

The Scottish Country Dance Teacher

TAS Newsletter July 2023

Newsletter of the Teachers' Association Scotland (TAS)

Recognised as an RSCDS Teachers' Association

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

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Secretary: Anne Thorn

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Treasurer: George Watt

Committee: Deirdre MacCuish Bark, Jane Meikle, Morag Barclay

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From the Chair

Flaming June certainly lived up to its name this year and, as we move into July and traditional Scottish holiday season, I hope every TAS member is enjoying the bountiful sunshine and all-too-rare warm weather – although perhaps too warm for the round of summer dancing occasions now in full swing.

The Spring workshop in Montrose on Saturday 29th April (report within this edition) was, overall, a successful occasion save for its financial ramifications. Despite attempts to cover the whole of Scotland in a rolling programme of our two annual workshops and the fact that we enjoyed some sound teaching and discussion during the day, and in a fine hall at that, numbers were down on our usual average. 44 dancers attended. All paid £5 for the Workshop irrespective of whether or not they were TAS members. It was disappointing that despite the secretary sending emails to all Branches, affiliated groups and classes north of Stirling, we did not have a larger attendance. This might also have been due to the Glasgow Spring Fling, the RSCDS Convenor Away Day and the bank holiday weekend. As everyone recognises, finding a 'window' for events to encourage optimum attendance is not always easy. Admittedly, Montrose was further away from the central belt than other venues and perhaps the fact that the majority of TAS members live closer to the central belt was a mitigating factor.

What clearly emerged from examining the day in retrospect was that possibly, as an organisation, we have, for too long, been 'pegging' the cost of each workshop at a price which, perhaps, has resulted in a degree of mismatch between rising costs of halls and musician/teacher fees and expenses fuelled in part by the current national climate of Covid recovery and rising costs generally.

To this end, the committee feels it necessary to review the price of attendance at each TAS event in such a way as to offset (minor but not insignificant) losses incurred recently and to ensure that future workshops are realistically priced in relation to what is offered to members attending as well as to fall into step with the current range of ticket prices for an evening of social dancing. Thus, it has been concluded by your elected committee that the Autumn Workshop cost will require to be increased to £10 for TAS members and £12 for non-TAS members.

Other measures are also being considered by the Committee, including the possibility of paying a standard rate to teachers and musicians regardless of distance travelled. Furthermore, a survey of TAS members will be undertaken in the coming months to ascertain how far each individual (anonymously, of course) would be willing, or inclined, to travel to attend TAS workshops and events.

I would like to end on a more upbeat note. The long-awaited, and much-anticipated, TAS publication of the book of 24 dances for children, beginners and intermediate dancers, "Start Dancing", along with a wonderful range of accompanying music (both traditional and new) played by some of our finest SCD musicians, is in its final stages of preparation and will be appearing shortly. I am sure it will prove an invaluable source of inspiration and practical application for all teachers in the coming months and years.

The sun is shining!

Best wishes and happy dancing to you all.

Oluf

From the Editor

This bumper issue includes information on the Autumn Workshop, papers for the AGM, reports, news and much more... There is exciting news about the TAS book of dances for children which will be launched at TAS AGM. The vexed question of the fifth couple has been raised again: it is interesting to note Hugh Porteous' comments on the difference between including the fifth couple in a social context and when teaching a class. It was wonderful to receive news from Branches about Centenary celebrations (particularly those involving children) and forthcoming events, as well as a report on Outreach activities in Glasgow branch. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

The Newsletter as circulated to members could not be uploaded to the website as it was too big. Sadly, I have had to remove some photographs to reduce the size of the document. Apologies to the contributors concerned.

Mary

Dates for Your Diary

TAS Autumn Workshop & AGM – Saturday, 26 August 2023
Venue: Cardross Parish Church Hall, Helensburgh

For programme and local information please see pages 21-23

AGM 2023 – Please bring this newsletter with you

Notice of the Annual General Meeting, the Agenda and Notice of Elections.

All members are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held prior to the Workshop on Saturday 26th August 2023, in Cardross.

If you have any matters of other business, not included in the Agenda below, please let Anne Thorn know in advance of the meeting.

TAS AGM AGENDA FOR 26TH AUGUST 2023

1. Welcome from the Chair
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 27th August 2022 (printed in this newsletter)
4. Matters Arising from the Minutes
5. Secretary's Report (printed in this newsletter)
6. Treasurer's Report (printed in this newsletter) and Adoption of Accounts
7. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members
Chairman – to serve for 3 years
Committee – one member to serve for 3 years
Committee – one member to serve for 3 years & to organise workshops
8. Date and place of Spring Workshop in 2024.
9. Date and place of AGM and Autumn Workshop 2024
10. Any Other Business notified in advance.
11. Vote of thanks

Teachers' Association Scotland

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held on Saturday, 27th August 2022, at 10:45am in The Victoria Halls,
Dunblane

Welcome

The TAS Chairman, Oluf Olufsen, extended a warm welcome to the 38 members in attendance.

Present

Helen Bain, Roy Bain, Margaret Ballantine, Morag Barclay, Judith Borup, Lyn Bryce, Allana Creighton, Linda Cullen, Margaret Fairgrieve, Fiona Fairlie, Ella Greig, Margaret Harris, Gillian Hardstone, Jimmie Hill, Kathryn Lawson, Deb Lees, Susan Mackay, Norma MacLeod, Marjorie MacRae, Debbie McAlees, Margaret McCann, Jean Martin, Jane Meikle, Yvonne Munro, Alice Oliphant, Oluf Olufsen, John Philip, Hugh Porteous, Joyce Porteous, Margo Priestley, Eve Ritchie, Anne Robertson, Lesley Ross, Moira Stephen, Margie Stevenson, Anne Thorn, Lorna Valentine, George Watt.

Apologies

Diana Baillie, Irene Bennett, Marion Bennett, Muriel Bone, Wilma Brown, Jeanie Butler, Ross Colwell, Heather Cowan, Fiona Cummins, Lorraine Dick, Margaret Davidson, Edna Ewen, Linda Gaul, Sheena Gillespie, Martha Harris, Annabel Harrison, Catherine Higgott, Helen Hobson, George Hobson, Pat Houghton, Janet Johnston, Zsofi Jozsef, Janette Kirkpatrick, Les Lambert, Deirdre MacCuish-Bark, Susan MacKenzie, Ian MacLennan, Theresa MacVarish Clark, Kate McArdle, Mary McFarlane, Margaret McGregor, Eileen Meany, Tom McKinlay, Brenda Pattison, Sue Porter, Margaret Pritchard, Jane Rattray, Evelyn Redmond, Jayne Riddett, Alison Robertson, Susan Robertson, Helen Rodger, Margaret Ross, Margaret Rose, Dorothy Scott, Irene Smith, Keith Stacey, Moira Stacey, Anne Taylor, Wendy West, Linda Williamson, William Williamson

Minutes of AGM held on 28 August 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th August 2021 had been emailed to members on 15th August 2022. There were no matters arising and the minutes were approved. Proposed by George Watt and seconded by Yvonne Munro.

Secretary's Report

Membership

The membership as of 26th August 2022 was 105. The membership for 2020-2021 was 128. This is probably due to repercussions from Covid and the period of lockdown with no dancing.

Workshops

We held our first workshop following the lockdown period on Saturday 28th August 2021 in Broxburn. It was a pleasure to welcome members back for the TAS AGM and workshop. Covid precautions were followed to make the day as safe as possible. The workshop was designed to include dancing to ease us back in gently including dances without taking of hands. It was a real joy to see members back dancing and enjoying themselves. The afternoon session included a very interesting talk from our musician for the day Ewan Galloway on how he had progressed from enjoying the accordion to becoming a professional musician. The afternoon also included a talk and discussion on Core Training for Instructors. The workshop was well attended, and it was good to be back after the long period of no dancing due to Covid.

Our Spring workshop was held in Bridge of Allan on Saturday 23rd April. The workshop was based around the dances of Sir Walter Scott, Heart of Midlothian. Our musician for the day

was Shona MacFadyen. Jimmie Hill led us through dances of the period during the morning session with a huge amount of enthusiasm, explaining the dances of the period as well as some of the social history of the time.

The afternoon included an interesting discussion regarding music of the period and the afternoon concluded with some dances associated with Burns led by Oluf Olufsen. A very enjoyable and interesting workshop with perhaps fewer attendees than we had hoped for, possibly due to ongoing issues with Covid.

TAS Committee

The three office bearers on the current TAS committee have been in post for a minimum of three years plus two non-office bearers have also been in post for the same time. This year we tried to encourage members to put forward nominees to fill these posts, but despite forms being compiled and sent out to the whole of the TAS membership, we only received one reply. This is for Deidre MacCuish Bark who has been proposed by Anne Robertson and seconded by Jimmie Hill to join the committee as a non-office bearer.

TAS Facebook Group

George Watt has kept the TAS Facebook page updated and has kindly agreed to continue in this role.

Moirra Stephen has managed the TAS Website and kept it updated. Moirra has kindly agreed to continue to manage the website.

TAS Newsletters

Mary MacFarlane has continued to produce very informative newsletters. Thank you to all who have contributed to the TAS newsletters. Mary has kindly agreed to continue as editor of the newsletter.

Oluf Olufsen thanked the secretary for the work done over the past four years and for this current report.

Treasurer's Report

A statement of accounts had been previously circulated to the TAS membership.

Income

Membership for 2021-22 stood at 128, which included three new members and a further five whose membership had lapsed but who rejoined. Thirteen members did not renew. The decision to encourage renewal, and other payments, by BACS seemed to be well received, with 73 subscription payments by that method, or directly into the bank account, so slightly over 50%, almost all the rest having paid by cheque, just a few in cash.

Note on Membership 2022-23, and possible consequences

At 26/08/2022 membership stood at 105, of whom 102 have renewed their subscription, one additional member has renewed after a break, and two are new members. Unfortunately, two members passed away over the last 12 months and the significant number of 24 have not renewed. This has caused a not insignificant drop in membership income. I would recommend that over the course of their next meetings the committee discuss whether an increase needs to be made to the subscription, as well as to remuneration for contributors to workshops.

Workshops 2021-22

Autumn workshop: It was decided that there would be no charge for the autumn workshop and AGM, since it was the first in-person event for some time. Expenses covered the musician's fee and travel and the hire of the hall.

Spring workshop: Attendance at the spring workshop was fairly low, understandable given the prevailing state of the pandemic at the time. The teacher for the day, Jimmie Hill, waived his fee, for which we are grateful. The declined fee is entered as a donation on the Balance Sheet, to give a more accurate indication of the cost of a workshop.

Expenses

Insurance: The Insurance Company failed to send a reminder about the renewal, and the Treasurer failed to notice this, so unfortunately a payment was missed. It was renewed as soon as the oversight was noticed, but unfortunately there has been a considerable increase in the cost of the premium.

Grants

None

Update on Banking for 2021-22 into 2022-23

The online banking arrangements have been working well, venues, teachers and musicians have been happy to receive payment by that method, with many members also proving to be willing to use it to pay their subscriptions or for workshops. Most of those who opted to pay by bank transfer have continued to do so for 2022-23, and a few additional members have moved to this method. 67/105 memberships have been paid by this method or by a direct transfer by members' own bank branches.

Thanks

The Treasurer thanked her colleague from the Scottish Tourist Guides Association, Joan Dobbie, who examined the accounts again this year, and gave valuable advice on the format and streamlining of the spreadsheet used to keep track of income and expenditure.

Oluf Olufsen thanked the Treasurer for her hard work, for keeping the accounts up to date and for compiling the current report and statement of accounts.

The Treasurer's report was approved. Proposed by Margie Stevenson and seconded by Judith Borup.

Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members

As intimated in the Secretary's Report, nomination forms asking for proposals of nominees to fill three office bearer posts and two non-office bearer posts were emailed to the membership on 24th July 2022 requesting forms to be returned by 7th August 2022. In the event only one nomination form was returned proposing a non-office bearer committee member.

The committee vacancies have become out of sync, the reason for which is not totally clear. Covid and the fact that the last time there was a vacancy for Treasurer the post was not filled and so this post became out of sync. Oluf Olufsen from the Chair spoke of TAS as a vehicle and platform for sharing good practice and this will thrive on the input of the members. We wish TAS to be an enthusiastic, eager and creative organisation, to thrive and be a strong organisation and this requires people.

It was suggested that some committee members may need to stay on.

Jimmie Hill proposed the following: Post of Treasurer for three years, post of Secretary for two years and post of Chairperson for one year. This proposal was discussed and adopted. Seconded by Alice Oliphant.

The full committee elected at the AGM on 27th August 2022 is:

Chairman	Oluf Olufsen - Oluf agreed to continue for one year
Secretary	Anne Thorn - proposed by Deb Lees, seconded by Helen Bain
Treasurer	George Watt - proposed by Jimmie Hill seconded by Roy Bain

Non-office bearers:

Deirdre MacCuish Bark - proposed by Anne Robertson, seconded by Jimmie Hill
Jane Meikle - proposed by Margo Priestley, seconded by Gillian Hardstone
Anne Smyth - 1 year remaining on the committee

It was agreed the Chairman must ensure the committee rolls forward each year.

Jimmie Hill gave a vote of thanks to both the retiring and incoming committee members.

Workshop dates and venues for 2023

Discussion on venues took place including the following issues.

Hall fees can be extremely expensive, the cost needs to be reasonable for TAS. We would like to cover the whole of the country, North and South. Parking and public transport should be taken into consideration when looking at a venue. No reason not to re-visit halls we have already been to. It was suggested it would be a good idea to build a directory of venues. Dumfries, Lockerbie and Strathpeffer were suggested, members in these local areas to find out more about the halls, including costs. Members asked to contact TAS by email, Facebook, website with ideas and suggestions.

Discussion on workshops took place including the following issues.

Currently we hold two workshops per year, Spring and Autumn, do we want a third? TAS has money in the bank, could we have a similar weekend to TAC which would provide a greater scope for those attending, would be more sociable including evening events, and would attract participants from South and North. A TAS ball was suggested, open to non-members.

After discussion it was decided the autumn workshop should continue to be on the last Saturday in August. The date of the 2023 AGM and workshop will be Saturday 26th August 2023, venue to be decided. As yet no date has been set for the 2023 Spring workshop.

TAS Website

Moira Stephen asked if it would be acceptable to transfer to a different web host. This was agreed and Moira will investigate a new host. Roy Bain will check free web hosts.

Use of Technology

The present Committee have been holding Zoom meetings every six weeks over the past six months. These meetings have proved very useful for discussions rather than only emails. Oluf Olufsen, Chairman, emphasised the need to engage with technology. It had been suggested that we video our workshop today to share with teachers' groups. Although on this occasion this was not possible due to short notice and lack of time, it was agreed that this might be possible in the future.

The Chairman asked all TAS members to make use of TAS Facebook page and the website to make suggestions and ideas.

The meeting closed at 11:45am

Secretary's Report for 2022-23

Membership

The membership as of 22nd June 2023 was 115 which is a slight increase on the previous year when membership stood at 105. We still have not returned to our pre-Covid membership of 133.

Workshops

We held our Autumn workshop on Saturday 28th August 2022 in Broxburn. The format was slightly different from previous years with the AGM being held first followed by the workshop. The workshop was led by Luke Brady who was ably assisted by Fiona Mackie. Luke focused on using music in our SCD classes and participants were kept engaged with the right balance between discussion and dancing. The day was broken up into four sessions: how to effectively use a musician in class; using a variety of music for step practice; how to use recorded music and dance programme writing.

Our Spring workshop was held in Montrose on Saturday 29th April 2023. The morning workshop focused on revisiting once popular RSCDS dances and we were taught by Alasdair Brown. Our musician for the day was Neil Galloway. In the afternoon we focused on "100 years of the RSCDS – what next?" and discussed the quotation "Cherish the past, adorn the present and build the future." The afternoon concluded with Alasdair teaching a few more RSCDS dances which were once popular followed by three dances from the RSCDS Glasgow Centenary Book.

TAS Committee

At our 2022 AGM two office bearers were appointed to the committee – Anne Thorn took on the role of secretary and George Watt became treasurer. Jane Meikle and Deirdre MacCuish-Bark joined the committee as non-office bearers. Sadly, Anne Smyth felt that she was unable to continue as a committee member and we were very fortunate that Morag Barclay agreed to be co-opted onto the committee.

Communication with Members

TAS Facebook Group

George Watt has kept the TAS Facebook page updated and has kindly agreed to continue in this role.

TAS Website

Moirá Stephen who has managed the TAS Website and kept it updated has kindly agreed to continue in this role.

TAS Newsletters

Mary MacFarlane has continued to produce very informative newsletters. Thank you to all who have contributed to the TAS newsletters. Mary has kindly agreed to continue as editor of the newsletter.

Anne Thorn
Secretary

Treasurer's Report for 2022-23

When I accepted the role of Treasurer I suspect Lorna's mouth fell open at the thought. After all, I find it hard to count my change out of a £20 note after buying two Americanos, a plain scone with cream and a fruit scone. (I'm the one who likes the cream). However, needs must and no one else was willing to take on the job.

It has been a steep learning curve, and I'm still only a third of the way up this particular mountain. I have to admit Lorna has shown me how it should be done, as opposed to my haphazard beginning. What I can see clearly is that although our bank balance is healthy, our running costs are increasing rapidly. There is much to discuss at our next AGM, but do not let that put you off from coming to our August workshop. It is your Association, make your voice heard!

Our book of dances is coming along nicely. Jimmie Hill has seen to the recording of the music for us and the line-up of musicians is beyond par. Neil Copeland, Mo Rutherford, Frank Thomson, Ian T Muir and Ewan Galloway. Excellence guaranteed. Costings have been agreed for printing and that should not take long. Moira is going to investigate using the Website for selling our wares through PayPal. It should mean in future you will be able to pay your annual subscriptions and Workshop fees in advance through PayPal should you wish to. Many of you have already paid your annual membership which is great. Very few of you however, have indicated whether you will attend the Autumn Workshop or not. I think we have a set!

George T Watt
Treasurer

TAS Annual Subscription

Membership subscriptions for the year June 2023 to May 2024 are now due – have you renewed yours?

Payment can be made by Bank Transfer (preferred method) or by cheque. Full details are provided on the membership form on page 26.

TAS Spring Workshop Report

The TAS Spring Workshop took place on Saturday the 29th of April in Old & St Andrews Church Hall in Montrose. This was a new venue and had been chosen to try to encourage more SCD teachers and TAS members from the north and north east of Scotland to attend. There were 44 attendees which was slightly disappointing however it was a holiday weekend, there was an RSCDS meeting scheduled that day as well as the first Glasgow Spring Fling event post Covid.

Our teacher for the Workshop was Alasdair Brown based in Glasgow and north east musician Neil Galloway provided the music. In the first session Alasdair focused on teaching dances which had once been popular. On being given this remit, he said that he had spoken to Margo Priestly, some dancers in Birmingham, his parents in York and members of the York SCD club to find out which RSCDS dances had been popular in the past. He had also looked at the Strathspey Server to find out which dances did not appear in dance programmes listed from across the world.

After a warm up, Alasdair divided the class into three couple sets as far as possible and then quickly recapped *Maxwell's Rant* (32 bar reel) from *Book 18*. In the four couple sets the fourth couple joined in by dancing in tandem with the third couple in the reels. This was followed by the teaching of *Ladies of Dingwall* (48 bar reel x 8) from *MMM2*. The following points of technique were covered:

- 1) Skliffing of feet in down the middle and up
- 2) The couple in third place having to turn very quickly to finish on the side lines after the change and set progression in promenade hold.
- 3) The first couple starting the left hand turn from the side lines.

The dance was danced through twice in three couple sets then dancers were asked to swap sides and dance twice more from their partner's position in order to discover the subtle differences.

Cauld Kail (16 bar strathspey followed by 16 bar reel) from *Book 9* was then taught. One awkward part in the dance was identified: the rights and lefts are executed in four bars therefore when the first woman finishes the rights and lefts with a polite turn at the end of the strathspey and then has to begin the reel by passing partner by the left to enter the figure of eight on the opposite side this can be a little awkward. The following points of technique were covered:

- 1) When dancing rights and lefts look at the person when giving hands and don't hold on too long.
- 2) Skliffing of feet.
- 3) Eyes looking across in the four hands across.

Cauld Kail was danced three times through in three couple sets then dancers changed sides and danced again to discover the subtle differences.

The final dance of the first session was *Lady Susan Stewart's Reel* (32 bar reel) from *Book 5*. Alasdair emphasised that in the first 8 bars of the dance the first woman

should anticipate the cast and that the second couple should step in when stepping up on bars 7 and 8. After everyone had danced the dance three times through, Alasdair stated that some dancers "dance TO places" but they should be encouraged to "phrase" to dance. The first session was concluded with a cool down followed by lunch.

After lunch Oluf Olufsen gave a short talk entitled "100 years of the RSCDS – what next?" He talked about his own experiences of dancing over the last fifty years then highlighted the friendship and joy of Scottish country dancing. Change was inevitable but Scottish country dancing has survived and is seen as a tradition. It has the binding forces of etiquette, grace and manners as well as encouraging everyone to join in. Good footwork and handing are also important. Scottish country dance teachers are the guardians and custodians on our tradition but how do we take the tradition forward?

Groups of 5/6 were formed and each group was given the quotation "Cherish the past, adorn the present and build the future." Groups were asked to consider the quotation and then discuss it with one person in the group making notes. At the end of the allocated time Oluf collected all the notes. He said that they would be collated and presented in the next TAS newsletter. (*Editor's note: See following item.*) He concluded by asking if we should consider collating everything from previous Workshops and newsletters into a teaching handbook.

The afternoon session began with a warm up followed by dancing *Tribute to the Borders* (32 bar jig) from *RSCDS leaflet* dance 31 in three couple sets.

Miss Mary Douglas (48 bar jig) from *Book 10* was then taught. Alasdair emphasised building momentum in bars 25 to 32.

Alasdair then moved on to teach three dances from the Glasgow Centenary Dance book. The first dance taught was *The Atheneum* (32 bar strathspey x 3) which Alasdair devised. The following points were emphasised:

- 1) In bars 8 to 16 when dancing the Rose progression, after the half turn with two hands the dancers should sweep out for the cast away.
- 2) In bars 24 to 25 dancers should flow out of the circle into the setting.

Jordanhill (32 bar reel x 8) was then taught. This dance was also devised by Alasdair. The Girandole progression was taught in two couple sets before moving into three couple sets to walk through the rest of the dance. Alasdair emphasised that the dancing couple should finish the first half reel on the side lines before entering the second half reel.

The last dance of the day was the easier *Centenary Jig* (32 bar jig x 8) devised by Anne Thorn. Anne explained each part of the dance as follows:

1-8 Depicts the "1" in 100.

9-16 Depicts the "00" in 100.

17-24 Depicts dancing across the four corners of the world.

25-32 Reminds us of the circle of friendship.

After dancers had walked through the dance, Alasdair emphasised that there should be equal sized turns in bars 9-16 with the second and third couples dancing for four bars and the first couple finishing the first turn in the middle of the dance in second place. When the first couple had danced once through Alasdair reminded dancers of the need to form a circle with "Ws" to support other dancers especially if the floor was slippery.

The afternoon session finished with a cool down followed by a vote of thanks to the teacher, musician and TAS committee for their contribution to making it an enjoyable but thought-provoking day.

Anne Thorn

RESULTS OF DISCUSSION GROUPS AT TAS SPRING WORKSHOP – AN OVERVIEW

Attendees were divided up into discussion groups of approximately five individuals. They were given the brief, 'Cherish the past, adorn the present and build the future' and asked for comments thereon pertaining in particular to our role as teachers. Hopefully the following collated summary of the comments resulting from these discussion groups might provide food for thought and inspiration.

Cherish the past?

Knowing the history of SCD and the foundation of the RSCDS is our point of reference as SCD is a cumulative product of the past. It is important to respect the past and teachers should be mindful of and encourage the preservation, through their teaching, of such aspects as the basic structure of and form of steps and formations, social nature of 'dancing' (as seen in many of the older dances), the observance of etiquette to enhance the experience of dancing (such as waiting for a dance to be announced before taking to the floor and also clearing the floor after dancing) and, most importantly, the awareness of and influence of the music. However, we should not be hidebound by the past. There are parts of the past that we could leave behind, such as not looking down on same-gendered people dancing together.

Adorn the present?

Continuity from the past is important. Continue with good teachers and good teacher training. How do we know (for certain) that classes are not interested in technique? If so, find out why. Adapt to age of class members. Mixed range of dancers in class. Build up from one week to the next. (What about infrequent attendees?). Plan but adapt plans dependent on who attends (Graded books 2 & 3 useful). How do we keep dancers who are trying SCD? Image of SCD? Mind-set of people who want to try SCD? Flexibility. Consider afternoon classes for older dancers, with perhaps music slowed down slightly. Increased publicity and advertising for new members, specific to location or community. Exposure through different forms of media? Flash mobs in shopping centres? Create groups/classes that people want to join and stay with, making the effort to turn up and get involved. Help new dancers by building a sense of community and social interaction within and with other groups. Involve youth, students and children by educating teachers and parents and creating more accessibility for parents. Grandma bringing children to class. Why do we keep adding new formations and new dances affecting consolidation for beginners/learners at intermediate level? Be open-minded about the future: Ceilidh; Ballroom; SCD combined? Should we add a bit more Ceilidh to SCD? Maybe people will not like that and leave.

Build the future?

Be prepared to change and accept that change. Potentially alter the objectives of the RSCDS as the society evolves. Increased further education and skills development for teachers as competence required. Get dancers “in the door”, listening, watching and wanting to join. Less advertising and publicity done with demonstration teams and more with social dancing to draw people in and capture the atmosphere, so it doesn’t look elitist. Don’t drill to perfection to start off, rather introduce formations and basics of handing and phrasing. Create sociability through enjoyment, instilling a desire to improve and share. Learn from your own experiences and learn from other teachers. Use a formation from an older simpler dance which is in a new dance. Teach earlier, simpler dance, consolidate formation then teach newer dance. Common starter – revise a number of dances with the same start to make dancers more confident. Entries/exits. Similarities. Dance Scottish (Wedding – Ceilidh – SCD). Use “Ceilidh” dances as warm-up/intro to class. Be aware of gap created by middle-aged people who stop dancing once they have a family and later want to return to dancing. Current entry points appear to be children’s classes, university classes, adult beginners’ classes and retirement age clubs but need to aim for people in 40s and 50s who might be looking for an evening class – how to attract them? Children should be encouraged through teaching in schools, after school clubs, attending adult dances with parents and/or grandparents ensuring good behaviour so that everyone can enjoy themselves. RSCDS Summer School expensive and thus not accessible to many.

Collated by Oluf Olufsen

Breaking news: The TAS Children’s Book Project

Start Dancing!

**24 Fun and Easy Scottish Country Dances
for use in schools, at Days of Dance, Festivals, and for beginners
and
8 Popular Ceilidh Dances**

At last, our TAS children's book project is nearing completion. The book and the music will be launched at our AGM on Saturday 26th August. The book contains 24 simple country dances, including *Miss Ross's Delight*, the only dance we know that Jean Milligan devised. We have also included the instructions to eight of the most popular ceilidh dances.

Our aim

Our aim is to kick-start country dancing in our schools. This project has been on hold over lockdown, as has the teaching of country dancing in schools. Three years is a long time in a child's school life. Those children who were taught before lockdown are now older and need to start again, and many have not experienced country dancing at all.

This book gives teachers really easy dances with a minimum of pas de basque and no difficult formations. Its aim is not to turn schoolteachers into country dance teachers, but to give them the confidence to teach a few dances to all their classes, and to keep country dancing as a natural part of the social life of the school – for Christmas parties, displays at fund-raisers, ceilidhs and parents' evenings. This book will extend

the repertoire of simple dances for use at Festivals and Days of Dance. It is also an ideal source of easy dances for adult beginner classes and for warm-ups.

The Book

We are publishing the book in two ways. The book is 48 pages and you can buy it at our AGM. It costs £5 per copy to TAS members if bought from TAS, and £10 to everyone else. It is also available by post.

Crucially, however, all schoolteachers can request a free copy by emailing the TAS secretary. Anyone else may download a pdf version from the Bandcamp website for £6. More details will be posted on the TAS website when the book is printed. For those who wish a hard copy of the book it will be on sale to TAS members for £5 at the TAS Autumn Workshop.

The Music

We have recorded the music for the 24 country dances. We have used 5 of our best loved musicians: Neil Copland, Ewan Galloway, Ian Muir, Mo Rutherford, and Frank Thomson. Mo accompanies Neil and the four accordionists have recorded 6 dances each. We asked them to decide for themselves what tunes Scottish children should be dancing to and not to worry if a tune was associated with an already published RSCDS dance. Scottish children should be familiar with tunes such as *Bonnie Dundee*, *the Muckin o' Geordie's Byre* etc. It does seem daft that they can't dance to a tune like *Mairi's Wedding* just because there is a dance of that name and one which is totally unsuitable for children in school.

All the tunes are traditional, apart from a few which have been written for the dances. For example, we have the tune, *The Noblehill Jig*, composed by Pat Clark for the children of Noblehill Primary School in Dumfries. The tracks are not studio band recordings. They are individual musicians and give a unique sound not normally heard outside the class situation. The 24 tracks of 4, 6, and 8 times through reels and jigs will also be an invaluable resource for all RSCDS teachers who use recorded music.

The music will all soon be downloadable from the music website 'Bandcamp'. You can buy all 24 tracks for £12, but most schoolteachers will only want a few tracks so they can buy individual tracks for £1 each.

Help us promote the book and the music

We all know that many branches and affiliated groups have money in the bank which they are not sure how to use to promote country dancing in their area. Why not persuade your branch to buy one copy for all the primary schools in your area. You can then take it along, give it to the headteacher, and tell them about the project to get Scottish schools dancing again. Offer to give the teachers an hour of CPD to get them started! All the dances are ideal for use at a Day of Dance or at a Festival, for Scouts, Guides, Boys and Girls Brigades etc.

Country Dancing! Scotland's other national sport!

Jimmie Hill
Member of the Steering Committee

Events around Scotland

The 2nd RSCDS Helensburgh & District Branch Half Day School 1st April 2023

Once again the Branch Committee decided to organise a Half Day School in 2023. Helensburgh Parish Church hall was booked from 1pm until 11pm to allow us to hold the class from 2pm until 5pm and the dance from 7.30pm until 10.30pm.

It was agreed that we should approach Margie Stevenson to be our teacher and she asked if Susan MacFadyen could be the class musician. Sadly, Margie had to withdraw from teaching at our Half Day School six weeks prior to the event but we were fortunate that Heather Cowan (who had taught at our 2016 Weekend) accepted our invitation to take Margie's place.

54 applications were received for the class and 81 applications for the evening dance which was slightly up on 2021.

At the Saturday afternoon class Heather started with a warm up and some step practice before teaching three dances: a round-the-room dance which participants were invited to name, *Noah's Ark* from RSCDS Book 43 and *The Flowering Heather* from Gaye Collin's book "The Musicians' Wedding".

The first session was followed by a break for tea/coffee and a biscuit. In the second session Heather taught *The Glaiokit Gowk* (April Fool) by Colin Anderson; *Florida Street "Cambio Cambio"* by Jim Stott and *The Highlandman's Umbrella* by Anna Holden.



At our dance in the evening we had the pleasure of dancing to a five-piece band when Nicol McLaren's three-piece band was joined by Susan and Shona MacFadyen. What an amazing sound they produced. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed dancing to their fantastic music. The tempo and tunes were spot on. The atmosphere at the dance was excellent and the attendees mixed well. Everyone enjoyed the music, programme and clear recaps.

We had a fantastic Half Day School and preparations are already under way for our 2024 Half Day School which will be held on Saturday the 6th of April. Why not come and join us?

Anne Thorn

Helensburgh & District RSCDS Half Day School Co-ordinator

Children's Ball in Selkirk to celebrate RSCDS Centenary



To celebrate the Centenary of the RSCDS the local children's class organised a ball in Selkirk Rugby Club. Over 70 children were there on the night, dancing to Stuart Anderson's band. The event was a great success and the raffle raised over £160.

Margaret Pritchard

Roxburgh Selkirk & Peebles Branch

West Lothian social event and Presentation on the Sir Walter Scott Dances

To celebrate the Centenary of the RSCDS, West Lothian Branch organised an afternoon event. Sixty members and friends from neighbouring areas gathered in Broxburn on 12 February to hear Jimmie Hill give a presentation about the Sir Walter Scott dances.

First, Jimmie provided some interesting historical and social background. Then tea and cakes were served and members had the opportunity to catch up with friends who are no longer able to dance.

Nattily attired in the costume of a 19th century dancing master, Jimmie then guided the dancers through three of the dances: the Jig *Reuben Butler*, *Madge Wildfire's Strathspey* and *Madge Wildfire's Reel*. Dancers and audience alike enjoyed the modern interpretation of the dances. The musical arrangements, reminiscent of those in fashion in Scott's time, were different from the 21st century SCD band sound.

It was a fitting celebration of the occasion and a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Mary McFarlane
RSCDS West Lothian

An Outreach Perspective from Glasgow Branch Past, Present and Future...

After completing four years as Outreach Convener of the RSCDS Glasgow Branch, I am taking time to reflect on past events and my hopes for current and future activities, in order to promote Scottish country dancing. I believe the role was created with the aim of boosting membership and attendance at classes or dances. For me, the most important objective of Outreach events is to engage with members of the local community by sharing the enjoyment of dance. Some may think the focus should be to obtain new members, as the Society needs to be developing for the future but making a small difference to the lives of people, especially after the stress of the Covid Pandemic has been most rewarding, for all involved. Hopefully, when an audience sees the joy of dancing then some may be more interested in attending a class, possibly leading to future membership. Due to Covid restrictions, Outreach activities were limited so the following activities were completed during 2022-2023.

Glasgow Branch was very fortunate to receive requests from local organisers, mainly via our website or a few through personal contacts. In most cases the organisers had a budget to pay the fees of the musician, so there was little cost to the Branch. All organisers requested live music to enhance the experiences. A team of Canadian curlers, on a tour of Scotland, wished a ceilidh type evening to be held in a local hotel and danced enthusiastically, with much hilarity, with support from Branch volunteers. Hand signals, smiles, nods and google translator was the order of the day when the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Glasgow Branch, hosted a cultural event to allow some families to learn some dances on St Andrew`s Night. After some hesitation, the visitors tried the steps of the new dances. To avoid language difficulties, there was a short demonstration of each dance by volunteers, prior to group participation. Throughout the evening the two cultures mixed and socialised with the organisers treating everyone to a light supper, incorporating fruits, meats,

cheeses, whisky, and shortbread. The Branch volunteers were both honoured and humbled to be part of this new community and the families' smiles increased as they relaxed. So much so that they offered to display and teach us a familiar folk dance from Ukraine. The evening was really special as we were able to share dancing as one new community of people. A further international event was to offer a dance session to 75 senior pupils from France, who were touring Scotland as part of a school trip. Fortunately, our selected Branch teacher spoke fluent French enabling the pupils to follow instructions and to complete dances, as they gained in confidence throughout the morning. After many selfies were taken, an exhausted group retired onto their coach. The Branch has been active in providing an alternative culture to visitors from abroad.

Importantly, the Branch has had various opportunities to involve the local community too.

Dance volunteers have been invited to a few Care homes, community, and church organisations to socialise and entertain the elderly. This has been a valuable and memorable experience for all volunteers. As we danced, the audiences were encouraged to sing, toe-tap or clap. On most occasions at the end of the session, there was an impromptu chance for the audience to participate, either by dancing, singing, or swaying. The branch was extremely fortunate to have access to fantastic musicians who were happy to play extra music to entertain the audiences. At most events the dance volunteers came along without rehearsal time so familiar dances, *Good Hearted Glasgow*, *Mairi`s Wedding*, *Shiftin Bobbins*, *City of Belfast*, were firm favourites. All the organisers have stated that watching dancing or chatting to us before/after the dancing, offered the opportunity for their group to chat and reminisce about past experiences. The volunteers found the experiences "very rewarding and meaningful" especially when some of the activities also included everyone sharing lunch and home baking! Many of the audiences had been socially isolated so they were very grateful for the opportunity to recall stories about their dancing days. I know the Branch plan to continue with these visits, as every organiser has asked us to return in the future as we bring "joy and cheer" to their groups. As Covid restrictions are relaxed, I very much hope more Community groups can be supported. All the dance volunteers have asked to repeat the activities as there was such a caring atmosphere at all events, a success indeed!

Recently there were two Glasgow events in which we had been invited to participate, by providing dance demonstrations to the general public, at Milngavie and Bearsden Highland Games and the Art Gallery in Kelvingrove. As this is the Centenary year of Glasgow Branch, these events provided a good opportunity to distribute information about local classes and to hopefully encourage wider participation in dance and possibly even future membership! These were new ventures for the Branch and brought different organisational challenges as the general public and Scottish weather were involved.

It has been more challenging to encourage children to dance. One main event, which encourages primary school pupils to showcase their skills is the Glasgow Music Festival. School staff have time constraints to train a team, who can be entered in either a competitive/non-competitive class. The way forward may be to support school staff by arranging Branch volunteers to visit schools during dance lessons or

clubs to instruct the pupils or advise the staff. The future lies with the children, so effort to encourage enjoyment of dance can only be a positive step. To encourage primary pupils to develop their skills, school staff requested that an inexperienced team be allowed to be part of the audience for the more experienced teams. This was possible and staff were satisfied that their suggestions were realised. I am pleased to report that there has been an increase in the number of adult teams entering the festival. The next date for the festival is Saturday 10th March 2024 and all teams will be welcome!!

One request, which would have been difficult to facilitate had the Branch not had a super selection of RSCDS trained teachers, was to provide a "fun activity" in a creche environment during a major conference at the EVO Hydro. The age range was from four- seventeen years, grouped in three sessions and the feedback from the organiser was "they were all amazing" and so this may become an annual event.

All the activities have taken time to organise but the enthusiasm of volunteers and the enjoyment shown by the audiences made it very worthwhile. A huge thanks to all Branch volunteers, teachers, and musicians without whom none of the above would be possible.

Susan Ewington

Outreach Convener 2019-2023, Glasgow Branch

The fifth couple again

It has been pointed out several times recently how, when a three-couple dance is normally done in a four-couple set, adding a fifth couple has a negative effect on the 2nd couple, especially when the 4th couple stay in second place after their turn. I do not wish to repeat the analysis again, except to say that something is clearly wrong when the 4th and 5th couples, while sharing the chance of being leading couple, positively dominate the opportunities of dancing as "corners", taking 9 of the 16 places, while the 2nd couple get just one such chance. I know that on the RSCDS website it is clearly stated that in these circumstances the 4th couple should drop to the bottom of the set after their one turn, but in many groups that is still actively discouraged and I have certainly been told off for doing so.

I would go further and say that in social dances, when a set has been made up, extra couples should not join as 5th couples, but accept that they should have moved faster and try to get up more promptly for the next dance. This is what they have to do when the dance has any other formation. Maybe I feel strongly about this because once at Summer School the last dance in the Younger Hall on the final Saturday was *The Flowers of Edinburgh*. I was first man in a four-couple set at the bottom of the room. Just as the dance started another couple came and asked the 4th couple if they minded having a 5th couple joining. Although they agreed, the result was that my partner and I danced the first two times through the dance and then stood doing nothing for the last **six** times of the dance. Usually I leave dances on a high note, but not that evening.

The situation is a little different when teaching classes. In general rather fewer dances are covered and the teacher is naturally anxious to make sure that all the class members get an opportunity to learn each dance. In that case I would consider

that 3/4 couple dances should be taught mainly in three couple sets to cut down the number of walk throughs required. Five couple sets should be regarded as a last resort and preferably be danced through ten times so that everyone gets a chance to dance from each position.

In fact, if you are teaching a dance with three couples in a three-couple set it is possible to accommodate one or two four-couple sets so that everyone can take part. I think it is simplest if it is walked through with the 1st couple then danced through once with the music. At this point in the four couple sets the **bottom** two couples should swap, even if the original 1st couple is still in 2nd place. Any further walk throughs can now be done as required, again with the bottom two couples swapping each time. If everyone now returns to the position after the first dance through and swap, the dance can now be done with the music for the standard three times, the original 1st couple having already had their turn. Everyone will now have performed the dance from each possible position.

This process is often more efficient than having to go through the whole dance a second time to accommodate one or two extra couples. I expect that the same principle could be used when teaching dances which require four couples if there are one or two extra couples in the class. The emphasis should always be to avoid having dancers standing around for a long time doing nothing while others are learning the dance.

*Hugh Porteous
Dundee*

Dates for your diary

Argyll & Lochaber Branches

RSCDS Centenary Dance, Corran Halls, Oban, Saturday, 9 September - See Flyer below on page 25

West Lothian Branch

Evening Class and Dance, Broxburn, Saturday 9 September Time: 7pm-10.30pm

Teacher: Fiona Mackie

Musician: Luke Brady

Details on West Lothian Branch website - rscdswestlothian.org.uk/ (Events tab)

Dumfries Branch

Half Day School and Dance, Saturday 23 September (Registration 1pm–1.30pm)

Teacher: Fiona Mackie

Class Musician: Stuart Anderson

Band: Stuart Anderson and his Band

Details on Dumfries Branch website: www.dumfries-rscds.org

Helensburgh RSCDS

Dancing Around The World, Saturday 30 September Time: 2pm - 5.00pm

Venue: Helensburgh Parish Church Hall, Colquhoun Street G84 8UP

Band: Matthew Maclennan

Contact: Anne Thorn (07490 274 871) Email: AM_Thorn@hotmail.co.uk

Price: £5 inc. tea/coffee and biscuit (please bring your own mug)

TAS

Teachers' Association Scotland

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

TAS Autumn Workshop & AGM Saturday 26th August 2023

VENUE:

Cardross Parish Church Hall, Station Road, Cardross G82 5NL

PRICE: £10 for TAS members (£12 for non-members)

PROGRAMME:

10:20-10:45	Tea/Coffee & Registration. Please bring your own mug/juice/water. Payment of TAS subscription.
10:45-11:30	AGM
11:30-13:00	Dances from Book 53. Teacher: Anne Robertson Musician: David Oswald
13:00-13:45	Lunch (Please bring your own lunch and mug) Tea/coffee will be available
13:45-15:45	Dances from Book 53. Teacher: Rachel Shankland Musician: David Oswald
16.00	Close

The charge for the workshop will be **£10** for TAS members (£12 for non-members) payable on the day or in advance by bank transfer using the details below.

Please let the Treasurer, George Watt georgetwatt@hotmail.com know if you intend to come to the workshop and whether you will be paying by bank transfer or in cash on the day.

If paying by bank transfer, please include “workshop” as a reference.

Sort code: 80-05-40
Account no: 06002469
BIC: BOFSGB21340
IBAN: GB37 BOFS 8005 4006 4006 0024 69

TAS AGM & Autumn Workshop SATURDAY 26th AUGUST 2023

LOCAL INFORMATION

VENUE

All events will take place in Cardross Parish Church Halls, Station Road, Cardross G82 5NL.

PARKING

Free car parking is available in the church hall car park or on street parking on Church Avenue in close proximity to the halls. The halls are booked from 10a.m until 5p.m. and the programme for the day will be issued

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Trains from Edinburgh to Helensburgh Central run every half hour and stop at Dumbarton Central, Dumbarton East and Cardross. Cardross railway station is a 5 minute walk from the church hall. First Bus run a half hourly bus service from Glasgow which stops on Main Road Cardross.

PROGRAMME

Programme to follow.

WHAT'S ON IN HELENSBURGH

For those arriving on Friday 25th August, Helensburgh & District Highland Association are holding a ceilidh dance from 8p.m. until 11.30p.m in the Osprey Suite of the Commodore Hotel with the Ewan Galloway duo providing the music.

Please also check the Tower in Helensburgh website/Facebook page if you'd like to attend the cinema or a live streaming. The Destination Helensburgh website also has information about other events which may be on the same weekend.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotels

Commodore Hotel (Travelodge) West Clyde Street Helensburgh
Rosslea Hall Hotel – Rhu
Duck Bay Hotel – Loch Lomond
Abbotsford Hotel - Dumbarton
Premier Inn - Dumbarton
Travelodge - Dumbarton

B&Bs/Guest Houses

Ballmillig B & B Colquhoun Street Helensburgh
Cardross Coach House- Main Road Cardross
Lethamhill B & B – West Duhill Drive Helensburgh
Mambeg Country Guest House - Mambeg
Moorlands B & B – Sinclair Street Helensburgh
No20 Boutique B & B – Craigendoran Avenue Helensburgh
Riva Boutique Hotel – West Clyde Street Helensburgh
Sinclair House B & B –Sinclair Street Helensburgh

There are other B&Bs/Guest Houses in Arden, Luss and Balloch.
Please see Booking.com or visit Scotland websites for more details.

Self-Catering

Please contact Anne Thorn to advise re. location of accommodation. (Some areas are nicer than others)

RESTAURANTS FOR EVENING MEALS

Abbotsford Hotel, Stirling Road, Dumbarton
Annayas (Indian Restaurant), West Princes Street, Helensburgh
Cardross Coach House, Main Road Cardross
Cattle & Creel (seafood, steak, European), West Clyde Street, Helensburgh
La Barca (Spanish Tapas), West Clyde Street, Helensburgh
Masala Twist (Indian Restaurant), James Street, Helensburgh
Mire Mare (Italian) Restaurant, West Clyde Street, Helensburgh
Padrone (Pizza & Pasta) West Clyde Street, Helensburgh
Peckams (European) East Princes Street, Helensburgh
Riva (European), West Clyde Street, Helensburgh
Riverhill Courtyard Restaurant and Bar (European), West Prince Street, Helensburgh
Sugar Boat (European), Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh
The Henry Bell (Wetherspoons Pub food), James Street, Helensburgh
The Mandarin (Chinese Restaurant), West Princes Street, Helensburgh
The Ruby (Chinese Restaurant), West Clyde Street, Helensburgh
Vintage Inn (Pub food), West Clyde Street, Helensburgh

TAS POSSIBLE VENUE DIRECTORY

With a view to planning future TAS workshops, the committee would value any local information re suitable halls and centres which you, as a TAS member, have used or have knowledge of. If you can help in this matter, it would greatly aid the committee in trying to vary our venues the better to cover the whole country and reach out to the entire membership of TAS.

Please copy and complete this form with as much relevant information as you have/can ascertain and return to the TAS Secretary.

NAME OF VENUE

.....

LOCATION/ADDRESS OF VENUE

.....

ACCESS: ROUTES, MILEAGE AND TIMES FOR (a) CAR (b) PUBLIC TRANSPORT (RAIL, BUS, etc.)

.....

CONTACT NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER FOR ENQUIRIES/BOOKING

.....

CARETAKER NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER

.....

FACILITIES AT CENTRE:

NUMBER OF HALLS

.....

APPROXIMATE SIZE OF HALL(S)

.....

TYPE OF FLOOR/AVAILABILITY OF STAGE, PIANO, POWER POINTS

.....

AVAILABILITY OF CHAIRS/TABLES/URNS

.....

AVAILABILITY OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT (e.g. MICROPHONE, PROJECTOR, SCREEN, etc.)

.....

KITCHEN AVAILABILITY

.....

CAR PARKING CAPACITY

.....

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

.....



Argyll & Lochaber Branches

RSCDS CENTENARY DANCE

Corran Halls, Oban, PA34 5PS

Saturday 9th September 2023
6.30 - 11.00pm

Wine Reception 6.30 – 7.00

Dancing to Marian Anderson and her SCD Band
7.00 – 11.00pm

Finger Buffet during the dance

Contact: Irene Smith
(helensburghrscds@btinternet.com)
T: 01436 810336

Teachers' Association Scotland

Membership Application / Renewal £5

Year June 2023 - May 2024

NB: This form can be downloaded, completed and attached to an e-mail, or printed and sent by mail. Please return to the Treasurer, address below.

Title

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Tel. No. Mobile

Email

RSCDS Branch.....

Teaching Certificate Full / Part / None
(Highlight/delete as appropriate)

First Aid Certificate Yes No
(Highlight/delete as appropriate)

The preferred method of payment is by Bank Transfer, using the following details:

A/c name: Teachers' Association Scotland (TAS)

Sort code: 80-05-40

Account no: 06002469

BIC: BOFSGB21340

IBAN: GB37 BOFS 8005 4006 4006 0024 69

If you prefer to pay by cheque, please make payable to **Teachers' Association Scotland** and **send to the Treasurer:**

George Watt, 61 Cliffburn Road, Arbroath, DD11 5BA

E-mail georgetwatt@hotmail.com

I enclose £ / I am paying by Bank Transfer (Complete/highlight as appropriate)

Signature.....

Date.....