

RSCDS Ribble Valley Newsletter

April 2025
Issue 78



From the Chair...

What a full calendar of dancing we have had from January through to April: the two Ceilidh Workshops, the combined Ceilidh Dance with Ewan, the Nice and Easy Dance, the Scottish Trip, Jill's Dance for Tom, the Spring Dance and the first monthly Ceilidh class and that's just our branch's activities!

I really must thank everyone on the Committee for their hard work and through their combined efforts we have experienced some fantastic dancing and social events.

The teachers: Joan, David, Peter and Michael, along with their assistants - Tracey and Rose, have worked particularly hard since the start of 2025. Jill and her helpers also need a special mention for the wonderful event she held for Tom. A great night of dances and shared memories, especially several references to chicken dinners!

I'm sure you will agree from the many photo's in this edition we've had lots of fun, fitness and friendship!

Happy Dancing

Sandra

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Special points of interest

- **Facebook page** : https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100084280723762&locale=en_GB
- **Website:** www.rscdsribblevalley.org.uk

The RSCDS Winter School Event 2025

A story of brave decisions and meeting challenges by Catherine Walsh

A decision was made in the Autumn of 2024 by my sister Josie and myself to enrol for the RSCDS Winter School in 2025 in the lovely surroundings of Pitlochry. It was an easy decision to make. We had both had many recommendations from former attendees who enthused with reports of the dances, workshops, musicians and events. We immediately began to look forward to being classmates in a landmark event attended by people from all over the world.

At the same time there were also challenges to consider. Questions started to be asked. 'Which standard of class should we choose?' 'Will we be able to uphold the reputation of the Ribble Valley RSCDS?' 'Will we be able to keep up the pace of dancing morning, noon and night?' And perhaps the most important question 'What does one wear to a ball at the castle home of the Duke of Atholl?'

A swift decision followed to remedy the last question and a new suitcase was ordered for the upcoming stay in Perth and Kinross. Another key decision was made to travel the day before the Sunday reception as a response to possible train strikes or delays that day.

The decision on the class was made by other colleagues in our society who confidently stated that Josie and I should go for 'Advanced Class' status without a doubt. We however had some doubts but were determined to meet this challenge not only to be in the advanced class but to stay there for the week.

In the meantime the new suitcase duly arrived and seemed somewhat larger than anticipated and even before departure from Preston on the Trans-Pennine express it had earned the nickname 'The Beast,' which was confirmed when attempting to transfer to the Scotrail train at Edinburgh, Haymarket where a number of kind volunteer helpers assisted 'The Beast' onto the train.

A most pleasant journey through the Scottish borders and towards the Highlands followed and a stress free and scenic journey ended early afternoon and a comfortable night in a typical B + B saw us sleep well ready for the excitement to follow.

The sensible decision to travel a day early afforded the convenient chance to sneak a visit to the House of Bruar and its many delights were duly taken advantage of.

The Atholl Palace Hotel was most welcoming and we were able to settle into its comfortable surroundings ready for the evening drinks reception. This event proved to be a true occasion. The atmosphere could be felt when descending the stairs – a truly 'buzzing' feeling of fellow Scottish Country dancers meeting up with old friends and new acquaintances from far and wide.

The next day began our 'Schoolwork' and we walked off into the town following a full Scottish breakfast towards our challenge – the Advanced Group. By noon we were still members of the group and looking forward to the next dance class.

Our evenings were filled with dances and soirees, the talents of musicians, singers and instrumentalists were celebrated and admired. Dances that proved to be particular favourites of ours were

The Earl of Mansfield, General Stuarts Reel, Rose of the North, The Kiltmaker and The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. Throughout our week of dance we were delighted to be accompanied by Jim Lindsay, Ewan Galloway, Murial Johnstone and Ian Robertson. A remarkable gathering of the finest talent.

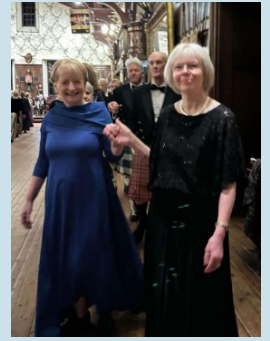
Above all, the occasion was truly enhanced by the global participants and the thrill of dancing with people who had come from Canada, America, Argentina, Japan, New Zealand and many various locations European. New friendships were struck over lively reels and traditional Scottish tunes.

Having met the challenges of the Advanced group we were able to face the once-in-a-lifetime chance to dance at Blair Castle and what an experience it proved to be. The piper's welcome at the castle door, The Grand March and dancing the Eightsome Reel was truly breathtaking. The evening flew by in a whirl of excitement, music and movement.

The decisions we made before the Winter School 2025 all turned out to be the right ones and all our challenges were met including returning 'The Beast' on to the platform at Preston station.

Only just this week was heard the notion 'I might do the Winter School again.' And rightly so!

And rightly so!



Taking the Mikiado

Two little maids from school are we
Doing all the dances wrong you'll see
Glad to be here in Pitlochree!
Two little maids from school.

Dancing here is a bit of fun! (chuckle)
Nobody's safe when our homework's done! (chuckle)
Class is a joke now we have come! (chuckle)

Two little maids from school!

Two little maids who find class scary
Come from Ribble Valley seminary
Finding the tutors a bit contrary -
Two little maids from school
Two little maids from school!

One little maid is a bit dum dum -
Two little maids should not have come -
Three little maids - Ee-bye-gum. (chuckle)

Two little maids from school!

From two little maids, ones had her day
One little maid extends their stay
Wishing each other would go away!

Two little maids from school.

Two little maids who find class scary
Come from Ribble Valley seminary
Finding the tutors a bit contrary -
Two little maids from school
Two little maids from school!

Written by Catherine & Josie



Ceilidh Classes in Whittle-le-Woods and Fulwood Success

The Ceilidh classes in Whittle-le-Woods and Fulwood have become a resounding success, drawing over 60 new dancers eager to experience the joy and energy of traditional Scottish Ceilidh dancing. These weekly events have quickly earned a reputation for being both fun and great exercise, providing a wonderful opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to come together, get active, and enjoy the lively atmosphere.

Deborah, a regular at Whittle-le-Woods, shared her thoughts on the classes: "A lot of fun, thanks for all of your hard work!" She, along with many others, has found the classes to be a perfect mix of exercise, learning, and socialising. Everyone has embraced the welcoming environment, making the classes a standout experience in the two communities.



Audrey, who looks forward to every session, added, "Always a great night – highlight of my week." The classes have become a key part of her social life, offering a space to unwind, connect with friends, and enjoy the company of fellow dancers.

For Jane, the fun is always guaranteed: "Fabulous as always." Her enthusiasm reflects the general sentiment of the group, with everyone thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to



dance and share in the joy of Ceilidh music.

A huge thank you goes to Peter, Tracey, Michael, and Rose, the dedicated team who have made these successful classes possible. Their hard work and passion for Ceilidh dancing have created a fun, supportive space for everyone involved.

Additionally, the support from others in Ribble Valley has been invaluable in keeping the classes running smoothly. Their involvement has definitely contributed to the success of both groups.

These Ceilidh evenings have brought joy to the groups, and with support from all involved, they are sure to remain part of our dancing culture for many years to come.

Super Ceilidh dancing.

Ceilidh Celebration Evening with Ewan!

One recent highlight of the Ceilidh classes was a special treat for the dancers, when musician Ewan Galloway came to play live music for both groups in a combined class.

"Dancing to live music was a magical experience," said one dancer. The live tunes brought an extra special element to an already wonderful evening, and participants thoroughly enjoyed the chance to experience Ceilidh dancing with a live musician, which added even more energy and excitement to the event.



Fun

To

bag-
a wa-
even-
Truly
Dougie.



add an extra Scottish twist, Dougie Cameron played his pipes to the dancers during ter break, then ended the ing with Auld Lang Syne. wonderful—Thank you

**Laughter
Guaranteed!**



Members Spotlight: David & Margaret Stoney

A Scottish
Country

Dancing Journey in Lancashire.

Some have been doing it all their lives, and for them it is all effortless. But not us.....now read on

In my youth Scottish country dancing was what was imposed on pupils in PE classes in Scottish schools throughout December. It consisted of the Gay Gordons, the Dashing White Sergeant, and those well loved 'Scottish' dances, the Canadian Barn Dance and the Virginia Reel as well as a few other dances the details of which I have mercifully forgotten. Dance practice was not generally well received by the pupils, especially the boys, but I rather liked it. The music was good and if the participants would stop mucking about and dance the proper steps it could be good fun.

Although I lived in Scotland in my teens and early 20's I attended few dances and even fewer ceilidhs, steering clear of anything 'traditional', especially if played on an accordion. When I moved to England I never gave Scottish country dancing a thought until in the early 1990's we moved to Chorley. It was then I came across an advertisement for Scottish country dancing classes in Wigan. I took David to class with me and we found the teacher helpful, the class members friendly but the reels impossible. We could dance a right shoulder reel most of the time and a left shoulder reel occasionally but mirror reels defeated us. After a couple of classes we gave up.

When we had both retired we attended a lovely Pilates class locally. A member - one John Thompson - suggested we might find more fun at a Scottish country dance class in Euxton run by Joan. Our first reaction was 'Scottish country dancing, tried that, too difficult' but John was persuasive and so along we went. It did not start out well, what with David's various injuries and not wearing proper dancing shoes, but we kept going. After a year or so, Joan's skillful and patient teaching overcame our ineptitude and we made slow progress.

Going to class once a week, most weeks, was not enough to turn us into dancers. Joan encouraged us to go to social dancing and to other classes in the area. Fellow classmates, the late, much missed, Chris Moon and Janet his wife, took up Joan's suggestions and were having a really good time. So we gave it a go. Initially, we went to a Ribble Valley class on a Monday and a ceilidh class on a Tuesday as well as the beginner's class. As our confidence grew we changed to the Wednesday class and Helen and Tom's dancing on Thursday.

Thinking we were getting the hang of dancing we signed up for Summer School in St Andrews in 2019. This proved an "intense" experience. Six mornings of dance classes lasting 3 hours then six evenings dancing. We stayed in comfortable surroundings, met lots of interesting people, explored a fascinating Scottish town and danced to fantastic music. We were hooked.

March 2020 brought Covid and Scottish country dancing along with so many other things stopped being the social experience it was and took on life online. Dancing with ghosts in kitchens and listening to fine musicians online led to a different Scottish country dancing community and the Stagger Inn book of dances. Slowly the country emerged from lock-down and dancing returned to church halls and we were really thankful. Back to dancing 3 times a week with real people. Balls and dances were being held again, for Spring, Summer, Hogmanay and Burns Night by the Ribble Valley Branch and the Caley Society. We tried to go to them all which meant learning an awful lot of dances. Thank goodness for YouTube.

We realised we were improving when we were asked to join the Heather Mix group which does new or more unusual dances. This is really enjoyable. The challenge comes when the group puts on demonstrations at functions. You don't want to be the one to wreck the set.

Our enthusiasm for dancing did not go unnoticed by the Ribble Valley committee and we were invited to join. We quickly came to realise what a lot of effort is required in order to keep the dancing running so smoothly. We had always appreciated how much time and energy the teachers gave to turn a dance class into a fun night/afternoon out but being part of the committee revealed all the organisational admin there is supporting the classes and dances.

Talking of feats of organisation, there are the Ribble Valley Scottish trips. Attend one and you will be treated to the spectacle of Jill organising coaches, hotel accommodation, dances with local dancers, musicians and loads of places of interest to visit, all for a very reasonable cost. As a dancer all you have got to do is pack a case and get on the bus, everything is taken care of for you. (Mind you it helps if you look at the dances on the dance programme before you go). We've been to Montrose, Glasgow, Oban and Dunfermline; all different but all great fun.

So where, after all that, have we got to? Well, our legs are not what they were, and we will never leap about effortlessly like the youngsters we see on Youtube. We learn a dance one night, and have totally forgotten it the next day. We can count on the fingers of one hand the dances that we really know by heart. (Mairi's Wedding, anyone?)

But nothing can match the sheer joy of dancing to live musicians (and the best can belt out a beat to rival anyone), and hearing the shrieks of laughter bouncing round the hall when something goes awry.



Nice & Easy dance—Music from Robert Whitehead (& CDs !)

Many of the dancers from the Sunday and Monday beginner classes enjoyed their first 'Dance' to live music. This was provided by Robert Whitehead. Unfortunately, due to an accident on the motorway, Robert was only able to play for half of the evening. However this did not dampen the dancers' spirits as music was provided by recorded CDs in the first half.

Our less experienced dancers were kindly supported by those who have a little more experience to guide them through the evening's dances. Sue commented that their endless patience, positivity and steering made a big difference. Barbara also was very grateful for the proficient dancers' patience with the novice dancers. This created a welcoming environment.

Catering was provided by the committee: scones, biscuits and the obligatory cup of tea! Who can ask for more!

Thank you to all those who have helped prepare the dancers for a wonderful evening of dancing and social opportunities.

Let's hope this has encouraged the newer dancers to keep on Scottish dancing.



Scottish Trip Costumes—article submitted By Judy Grimsey

In the run up to the annual Scottish trip there is much speculation about what the catering staff will be dressed up as. But how did the costumes start?

When Mary was the newsletter editor, she also started the Trippers Travel News and referred to Lavinia as the Trolley Dolly

“Coach leaves Preston at 9:30am heading north to Dunoon. Usual on-board facilities and entertainment with your reps: Trolley Dolly (Lavinia); Quizmaster and Raconteur (Martin) & Master of Ceremonies (Kenneth)”

Lavinia came dressed in a French maid’s outfit and the rest is history.

When Jill & Mary took over the “Trolley Dolly” role the costumes continued, first with Bunny Girls, then Police Women, Nurses, and School Girls.

Looking back at some of the trip photos in the newsletter I must have been an apprentice, as I had my own set of Bunny ears and a Police Woman’s hat.

Presumably I gained my qualifications for catering assistant because I was recruited after Mary retired from the job.

I now have a large collection of outfits (somewhere in the loft).

Jill and I have been Red Indians, Pirates, Nuns, Jesters, Fish, Penguins, Chefs, Care Assistants, Elves, Mobile Phones, Jockeys, Ladybirds, Tins of Baked Beans, and (the latest) Cans of Tonic Water.

Some of the outfits were created by one of Jill’s work colleagues, but latterly the costumes have been sourced online.

The requirement for the costume is that it needs to be comfortable to work in, with room to move our arms, not too wide to fit down the aisle of the coach, and we need to be able to sit down in them.

It’s quite amazing how Jill comes up with all the brilliant ideas.

Quite a selection of innovative costumes!



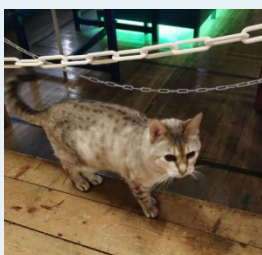
Annual RSCDS Ribble Valley Trip—This year to Dunfermline

Delightful Dunfermline—trip delights from Dougie & Moya Cameron

It was a lovely sunny morning. Everyone arrived on time, and to our delight, two gin and tonics were waiting to welcome us aboard the coach. After tea, coffee, hot chocolate, cheese, and wine—expertly served by our very own trolley dollies—a very happy group arrived at the charming Keavil House Hotel.

We were greeted with a warm and friendly welcome, enjoyed great food, and received outstanding service from the extremely helpful staff. There was a beautiful swimming pool... though we barely had time to wash our hair, let alone go for a dip! We had a superb evening of Scottish dancing—swishing and burling—at Dunfermline High School. The men swished their kilts, and the ladies twirled in their pretty dresses. The ceilidh was, as always, a roaring success. Catherine stole the show with her unforgettable "Piper and the Penguin" performance. Josie's Secrets of Nighttime Noises and Catherine's Lost Knickers had us all in stitches—let's hope they eventually turned up! And what can we say about Sarah's fabulous Highland Fling? She truly is a marvelously talented lady.

A massive thank you
ble trip. Sadly, for
home. But not be-
led by Catherine,



to Jill and Judy for organising such a memora-
the exhausted travelers, it was time to go
fore a heartfelt rendition of Auld Lang Syne,
brought the perfect end to a perfect holiday.

A Night to Remember at Ribble Valley's Annual Spring Dance held at Broughton Club, music by Nicol McLaren and his band

The Ribble Valley's annual Spring Dance was nothing short of spectacular this year. Held in our usual venue, the event was graced by the uplifting tunes of Nicol McLaren and his band. Their music was simply amazing, lifting everyone's spirits and bringing smiles to all faces. The lively melodies and rhythmic beats made it impossible not to dance.



A special thanks goes out to the MCs, whose excellent recaps of the dances kept everyone in order—well, mostly! Their guidance ensured that even those with two left feet could join in the fun. The caterers also deserve a round of applause for providing an array of delicious sweet and savoury treats that kept everyone energised for the second half of the night.

One of the highlights of the evening was the introduction of our very own "dishwasher," John Thompson, who took on the task of washing up with great enthusiasm. His efforts were much appreciated and added a touch of humor to the night.

The atmosphere was filled with joy and camaraderie as old friendships were renewed and new ones were formed. The social ambiance was brilliant, making it a fabulous evening for all attendees. The Ribble Valley's Spring Dance once again proved to be a wonderful event, leaving everyone eagerly anticipating the next event.



A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in making this night so memorable. Here's to many more nights of dancing and joy with RSCDS Ribble Valley!



*See Facebook or website
for more photos*

Following the success of the Ceilidhs, Sarah Horne submitted this article:

The Dashing white Sergeant

Probably one of the most popular, dances done within the whole culture of Scottish dance, being a regular part of any Scottish gathering and appears within ceilidh, reeling and even in many parts of the world country dance programmes. For this reason it is for me, interesting to note its unusual origins which seem to have absolutely no relationship to anything Scottish!!

The **Dashing White Sergeant** is a Scottish country dance, performed to a similarly titled piece of music. The dance is in 4/4 time, thus it is in the form of a reel. The dance is performed by groups of six dancers and is progressive. *Wikipedia*

The title comes from a song, the original lyrics of which had been written as an opera by John Burgoyne with music composed by Sir Henry Rowley Bishop in 1828. The music was then adapted as a Military March for the Berkshire Regiment. It became very popular in the US as a song, and a dance tune was added to the repertoire of the West Point Military Academy, where it is still played to-day. The movements come from the Swedish circle dancing that was popular in Victorian Britain. As far as I can see none of this has any link to Scotland!

The original Lyrics by **General John Burgoyne** as seen below bare no relationship to the better know Lyrics written much later by Sir Hugh Robertson where we do get a taste of Scotland!

If I had a beau for a soldier who'd go,
Do you think I'd say no? No, no, not I!
For a soldier who'd go, Do you think
I'd say no?
No, no, no, no, no, no, not I!
When his red coat I saw,
Not a sigh would it draw,
But I'd give him eclat (*approval/
applause*) for his bravery!
*If an army of Amazons ere came in
play,
As a **dashing white sergeant** I'd
march away.*

Sir Hugh Robertson's lyrics now
with a definite Scottish theme!
Now the fiddler's ready, let us all
begin
So step it out and step it in
To the merry music of the violin
We'll dance the hours away.
(Repeat first 4 lines, then):
*Katie and Peggy and Patsy and Paul,
Callum and Peter and Flora and
Moll,
Dance, dance, dance, dance, dance
away the hours together!*

Future events:

Summer Dance, Sat 9th August 2025,
7pm at Broughton Club, music by Ewan Galloway

Autumn Dance, Sat 18th October 2025,
7pm & Broughton Club.

Hogmanay, Wednesday 31st December
2025, 8pm at Samlesbury Village Hall,
recorded music.

Nice & Easy Dance, Friday 6th March
2026, 7.30pm at Broughton Club.

Spring Dance, Sat 25th April 2026, 7pm
at Broughton Club.

Summer Dance, Sat 8th August 2026,
7pm at Broughton Club.

Classes Information

Monday class The beginners & all-abilities class runs most Mondays at Christ Church Hall, Fulwood, at 7.30 p.m., except Bank Holidays. A monthly ceilidh class will also be held on the last Monday of each month (unless this lands on a bank holiday where it will be the next week). This ceilidh class will continue through the summer.

Wednesday class The Intermediate and Social class runs every Wednesday at Christ Church Hall, Fulwood, at 7.30 p.m. (*This class does not break for Summer*)

Sunday class The beginners' class, runs on Sundays at Euxton Community Centre, 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. Classes run until around Easter, with a possibility of social dancing once a month through the summer period.

Reminder: AGM Wednesday 25th June 2025 @ 7.30pm

Current Committee Members

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May I thank everyone who has submitted articles: either by volunteering or being persuaded—our readers really appreciate the interesting articles and information provided.