



THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY –RICHMOND BRANCH NEWSLETTER NUMBER 65

Dear Members and Friends

Although our Richmond Branch membership has declined over the last twelve months, the Branch remains a thriving and happy group and we pride ourselves in being welcoming to newcomers. We are much indebted to the commitment of Sue Tandy, who filled the role of Honorary Treasurer after the untimely death of her predecessor, and for her dedication to the task. Sue has, however, now relinquished this role and is succeeded by Jane Gilby. Other Committee responsibilities remain as last year but, following a suggestion at our last AGM, Joy Bradshaw now attends our Committee meetings.

I am pleased to report that Anna Smith, our Webmaster, has completed the first stage of setting up our new website which can be found at www.rscds-richmondnorthyorks.org.uk. The site is now fully updated and has links to other SCD group websites where you can find details of their events and cribs. Of course, details of our dances, socials, other events and cribs are included on the site. Please avail yourselves of this great facility, any thoughts and suggestions would be welcomed.

Our Branch weekly classes continue at the Booth Hall in Catterick Village, with Joy Bradshaw and Louise Macdougall sharing the teaching duties, although Fiona Turnbull, our President, will occasionally step in. Last year there were only two occasions when a teacher was unavailable and a social class was substituted. Major refurbishment has been taking place at the Booth Hall which has included structural repairs and re-decoration. In spite of this, we were able to continue to use these premises for most of the year and it was only on the last few occasions of the Spring Term that we had to relocate to the nearby Scout Hall. The last job to be completed was the long awaited replacement of the hall floor which, we understand, was installed when the building was constructed in 1896, and had become very much the worse for wear. We have constantly been papering over the cracks with masking tape for the last few years, but no more. This is now done and all that remains is for the new curtains to be hung for all to be ready for us in September. Our new weekly classes begin on **Wednesday 6th September**, when we are introducing a big change to the format. We hope that this change will encourage newcomers to learn the basic skills of Scottish dancing and encourage them to continue. We hope, at the same time, that other dancers will take advantage of this opportunity to refresh their dancing skills. To enable this to happen, the new classes will be in two parts, the first from 7.00 – 8.15 pm when all abilities including beginners will concentrate on a theme of step practice, basic formations and straightforward dances. Then, after a short break, the class will continue from approximately 8.30 – 9.30 pm for more experienced dancers. Please be aware that the customary warm up will only take place at the beginning of the evening, so that any late comers will need to do their own warm-up exercises. Once again we are going to offer a discount to beginners with their first six classes charged at a reduced rate of £10.00, and newcomers, who are already dancers, will not be charged for their first attendance.

The Committee has carefully considered the Branch income and expenditure and has decided that it has become necessary to increase our fees for the coming year. For the Autumn Term of 15 classes, the cost will be £35.00 and the Spring Term next year of 16 classes will cost £37.50. The “pay by the night” fees will also be increased slightly to £2.50 for members and £3.00 for non members. The main reasons for these increases are reduction in our membership and higher administration costs. I am sure that you will be aware that our combined RSCDS and Branch membership fees are also now due. The individual membership fee being £24.00 and the Joint fee for couples is £40.00. These figures reflect an increase of £1.00 on the Branch membership fee. If you have not already paid your dues then our Membership Secretary, Liz Spooner, will be pleased to receive your contributions. Payment can either be made by cheque, payable to RSCDS Richmond Branch or by cash, or directly into our bank account with details as follows: Sort Code 05-04-04 Account No 13384531 RSCDS Richmond with your surname being used as a reference.

In addition to our regular weekly classes the Branch held two Sunday classes, one in March designed for those who wished to try out more challenging dances and the other in July to evaluate some dances for the new RSCDS Book 52 to be published in 2018. Both classes were taken by Joy Bradshaw and held at Cleasby Village Hall and were well enjoyed by those present. It is the Branch's intention to continue with similar ventures in the future.

We held two dances last year, both at the Clarke Hall, Richmond School. The David Oswald Duo played for us in October when we only had a modest attendance, but we danced to excellent music and a great atmosphere. Then in April this year, Marian Anderson and her band came to play for us again and this time the event was almost a sellout. We enjoyed a super evening of dancing to a great programme and we have since received many compliments and I am sure that this was much enjoyed by all. As a result of this Marian has agreed to play for us every October in the future and her next visit to Richmond is scheduled to take place on Saturday 20th October 2018. Looking ahead this year the Neil Barron Duo will play for us on Saturday 21st October and on Saturday 21st April 2018 George Meikle and the Lothian Band will provide the music. Both these events will be at the Clarke Hall.

Branch socials will continue to take place at Richmond Town Hall on the first Friday of each month beginning on 1st September when Terry Chater will be our MC. Other socials will again be MC'd mainly by Branch members with a good variety of programmes. Your attendance at these events is encouraged where you are assured to have a happy time. The outdoor social at Reeth this year, the 20th, was held on 1st July. We had good numbers and an excellent tea, but a fine although cool afternoon resulted in some of us dancing in our coats, but there were no midges and the usual crop of lawn based worms were in short supply. The social at Reeth next year will be on Saturday 7th July.

The Branch has again taken part in several displays this year and we have danced for the first time at some venues which have included retirement homes and for Barningham Parish Church. We have also taken part in the White Rose Festival at Gateways School at Harewood held outdoors on a sunny afternoon. Our team danced the usual mixed programme, but our main challenge was to demonstrate a complicated reel called The Waterfall. Much time and effort was devoted to learning this dance which in the end was reasonably well performed. The Festival continued with an evening dance in the Sports Hall dancing to the Neil Hardie Band, who incidentally had played for us in the afternoon. Probably 150 dancers attended this event, all of whom enjoyed a very good evening, but the hard floor resulted in some of us having rather sore feet. Overall a great Festival organised by RSCDS Leeds with excellent food and facilities.

You may recall that in my last Newsletter I referred to "The Archive Project" which had begun by us holding a "get together" in Richmond in April 2015 when a number of senior and past members of the Branch were invited. As a result of this a number of those attending suggested that we may like to hold a similar event in the future. So, as the Branch is 65 years old this year, it seemed to be a good opportunity to follow up this idea. Richmond Town Hall was the chosen venue and on Wednesday 19th July a tea party was held to which former and current members from far and wide were invited. On the day, 40 of those invited came along, including almost all of those who came to the Archive meeting. It was an informal afternoon hosted by our President, Fiona Turnbull, when excellent refreshments were provided and a short dancing display was given setting many toes tapping. There was also a display of memorabilia and photographs, thus generating lots of chat and rekindling happy memories. We intend, in due course, to continue to gather everyone together for similar events.

From the foregoing I hope you agree that Richmond Branch is a happy and active group. We have an enthusiastic Committee and I am sure that together we can look forward to a bright future. The Committee and I look forward to welcoming you all back in September.

Geoff Robinson

Chairman

August 2017