

# Leeds Branch, Dancers' Newsletter

Registered Charity No. 1072452

ISSUE 88 FEBRUARY 2018



*Malhamdale Weekend, teacher William Williamson and musician Màrtainn Skene (see page)*

## Future Newsletters

The Branch welcomes your news, stories, views, questions etc...

Please send all copy for future newsletters to Irene Dracup  
 21 Lawns Drive, Leeds LS12 5RJ  
 Tel: 0113 2631310  
 Email: glyn.cup@virginmedia.com

Copy should be with her at least three weeks before publication for the November, February and May issues, and early July for the August issue.

If for some reason you don't receive a copy of the Branch newsletter please contact Brenda Burnell on 0113 267 6655.

## From the Chair...

### Hello Dancers

The start of a new year always gives me the opportunity to reflect on past events and to review what may be to come in the future.

I have been fortunate to have been involved in dancing since I was very young, surrounded by dancers so I tend to view dancers as one large, extended family where everyone looks after each other - I wonder if you feel the same way?

I know that wherever I travel in the world, if I want to dance then there will be opportunities fairly nearby. That, to me, is one of the most beautiful aspects of our dancing - instant acceptance into a group of strangers and being welcomed as a friend.

As I write this some of you may be preparing for Winter School, younger dancers are looking forward to Spring Fling, we are preparing for our Musician's Day School and the Scarborough weekend. All of these events bring together people from far and wide, some will be strangers but by the end of the weekend will leave as new friends.

So I invite you all, at the next dance you attend, wherever that may be, find someone you don't know or haven't danced with and ask them to dance. We are all one big family and we are at our best when we work together.

*Claire Johnson*

## Leeds Branch on the internet

The Leeds Branch provides several resources on the internet.

The main web site is at <http://www.rscdsleeds.org.uk/>, everything is accessible from here. It has details of upcoming events and links to cribs, the new shop, the White Rose Festival, Facebook pages and Twitter.

The shop now has its own website at <http://rscdsleeds.uk>. It now provides online ordering and payments.

If you require any help accessing the above information speak to Adrian Dickin or email [adrian.dickin@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.dickin@gmail.com)

Subscription to this Newsletter can be taken out at £6.00 for 4 issues for non Leeds Branch Members.

Contact Brenda Burnell for details and form.

The Branch web site is [www.rscdsleeds.org.uk](http://www.rscdsleeds.org.uk) Why not give it a try?

## Betty Chater

It was with great sadness that we learned of Betty Chater's death. Our thoughts and sympathies are with Terry. Terry and Betty have been loyal supporters of our Children's Festival, White Rose Festival and visitors to our dances over many years. Betty will be greatly missed.

*Irene Dracup*

## Adel Christmas Tea dance

Yes....it was that time of year again; a Monday afternoon in December at Adel Methodist Church and the World famous TEA DANCE. Dancers were flocking in through the door with not just dancing shoes in their hands, but lots of yummy festive fare. When the appointed time arrived, Don and Ian, who else! had taken their places on the stage and the dance floor was packed with dancers eagerly awaiting instructions for the first dance of the afternoon. Happy Returns, a very apt title for the first dance because so many of the dancers present have been coming since the inception of this World famous Adel Tea Dance, the brainwave of Susan and Alan Carr. Unfortunately only Alan was able to join us this year. We missed you Susan.

From time to time in between recapping each dance Don leapt nimbly from the stage to join the rest of us and dance. A favourite dance is the Dream Catcher, the music is beautiful for this strathspey and is most certainly very high on my list of personal favourites. Then in complete contrast everyone was really buzzing with the Bees of Maggiknockater, a great fun dance. As we progressed or should I say danced through the afternoon's programme it was the music maker Ian who kept us on our toes with his superb playing which helped to create such a friendly, happy atmosphere.

At the end of the dances the time had come to eat and quench our thirsts with gallons of tea. It was a wonderful team effort, with everyone present helping to prepare the room with the tables and chairs. Tables were covered with festive tablecloths, plates and napkins not forgetting the most inviting food, just another part of a terrific afternoon. Many, many thanks to all who came and again to Don and Ian for their huge contribution, without them - well!

See you at the end of 2018 for yet another Adel Tea dance. The date for your new diaries is Monday 10 December. See you all again on that date.

*Jean Weatherill*

### Highland and Scottish National Workshop

14th October 2017 - 10am to 3.30pm  
St Giles Church Hall, Church Hill, Bramhope, LS16 9BA

**A fun day for all. No experience needed. We will be practicing the White Rose Festival dances**

Teacher: Catherine Livsey

## Joint Ball Leeds and York and North Humberside

It was the turn of York and North Humberside to arrange the Ball last November. They had a little bit of a panic because the Riley-Smith Hall at Tadcaster, which has been our usual venue, was booked up for our usual date. In the end they managed to book the Stockton on the Forest Village Hall for the event but on a different Saturday. It's a nice hall and on the evening it was nicely filled with enthusiastic dancers from East and West to enjoy the music of the Scott Band. A good programme, good band and lovely supper contributed to an enjoyable evening. Of course, as a friend of mine always says 'It's the company that counts' and in Scottish Dancing the company is always great.

Thank you to the York and North Humberside team for their organisation.

Learning from the experience of York and North Humberside Leeds booked the Riley-Smith Hall early so we'll be back at Tadcaster this November. I'll see you there.

*Irene Dracup*

## Joint Leeds Club and Leeds Branch Christmas Dance

We had an easy year last year because it was the turn of Leeds Club to organise the Christmas Dance. It was at St Chad's Parish Hall with George Meikle playing, as is now becoming traditional at Christmas. Don Andrews and Catherine Livsey were in charge and produced a lively programme to get us all in the Christmas mood.

The Christmas touches of punch and mince pies and the bringing in the green and the light added to the atmosphere.

Once again, a good programme, good music and good company. What could be better?

*Irene Dracup*

### Musicians' Workshop



**Saturday 24 February 2018**

**Adel Methodist Church, Gainsborough Avenue, LS16 7PQ**

The workshop is intended for Scottish dance musicians who are interested in learning more about playing for classes.

The workshop sessions will be led by an experienced dance teacher and pianist **Jeremy Hill**.

**Interested? Heather Foote tel: 0113 2550860**

**Email [heather@feete.org](mailto:heather@feete.org)**

**Further details on our website  
[www.rscdsleeds.org.uk](http://www.rscdsleeds.org.uk)**



# Malhamdale - December 2017

This was our first time on the Malhamdale weekend at Newfield Hall and it was to be extra special as a celebration for the weekend's 21st year was held. Newfield Hall is a splendid old country house, run by the HF, and provides an ideal venue for a weekend such as has been organised for 21 years, firstly by Brenda Burnell and Yvonne Tredgett and Derek Kendal and now by Janet Brayson and Alan Horsfall.

We arrived in time for tea and a lovely welcome and were pleased to find quite a few dancers whom we knew from our travels and by the time we left we knew virtually everyone thanks to the friendly atmosphere. The surroundings are very well suited to good dining and dancing, as the areas for each are separate. This, apparently, has not always been the case, so we benefitted from being latecomers to the "Malhamdale experience". Our teacher for the weekend was William Williamson from Dumfries and he proved to be a very able teacher with a nice sense of humour and not too strict.

## Saturday 17 March 2018, 7.30pm SOCIAL DANCE

Corpus Christi Catholic College,  
Neville Road, Leeds, LS9 0TT

Music: **Matthew MacLennan** MC: **Debbie Crossley**  
Admission: £9, Non-members £11, Full time Education £3

### Programme

Liquid Assets	8x32 J	Drewry, Stoneywood Collection
The Spring Fling Reel	8x40 R	RSCDS Book 50
The Silver Tassie	8x32 S	Drewry Bon Accord Book
The Weathercock	4x32 J	RSCDS Graded Book 2
The Inimitable Derek	8x32 R	RSCDS 3/2006
A Couple of Keepers	3x32 S	Excited States Book
John Cass	5x32 J	RSCDS Book 49
Peggy's Strathspey	8x32 S	RSCDS Book 41
Craileith	1x88 R	RSCDS Graded Book 3

### INTERVAL

Gaelforce Wind	8x32 J	RSCDS Graded Book 3
The Castle of Mey	8x32 R	RSCDS Diamond Jubilee
Sandy's Scotch Broth	3x32 S	Katannuta Book
Immigrant Lass	8x32 J	RSCDS Book 39
Crom Allt	8x32 R	RSCDS Graded Book 3
Midsummer Common	8x32 S	RSCDS Book 49
Neil M Grant	8x32 J	RSCDS Book 49
The Robertson Rant	1x80 S	RSCDS Book 39
Deil Amang the Tailors	8x32 R	RSCDS Book 14

### Extras

Jubilee Jig	8x32 J	RSCDS Leaflets
Minister on the Loch	3x32 S	RSCDS 4/2008

**All dances will be recapped**



We were able to improve our dancing in a relaxed way whilst still working quite hard. The musician was Martainn Skene, who is a very able accordionist and he coped very well with the requirements of the teacher. The only adverse comment was that he played just a tad too slowly for our taste! There was free time in the afternoon on Saturday and some walked, some visited nearby Skipton or simply rested in the comfort of their rooms or the lounges. Dancing on Friday and Saturday evenings to excellent programmes MC'd by Alan completed the action packed weekend. The 21st birthday was celebrated with a lovely cake made and decorated by Yvonne - being a talented cook is another of her attributes!



Geoff and I can say that we had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend and look forward to 2018, which is already planned with a booking form available on departure!

Jan Robinson

# Learning Dances in Words and Pictures

Brenda Burnell's contribution on different ways to memorise dances intrigued me for two reasons: firstly I really struggled to learn dances when, after a 40 year break, I returned to Scottish Country dancing when I retired; and secondly I have been involved all my life in learning, both as a student and as a teacher. As a teacher and trainer I had studied psychology, particularly as related to teaching and learning, so why was I struggling? Time to do a bit of reflection on my learning and Dances in Words and Pictures help to others.

## First, initial assessment.

What did I know/could I do already and what kind of learner was I? Were there any impediments to my learning?

I wasn't a beginner - I knew the steps and basic figures, had danced demos in my youth, and even done some Highland dancing. But, I was unfit; very unfit. The main reason I had returned to dancing was that my GP was urging me to get some aerobic exercise, and the only exercise I ever really enjoyed apart from (once) pony trekking, was dance. However, I was so busy focussing on just breathing, I couldn't pay attention to where I should be going next.

And all the dances were unfamiliar. Until 1964, approximately when I stopped dancing, the repertoire was pretty fixed and had been for years. And now not only were there literally hundreds (thousands?) of dances, but there were myriad new figures and formations too! Sure I could pousette, in slow and quick time, knew about allemandes and reels and turning corners, but 'set and rotate', 'set and link', and Celtic and Schiehallion reels were a mystery. The shoulder of Schiehallion was a tough bike ride, spirtles were strictly for stirring the porridge and a targe belonged in the Royal Armouries.

So, really, I was 'false beginner'. A bit of a parson's egg of the experienced dancer I had believed myself to be, and worse, had claimed publicly to be: good in parts.

Moreover, I was now discovering that in several areas I could no longer pick up new skills and absorb information as easily as I had in previous decades. My short term memory was very unreliable, so my long term memory had little chance! Remembering the sequence of figures in a new or half learned dance was a serious challenge.

I had a fairly solid, but not specialist, music education, had played an instrument and knew Scottish Country dance music. But my time-keeping and bar counting had always been unreliable, as well as now being out of practice.

Then there was my hearing. I had used hearing aids for over 10 years before retirement, and as a language teacher I had been prioritised for the best digital hearing aids the NHS could offer. I needed to hear and correct my students as well as know where in the classroom the sounds were coming from, not least for discipline. I had contributed to training for colleagues on teaching hard of hearing and deaf students, so knew what the issues were. However, as a teacher I had been in charge of the classroom, and could control the noise levels and soundproofing (mostly).

Now I was struggling with echoey halls, shuffling feet, chattering classmates and relatively soft voiced teachers, who sometimes turned their backs to adjust the music whilst talking. Nearly as bad as the station announcements or a busy restaurant!

Partly as a result of hearing loss, my auditory memory, was not great. I had always found recalling names and matching them to the object hard. Names of people and faces, authors and books or plays, places to pictures - aah, and dances! However, as a teacher I had access to the register, and thus names written down, and had regular daily and weekly practice in matching names and faces. I had the (written) lesson plan, and knew the topics and the sequence of activities. I had even been the one to write them down! My most reliable recall was visual; I could remember whole staff meetings or training sessions by replaying the video, in my head. But in a dance class I never had the dances written down and was much too stressed to have 'recorded' a similar 'video' of dances during the class.

I realised I also had difficulty hearing the names of dances because I didn't know what I was listening for, leading to some comical interpretations of what I heard. Obviously I needed to read the programmes available in class and on the Branch website, even if I didn't intend to go to social dances, as these were likely to be taught in class beforehand.

Clearly I also needed to use more visual ways of learning, such as reading and actively watching, as well as working on the things I found hard, like listening to strings of instructions and interpreting them into movements.

As a long term physical education refusenik, I was not used to interpreting oral instructions into a physical movement and responding. I needed first to visualise the movement, then immediately be able to perform the movement confidently. I also needed to train my muscle memory to remember sequences of these movements.

On top of all this, I knew that I needed far more practice, and that I wasn't doing any homework! In training college we were taught that it takes, on average, 25 repetitions to learn something. I believe that has now been discredited, but I have found it a useful rule of thumb. The repetitions need to start fairly close together: several during the '1st exposure', then at increasing intervals thereafter, until reminders (recaps?) are only needed occasionally. We know from other physical activities involving co-ordination and muscle memory, such as riding a bike, driving a car or swimming, that these can become largely automated, leaving the brain free to think about where we are going or even have a conversation at the same time. I wasn't getting those repetitions close enough together with only one class a week and no homework.

## Secondly, goals and motivation.

What did I want to achieve, and how could I make myself 'stick at it'?

I really wanted to get fitter, both physically and mentally. And I wanted to be able to enjoy the social dances, which

I couldn't do whilst I consistently threw partners and often entire sets into a muddle. Partners and set mates were kind, but I was thoroughly embarrassed.

I also had a family and a life outside dancing, so I needed to prioritise my learning targets, and these had to be achievable, or I would just give up. And then feel even worse.

## Finally, a plan!

I set myself some learning targets which I believed to be achievable, and possible activities to achieve them.

Target	Possible activities
Become an Active Learner	Commit to spending more time on learning Use learning techniques which emphasise visual skills Practise listening skills
Learn new figures	Learn names Write description down Watch on YouTube
Match more dances to names	Check upcoming programmes BEFORE class for familiar dances ASK name of dance if you haven't heard
Learn two or three dances thoroughly from each social programme	Read crib AND COPY IT OUT Study diagrams and learn to understand them Match diagram to instructions, chunk by chunk. Watch on YouTube
Increase repetitions/practice opportunities	Go to more classes per week Go to social dances, but just watch the harder or unknown dances Go to workshops (and summer school?) Watch carefully on YouTube or while sitting out in class/at dances

And here, you thought retirement was a breeze! However, it's working; until the next time I throw your set into disorder with a confident stride into the wrong figure, or don't even perform the 'startled rabbit' move.

*Evelyn Davidson*

The 64th annual

# WHITE ROSE FESTIVAL



... of Scottish Country Dancing

**Saturday 14th July 2018, 1.30pm,  
Gateways School, Harewood, Leeds LS17 9LE**

Massed General Dancing, Demonstration Groups,  
Highland & Ladies' Step Dancing, Children's Groups, Evening Dance

**Music throughout by Marian Anderson & her Scottish Dance Band**

**We welcome full teams of 8-10, but can make arrangements for smaller groups or individuals**

Full details from Irene Dracup tel 0113 263 1310  
or from the website [whiterosefestival.uk](http://whiterosefestival.uk)



# DATES, DATES, DATES

The many dances arranged locally are listed in the  
Yorks & North East Scottish Country Dance Diary.

## 2018

### **Saturday 17 February** **Social Dance 7.30pm**

Corpus Christi Catholic College, Neville  
Road, Leeds, LS9 0TT  
Music: Ian Slater

### **Saturday 24 February** **Musicians' Day Course**

Adel Methodist Church, Gainsborough  
Avenue, Adel, Leeds, LS16 7PQ  
Teacher: Jeremy Hill

### **Saturday 17 March** **Social Dance 7.30pm**

Corpus Christi Catholic College, Neville  
Road, Leeds, LS9 0TT  
Music: Matthew MacLennan

### **23-25 March** **Scarborough Weekend**

Teacher: John Wilkinson  
Music: George Meikle

### **Saturday 28 April** **Highland and Scottish National** **Workshops (dances for White** **Rose Festival)**

St Giles Church Hall, Church Hill,  
Bramhope, LS16 9BA (venue tbc)  
Teacher: Catherine Livsey

### **Saturday 19 May** **Social Dance 7.30pm**

Corpus Christi Catholic College, Neville  
Road, Leeds, LS9 0TT  
Music: Ian Muir

### **Saturday 16 June** **Social Dance 7.30pm**

Corpus Christi Catholic College, Neville  
Road, Leeds, LS9 0TT  
Music: Robert Whitehead

### **Saturday 14 July** **White Rose Festival**

Afternoon 1.30 - 5.00  
Evening 7.00 - 10.30  
Gateways School, Harewood,  
Leeds, LS17 9LE  
Music: Marian Anderson and her  
Scottish dance Band

Full details of these events  
will be circulated at Branch  
dances and posted on the  
Branch web site  
**[www.rscdsleeds.org.uk](http://www.rscdsleeds.org.uk)**  
where you will find dance  
programmes, dance  
reminders and application  
forms.

## The Branch Shop

We now sell James Senior shoes, including colourful pumps and  
ghillies.

We stock the latest books and CDs from Head Office, Branches,  
clubs and individuals from around the world.

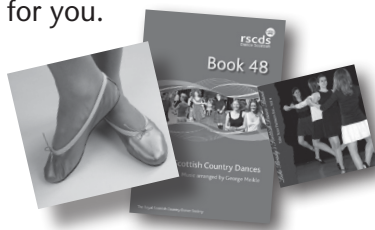
Why not take a look at our new range of ebooks for purchase,  
plus some free ones too to download.

Visit **[www.rscdsleeds.uk](http://www.rscdsleeds.uk)** for full details of these and lots of other  
goodies or email: **[sales@rscdsleeds.uk](mailto:sales@rscdsleeds.uk)**

If you would like anything else we don't  
stock we are happy to try and get it for you.

Please support your Branch shop!

Follow us on  **@RSCDSLeeds**



## Classes

### **Spring Term 2018**

W/C 8 January to W/C 19 March

### **Summer Term 2018**

W/C 9 April to W/C 21 May

W/C 4 June to W/C 9 July

**Fees: £4.00** per class  
or ten class ticket **£35** for *members only*  
(all fees half price for those in full time education)

### **Monday Afternoon**

1-45 to 3-45pm General/Beginners  
Adel Methodist Church, Gainsborough  
Avenue, Adel, Leeds, LS16 7PQ  
Teacher: Don Andrews

### **Monday Evening**

7-45 to 9-45pm Experienced  
Calverley Conservative Club,  
Victoria Street, Calverley, LS28 5PT  
Teacher: Catherine Livsey

### **Tuesday Evening**

7-45 to 9-45pm General/Beginners  
Adel Methodist Church, Gainsborough  
Avenue, Adel, Leeds, LS16 7PQ  
Teacher: Irene Dracup

### **Thursday Afternoon**

2-00 to 4-00pm General/Beginners  
(2-30 start on third Thursday  
of each month)  
St Margaret's Church Hall, Ilkley, LS29 9QL  
Teacher: Don Andrews

### **Thursday Evening**

7-30 to 9.30pm General/Beginners  
Lidgett Park Methodist church,  
Lidgett Place, LS8 1HG  
Teacher: Brenda Burnell  
If the door is locked please ring:  
07932 486340 to gain entry

### **Friday Evening (Children)**

5-15 to 6-45pm  
Hawthorn Wood Primary School,  
Broadway, Leeds, LS5 3QE  
Teacher: Brenda Burnell

### **Sunday Afternoon**

1.45- 3.45pm  
Askwith Village Hall, Askwith, LS21 2JB  
4 March, 8 April, 6 May,  
3 June and 8 July 2018  
For dancers with a good knowledge of  
steps and figures and with ambition to  
extend their repertoire. All welcome.  
Teacher: Catherine Livsey

### **Further Information**

**[www.rscdsleeds.org.uk](http://www.rscdsleeds.org.uk)**  
For further information and details, application  
forms, dance cribs and the Branch shop etc.

**You can now follow the branch**  
**On twitter and facebook**

Twitter **[www.twitter.com/RSCDSLeeds](http://www.twitter.com/RSCDSLeeds)**  
Facebook Rscds Leeds Branch