



AFFILIATED TO THE
rscds

Teachers' Association Scotland

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

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Committee: Morag Barclay, Muriel Bone, Jayne Riddet, Anne Thorn

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The Scottish Country Dance Teacher NEWSLETTER – October 2025

From the Chair

Thank you to everyone who attended our weekend in August when we had our Friday night dance, AGM and workshop in Bridge of Allan. It was a most enjoyable and informative week-end and it was good to catch up with our TAS members. The articles elsewhere in the Newsletter will supply more details. We also had the opportunity to dance on Saturday night as RSCDS Stirling was running one of its Summer dances.

Planning for the workshop in Bearsden on 18 April 2026 is ongoing and the details will be released once confirmed. The content of the day is based on suggestions from members so please keep your ideas for future workshops coming. The dance on Friday night will be organised by RSCDS Glasgow so please apply to them for tickets. Details for overnight accommodation, and parking at the New Kilpatrick Church Hall on the Saturday will follow.

There are still some spaces available for our 20th Anniversary week-end next September in Dundee. We're delighted to have Gary Coull and Ian Muir as the star attractions during the day and the assurance of good music from our bands on Friday and Saturday night; led by Scott Band and Ian Muir respectively.

Very sincere thanks are extended to our retiring team. They used lots of their time, including Sunday evenings, working on our behalf, and I'm sure they'll be happy to have their Sundays returned to them. George Watt has completed his three years as Treasurer, and Deirdre MacCuish-Bark and Jane Meikle served their time on the committee. Jane, however, remains as part of the sub-group organising our Anniversary week-end.

The TAS committee will once again have a presence at the RSCDS Conference week-end in Glasgow on Saturday 8 November. Use it as an opportunity to pay TAS subs, book the Anniversary week-end or just stop at the table for a chat. We'd be delighted either way.

Many thanks to everyone who has submitted articles for the newsletter. We have another bumper edition here for you on a variety of subjects. Please keep them coming. Thanks also to Mary as she puts the newsletter together.

Best wishes to all and enjoy your dancing.

Janet

From the Secretary

It's been a very swift month since we met in Bridge of Allan for our dance, AGM and workshop. Though attendance at the dance wasn't as high as we could have hoped, it was still an enjoyable evening. There was an "embarrassment of riches" that weekend, as far as dances to attend were concerned – which is a great thing, of course. There is a report on the weekend from Roy Bain elsewhere in this newsletter, and some photos from the dance and workshop in the Gallery on the website. We thank Anne Thorn for continuing to update the website.

At the AGM, Jayne Riddet and Anne Thorn rejoined the committee, and Sue Porter agreed to reprise her previous role as Treasurer. We are grateful to them all for coming forward – again 😊 - to support your Association.

Bookings have been coming in for the Residential Weekend in Dundee next year. Priority bookings for TAS members and their room-sharers - spouses, partners, friends – continue until the end of October, at which point any remaining places will be open to other teachers and friends. Booking information is on the website: <https://www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk/20th-anniversary-weekend/>

The spring workshop will be held on Saturday 18 April 2026 in Bearsden. TAS is not organising a dance this time, but Glasgow Branch's regular April dance is being held on the previous evening in Milngavie, and tickets will be available in due course through the Branch website. <https://www.rscdsghlasgow.org/dances>
I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Anne

From the Editor

As always, thank you to everyone who has taken the time to contribute to this Newsletter: Roy for his report on the AGM and workshop, Sig Wallen for her report on her experience taking Units 2 & 3 at Summer School, and Deb Lees for her piece on Warming up and Cooling down. Special thanks to Ian Brockbank and Heather Cowan for preparing teaching notes on dances in Book 54. A taster has been included in the Newsletter but full details will be available on the website. If you are looking for Dance Festivals there is information about festivals in Perth and Glasgow in 2026. The youngsters in Selkirk have been performing again and enjoyed the recent Family and Friends event in Moffat.

Have you booked your place on our Anniversary Weekend? (see p13). If your partner doesn't dance be sure to read George Watt's excellent article on what to do in Dundee – there's plenty to choose from (see p8).

A Report on the AGM & Workshop – 29-30 August 2025

After a pleasant run through from the Clyde Coast we booked into the Court Hotel in the University Campus, which gave us a short drive to our Weekend Venue, Bridge of Allan Parish Church Hall. Parking this year was a tad difficult as the Coop carpark is now a Contractors Yard.

Although we had an excellent programme, the Friday Dance was not so well attended as previous years. Five sets. Other dances in the local area the previous night and also on the Saturday kept some folk away. It was a pity we were down to five sets, but, on the other hand, isn't it great that local dancers have the option of various dances to attend.

Last year we had Michael Taylor from Fife playing for the classes. This year we had Michael and his Swilcan Band playing for the Friday Dance. Excellent music. Personally, I enjoyed the percussion with the blocks, a nice touch. A very good night even with slightly lower numbers.

Saturday morning found us back in the Church Hall, coffee and chat to begin, then settling down at 10:45 for the business part of the weekend – our AGM. The usual Reports on finance and activities accepted. Then the difficult part of the meeting. Who will volunteer to replace committee members retiring after their stint? Eventually Sue Porter (Oban & Lorn) agreed (as no one else offered) to replace George Watt as Treasurer. Two vacant places on committee were filled by Anne Thorn (Helensburgh & District) and Jayne Riddet (Dumfries).

Business over it was time to have a look at *Book 54*. The first Class was led by Ian Brockbank with Neil Galloway on accordion. Dances covered were *Kathy's Fascinator* 3x32J; *Thank You Patricia* 8x32S (devised by Deb Lees); *The Darlington Dancer* 2x40S + 2x40R; and *Dancing Forth* 8x32R.

After time to relax, chat and have lunch it was then over to Heather Cowan to lead us into other parts of *Book 54*, again with Neil on accordion. Dances covered were *The Tea Pottery* 1x96J; *Tullynessle & Forbes Hall* 3x32S (devised by Edna Ewen); *Donna's Dancing Shoes* 8x32R (Neil Galloway tune) done once each couple in a 3-couple set; and *Canadian Landscape* 3x32S.

Our final session of the day was about Archives. Pam McNicol, an archivist with Stirling Council, gave an interesting and informative talk on the Preservation of Documents. A lot of information on what to store; what to use for storage and what not to use; where to store and where not; repairs; temperature; lighting, etc: all-important info when we are storing documents. From a Branch point of view, we also need to know WHAT to store. From my own Branch experience, I believe we have many documents that we no longer need in our archive. Documents like RSCDS Bulletins. When we put them in our archive, forty, fifty years ago that was our only way to research years gone by. Now, of course, we have online access to the Society Archive where we can research Branch and Society history.

Unfortunately, neither the sound nor the visuals were as good as they could have been. Something we need to improve in future.

As is normal, an excellent Weekend. Time to Dance, Time to Chat, Time to Catch up with long-time Friends and Time to meet Teachers from other parts of Scotland that we haven't met before.

Perhaps we will meet again - at the Society AGM in Glasgow, Glasgow Branch Dance on 17 April in Milngavie, TAS Spring workshop on 18 April in Bearsden, or at the TAS 20th Anniversary Weekend which takes place in Dundee in September (see p13)

Roy Bain



***Anne Robertson asked returning Committee Members:
Why did you decide to return to the Committee?***

"Having been involved with TAS from day one, I find it a very encouraging group, where we can come together with other teachers, whether qualified or not, to discuss and share best practice in teaching our sociable hobby. This is especially relevant for teachers like myself from rural areas without many other teachers to turn to for support."

I have always believed that if you are going to be part of a voluntary group, then you should take your turn in helping to run it, either on the committee or in other ways. Having previously been a treasurer for several other groups including TAS, I realise that not everyone is happy working with other folks' money. Given this regrettable, yet understandable, reluctance, I decided to offer my services once more as Treasurer."

Sue Porter

"For me personally, I've always enjoyed the TAS Meetings because they are different from other discussion meetings offered. The variety of topics, open discussions and interesting workshops appeals to me. Sharing ideas with like-minded dancers/teachers reinforces the purpose and aims that we are striving to achieve as well as exploring new ideas. I find TAS a very forward-moving group and am pleased to support it in any way I can. Hopefully we will continue to keep it different and interesting for all of us. My preference is that I enjoy the one-day events although I do understand that others may enjoy the opportunity of a dance being included. I am looking forward to the residential weekend in Dundee in 2026."

Jayne Riddet

"I'd enjoyed my time on the TAS committee and since I joined when we were coming out of Covid and TAS was trying to put in place the phased stepping down of members, I only served two years. I said I'd stand again if no one new came forward. Now I'm retired I have plenty of time to make a contribution to the hobbies I love. I've always enjoyed TAS Workshops and think the organisation has a very important part to play in the future of Scottish Country Dancing. The recent initiative to sponsor new teachers in achieving their Unit 2 and 3 is an example of this. When on the committee I really enjoyed taking forward the new website project and engaging in discussion on how to grow our membership and make Workshops appealing. I'm looking forward to our Residential Weekend in Dundee next year and would also welcome any suggestions from members about what else we could add to the TAS website to support Scottish Country Dance teachers in Scotland and further afield."

Anne Thorn

Teaching Notes for dances in Book 54 (See TAS website for more information)

Our workshops on Book 54 were led by Ian Brockbank and Heather Cowan. Both have shared their notes: as a taster, here is one set of notes from each teacher.

From Ian, on Kathy's Fascinator, J3x32

Teaching points:

- Set and rotate:
 - When casting, there is a tendency for the non-supporting foot to fly up high, so make sure it is kept low (and ideally pointed)
 - The people in 1st man's and 2nd woman's place go $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way round the square, while the other two just shuttle up and down the sideline
- The first 24 bars should flow as one unit
 - the set and rotate naturally takes you into the RH across.
 - 1st couple need to be ready to change sides for the LH across – keep it flowing
 - 1st couple then go back to 2C (right shoulder) to start the (parallel) reels of three
- The knot doesn't flow as well out of the reels (particularly for 1M and 3W), so you need to be ready

- The alternative ending (1s cast, 3s stepping up on bars 27&28, then all TR) flows better
- The alternative ending makes it a great teaching dance for set and rotate, because the rest of the dance is nice and simple
- It's only 3 times through, which is unusual for quick-time (and a shame, I would say).

From Heather, on Tullynessle & Forbes Hall, S3x32

General:

2 couple sets can be used to go over teaching points for a Rondel

2 couple sets can also be used to do bar 9-16 which helps to emphasise that 2s (top couple at bar 9) start facing out and the finish position for the 1s in and facing down nearer hands joined (as if facing imaginary 3s).

bars 1-8: step transition setting to travelling for 1s and 2s and 2s stay facing out end of bar 8

bars 9-16: phrasing as for double figure of 8 and on bar 7&8 1s lengthen steps to dance down sidelines and come in to take nearer hands facing down. 3s step in bar 8 of the phrase

bars 17-24 teaching points as for rondel but poise /balance important here as bar 24 is a left foot step out to sidelines for 1s and 3s and have to be ready to start hands round to the left which is a change of direction for 1st women and 3rd man from rondel to hands round.

bars 25-32 teaching points as for hands round to the left and back.



A Report on the Summer School course for Units 2 & 3

Last summer I decided to undertake teaching Units 2 and 3 at Summer School! After teaching the university beginners in Dundee for a year, I knew how much I loved watching my students progress and gain confidence. Hearing their excitement about their achievements and joining them at events I enjoy continues to make me proud to be a teacher and I strive to further my knowledge.

I expected to make friends at Summer School, but I wasn't prepared to feel so at home with the wonderful people! At first, I was nervous, not knowing what to expect and who I'd be paired up with - but all 12 of us were in the same boat

and quickly bonded. Dancing, singing, laughing, and learning together created friendships I know will last a lifetime, and are encased in beautiful memories from the units!

Wonderfully supportive were our tutor, Eric Finley, and musician, Luke Brady. From Disney warmups and party-room singalongs to their constant encouragement and ceilidh items, they brought out the very best in us. Eric's kindness and Luke's reassurance made them the perfect match for our group.

It also helped having friends nearby during both weeks. People who listened to my rants, danced countless poussettes, checked lesson plans, and shared plenty of laughs (and gin!). The staff were equally supportive and lovely: Anne and Janet not only helped with printing and planning but even treated us to a much-needed colouring break once.

Safe to say, attending the Units 2 and 3 at Summer School was truly one of the best experiences in my life. I received overwhelming amounts of encouragement, made absolutely wonderful friends, and created hundreds of memories I will always treasure.

Sig Wallen



The class with tutor Eric Finley and musician Luke Brady

Warming Up and Cooling Down for Scottish Country Dance Teachers

A new Warm Up and Cool Down booklet is now available offering practical, research-informed guidance to help teachers prepare dancers' bodies and support recovery after class. This digital resource was created by the RSCDS in

collaboration with a diverse team of dance and movement specialists. It combines expert insights and in due course photos and video demonstrations will be uploaded to bring these exercises to life.

You can find this resource on the RSCDS website. Sign in on **'My RSCDS'**, then on the far left menu bar click on the second option, **'Member-only content'**, scroll down to **'Quick Links'** to access the last option **'Warming Up and Cooling Down for SCD Teachers'**.

Deb Lees

Things for your non dancing partner to do in Dundee

For those of you who have a non-dancing partner and are wondering what they could do while you are enjoying yourself, here are a few things that Dundee has to offer. Nearest the Invercarse Hotel, in fact directly below it on the other side of the railway is the Botanical Gardens. There is a bonnie walk round the park with many different trees from around the globe. There is also a nice wee café. If you head into town, there are several places of interest. Perhaps the two best known are the V&A and the Discovery. The V&A, Victoria and Albert, is the most amazing building on the banks of the Tay. Built to represent a ship about to be launched it must surely be unique. Inside, there is bound to be an interesting display, the usual shop and a very fine restaurant. The Discovery is undergoing a lot of preservation work just now but it is still open to visitors. This is really a step back in time in both social and maritime history. There is the visitor centre attached to it which is well worth a visit too. The Discovery was built in Dundee due to their expertise in constructing Whaling ships able to withstand the dangers of pack ice.

Moving into town, the Verdant Works is an old mill that has been preserved and again a magnificent piece of social history encompassing not only the working mill but the lives of those who worked within them. Hard to imagine now, but the 'Verdant' must have been near the edge of town at that time. Also hard to imagine are the rivers that fed the mills which still run deep below the roads and buildings. The nearby Brook Street is a reminder of the past.

Dundee, like all large towns has its own art gallery, the McManus. Here are many fine examples from Victorian masterpieces to the present day. Paintings by MacTaggart are incredible to see with their vast seascapes. See if you can locate the painting by David Scott Foggie entitled 'Forfochten'. If you do not know what the word means, just look at the man portrayed. The McManus is not just an art gallery it is a museum too with many artefacts. These artefacts show the life of Dundee through the centuries, from the industrial ship building era to the more historical. There is still damage to the city centre churches from General Monk's Canons. There is also the museum of transport which I'm told is well worth a visit, but I have not actually been there. Located in the old cattle market it is a bit away from the town centre.

If your non-dancing partner wants to go walking there are plenty of opportunities for a ramble. The Glens of Angus provide lots of walks for the more adventurous but would require an early start. There are however the Sidlaw Hills, with their Pictish fort and Tullybaccart has a grand walk up to the Lundie Crags with extensive views out over the Tay and across Dundee. Muriel Johnstone has composed a beautiful waltz tune called, Tullybaccart, which many of you will know from her CD 'Dancing Fingers'. Tullybaccart is the home of Gordon Patullo. No visitor to the area with a decent pair of trekkers should miss the cliff walk from Arbroath to Auchmithie. The seascape and cliffs are amazing and on a windy day the walk is truly invigorating.

This area is also excellent for cycling. You can cycle from Dundee to Arbroath on a dedicated cycle track nearly all the way and almost dead flat too. If your non-dancing partner wants something more strenuous, they can head inland, where there are lots of steep braes. The run from Dundee to Coupar Angus, up to Blairgowrie and back into Dundee is quite a favourite for a wee circuit.

If, however, you find yourself in a traditional Dundee hostelry, do not overlook the opportunity to indulge in a local delicacy. Be sure to tell the waitress, '*eh want a peh wi ingins init.*' Enjoy!

George T Watt

Discover your potential at Perform in Perth Appeal for Scottish Country Dancing Team Entries

Perform in Perth is an annual festival of music, speech, drama, and dance held in Perth, celebrating talent across a wide range of performing arts. For Scottish country dancers, it offers a vibrant platform to showcase their skills, connect with fellow dancers, and uphold the rich traditions of Scottish dance in a friendly setting. Over the last few years, the number of Scottish country dance teams entering Perform in Perth has decreased.

We would like to encourage Scottish country dance teachers to consider bringing teams of dancers to join us in 2026. We have a range of classes, both competitive and non-competitive, timetabled for Friday 13 March 2026. The adjudicator will be the highly respected Scottish country dance teacher and adjudicator, Jim Stott, known for his extensive experience and dedication to promoting the tradition both in Scotland and internationally.

Dances from the TAS Start Dancing Book are a syllabus option for the non-competitive classes. Entries will open along with the full syllabus in October this year. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date.

You can also find out more information from Eileen Waterston at perthcompfest@hotmail.com

Web site: www.perthshire-music-festival.org.uk

Facebook: Perform in Perth

Instagram: performperth

Allana Creighton

Glasgow Music Festival 2026

The Glasgow Music Festival is held annually in March, celebrating Music, Speech and Drama and Scottish Country Dancing. The 114th Festival will take place on Saturday 14 March in Renfield Church Centre, Glasgow.

Both adult and pupil teams can participate, with the Syllabus catering for different levels of experience. An Adjudicator will offer oral and written feedback

and for those teams with more experience, a score will be given. Angela Young will be the Adjudicator in 2026.

The Adult team which obtains the highest mark throughout the session will receive the RSCDS Glasgow Branch Quaich, while pupil teams who have some experience of dancing may be awarded the Marion B Hamilton certificate. Adult teams may select a dance from a given set of RSCDS publications or choose from other publications plus there is an option for a Square Dance. Pupils with some experience can select from a set list, including two from the TAS "Start Dancing!" publication, while those with limited experience can select their own choice.

The Syllabus and an entry form can be found online at www.glasgowmusicfestival.org/takepart.

The closing date for all entries is Sunday 30 November 2025.

My thoughts, as Dance Administrator, are that perfect footwork is not the main criterion...a good knowledge of skills, teamwork, dance geography, and a bright smile are very much the order of the day! The teams do not need to be at demonstration level...I want them to come along and showcase what they enjoy doing.

So how can YOU help?

Please encourage any adult, youth or pupil dancers in your Branch to come along to share the joys of dancing...feel free to put together 8 dancers especially for the Festival! Come and join the supportive audience of parents and school staff. If you would like further information, please don't hesitate to contact me on susan@glasgowmusicfestival.org

Happy Dancing to you all.

*Susan Ewington
Dance Administrator, Glasgow Music Festival*

More news from Selkirk children's Class

A couple of photos from our class. The occasion was our twin town in Bavaria visiting us in Selkirk. They invited our class to take part with them. The kids just loved the ladies from Plattling joining in the Virginia Reel.

A photo from our bag packing effort at Asda raising money for our trip to the Families & Friends weekend in Moffat.

*Margaret Pritchard
Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch*



Forthcoming events

TAS Spring Workshop

Saturday 18 April 2026: Workshop – 10.15am – 3.40pm
New Kilpatrick Church Hall, Bearsden

TAS 20th Anniversary Weekend

Fri 4 Sept – Sun 6 Sept 2026. Invercarse Hotel, Dundee

Branch events

Glasgow Branch Dance: Friday 17 April 2026 - 7.30pm -10.30pm
in Milngavie Town Hall



Neil Galloway played for the Autumn Workshop



20th Anniversary Residential Weekend

Friday 4 (check-in from 14:00) - Sunday 6 (late morning) September 2026
Invercarse Hotel, 371 Perth Road, Dundee, DD2 1PG (hotel has no lift, flights of stairs are short)



*Teacher: Gary Coull
RSCDS*



*Class Musician: Ian Muir
RSCDS Music Director*

Programme Summary

Workshops are open to TAS members and other teachers of SCD

Friday: Welcome drinks reception, evening meal, dance - Scott Band and his Band
Saturday: Breakfast, morning workshops, lunch, AGM, afternoon workshop, free time, evening meal, dance – Ian Muir Scottish Dance Band
Sunday: Breakfast, morning workshops (hotel checkout time 11:00)

For further information see the TAS website

Information: [Information](#)

Booking Form: [Booking Form](#)

Limited places available - priority booking for TAS members until 31 October 2025

Booking open to all teachers of SCD from 1 November 2025

A non-refundable deposit of £50.00 per person is required when booking