wing uphill while having to negotiate a rather large combine harvester and farmer reaping his crops.

We had a well earned drink and meal at the Cock Inn afterwards and indulged in desserts which none felt guilty about as a few calories surely must have been burnt. They dealt with us all in an efficient and friendly manner, while we chatted and caught up with each other's news from over the summer. We left, most wanting to dip into a cool shower and by the look of some maybe forty winks as well. Good time had by all! **Sarah**



I would like to add my congratulations to Sarah on organising the walk, even though some of us succumbed to the heat and a misconception that we were taking a 2 hour walk! We had an enjoyable time meeting up with old friends - again the pub refreshments were most welcome after.
Annette

SUMMER DANCING IN SCOTLAND

People holiday in Scotland to enjoy many unique features and I go to Perthshire every year to enjoy: relaxed walking in wonderful countryside with hills, glens, waterfalls, lochs, rivers, trees, wild flowers and animals; historic buildings like Scone Palace, Stirling Castle and Dunkeld Cathedral; historic bridges like those at Dunkeld and Abefeldy; small towns like Blairgowrie, Callander, Crieff and Pitlochry with tourist shops and visitors from around the world; trips further afield to Braemar, Oban and Edinburgh; and, of course, Scottish Country Dancing.

Summer dancing in Perthshire used to start in May and run to September but the start has slipped back to late June/July probably because of falling numbers and increasing costs. Wherever you go in Scotland, summer dancing is great fun, great value and well worth adding to any holiday. In addition to RSCDS branch websites, the two I use to find out what's on are: www.dancediary.info and <http://john.m.sturrock.users.btopenworld.com/scdevents.index.htm>

When on holiday in Perthshire, you can dance on Mondays in Dundee, Tuesdays in Perth, Thursdays in Alva (near Stirling), some Fridays in Blairgowrie, alternate Saturdays in Pitlochry and Stirling or Dunblane. There are open-air dances in Edinburgh's Princess Street Gardens and Linlithgow Palace

It costs around £6 a night to dance to an excellent band. Perhaps one that is well known such as Marion Anderson, David Cunningham, Colin Dewar or Nicol McLaren or perhaps one less well known such as David Anderson, Luke Brady, James Coutts and Frank Thompson. While I would look forward to someone like Colin Dewar, I have been surprised and delighted by many of the less well known bands and I cannot think of any that I would not recommend.

Perth RSCDS used to have an annual "Summer Assembly" with dancing to the Perth Strathspey and Reel Society. Dancing to a fiddle orchestra is different in that the tempo is a bit slower, similar to that we experience when dancing to the musicians of the Thistle Club workshops in September. The Perth Summer Assembly was also different in that it included a full dinner with wine. I thought it was a bargain at £12 but they stopped when the number of dancers dropped below that required to cover costs.

The venues in which I have danced ranged from the large Corran Hall in Oban which holds 2-300 dancers to Clunie village hall which is a bit like a large garden shed set in the countryside with no house in sight. I don't know how many dancers packed in but the hall really rocked on its foundations.

I used to love dancing in Perth City Hall with its beautiful floor and wood panelling. This is no longer used as the City Council decided a few years ago that it was redundant. Victoria Hall in Dunblane is a real experience with a floor that puts a great spring in your step – but Stirling RSCDS no longer book it for their regular dances. Pitlochry and Blairgowrie town halls are best described as "intimate" and both are used regularly.

You don't have to be a good or an experienced dancer. The dances and the standard of dancing are not very different to those found around here. A few dancers are good (mostly young ladies) and a few are not so good (old men) but anyone could go from a Monday night in Bradwell to a Saturday in Pitlochry

and fit in without difficulty. There is usually a talk or walk through of unfamiliar dances. In some places, such as Dundee and Blairgowrie, it seems to be the regular practice to have a full reminder or walk of all the dances. I particularly enjoy the relaxed atmosphere where the enjoyment of dancing is more important than high technical quality. The relaxed enjoyment often manifests itself in spinning whenever possible. I was reminded of this when I danced J B Milne in London recently. It was the first dance on the 7th July programme in Pitlochry. I remember thinking

that it was a strange choice because there is so much setting. However, there was no setting in Pitlochry: 1st man and 2nd lady spun then 1st lady and 2nd man, etc. And it was the same in other dances. I think the practice has increased over the years and I find it difficult to cope with big strong Highland Lassies who spin me off my feet but when you get the hang of it and relax it's great fun. What is also great is the friendly social welcome and being greeted by "good to see you, up on holiday again are you?" **Terry Orchard**

Bradwell Dancing

Starts on Monday **10th September 2012** and ends on **17th December 2012**

Forthcoming events:

Thistle Club Musicians Workshop and Dance at Wing Village **Hall 1st September 2012**
Silver Cross Dance **6th October 2012**
North Herts Reel Club Ball **13th October 2012**
RSCDS AGM **2-4th November 2012**
Beginners Dance Friday **7th December 2012**
