

**Minute of the 89th Annual General Meeting of the Aberdeen
Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.
Held at Beechgrove Centre, Midstocket Road, Aberdeen
on 13th June 2016**

Present were the following 41 members of the Branch:

Emma Allsop, Aileen Appleyard, Sheila Bain, Morag Barclay, Kathleen Bruce, Sheila Cameron, Lynne Cursiter, Pam Dignan, Edna Ewen, Sheila Fyfe, David Geddes, Stan Grycuk, Clare Grycuk, Martha Harris, Jane Leys, Mary Lillie, David MacKenzie, Michele MacLeod, Jean Martin, Lesley Martin, Heather McDonald, Heather McKenna, Paul McKnight, Isobel McMillan, Martin Milne, Annie Robertson, Irene Shand, Anna Smail, Fiona Spence, Billy Stuart, Walter Sutherland, Evelyn Swanson, Fiona Taylor, Vera Tocher, Eileen Watson, James Watson, Fiona Wilson, James Wilson, Lynn Wood, Angela Young, Doris Young.

1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks.

Stan Grycuk, Chairman, welcomed members and especially our President Lesley Martin and Vice President Jane Leys to the Aberdeen Branch's 90th AGM and made the following remarks:

"Welcome to the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the Aberdeen Branch of the RSCDS.

As retiring chairman of the Branch I find it encouraging that you take an interest in the running of the branch. Also the AGM is a chance for you to hear about the work of the committee over the previous year.

From my perspective, the main event was the culmination of our 90th anniversary celebrations in October 2015. The evening dance and the afternoon tea party were a tribute to all those that worked so hard to prepare for the events.

Alongside the celebrations, we published a book of dances accompanied by a CD recorded by Frank Thomson's Scottish Country Dance band. Sales of the book and CD have exceeded all expectations, with over 400 copies of each being sold so far, with sales as far away as Germany, Japan and Canada.

With substantial reserves, the committee decided that it was appropriate to subsidise the 90th celebrations, and return to members some of the surplus that had been built up over the years. Many of those that attended the tea party especially, were no longer dancing, and the subsidy rewarded them for their support over the years.

Moving on to 2016, another highlight was the course that Jim Stott ran for new teachers. I was so pleased with the achievement of all the candidates in Units 2 & 3 of the course. Again the committee decided to subsidise the candidates, as encouraging young teachers helps to guarantee our future.

Our classes are doing well at all levels, though we are making some changes

by introducing a combined Very advanced and Demonstration class to expand the number of dancers available for demonstrations. At the introductory/improvers level, it is encouraging to see dancers from this class coming to more of the formal and informal dances. I must also mention the delight we had with the new class at Braehead School run by Heather Blair.

The children's classes continue to meet the needs of well over 100 enthusiastic dancers. When I attended the annual children's party last Thursday, I was thrilled to see so many excited and energetic children dancing a programme of 14 dances. It must be a real challenge for the children's teachers and helpers to focus all of this energy into dancing. Have a look at the children's photograph on Facebook and you will see our investment in the future of Scottish Country Dancing in the North East.

Another of the year's highlights is of course the Aberdeen Festival, where the Branch subsidises the entrance fees of many teams. There are classes for all ages and all abilities. And for those not dancing it is an opportunity to see exquisite performances from young and old. Put next year's event in your diary now.

Lastly I would like to thank all those that have been on the committee in the last two years, and have helped me to continue the work of the Branch in providing Scottish Country Dancing in Aberdeen. Without their help and support, we would have no classes, no formal dances and no social dancing. With the regular turnover of committee members there is plenty of opportunity for everyone to make a contribution to the running of the branch, you all have something to offer."

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from the Honorary Vice-President Doris Kinghorn, and 27 other members as follows:

Brian Anderson, Margaret Brown, Gail Fraser, Tom Hall, Ray Inkster, Jackie Keith, Max Keith, Betty MacKenzie, Andrew MacLeod, Andrew J MacLeod, Iain Martin, Gordon McRuvie, Jim Morrison, Moira Morrison, George Rae, Alastair Reid, Judith Riddoch, Moira Robertson, Mary Robinson, Sally Russell, Alan Smail, Jim Stott, Frank Thomson, Margaret Webster, Anne Wood, Bruce Wyer, Linda Wyer.

1.3 Approval of the Minute of Previous Annual General Meeting

The minute of the Meeting of 14th June 2015 had been circulated beforehand to members.

The minute was approved and adopted on a proposal by Isobel McMillan and seconded by Clare Grycuk.

1.4 Matters arising from the Previous Minutes:

Sheila Fyfe noted under 4 Report from Headquarters, that Isobel McMillan had stated that one of the major topics for the Society is "How do we increase membership". Sheila felt that this should be "How do we retain membership". Emma Allsop responded it was a Headquarters initiative and she had been invited onto a Business Working Group and one of the topics is the retention and encouragement of new members.

Angela Young noted that it was part of the Strategic Plan – and Headquarters needs to work with Branches more as it was a constant issue for them. The Business Working Group is aimed at doing this.

2. **Honorary Secretary's Report**

The Honorary Secretary's Reports had been circulated beforehand to members.

On a proposal by Isobel McMillan seconded Paul McKnight, 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.

- The Away Weekend and the 90th events were included in the Social Events section of the accounts.
- Meetings and Other included cost of the 90th Anniversary Book & CD.
- Sales of the 90th Anniversary Book & CD were separate.

Figures from the 90th Anniversary Events were circulated to the meeting and explained the background costs and Sales to the end of March.

- Class and Social event statistics were distributed at the meeting – not all 90th Anniversary events, costs and sales were included.

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

Walter Sutherland asked that the class and social event statistics could be circulated to the membership with the other AGM papers although he appreciated that there could be time restrictions.

3.1 **Children and Young Person's Fund**

The amount for this fund of £700 had been recommended by the Finance sub-committee, notified to committee and to be agreed at the AGM. It was noted that £640 (with a fund of £600 agreed) had been spent during the year (Inverness Festival entries, Children's Party Dance, 90th Anniversary children's party and Aberdeen Festival Entry Fees).

Jean Martin suggested that £1000 be allocated as we had overspent in 2015-16. It was noted that this was partly due to the 90th Anniversary Children's party. There was a vote on whether £700 should be agreed, and everyone was in favour.

The Children and Young Person's Fund was adopted on a proposal by Finance Committee and seconded by Jean Martin.

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:

Isobel McMillan – Management Board

Angela Young – Education & Training

Emma Allsop – Youth Services Committee and Business Working Plan Group

Isobel McMillan noted: The Work of the Board

I am into my second year as a Board member, and I like to think that I am giving something back to the RSCDS which gives all of here a huge amount of joy.

Many of us take for granted our Dancing here in the North East, where Scottish Country Dancing is in a relatively healthy state; and we wonder why we need to be a member, and pay £21 to Edinburgh and a £5 to Aberdeen Branch. To answer that, let me tell something about the working of the HQ Board.

There are 7 meetings during the year, and we now have the ability to join the meeting by Skype (known as Go To Meeting). Tom Halpenny from Washington Branch is a regular, and Anselm Lingnau from Germany also joins us by Skype if he is not personally present – he is the Membership Committee Convenor. We intend to try one meeting where we will all Skype with only the Chair and the Secretary actually in Coates Crescent! Not at all sure how that will go - but I reckon it's worth a try. The Board numbers 13: there are six ordinary members, plus Jim Healy, our Chair; Helen Russell, our Chair Elect; Bill Cant, our Treasurer; Gillian Wilson, our Executive Officer and Secretary; Sue Porter, Convenor of Education and Training; Anselm as already mentioned; and Anne McArthur, Convenor of Youth Services.

I thought that I would take you through one Board Meeting so that you get a wee peek at the extraordinary amount of work that HQ does, and that the other committees do. Remember that most of the committee members are volunteers, and have an amazing drive to make sure that our hobby will continue for many years to come.

The Minutes of the February meeting reveal that among other stuff we dealt with:-

- the Patrons' Lunch in London, part of the Queens 90th birthday celebrations. London Branch took up the offer of tickets, and we get our name on the website, and therefore Social Media pick it up and we get free publicity. I believe that Sheila and Willie Fyfe also have tickets.
- Celtic Connections was a great success, and our own Gary Coull from Banffshire was complimented on his huge contribution. I find it interesting, and not before time, that we are getting happier about embracing Ceilidh Dancing.
- The Finance Report always bamboozles me, and I find that I have to take a couple of hours the night before with my Mike taking me

through the paper. A few of my suggestions have been taken up by that sub-committee, for example : we now get last year's figures for the same period so that we compare like with like; and the HQ building has been properly valued for insurance replacement value purposes as well as Market Value

- The Finance Report, of course, includes the Balance Sheet items such as the Reserves, the General Funds, the Development Funds, and the Jean Milligan Memorial Fund.
- There is special panel or subcommittee which deals with all the finance information, and I read and usually understand their reports, and question them if I am unclear or unhappy.
- HQ and staff reports are always an eye-opener for me. They do the enormous amount of work in overseeing and carrying out the administration of Spring Fling, Winter School, Summer School, examinations, event bookings, and of course Social media and our website. Since March we have had 84,518 hits on the website's home page, 44% of which are by new users and 55% by returning users – the statistics do not reveal the nature of the remaining 1%. On top of all that they compile our newsletters for emailing to us all, and they manage the on-line shop.

They also secure adverts for our excellent magazine - 14 adverts were booked for the April Issue, which brought in £2,000, all helping to reduce the costs of production and are looking into sponsorship of some of our Events, and we have already had two positive responses. I am hoping that Mackie's of Scotland will respond favourably.

- There are 161 Branches worldwide, and 317 Affiliated Groups. HQ and the Board Members are in contact with all of them, and help to answer queries and sort out problems. I have been allocated 26 Branches, and three of them have so far asked for my help, which I managed to provide.
- HQ have produced guidance packs for Branches on how to deal with Press and Media, and editable flyer templates for them to use and adapt. The list just goes on and on.
- Then there are the reports from the three committees - Education and Training, Membership Services, and Youth Services. They all do invaluable work for your Society, promoting and encouraging SCD for all ages and abilities, maintaining high standards of teaching, training teachers and musicians, and publishing materials.
- It is a fairly long day - the meeting starts sharp at 10:30 and usually finishes at 4:00. I admit to leaving early to catch the 3:30 train home - by that time I am exhausted.

I have another year to go, and I hope that we will find somebody willing to take over from me in representing Aberdeen Branch at Board level.

Angela Young - Education and Training

This committee deals with Medal Tests, Examinations, revise the Dance Achievement Awards, and provide training and examiners for all of these. Youth Leadership is a new award initiative to work alongside the Duke of Edinburgh and Guiding awards. The objective is to achieve this by the end of the summer (with possibly a phone app.) They are also a technique advisory

panel and respond to questions on fine details of technique as a group and agree the response. Standards are constantly being set and maintained. In May 150 children took Medal tests and we now have assessors in USA and Canada.

Emma Allsop Youth Services noted:

The Youth Services Committee works on encouraging younger people to dance. In September the committee decided to try and publicise Scottish Country Dancing by having a Flashmob. This is an event where many dancers come together and start dancing, with the hope that the public become interested. As there are a lot of dancers in Aberdeen, I agreed to organise this event. So after finding a venue, musician and around 50 dancers, we danced a Flashmob in Union Square which went down very well. It certainly sparked interest and we had flyers and adverts for our classes available to hand out to interested onlookers. Mike Greenwood from HQ came to film the event and this went out on Social media where it was noticed from further afield. We have had emails from around the world saying how good it was and other Branches are going to try and do the same to promote dancing in their areas.

The Committee also organise Youth Workshops for young dancers and recently the Scottish locations have been in Aberdeen and Perth.

Spring Fling also comes under our remit, a weekend of dancing and music. This year, Mike interviewed many attendees and we were able to produce little movies which have been spread on Social media. This also encourages making links internationally.

We introduced Global Youth week as a pilot, to try and encourage more people to get involved in dancing. This initiative has been thought through and will be tried again in January where, with more publicity, it is hoped more branches will take part.

We also devised a new dance to help with Pudsey Fundraising and it had accompanying music. The aim was to try and use it in schools to promote dancing there.

Stan Grycuk noted that the Flashmob that Emma Allsop organised in Aberdeen – should this be a model for other branches? He noted that he was underwhelmed by the computer system particularly in relation to booking for Summer School (when they were told that the database had crashed and they had a phone call to check if they were booked).

Sheila Fyfe noted that she had a problem with HQ over the Patron's Lunch arrangements. Payment and full security information was sent to HQ to forward to Buckingham Palace but 10 days prior to the event Sheila had not received tickets and had no response from HQ for 3 days. Sheila eventually spoke directly to the organisers. 2 days prior to the event she heard from Gillian Wilson (HQ had incorrectly typed Sheila's email address). Others from RSCDS at the lunch had also had problems with their tickets.

Isobel noted that she was the local Representative on the Board and any

queries, issues etc, should go through her.

5.1 Appointment of Honorary President

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

5.2 Appointment of Honorary Vice-Presidents

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

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

6.1 Election of Chairman Nominee – Emma Allsop

This was proposed by Doris Young and seconded by Janet Mitchell.

This was approved by the meeting.

Emma noted: I would like to say 'Thank You' for electing me as Chairperson for the RSCDS Aberdeen Branch. I have enjoyed being on the Committee and working groups the past few years and I am looking forward to my time as Chairperson.

6.2 Election of Vice-Chairman Nominee – Morag Barclay

This was proposed by Doris Young and seconded by Sheila Cameron.

This was approved by the meeting. Morag was invited to join Emma at the top table.

6.3 Election of Honorary Secretary Nominee – Lynn Wood

Proposed by Isobel McMillan and seconded by Kathleen Bruce. There being no other nomination, **Lynn Wood was duly elected as Honorary Secretary.**

6.4 Election of Honorary Treasurer. Nominee – Fiona Taylor

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

6.5 Election of Committee Members to replace those retiring

Nominations received:

Edna Ewen – proposed by Emma Allsop and seconded by Martin Milne.

Paul McKnight – proposed by Emma Allsop and seconded by Lynn Wood.

As there were three vacancies for 3 years, one vacancy for 2 years, and 2 vacancies for 1 year, nominations were requested from the floor.

Angela Young nominated **Jean Martin**, seconded by Doris Young for a 3 year vacancy.

Stan Grycuk nominated **Kathleen Bruce**, seconded by Sheila Bain for a 1 year vacancy.

With no further nominations Edna Ewen, Paul McKnight and Jean Martin were duly elected to serve on the Committee for three years and Kathleen Bruce for 1 year.

It was noted that committee had had 2 resignations during the year; one working away from Aberdeen and the other through ill-health.

6.6 Election of Delegates to the 2016 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 2016.

Isobel McMillan and **Paul McKnight** volunteered.

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

7. Appointment of Honorary Auditor

Frank Thomson, who had expressed his willingness to serve as Honorary Auditor, was proposed by Stan Grycuk and seconded by Lynn Wood.

This appointment was confirmed.

8. Motions

No motions had been had been raised to the committee.

9. Any other Competent Business

Jean Martin noted that she felt that a generation was missing on committee – people in their 40s and 50s. Those of this age need to give support to the Branch.

Doris Young noted that she was on the North East of Scotland Music Festival (dance section) committee and reminded the membership that they had had to move to the Beach Ballroom in 2016. **Martha Harris** noted that they had a £1,479 deficit but this was offset by fund raising. She also noted that the festival may be able to get a grant from the Jean Milligan fund but need the Branch to support their application. Martha also noted that RSCDS Stonehaven had donated money, and Heather McDonald had run a dance giving the surplus, there was a raffle and bag packing. Martha confirmed that the Music Hall would not be available in 2017 so the Dance section would be in the Beach Ballroom again. She noted that there were 90 entries in 2016 and the Festival had been running for 90 years.

The committee had already agreed that the Branch should support the Festival and £500 was agreed by the meeting to donate to the Festival funds.

Fiona Spence suggested that this is not seen as an ongoing donation.

Isobel McMillan suggested that the Branch dances commenced at 7:30pm with an ageing group of dancers, people were leaving early and bands prefer an earlier finish. She noted that Stonehaven moved their dance to commence at 7:30pm with no loss of numbers. **Sheila Fyfe** commented that her class dance had also commenced at 7:30pm and everyone stayed to the end (an early finish). **Sheila Bain** commented that dances South of Aberdeen generally started at 7:30pm. It was agreed that the committee would discuss this at their next meeting.

Doris Young commented that a tremendous amount of work was done by the 90th Anniversary committee and thanked Lynn Wood for all her work.

Jean Martin thanked Stan Grycuk for being so enthusiastic in his role and supporting dances and classes.

Isobel McMillan requested that the venue for the Branch AGM is moved to Curl Aberdeen where parking is simpler. **Lynn Wood** noted that we had moved from Curl because of the rising costs of hiring the hall and the charge for tea and coffee. **Heather McDonald** noted that the Beechgrove Centre was being looked at for redevelopment and may not be available.

9.1 **Membership Fees 2016-2017**

Emma noted that at the HQ AGM in November, membership fees would increase by £2. There would be no increase in local membership fees.

9.2 **Winter Socials Review**

Emma noted that attendance at the Winter Socials had been falling over the last 3 years and it was felt that with so few attending, there was little atmosphere and not a good impression for the musician.

Fiona Spence noted that initially it was a trial but as it was successful, it continued.

Walter Sutherland noted that class attendance was also falling.

Aileen Appleyard noted that 2:00pm was too early, 2:30pm would be better.

Lynn Wood responded that the committee had chosen the early start as it is dark by 4:00pm in the winter.

Martha Harris noted that when we run the Summer Socials there are no classes, whilst in the winter, the Winter Socials run alongside classes.

Heather McKenna noted that if the same people were attending the Winter Socials, perhaps we were spreading ourselves too thinly.

There was a vote from the floor with the following result:

Abandon the Winter Socials – 21

Keep the Winter Socials – 6

Abstentions – 17

10. Close of Meeting

There being no other business, Emma Allsop thanked all those who had attended. The meeting thereafter closed with thanks to the Chair.

11. Date of next Branch AGM

This was set to 12th June 2017 – venue to be confirmed.