

ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY GLASGOW BRANCH

Charity No.SC008002

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Annual Branch Report for AGM 2025

This is the 102nd Report for RSCDS Glasgow Branch.

Membership: Our current membership stands at 211 (29 Life members, 127 Adult members, 52 Joint members, 2 Young Adult members, 1 Youth member). In addition, we have 22 Associate members and 11 Linked Groups.

Classes: Classes began in September 2024 with 7 Branch Classes running over the year catering for dancers of all abilities from beginners to experienced. As in previous years, Hillpark Beginners had two additional classes in April. Additionally, 3 Spring Classes were held with three different guest teachers: Abbie Brown, Amy Bryson and Fiona Fairlie. The Branch would like to thank all the musicians and teachers who make our classes possible; it is greatly appreciated.

Dances: Eleven dances were held during the last year including the Midwinter Ball in January 2025, three 'Nice & Easy' Dances, Branch Dances and a Challenging Dance.

Glasgow Branch Newsletters: Three newsletters have been published during the year. We thank Peter Knapman for continuing in the role of Editor and producing the newsletters with the Committee's and Membership's input. The Newsletters have benefited from interesting and informative contributions from Peter himself. Two Short Newsletters were also produced in June and January.

RSCDS AGM and Conference Weekend: This year the Society held their AGM and Autumn Gathering in Edinburgh. 5 delegates attended the AGM and a full report was published in the Winter Newsletter 2024. Many Branch members were present to take part in evening dances and some of the other enjoyable and informative weekend events.

Glasgow Music Festival: The Scottish Country Dancing classes of the Glasgow Music Festival took place on Saturday the 8th of March in the Renfield Centre, Glasgow.

The morning session saw five enthusiastic primary school teams participate in classes 505-508 with experience ranging from beginner to more advanced. All were smartly turned out and were commended on their teamwork and spirited performances of the dances they had chosen. The Marion B Hamilton was awarded to the Dalriada Dancers from the Falkirk area for achieving the highest score of the morning. We were delighted that the Honorary President of GMF, Robert MacDonald, was available to present the certificate to the winning team, which was very appropriate as he is also the nephew of Marion B Hamilton.

The afternoon session of classes 501-503 for adults was supported by six teams, some of whom were participating for the first time for many years – including the 'more mature' team

from Glasgow. The standard of dancing was excellent with some outstanding performances. The winners of the RSCDS Glasgow Branch Quaich, which is awarded to the team with the highest score of the afternoon, were Glasgow Dancers.

We are grateful to Les Lambert for adjudicating. This is his last year as adjudicator, however we are pleased to announce that Angela Young will take over this task for 2026. Excellent music to accompany the dancers was provided all day by Martainn Skene. Thanks also to Maureen Daniel for agreeing to take on the challenging task of recording the comments, to the school staff, dance instructors and of course the pupils and dancers who all worked so hard and to all the Glasgow branch volunteers who acted as stewards on the day. Sincere thanks go to Susan Ewington for all her hard work in making this year's festival a success.

Primary School Festival - Day of Dance: This one-day event for Scottish country dancing was once again held in Glasgow City Chambers, hosted by Lord Provost Jacqueline McLaren. 17 Glasgow schools took part with over 20 sets dancing at one time. RSCDS Chair-Elect Sebastian Wanless and Lorna Valentine (Convenor of the RSCDS Scottish Schools Working Group) were in attendance. We were delighted that the deputy Lord Provost Christy Mearns joined in the Dashing White Sergeant. Grateful thanks to Walter Proven - our experienced MC - and to John Carmichael and his band for the excellent music. We would like to extend our thanks to Fiona McDonald who has organised this event for a number of years in partnership with Glasgow Education. Thanks also to the school teachers, parent chaperones, Council staff and to RSCDS Glasgow Branch members for helping to make this a special day.

Seniors' Group: Four meetings took place throughout the year, including the 25th Anniversary lunch held on the 10th of October 2024 when one of the founding members of the group, Ruth Beattie, was presented with a well-deserved Branch Award and Eric Finley entertained all present by singing Scottish songs and telling stories. On the 27th of June the group was entertained by Amy Spearing, senior chorister at Paisley Abbey, playing the clarsach. The Christmas lunch was held at the Crookston Hotel on the 5th of December. Maureen Daniel acted as quiz master after lunch and Branch Chair, Ian Johnson, read a Christmas poem. At the Seniors lunch on the 20th of March Branch musician Frank Reid entertained attendees.

Centenary Book: The Branch's Centenary book, which was launched at the Mid-Winter Ball of 2023 proved extremely popular and sold out at the beginning of this session. It is now only available in PDF form. The music for each dance is available on Bandcamp and music sales continue to provide revenue for the Branch.

Outreach: The Branch has responded to many requests to hold or participate in a wide range of events. We have supplied various teachers, dancers and musicians throughout the year, for a range of activities. Demonstrations took place once again at the Bearsden and Milngavie Highland Games in June and at Neilston Women's Group and Westerton Gala Day in August. Dancers visited Hawthorn Care Home for the first time in October and made a return visit in January. In August there was a demonstration at the Golden Girls Group in Neilston and at the Friendship Group in Giffnock in November. A return visit was made to St. Francis Care Home in Govan in October and again in January.

In August a taster session was organised to support Healing Arts Scotland (HAS) Glasgow Day. Four members of Glasgow Branch gave support at a free half-hour workshop, delivered by Anne Robertson with live music provided by Billy Gray, at the Tramway in Albert Drive. This event was part of a week-long HAS festival being supported by RSCDS. Anne delivered a great lesson where she managed to cover a good number of dances in the short

time available to approximately twenty very enthusiastic attendees, all of whom seemed to thoroughly enjoy the experience.

The Branch also supported an initiative to promote physical and mental health in Barlanark in partnership with the RSCDS, Glasgow Life and Alliance Scotland. The Branch provided a teacher and musician and helpers every Tuesday to try to encourage local residents to take up Scottish country dancing as a hobby.

Branch Administration: The Committee significantly changed this year with the appointment of Branch Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Chair Elect, Social Convenor, Communications Convenor and Membership Secretary. It remains challenging to attract Members to serve on the Committee. The Committee is operating with one ordinary committee member vacancy and a Class Convenor Group has had to be formed as there were no nominations for the Class Convenor vacancy. Committee meetings were split between face-to-face meetings at Sherbrooke Parish Church and over Zoom.

Having moved south a few years ago, our Honorary President, Ruth Beattie, decided to step down and John Johnston, our Honorary Vice President, was appointed to this position. Fiona McDonald was appointed Honorary Vice President.

Mary Webster and Margaret Tough continued to provide valuable and timely support and updating of the Branch Website.

Several sub-committees continued work from previous years: e.g. Classes and Dance Programme subcommittees. The Class subcommittee was created to examine our class offering in detail and its work will continue under the newly elected Committee from May 2025. Its remit is to consider how to go forward with classes and dances, ensuring that the Branch meets its obligations to promote Scottish country dancing while being financially responsible and to hear the views of members and teachers on what we offer, anything additional they would like, and their reaction to the changes made to classes and dances in the future. The newly appointed Safeguarding Team met on a number of occasions to revise Branch policies and procedures. Several workshops were organised by the team in order to provide important information about safeguarding to Branch teachers, musicians, Committee members and members of Linked Groups. The Branch's Privacy Policy and GDPR Policy were revised and a Register of Systems document was produced.

Other Notable Events: Three members of Glasgow Branch were awarded Branch awards this session for their invaluable services to Scottish country dancing. Ruth Beattie received her award at the Seniors' 25th Anniversary lunch in October. Due to illness, Johan McLean was unable to attend the Senior's 25th Anniversary lunch and was presented with her award at her home by Ian Johnson later in October. Peter Knapman received his Branch Award at the Midwinter Ball.

Branch Members gathered in the city centre in September and October to rehearse a ceilidh scene for *Lady MacLean*, a short bilingual English-Gaelic film. Written by Lana Pheutan and directed by Catriona MacLeod, the film is part of the inaugural NFTS Sean Connery Talent Lab, which supports emerging filmmakers with backing from the Sean Connery Foundation. Filming took place on 2nd and 3rd October at Partick Burgh Hall. *Lady MacLean* is now in post-production, and the "extras" been told they will be invited to the screening.

Sadly, we lost some branch members and members of our dancing community in the past year. These include Helen and Graham Murray, Bob Blair, Sandra Fraser, Elma Wilson, Robina Marshall and Pat Duchart.

Anne Thorn

May 2025