



Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
St Andrews Branch

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Where have all the dancers gone?



You may have noticed that the May social dance evenings are missing from the **Dates for your Diary** column of our annual schedule.

Last May, although we had advertised a different guest teacher for each evening, the attendances were poor. In previous years we used to attract dancers from other groups and branches but this did not happen in May. It is embarrassing to invite a teacher, who may have travelled a distance, to take a class and the dancers, many of whom live locally, don't turn up. So, reluctantly, the committee took the decision to drop the May social evening from the calendar.

In 2015, there will be no dancing in St Andrews Branch between the Half Day School and Dance in March and the Annual General Meeting in May. One of the reasons the branch started holding May evenings was to maintain interest in the branch leading up to the AGM. The committee hopes that our less-experienced members will come to the dance in the evening of the Day School on 28 March 2015; the programme has been planned to include popular Scottish country dances interspersed with some really simple ceilidh dances.

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Do you have a story, a picture or anything else on SCD for our next issue? If so, please contact the Branch Secretary.



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St Andrews Branch is not alone in experiencing ever decreasing numbers. I attended the Open Forum, entitled 'Increasing Membership', at the RSCDS Annual General Meeting in Perth on 8 November. We were divided into discussion groups and asked to share ideas on how to attract new members. Everyone in the group belonged to a branch which is trying to be creative and imaginative in running classes for dancers with wide-ranging abilities and experience. Our branch has recently revised our system of paying for classes to make it easier for those who do not want to pay for the whole session in one amount.

For various reasons some dancers choose to attend privately run classes. I would just make the observation that most of the teachers who take these classes would not have acquired their expertise without, at some time, having been exposed to being taught in an RSCDS class.

Can you find a new member for the branch class? Let's not lose this great organisation which has brought us fun, friendship and fitness.

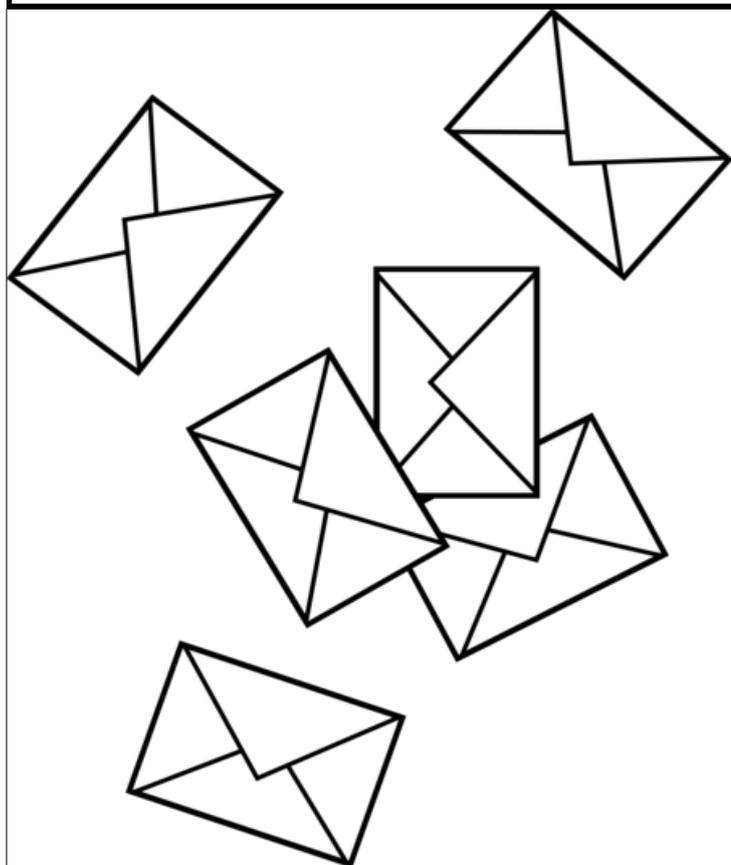
Irene Bennett

The classes they are a-changin'

Over the last couple of years, the members of your Committee have been giving a lot of thought to the format of Branch classes, in order to come up with a version that will suit as many people as possible. Of course, as the old saying goes, it's not possible to please all the people all the time, but we do our best. Since last year's version, with classes one after the other on the same night, didn't seem to work out, it was replaced with simultaneous classes upstairs and downstairs, the two classes merging for the last half-hour to do dances that have been practised in detail downstairs. The problem—which is partly not a problem, as it is always a good thing when beginners become competent and confident enough to dance in a higher-level class—is that there are often not enough beginners for the downstairs class to be viable. So, unless we can amass a large number of eager beginners to make up a class (and the teachers and Committee dream of this happening), the class format will be tweaked again. After New Year, the downstairs class will have a programme each week of specific figures and technique elements, and anyone who wishes to brush up on the Bourrel or perfect their Poussette will be free to join in.



Irene and Shelley both allude to the new payment structure, and the reasons for its implementation. In future, anyone who has paid their Branch and RSCDS membership will be able to 'pay as you dance' for £5 a time. The special rate for young adults comprises a £20 package of Branch and RSCDS membership and one class—classes thereafter costing £2 each. We hope these changes will help boost our dropping numbers.



Personal

Valerie Frazer would like to thank everyone who sent cards during her recent illness. Their good wishes are much appreciated.

From the Chair



Looking back, the past summer saw good attendance at our dances in spite of the fact that summer school numbers were down overall. As ever, numbers are a concern not only for the Branch but also the Society as a whole. At the beginning of the term we had several University students attending our classes but as the season progressed their numbers dwindled. Enquiries told us that cost was the major factor. As the health of our Branch depends on replenishing our aging population with young dancers, the committee has decided to introduce a discount for those aged 25 and under. Hopefully they will find the new price affordable.

The committee is also exploring greater involvement with young people by possibly reinstating the monthly joint classes with Celticsoc. Looking back to my days with Celtic, I quite enjoyed these classes so I hope they will too.

Also over the summer the demo team has been active, dancing for a local golf tour group at their 'Taste of Scotland' dinners. This has been a nice opportunity to introduce Scottish dancing to people from far and wide and also earn a bit of extra money for the Branch.

Shelley McElney

Dates for your Diary

11th December	No dancing.
13th February 2015	Ceres Dance: Cupar Corn Exchange, 7.30 p.m., £7. Band: Luke Brady.
28th March	Half-Day School and Dance. Class: 2 p.m. Dancing: 6.30 p.m. Teacher: John Wilkinson. Class musician: Robert Mackay. Evening musician: Stewart Warrender. Refreshments will be available between the class and evening dance.
28th May	Annual General Meeting: 7.30, Victory Memorial Hall.
28th July, 4th, 11th, 18th August	Summer Dances: Venues TBC.; bands: July 28th Luke Brady; August 4th James Coutts; August 11th Jim Lindsay; August 18th Neil Galloway 8-11 p.m. Cost: £7 per night.

The Curious Incident of the Night at the Victory

The AGM had reached its conclusion, amicably, and one of the most important items was the change of times for the next season's classes.

Those remaining put on their shoes as Shelley put on the music. The last dance was 'The Duke of Perth'.

At about bar 12, the door was flung open and three people appeared—two young men and a woman— closely followed by the Hall Keeper.

One of the young men took his jacket off, and he and his companion noisily tried to join in, while the woman kept shouting at them.

Shelley stopped the music, and the woman shouted: 'Come oan—this is no' the Cosmos Centre!' The Hall Keeper led the three people away. The music was started after Shelley said that this was the end of the cabaret.

Perhaps we should have a cabaret or an incident to encourage people to come to the AGM for a bit of the unexpected. It's worth a try. Suggestions please!

'Hetty Kett'

Editor's facetious suggestion: perhaps the AGM should be held in the Cosmos Centre?