

**Minute of the 88th Annual General Meeting of the Aberdeen
Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.
Held at Curl Aberdeen, Eday Road, Aberdeen
on 16th June 2014**

Present were the following 43 members of the Branch:

Emma Allsop, Brian Anderson, Aileen Appleyard, Sheila Bain, Morag Barclay, Kathleen Bruce, Sheila Cameron, Lynne Cursiter, Rachel Discombe, Edna Ewen, Anne Findlay, Gail Fraser, Sheila Fyfe, David Geddes, Stan Grycuk, Clare Grycuk, Thomas Hall, Martha Harris, Jane Leys, Andrew MacLeod, Michelle MacLeod, Jean Martin, Lesley Martin, Linda McDonald, Heather McKenna, Isobel McMillan, Martin Milne, June Rae, Annie Robertson, Fiona Spence, James Stott, William Stuart, Walter Sutherland, Evelyn Swanson, Fiona Taylor, Frank Thomson, Vera Tocher, Eileen Watson, James Watson, Elizabeth White, Eric White, Lynn Wood, Doris Young.

1 Chairman's Opening Remarks.

Isobel McMillan, Chairman, welcomed members to the Aberdeen Branch's 86th AGM and made the following remarks:

"Welcome everyone to our 88th AGM of the Aberdeen Branch of the RSCDS.

We have a very active and vibrant Branch, and one that we should all be proud of. We run five adult classes, a demonstration class, a very successful Ceilidh class and five children's classes. On top of that we also hold two dances, one in March and the other in December; we run Summer Socials from May until the end of August; we run four Winter Socials, held on Sunday afternoons; and of course we run the Away Weekend.

Add into this mix the workshops for our youth, and the medal tests and dancing proficiency tests that our children sail through with ease. We are so blessed with the calibre, stamina and enthusiasm of our teachers, all of whom go that extra mile to prepare the children for these tests.

Last June as a sort of reward to the children, their teachers organised a party in the MacRobert Hall at Robert Gordon's College. Around eighty children danced and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. That party was so successful that we repeated the occasion last Thursday when we had well over a hundred children, and it was wonderful.

As if all that isn't enough, teams from the demo, adult, children and youth classes all entered the Aberdeen Music Festival in the Music Hall in March, and all of them did us proud. Our Demo Team have performed on several occasions in Aberdeen and at Drum Castle, and we even got paid for their performances which is an extra bonus. Thank you to all our teachers.

We are also fortunate that most of our classes to date have had the benefit of live musicians, which is not the case in many other Branches. So thank you to Kathleen, Erica, Irene and Frank. Frank ran two very successful musical

workshops last summer, and as a result one young man, Craig Mainland, who has accompanied Frank on several occasions, has offered to play at one of our Winter Socials. Frank is going to run another workshop before our last Social in August. He has to do a fair amount of work for this event, including making up the sets, photocopying all the music, and then rehearsing with the musicians. Who knows, out of the next workshop there might emerge another budding Frank to keep the live music tradition going.

Into this very lively programme comes the Commonwealth Ceilidh, which as you all know takes place on Saturday in the Music Hall. When we were first approached it was to devise a ceilidh dance and then to help run the event on the night, with Get Scotland Dancing as the main organiser. In the event, not only did Emma devise a brilliant dance which I think will become very popular in SCD and Ceilidh circles, but we ended up doing all the organising as well. If it were not for our extremely efficient secretary, who luckily for us now has time on her hands, the event simply would not be taking place this Saturday. Lynn dealt with an endless stream of emails between herself, the band, the City Council, Get Scotland Dancing, Headquarters, myself and Emma, and somehow everything fell into place. Fa's like us!

We have a lot of wonderful people who put huge amounts of energy into our affairs. One such is Jim Stott. It was a highlight of my term in office to present Jim with his Branch Award at the Spring Dance. Thank you again Jim for all the work that you have done in the past and continue to do.

Finally I thank the whole Committee, who have supported me and contributed hugely to the success of the Branch over the past year. I thank in particular the three retiring members, Brian Anderson, Sheila Bain and James Wilson: Brian helped Fiona with the accounts, and kept me right with the figures with amazing patience; Sheila and the Away Weekend are inseparable, she does a fantastic job, and isn't too shabby at making up a dance programme either; and it was always worth heeding James's sensible advice and comments. Indeed I should also say that Brian and James held their own in a female-dominated Committee, and that's no mean feat. I also have to thank Kathleen, who has been a terrific Vice-Chairman and has stepped into the breach for the last two meetings and the recent socials when my own family affairs caught up with me. Thank you Kathleen.

Thanks also to Fiona Taylor, our Treasurer, who quietly keeps our books in order; our Secretary, Lynn Wood, who has been my ever-helpful friend and has taught me so much over the last two years. The Branch is so very lucky to have you both on board. I certainly could not have done this job without you.

Finally, my thanks to you, the members, for giving me the opportunity to chair this great Branch. It has been a most enjoyable experience - for the most part.

2015 sees us celebrate our first ninety years: I do hope that at this AGM we fill the vacancies on the Committee and thus ensure that this Branch continues to flourish."

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the Honorary Vice-President Doris Kinghorn, and 23 other members as follows:
Maggie Alexander, Gladys Ball, David Eastwood, Willie Fyfe, Magdalen Leiper, Violet Lorimer, Betty MacKenzie, David MacKenzie, Iain Martin, Fiona McIver, Gordon McRuvie, Jim Morrison, Moira Morrison, Judith Riddoch, Moira Robertson, Alan Smail, Anna Smail, Fiona Wilson, James Wilson, Anne Wood, Bruce Wyer, Linda Wyer, Angela Young.

1.2 Approval of the Minute of Previous Annual General Meeting

The minute of the Meeting of 17th June 2013 had been circulated beforehand to members. It was noted that the Away Weekend surplus figures should not be absorbed into the general funds but kept separate.

The minute was approved and adopted on a proposal by Jean Martin and seconded by Stan Grycuk.

1.3 Matters arising from the Previous Minutes:

There were no matters arising.

2 Honorary Secretary's Report

The Honorary Secretary's Reports had been circulated beforehand to members. The Chairman thanked Jane Leys for her continued hard work as Membership Secretary and for providing the membership figures.

On a proposal by Stan Grycuk seconded Jean Martin, the Honorary Secretary's Report was unanimously adopted.

3 Honorary Treasurer's Report

Fiona Taylor presented the accounts and spoke of the surplus and loss breakdown for the year for adult and children's classes

Jean Martin queried the sales figures of £888 against a cost of goods of £1,106. Fiona clarified that the surplus stock in the "shop" had been sold off and any remaining items were given to the Christmas Dance raffle for prizes. Sales of Book 47 had been underpriced as the cost of postage was sent by HQ 4 weeks after the books had been delivered. There are also Jigs and Reels packs in stock. The current balance is £203 and the Wednesday and Demo class are debtors.

After discussion the **Annual Accounts were unanimously adopted on a proposal by Jim Stott and seconded by Fiona Spence.**

The membership was asked if there were any questions on the breakdown of the figures for the individual classes and events during the year which were available at the meeting. There were no comments.

3.1 Children and Young Person's Fund

The amount for this fund had been recommended by the Finance sub-committee, notified to committee and to be agreed at the AGM. It was noted that only £386 had been spent during the year (Inverness Festival entries, Youth Workshop, Children's Party Dance and Aberdeen Festival Entry Fees).

£500 for the year April 2014 to March 2015 had been recommended.

This was unanimously agreed by the membership.

4 Report from Headquarters

As members had regular copies of the Scottish Country Dancer they were familiar with Headquarters' news.

Outstanding items included PRS licences (Performing Rights Society) with whom HQ (David Cunningham) is still in correspondence.

Three members of the Aberdeen Branch were on committees at present:

Jean Martin – Management Board

Jim Stott – Education & Training

Angela Young – Education & Training

Jean Martin again spoke briefly on the proposal of moving the RSCDS to be a company limited by guarantee whilst retaining its charity status. OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) has now approved this move and there will be a motion at the Society AGM for which members will be asked to vote. There are Rules and Procedures which explain how the society works and it will be available on the Society website prior to the AGM. Jean noted that she would like to record the help of Aberdeen Branch member Ray Inkster in proofreading these.

Jean also noted that she was on the editorial board for Scottish Country Dancer and magazine articles were always welcome. A new book (Book 48) and Graded Book 3 (for children and beginners) would be available at Summer School and a composite book to gather various “odd” dances would also be available. There was a new Guide challenge badge and branch member Fiona McIver was acknowledged for her help and support in this. Mrs Stewart (one of the founders of the Society) was also a guide leader and 1,000 badges worldwide had already been taken.

Jim Stott discussed the new Accreditation for Schools which had recently been launched. The Aberdeen Branch children's classes had successfully piloted the scheme although it was designed to work with the curriculum for excellence in schools. A CPD (Continual Professional Development) session for teachers using the Jigs and Reels pack is planned in Aberdeen on 1st July. A ceilidh pack for secondary schools (including 6 Scottish country dances) is being developed by an under 16 group at Summer School.

Angela Young who was unable to be present wrote the following which was read out to the AGM:

“In November I was elected to the Society's Education and Training Committee for 3 years. Having previously been on the then Publications Committee, I was interested to see how much, if any, of Headquarters' committee procedure had changed and how this committee at the heart of the Society's teaching fed into overall policy. E & T is the umbrella for a variety of RSCDS activities - Summer and Winter School, the Teachers' Associations workshop day at the AGM, Examinations, Dance Instruction Queries, Children's Medal Tests, Adjudicator Courses to name but a few.

So far I've attended three meetings and outside of these have been involved in restructuring the Dancing Proficiency Award. The work this year has led to this being renamed as "The Dancing Achievement Award". There are still 3 Levels - Intermediate, Advanced and Very Advanced. These levels mirror those set for RSCDS School events with the expected knowledge of formations. The dances set for each level become progressively more challenging and are aimed to extend dancers' knowledge, while bringing together dances published in early RSCDS books with those in more recent publications.

Feedback has been taken on board from tutors, assessors, as well as those who have undertaken this award and a revised assessment sheet is now in place. The pass mark for all levels is now exactly 50%, with an emphasis on achieving positive marks for elements of technique. Additionally formations will be seen as single 8 bar phrases so that the amount of work is manageable in the course time suggested, and dancers will know what is expected at the assessment. The committee has suggested that this will be of interest to dancers wishing to improve their personal dancing, as well as to those interested in taking the teachers' modules to give a guide before sitting Unit 2. Additionally it could give intermediate dancers a goal to achieve after attending branch classes. This year Summer School will offer both intermediate and advanced courses each week.

I have to admit I'm still finding out the full brief of the Education and Training Committee and how things really happen. There are various anomalies which have arisen over the years as to how sub-committees report and to how some decisions are made. Thankfully the questions I'm asking seem to be those other committee members thought everyone but them knew the answer to as well."

5 Appointment of Honorary President

The appointment of Lesley Martin, as Honorary President was confirmed.

5.1 Appointment of Honorary Vice-Presidents

The appointment as Honorary Vice-President of Miss Doris Kinghorn was confirmed.

The committee proposed a new Vice-President for approval by the meeting. Jane Leys has been a member of the RSCDS Aberdeen Branch for over 50 years. During that time Jane took her teaching certificate and danced in demonstration teams for many years. Jane was also in the team that worked with John Drewry when he was developing new dances.

In more recent years Jane has served on committee for 4 terms and was also on the working group for a number of years when the RSCDS AGM was held in Aberdeen. Jane has helped by taking the money at both Adult and children's classes and since 2002, Jane has been the Membership Secretary. She took this role when the previous incumbent (Jean Yeats) died and she has been meticulous in maintaining the records of the Branch Members, and each year called regular members who had perhaps forgotten to rejoin. Jane

has been a support to the committee for many years and in particular to the secretary, Lynn Wood, for the last 12 years.

The committee felt that this long term support of the Branch should be rewarded by honouring Jane with a Vice Presidency.

Jane thanked the committee for the honour and noted that she will do anything required of her. She said that she had enjoyed dancing and music since she started at the age of 8.

The appointment of Jane Leys as Vice-President was confirmed.

6 Election of Chairman Nominee – Stan Grycuk

This was proposed by Violet Lorimer and seconded by Margaret Alexander. This was approved by the meeting.

In response to his election Stan said the following words:

“Thank you Isobel, for passing on this chain of office. Ladies and gentlemen, it is with some nervousness that I take on the role of Chairman in this 89th year of the Branch, when there are also so many other important Scottish activities.

Isobel through her enthusiasm and energy has done a wonderful job of moving the Branch forward, and I am sure that we all want to thank her for her commitment to the branch. I can't guarantee to be as successful, but I can guarantee to carry on her tradition of being hopeless with names. So I might as well apologise now if I offend anyone. And while I am in the process of apologising, Clare informs me that I have “no social skills”, so I will try harder in that respect.

Although I have not been on this committee before, I have had some experience of committee work before I retired and have done duty as chairman of the Banchory SCDC. The opportunity to serve on this committee I regard as an honour rather than a duty and I will try to live up to the standards set by previous chairmen.

Unlike Jim(Stott) I cannot claim that “dancing has been my life”, but I have a certain enthusiasm if not expertise, and have just now reached the total of attending 200 dances, or 800 hours of dancing... excluding classes.

Isobel has kindly briefed me and handed over copies of core documents used by the committee. I can see by their content that this is a well-run branch with a very full agenda. Just as with our dancing, the work of the committee is a team affair and I look forward to working with the continuing and new members of the team in fulfilling the objectives of the club as outlined in the proposed new constitution and the strategic plan.

I have copies of committee minutes to bring me up to speed with current activities. The most recent one the “Commonwealth Ceilidh” takes place this Saturday. Sadly I will not be there due to attendance at the Buckie weekend,

although I was involved in some of the early publicity events. My first big event therefore will be the branch 90th celebrations. So it will be a bit of a baptism of fire for me.

Now I suggest that we get back to the formal business of the meeting as outlined in the agenda.”

6.1 Election of Vice-Chairman Nominee – **Kathleen Bruce**

The appointment of Kathleen Bruce as Vice-Chairman nominated by Lynn Wood and seconded by Gail Fraser was confirmed. Kathleen was invited to join Stan at the top table.

6.2 Election of Honorary Secretary Nominee – **Lynn Wood**

Proposed by James Wilson and seconded by Vi Lorimer. There being no other nomination, **Lynn Wood was duly elected as Honorary Secretary.**

6.3 Election of Honorary Treasurer. Nominee – **Fiona Taylor**

Proposed by Margaret Alexander and seconded by Frank Thomson. There being no other nomination, **Fiona Taylor was duly elected as Honorary Treasurer.**

6.4 Election of Committee Members to replace those retiring

Nominations received:

Michele MacLeod – proposed by Lynn Wood and seconded by Kathleen Bruce.

Morag Barclay – proposed by Isobel McMillan and seconded by Lynn Wood.

As there were three vacancies for 3 years, nominations were requested from the floor.

Andrew MacLeod noted that he would be willing to stand and on a proposal by Isobel McMillan and seconded by Sheila Bain, Andrew was nominated.

With no further nominations, and as the required number of nominations to fill vacant posts had now been received, Michele MacLeod, Morag Barclay and Andrew MacLeod were duly elected to serve on the Committee for three years.

Stan noted with appreciation those members of committee retiring: Isobel McMillan, Brian Anderson, Sheila Bain and James Wilson.

It was noted that for cheque signatory purposes, Isobel McMillan and Brian Anderson would be removed from the list of signatories. They would be replaced with Stan Grycuk and Kathleen Bruce.

6.5 Election of Delegates to the 2014 Society AGM

Members were reminded that its size entitles the Branch to have up to five AGM delegates, three of which were the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. Nominations were requested from the floor for two other delegates for the AGM in Perth in 2014.

Isobel McMillan was proposed by Jean Martin and seconded by Linda McDonald.

Frank Thomson was proposed by Isobel McMillan and seconded by Tom Hall.

With no further nominations from the floor these nominations were approved.

7 Appointment of Honorary Auditor

Frank Thomson, who had expressed his willingness to serve as Honorary Auditor, was proposed by Fiona Spence and seconded by Annie Robertson. This appointment was confirmed.

8 Motions

1. It is proposed by the Committee: That the printed document produced to this meeting, and entitled "The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Aberdeen Branch Constitution", be approved and adopted as the Constitution of the Branch, in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, the existing Constitution.

Note: In terms of the existing Constitution the foregoing proposal requires to receive the vote of not less than two-thirds of the members present at the meeting.

Stan asked Isobel to return to the table to lead the discussion on the motion. Isobel noted:

"You will see from the list of Nominations and Motion which accompanied the Agenda, that the committee proposes that we adopt a re-written Constitution, a copy of which you received two months ago.

In the past, the committee has tinkered with the Constitution, but there has been no major attempt until now to bring it up to date. However, during my three years on committee, there have been several occasions when questions of interpretation have arisen, issues are not covered. It became obvious that we had to do something to modernise the constitution and to remove any ambiguities. We have also taken the opportunity to refer to ourselves as "the Branch" rather than the cumbersome "Local Association".

Two things helped us in drafting what is now before you:

1. Headquarters updated the model constitution which they suggested be adopted by all new Branches, and encouraged existing Branches to consider; and
2. We had the advantage of free legal advice from my lawyer husband in Burnett & Reid, who drew up the document.

The draft before you has been scrutinised and approved by Headquarters and by the committee. All comments have been taken account of and the document changed as appropriate. Indeed the version before you is version

8. I don't think that I need to go into the detail of the changes because you have all had ample opportunity to absorb the proposal, but we are happy to answer any queries you may have.

I urge you all to vote in favour of the Motion."

There was a question from the floor:

Martha Harris – "Section 8.8 "An adult member of the Society who is not a member of the Branch, or is an Associate Member of the Branch, shall be entitled to attend any General Meeting of the Branch, and at the invitation of the Chairman, shall be entitled to speak but shall have no vote."

Why are there Associate members and why are they allowed to attend a Branch AGM?

Jean Martin responded that if a member moves, it enables them to keep a link with their old Branch.

Fiona Spence responded that if they were an active member in the Branch as well as their own main Branch, it would be appropriate for them to be at the AGM.

Evelyn Swanson – are they only allowed to speak if invited?

Isobel McMillan responded that this was true – they could attend and listen but not vote nor speak (unless invited).

Doris Young – could the payment of an Associate member be clarified?

Jean Martin responded that every member pays a proportion of their subscription to HQ and a local fee to the Branch. Associate members do this to their own Branch, and pay an additional local fee to the secondary branch.

There was further discussion on this point.

Isobel McMillan suggested that we voted on section 8.8.

With a vote of 40 for and 3 abstentions section 8.8 was agreed.

On a proposal by Jim Stott and seconded by Clare Grycuk the motion was passed.

9 Any other Competent Business

Sheila Fyfe asked if the committee would consider cutting down the number of dances on our programmes to 18. She noted that from 23:00 a large number of attendees left and the atmosphere is lost.

Isobel McMillan noted that in Glasgow, dance programmes were typically 16 or 18 and was in favour of a shorter programme.

Sheila Fyfe produced a copy of the latest Scottish Country Dancer magazine and noted that the front page looked like an advert for a Saga dancing holiday and that the photograph was not appropriate.

Jean Martin responded that the magazine editors had been criticised in the past for having too many young people in the photos.

10 Close of Meeting

There being no other business, Stan Grycuk thanked the Committee again for all their hard work, in particular Lynn Wood and Fiona Taylor. He reminded members that an Open Forum would follow. He thanked all those who had attended and wished all members a happy dancing year. The meeting thereafter closed with thanks to the Chair.

11 Date of next Branch AGM

This was set to 15th June 2015.