

KASS

KENT ASSOCIATION OF SCOTTISH SOCIETIES



KATE'S PHOTOS TAKE US "DOWN MEMORY LANE"



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to my penultimate Newsletter as Editor. It will be after publication of the next edition (November 2013) that I will relinquish my role as Editor. Having begun editing this Newsletter in 2009 it seems right to let someone else have a go and give them the chance to breathe new life into it! As I said in the last Editorial – “there is plenty of time for someone to think about it and come forward. Could that person be you?”

Since the last Newsletter we have enjoyed the KASS Autumn Dance (reviewed elsewhere) and the debate whether “Should we/Should we not book dances?” continues to rumble on! (this, too, is covered elsewhere!)



**Your Editor at the Warwick Spa Resort,
Coral Coast, Fiji – Paradise on earth!**

My absence from local dances in January to March, (noticed and commented upon by some!!) was the result of a fantastic “round the world trip” which had always been one of those “must do” activities on my Bucket List! If I was ever to get to Australia, to meet up with old friends and cousins, I wanted to go on to New Zealand as well, and then, not come back the way I went, but go right round the world. This we

did (see the next Newsletter!) and then I suffered as we returned to a sub-zero UK after a few days in an equally cold, arctic, New York! Three weeks I was unwell - sciatica in both legs for a while and a chest infection – keeping me out of action till late March! Serves me right, some commented!

Unfortunately there were no entries received to the competition included in the last edition of the Newsletter. I went through the 800+ emails plus a pile of mail waiting on my return – but nothing. So, if you have the Newsletter (or go to the KASS Website) check the pictures of Chris Hoy (GOLD in the Men’s Keiron and GOLD in the Team Sprint - Olympics) with Neil Fachie (GOLD Men’s Individual 1km Time Trial – Paralympics) with his sighted pilot Barney Storey. The front cover of this edition consists of a selection of archive photos – thanks to Kate Middleham – full of memories and nostalgia!

I hope my last “bumper” edition will be MORE than the usual mix of KASS News plus information from only a limited number of Clubs. It is usually the same small number of people, from the same few Clubs, rising to the challenge of submitting articles or snippets or photos or holiday tales, etc., for which I am always grateful! So, the rest of you – if you actually read this Editorial and the rest of the Newsletter that is – please let it be a true reflection of what KASS is all about and of its membership. Send anything to me at:

Alan@docfrench79.fsnet.co.uk or by Royal Mail to:
79, Harcourt Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4AE.
Alan French (Dover SCDG Editor)

From the KASS Chairman

Once again we are about to enjoy the KASS Highland Ball and this year we will be dancing to the music of *Marian Anderson and her Band*. On 21 April Orpington and District Caledonian Society held a Tea Dance to round off their 75th Anniversary celebrations. This was run in accordance with the new arrangements for tea dances outlined in a previous Newsletter. On 23 June Canterbury Scottish Society is organising the KASS Walk starting from Reculver. We shall be able to enjoy the country and sea air provided the rain and snow have stopped by then!

So far Tom and I have been to dances at Sidcup, North Kent, Orpington, Medway and Canterbury St Andrew’s. This was our first visit to Medway and Canterbury St Andrew’s where we enjoyed a friendly atmosphere and were made very welcome. With the lighter evenings we hope to attend dances further afield without getting lost. Our Sat-Nav appears to think that we should see as much of the countryside as possible rather than taking the shortest route! We have survived three Burns Suppers (at Sidcup, North Kent and Meopham) all different and all enjoyable. At Meopham, when the Haggis was addressed by Dr Bob MacDonald (who had just celebrated his 90th birthday) and he listed the

ingredients, he assured us it contained no horse meat! The fact that clubs have members in their eighties and nineties is evidence of both the physical and mental benefits of Scottish Country Dancing. The problem remains, however, of recruiting younger members. Clubs have explored all avenues of recruitment. Perhaps we could stress that it is good preparation for retirement and longevity.



KASS Chair - Wendy Carter

There has been much discussion whether or not dances should be booked. At the KASS Autumn Dance we designated a few specific dances which should not be booked. Afterwards Nigel Hewitt, KASS Secretary, sent out a survey to discover reactions to this experiment. The results were inconclusive and the Committee decided to take no further action. The difficulty is that if all dances are booked in advance, people who are unable to arrive early, or who do not know many people, find themselves without partners. It has been suggested that, perhaps, dancers do not book all dances - but it is a decision for the individual.

The Website goes from strength to strength and thanks go to Ken Hamilton, now aided by Brian Knell, for all the work he does to maintain it. Sadly, Alan French has decided that, after six editions as the KASS Newsletter editor, the November 2013 issue will be his last. He has written an account of how he produces the Newsletter which has been circulated to all clubs. There is no doubt a prospective editor willing to take on this challenge.

I should like to thank Dick Barford - Vice Chairman; Nigel Hewitt - Secretary; Trevor Graves - Treasurer; Helen Knell and Jane Whittington - Events Co-ordinators and all the Club Reps - all of whom give of their time and some travel quite long distances to attend meetings. I should also like to thank the Past Chairs - both Roger Brown and Muriel Greenstead, for their advice and encouragement.

Wendy Carter (KASS Chairman and Sidcup)

KASS NEWS

The KASS Autumn Dance

As part of its 75th Anniversary celebrations, Orpington & District Caledonian Society offered to run the KASS Autumn Dance in 2012. Halls are more expensive near London and price was a serious consideration, but in the end it was decided to use Petts Wood Memorial Hall, the venue for ODCS's weekly social meetings and their own formal dances. The downside was that a limit had to be placed on numbers to avoid overcrowding, but the price of tickets would be reasonable.



KASS November Dance at Petts Wood

The hall was decked out with bunting, flags and tartan but the additional big "plus" was the floor had been sanded and resealed, so was in shining condition, but not slippery. *The Caledonian Reelers* provided lively music for a varied dance programme. The hall was comfortably full with over seventy dancers and very few sitting out, so the atmosphere was "cheerfully dynamic".



Counting the lines at the KASS Autumn Dance

KASS had decided to try to discourage people from booking all their dances in advance. So, as an experiment, dancers were encouraged not to book five of the better-known dances, seeking someone new to dance with. Extra time was built into the schedule to let dancers "pair up" but sets still formed very quickly, so had some already made an informal assignation? If you were at the Autumn Dance, let your KASS Rep

know how you got on. Did it work for you? Did dancers take the hint and not book other dances too? Have you any other suggestions?

In spite of being right up in the western corner of Kent, we had dancers from Cobtree, Dover and Deal, Medway, Meopham, North Kent, Sevenoaks, Sidcup and, of course, Orpington (the host organisation). So thanks to all those who travelled to Petts Wood, making the evening successful. Thanks, too, to the KASS Events Co-ordinators (Helen and Jane) who take on the task of publicising the dance, producing and selling tickets and generally checking that all arrangements are in place. Once the venue and dance programme are agreed with the host organisation a few months in advance most of their other duties are on the night.

By the time you read this report we will have had the KASS Highland Ball and be looking forward to summer. However, the dancing season will soon be upon us again with the KASS Autumn Dance, hosted by Sheerness Scottish Heather Club, on 9th November at Holmesdale Technology College - in the centre of Kent - dancing to *Craigevar*. See you there.

Roger Brown (Past Chairman and Orpington)

News from the Groups

Orpington

Fun and Games in Orpington

With the Diamond Jubilee year of the Orpington and District Caledonian Society nearing its conclusion, over 70 members and friends attended the annual Ceilidh held in February, to enjoy an excellent evening of dance, music and poetry, masterminded by convenor David Keen. Dances were interspersed by various entertainments provided by members and guests, starting with John Cottrell's recitation of a "Welsh Choir Practice". This was followed by excerpts from "Phantom of the Opera", performed by tenor Paul Arden-Griffith, a member of Andrew Lloyd-Webber's original cast. Paul displayed a rare combination of talents, embracing every aspect of music-theatre. Next came a charming display of a Tai Chi Fan Dance, performed by Ying Ying, My, Vicky, Indra Doyle and Pauline Clift. This was followed by a brilliantly performed Scottish dance named "Celtic Gathering", by the society's advanced group, coached by Angela Campbell.



To complete the celebration of 75 years of Scottish dancing with the ODCS, the Monday Beginners' Class turned out in full force to dance "The Diamond Circle" with traditional enthusiasm. As a contrast, David and Gilly Keen, Ben and Ginny

Colenbrander, Angela House and Margaret Briggs (the "Morris Marinas") gave a jingling display of Morris dancing. The evening concluded with rapturous

applause for an hilarious sketch labelled "Pauline and friends".

The Ceilidh, presided over by David Keen and Elisabeth Leishman, was a huge success and we now look forward to our next event, which is the Summer Dance, on 15 June at Petts Wood Memorial Hall.

Elisabeth Leishman (Orpington)

Sidcup

The Sidcup and District Caledonian Association continues to thrive and numbers have improved at the practice meetings on Wednesdays. Since the retirement of *Caber Feidh* we now have more dances with recorded music so we have invested in new CDs yet dancers still enjoy a good evening. The John Fisher Church Hall in Bexley Village has proved to be a good location for our Burn's Supper. A friendly atmosphere and helpful caretaker also helped.

We are looking forward to the Spring and Summer season of dancing without starting the session with freezing cold feet, having battled against wind, rain and snow to arrive. The Beetle Drive will be on the last Wednesday in July and the Quiz on the last Wednesday in August. We continue through August, so members of other clubs, which do close at this time, are very welcome to join us. Rene Farthing is now organising her annual holiday for members at the end of October with a visit to the Isle of Wight.

Our thanks go to our teacher, Loraine Chase, for her continued patience and one day we really will sort out our left from our right! To save money, Bexley Council wants to lease out Hurst Community Centre, where we dance, along with other community centres in the borough. This is causing us some concern as no doubt it would affect rent levels, but as yet there is no development.

Wendy Carter (KASS Chairman and Sidcup)

Cobtree

40 Years of Dancing at Cobtree

In the early 1970s a group of English Country dancers in Maidstone decided to try Scottish dancing on the alternate weeks to their English dancing classes. Peter and Phyllis Green, staunch supporters of Mencap, arranged for them to meet in Cobtree Hall in Mote Park. Cobtree Hall had been the Church of St John the Evangelist and had been recently de-commissioned. It was taken over by Maidstone Mencap in 1972, as a base for their pre-school and their evening Gateway clubs. In 1975 the dancing club was named as "The Friends of Cobtree Hall" with the aim of raising funds for Mencap.

It became known as the Cobtree Scottish Country Dance Group in the 1980s when Scottish Dancing took place every week. Phyllis and Peter continued to run the group until Phyllis' death in 1997 and Peter continued to be involved until his death in 2009. Cobtree Hall is small, only able to

accommodate two sets comfortably so, as the group increased in size in the '90s, another venue had to be found. The club moved to Grove Green Community Centre in 1999, which can accommodate the five or even six sets that now participate. The club retained its name and its original purpose of raising funds for Mencap, safeguarded in its constitution. All profits from club nights and dances are given to Mencap and when a demonstration team performs at a fête, school or any event, they still ask for a donation for Mencap.

Over the years the group has managed to contribute substantial funds to Maidstone Mencap, some of which is specifically for the benefit of the children who attend the pre-school at Cobtree Hall. In 2012 the group again contributed £4,750. Every year a team of club members dance at the Cobtree Mencap Fête, outside the Hall and rehearsals still take place in the Hall.

So 40 years on, the links are still there. Hence we are holding a special dance this year to celebrate:

40 years of Dancing at Cobtree.

Dick Barford (Cobtree and KASS Vice-Chairman)

Sittingbourne



"Three dancers, frustratingly indisposed!"

Against all odds, we soldier on! From time to time our meager numbers are boosted by Selwyn, Ernestine and Grace, to whom we extend the warmest of welcomes and thank you, thank you, thank you!

Kate Middleham (Sittingbourne)

Booking at Dances

This was written some ten years ago but still it raises its ugly head! When, in my final years of working, one of my superiors referred to me as being of the "old school", I took this as a compliment. Strangely to some, I still like to wear a tie, a suit on occasions, trousers with a pleat in them and I loathe denims, which were originally worn for work! When I see personalities and politicians on TV 'dressed down', it makes me cringe when compared with foreign politicians, who generally look smart - and yes, I still walk nearest to the road when I am escorting a lady!

This leads me to when I started Scottish Country Dancing, over 30 years ago. At most dances the ladies appeared in Scottish attire - long white dresses with a sash across the shoulder, fastened with a Scottish broach. The men wore Prince Charlie jackets and kilts with a sporran according to their means, as the silver ones were quite expensive. Many

men kept their jackets on all evening. At an RSCDS function in Edinburgh I once attended, this was mandatory. Back then, Miss Milligan (a Scottish school teacher) was trying to raise the standards of Scottish dancing. Branches of the RSCDS came into being, where classes taught footwork, handholds, bowing and curtsying to their partners, both at the beginning and the end of a dance. I also learned that at Scottish Balls and dances many years before, ladies wore a small booklet on a chain from their shoulder. This was for the gentlemen to request the pleasure of a dance during the course of the evening, which the lady would note. All at the function would hopefully fill up their programme. Thus, dances would run smoothly without last minute questioning 'are you booked?'

When I started attending Club dances, of which there were many more then, I also booked and it seemed to be general practice. Over the years I have gone to dances across Kent, Surrey, in both East and West Sussex, and on dancing holidays abroad. In booking dances at these places, I have got to know many people, writing their names on my programme. Soon we didn't need to ask for names as we became well acquainted. It followed that we would exchange pleasantries, have a laugh and a joke and, if we missed someone, enquire after their health and well-being. One might describe these as family gatherings.

Now, I find that some groups from clubs are coming together, not booking but staying in their little group all evening, dancing only with each other. So, apart from in their sets, they do not meet dancers from other clubs. Then they disperse to their places afterwards without following up the acquaintance, without words being exchanged. This seems to be the trend in all things now: of lowering standards and not only in booking. Whilst most men wear kilts or trews, only a few ladies now wear Scottish dress or something representing Scottish. At a recent event only four of the ladies dancing wore something Scottish - one had a long white dress with a sash and the others wore a tartan skirt or similar. I have heard it said one does not need to dress Scottish but it does add to the atmosphere, making it more than just a Saturday hop.

I consider not booking a 'yobbish' attitude! So there you have it. I prefer booking dances, so I get to know dancers from other clubs, when we may possibly meet up again and so functions are very friendly and enjoyable. May I suggest, therefore, dancers invite dancers from clubs other than their own to dance and, by booking, foster an even more friendly spirit between Scottish Clubs.

John Warner (Wadhurst and ex-Tunbridge Wells)

Etiquette

A few complaints have been aired that some dancers are not following the traditional etiquette for Scottish country dances. Here are a few reminders:

1 - Move out onto the dance floor with a partner only after the dance has been announced by the MC.

- 2 - Join the longwise sets at the bottom - do not jump into the middle of the set.
- 3 - The first couple of the set should count the sets promptly and as far as possible at the same time as first couples at the top of the other lines.
- 4 - Dancers should initially form up in long lines, even if the dance is in a square or five couple square set, so couples can be counted into the required numbers, which prevents people having to dash all over the room to find a gap in a set!
- 5 - Look at your partner - and smile.
- 6 - It is courteous that a gentleman takes the lady back to her seat. In this age of equality some may think this unnecessary! This can be varied, of course, when two ladies or two men dance together!

This basic etiquette does help a dance to run smoothly for the benefit of all.

Wendy Carter (Sidcup and KASS Chairman)

Butteries

If you've not visited Aberdeen or the north east of Scotland, you've probably never had the delight of sampling butteries. They are slightly greasy and possibly not all that good for you, if on a diet, but taste absolutely delicious. Marks and Spencer stocked frozen ones thirty years ago, but they never caught on. It's strange that they're called butteries as there is no butter in them at all, rather a mixture of margarine and lard. Meeting someone for coffee in Aberdeen, you are likely to have a buttery with it, and if you're staying with someone, you hope they are on offer at breakfast.

To my delight, I eventually found a recipe for Butteries in a church fundraising book of my mother-in-law's and was very proud of my first attempt. Sometime later, I offered some to my daughter, but received the cruellest cut of all. "I only like the **real** butteries, not your home-made ones, so don't give me any." Hastily, she added, "I know how much you like them, so I don't want you to waste them on me." However, since she has not had a real buttery for over 10 years, and her children love making them and eating them, she is now happy to take some home and they are enthusiastically enjoyed.



My grandchildren love making them with me, taking a whole morning, the entire kitchen table and usually making a considerable floury mess - depending on the age of the grandchildren! But the result of the mornings "hard labour" is worthwhile when you have the first one hot, straight out of the oven, and the second and third with your soup at lunch. So what is this elusive buttery? It's difficult to describe. It is a morning roll, (shown above) but unlike any morning roll you will ever have

eaten. It's somewhat like a Danish pastry, but savoury, rather than sweet. Making it is rather similar to making puff pastry (yes, I know, we only buy it frozen!) but using dough, with lots of rolling out and spreading on the fat mixture and folding and then repeating the process.

When I was at University I was envious of those students with well-paid jobs in the summer vacation as, unfortunately, my dad thought it was "infra dig" to do something like that. Yet I was allowed to work in the post office at Christmas. Happily for me a friend's mother had a guest house in Ballater, not far from Balmoral, and, as she was studying for a resit, extra help was needed. I made the longest journey ever (all 30 miles!) on my Vespa scooter on a lovely sunny day and was general factotum. Of course, butteries were on the breakfast menu every day and I don't know how many I consumed while I was clearing away! The snag was I didn't like the look of myself in a photo one of the guests took - I must have put on about half a stone!

When a fellow Aberdonian and I were students in London, we always took a bagful of them back with us after any visit home. One Christmas when we were returning to London, we heard that the train to London was seven hours late, and we were due to travel the next night. We knew we wouldn't starve as we would have our usual stash of butteries. It was not surprising, then, that we were still curled up in our sleepers, when the train arrived seven minutes early!

However, I reckoned they wouldn't be expecting me at work too early and, to my amazement, they said, "Didn't expect to see you today," when I strolled in at 10 am. It was Hogmanay, when ex-pats in London go a bit mad, so when I strolled in at 10 am on 1 January (I couldn't believe Sassenachs worked on 1 Jan, and youngsters today probably can't believe it either!). So to be greeted with "We didn't expect to see you today!" my response was "Well, why did you tell me to come back then?" In those days offices closed for just the regulation 2 days of Christmas and Boxing Day. My boss was quite kind, though, and would extend my holiday to cover a weekend, knowing home was far beyond the other side of the border, let alone the Watford Gap!

Still, I have strayed some way from butteries - marks off for digression! I just want to finish by saying that if you ever visit Aberdeen or the north east, make sure you sample at least one buttery and I'm sure you'll want to take a bagful home with you.

Anne Stott (Meopham)

Recipe

Cullen Skink

"Cullen Skink" - what??!! It sounds rude! Surely no Sassenach (unless a Scottish dancer) and probably many Scots have no idea what those words

mean. Perhaps some dancers are not aware! Well, it is a delicious soup and here is the recipe. When I make it I do not necessarily stick to these instructions. I may make my own version which is still edible and just as good! Or you can buy it in a tin from Baxters – my friends across the Firth. This recipe gives two portions providing a “meal in a soup bowl”!

Buy a whole medium sized smoked haddock, as you can use the fins, tail plus skin to make fish stock. Put into a saucepan with one medium or two



small onions, roughly chopped. Add 300mls/½ pint water, cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Strain and keep the liquid, which should be about 150mls/¼ pint. Return this liquid to a saucepan with 300mls/½ pint milk and skinned haddock.

Simmer until tender. Remove the flesh and flake, discarding all bones. Return the flaked fish to the liquid. The cooked onions are often left out but they can be chopped and added.

While making the stock, cook and mash smoothly two medium sized potatoes (about 175gr/6 oz). Add the mashed potato to the fish and liquid and adjust the seasoning. Top with parsley and serve. If a smooth soup is wanted, blend in a liquidiser. You can add cooked peas and/or sweet corn to give a more colourful, sustaining dish.

Bon appetite!

Kate Middleham (Sittingbourne)

Holiday of a lifetime?

Coming from a railway family and having once worked for British Rail as a student in long vacations, when I would say, “Train Enquiries. How can I help you?”, I love train travel. It had been my dream to travel from London to Venice on the VSOE (Venice – Simplon Orient Express) since its inaugural run. This dream became a reality last October when a rather belated 25th Anniversary was celebrated along with a couple of good friends who were marking their 50th birthdays. Most people we met on the trip, which is not cheap, were celebrating something special. At the end of the journey, as we arrived at Venice just before 6pm in the evening, having left London Victoria at 10.45 the previous day, all agreed it had been so much more than we ever dreamt or expected.



the left ready to depart) as it took a leisurely route

We ate a delicious brunch: smoked salmon, scrambled eggs, mushrooms and crumpet, washed down with Bellini cocktails on the British Pullman, (yours truly on

from Victoria, through Kent, passing Swanley, Meopham, the Rochester Bridge, Faversham, Canterbury East and Dover (waved to by friends standing outside their house in the rain!) to Folkestone West (met by more friends) where luxury coaches then travel through the Channel Tunnel to Calais Ville.

From the moment we pass the line of restaurant staff in their spotless livery, greeting us politely, the dream got better and better. As we boarded Sleeping Car D, which was our home for the night, our Steward Michael brought glasses of Champagne. Our luggage, needed for dinner that night which had not been seen since Victoria, was waiting for us in our cabins. Dinner suits and posh frocks were unpacked and the adjoining door to the adjacent cabin was opened. As the long 17-coach train slowly pulled out of Calais, we were ready to explore!



We found the Piano Bar (above), which is one of three beautifully restored, blue and white liveried Pullman cars in the middle of the train. There really was a baby grand, at which a gentleman was really tickling the ivories, as we sipped our drinks, while the flat (but by now sunny) north of France slipped past the windows.

Dinner was beyond the 5 Star quality we were expecting. Each dish being placed before us, the crest in exactly the correct position, the food so beautifully presented and the waiter announcing what it was:



Lobster Lasagne as the starter (left) which was unbelievable! Then Fillet of Charolais beef with a selection of Autumn veg for the main; followed by

cheese (or for me a sorbet) before a Chocolate cannolo for sweet then Petit Fours (right) and coffee.

There are 3 restaurant cars, unique “palaces on wheels”. We dined in one with Chinese lacquer panels, the design also appearing on the menu. Another is decorated with Lalique glass panels and the other (in which we ate lunch the next day) had exquisite marquetry panels. Then we went



back to our cabin, now converted to bunk beds, for the journey across the rest of France and Switzerland. At 5am the next morning we were at Basel. At 6am we were at Buchs and outside stewards and other train crew were on the platform, limbering up and exercising. After we had opened the blinds and saw the majestic Austrian mountains in the early morning sun, our steward, Michael converted our cabin back to its day condition and brought us breakfast.

After complimentary Morning Coffee in the Piano Bar we returned to the cabin to watch the train, in which we were now fourth carriage from the back, make its way through the Arlberg Tunnel and down the valley to Innsbruck for a thirty minute stop. After we pulled out of Innsbruck station we were back at the front of the train! Our steward gave warning of things to look out for:- the Europa bridge and a huge sweeping curve that lets everyone on board see the length of the train, as it slowly climbs up to the Brenner Pass.

Lunch in another dining car (below) was as superb as dinner had been the night before with



baked sea bass fillet and giant prawns as a starter, followed by quail, stuffed with figs, as the main. Then an apple soufflé was the sweet – then coffee. Delicious!

Before long we were passing through Verona, then Padua and, just over 24 hours after leaving Calais, we passed stone lions guarding the head of the causeway across the lagoon and drew in to Santa Lucia station in Venice. Journey's end and what a journey! Everything I expected and so much more! It was definitely an experience, very enjoyable and I have so many wonderful memories! If you have a special anniversary or want to mark retirement – I can recommend the VSOE unreservedly.

How did we get back? We avoided steerage in *Easyjet*, opting for 1st class travel on an Italian *Eurostar* to Milan for a few days stay. Then 1st class *TGV* from Milan to Paris for a few more days (the four of us drank the trolley dolly's bar dry!!). Finally it was a 1st class *Eurostar* to St Pancras and high speed *Javelin* back to Folkestone. These fares were a snip compared with what we had paid for the VSOE!!!

These other train rides were most enjoyable but they could never quite come up to the standard of the VSOE, somehow!!



Alan French (Dover)

Winter in Barbados

We chose a good year to spend most of the winter in Barbados, missing all the snow, ice and other

unpleasant bad weather here. As both my sisters and other family members were on the Island for February and March, it was a good time for us to share houses and be together, enjoying the warm climate.

We three sisters love the coast - walking on the beach in the early morning before it gets too hot; swimming in the warm, clear, blue sea and several cocktail hours in the evening, watching the sun set. Dinner outside, under the stars, was another regular feature of the holiday. We visited gardens, great houses, drove to picturesque spots and met up with many old friends. Sunday mornings found us at Dad's last parish before he retired, St Matthias' Church.

Harry and I also went dancing with the group on the Island, taught by Ken Thomson. Ken is Scottish and his wife Margot is from Canada, and they have run this group for several years. In fact this is where Harry and I met in 1985!! The local group, though quite small, is heavily augmented by visitors in the winter, many of whom hail from the Ottawa RSCDS.



Ken was honoured by the RSCDS HQ (shown on the left) for 40 years of teaching SCD, most of which has been in Barbados, or Jamaica or the Bahamas. It was at a "surprise"

party, to which we were invited, Margot had planned for him.

On a small island, where everyone knows your business before it happens, how do you keep such a big event a secret? The answer was for Ken and Margot to visit England for many weeks for surgery to his shoulder. They arrived back the day before the party, which was held at the Yacht Club, and we were happy to help. We read out the many congratulatory cards and e-mails, which included a note from Carolyn Warder (Cobtree) who danced in his class in Jamaica. Over eighty people turned up, dancers and friends, all there to surprise Ken when he and Margot arrived. He WAS surprised!!



Ken, Margaret Anne, Harry and Margot at the party.

Margot had gathered four local musicians in a short time who had learned enough music for a few Scottish dances, with a calypso flavour! What a great sound they made! Then we danced to Ken's recorded

music. The band returned after the buffet supper to play Caribbean style music for a different sort of dancing. Margot's brilliant speech told us of the subterfuge she had used to keep the secret. She had even visited the RSCDS headquarters to collect the award on their recent visit to Edinburgh – quite unknown to Ken! She was very pleased that everyone kept the secret and were there on the night to honour Ken.

The evening was a huge success and lots of fun. Ken was delighted with his RSCDS award – a Clan Thomson tie and a large painting by a local artist, Fielding Babb, given to him by the dance group. We all wished him many more years of teaching and dancing, the Scottish way!

Margaret Anne Robertson (Medway)

What a G.A.S.S.!

At our first Tuesday class in September, after our summer break, we did something completely different, like Monty Python! Through our website, we had a request from the Chairman of G.A.S.S., to give the members of their club a lesson in Scottish Country dancing. G.A.S.S. stands for Gentlemen's Ale Sampling Society, a Club for businessmen interested in ale and in learning something new, held on a Tuesday evening each month. They have tried various activities like hand bell ringing, singing and playing in a band, and wanted to have a go at SCD!

The Tuesday class agreed to welcome the GASS members and, though we had no idea what to expect, the evening was arranged. The large hall at St Mary's was available and they arrived at 7.30 pm, along with a few council members, for a brief introduction to Scottish dancing from Harry Robertson. Over twenty men arrived to learn to dance, dressed in a variety of attire, with a definite nod to tartan. Many were in proper kilts, which they had hired, and others wore garments resembling kilts, some adding their touch of tartan by wearing cummerbunds, ties or bowties. All had made an effort with their dress, even if one or two nearly lost their kilts mid dance!

They all entered wholeheartedly into the evening and, as their purpose was to learn to Scottish dance, they took it seriously. At first they danced quite happily with each other, learning a few simple formations and steps. As the Tuesday class members arrived at 8pm as usual, they chose ladies as partners for the simple dances we did. The GASS men were great fun, polite and friendly. When they left as arranged at 9pm, we were sorry to see them go! Many of them went round the hall, saying thank you, before going to their next stop, dinner at the *Ship and Trades*, still dressed in their tartan dancing gear!

They were as generous with a donation as they were with their thanks and praise for the evening. Their spokesman said that they aim to do something different each month, and this had indeed been different!

Margaret Anne Robertson (Medway)

Mausoleum Restored!

I wrote in the November 2011 edition of the Newsletter, of the desperate state of Robert Burns' Mausoleum in Dumfries. My sister in law, Professor Irene Turpie, had even written to the Scottish First Minister, expressing her disgust. We were sceptical of the assurances that "something would be done".

After many months of negotiations and waiting for good weather, work began early last summer and was completed in July. The work was undertaken with the support of Historic Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council, costing considerably more than the original and unrealistic estimate of £30,000! The old paint, which had let water in causing staining and flaking, has been replaced with "breathable" paint. The roof has also been replaced with a copper cupola, sealed to prevent water seepage. The small surrounding garden has been landscaped.



Rita Menzies (Medway)

I haven't been able to see it for myself, unfortunately, but Irene was pleased with what she saw on her visit. She didn't get any of the credit for it, of course!! Rebecca Middleton, my granddaughter, took this photo, shown on the left, when she was in Dumfries in February.

Obituaries

Sadly, Medway has lost two of its longest standing members in the past few months.

VERA COWARD, along with her husband Noel – a former Medway Treasurer - was a pharmacist in Chatham. She was an active member for many years, and danced with our demonstration team. They retired to Edinburgh, but always kept in touch. She had a standing order for the KASS Newsletter, which she usually shared with Ellen Dempster, who also now lives in Edinburgh.

KATIE CAMPBELL-LENT died in Devon recently, at the age of 93. Katie and her husband Harry were also prominent in the Medway and District Caledonian Association until Harry's death in the early 90's. Arrangements are being discussed for a memorial service at Bredhurst, so that Katie's ashes can be buried alongside her husband.

Rita Menzies (Medway)

JIM MCQUILLAN aged 81, had been suffering with Motor Neurone disease for some time and was nursed at home by his wife Pam. Jim was a well-known

dancer at many clubs in North Kent. Both Jim and Pam were members of Meopham Scottish Dance Club from 1995–2005 and he was Chairman from 1997–1999. Jim was a great social arranger and it was he who instigated the Club's annual Haggis Supper during his period in office. This is purely for club members and guests but still continues with great popularity. After Jim and Pam gave up dancing they were involved in both the National Trust and Eleanor Hospice Charity. Jim had a beautiful garden at their home in Dartford which they sometimes opened to raise money for the charities. The funeral took place at Eltham Crematorium.

Jane Whittington (Meopham)

40th Anniversary Dance

KASS members are invited to attend Cobtree's celebratory dance on Saturday 29th June 2013. The Group, though formed in 1975 had met informally (called *Friends of Cobtree Hall*) for at least two years prior to that, so is celebrating 40 years of Scottish Dancing at Cobtree this year.

Therefore, Ditton Community Centre, a wonderful large hall, has been booked plus a super band, *Craigievar*. It is hoped as many as possible will join Cobtree for this special occasion. If you do not have a ticket - book NOW, to avoid disappointment!

Esther Barford (Cobtree)

For Sale

Two lady's kilts made by Geoffrey the Tailor of Edinburgh's Royal Mile – both nearly new, hardly worn:

- (1) 6 yard Earl of St Andrews (Blue) tartan waist - 26½ ins; seat – 39 ins; length - 25½ ins - £60
- (2) 5 yard evening kilt Green Douglas Old Colours (soft green) waist - 26½ ins; seat – 39 ins; length - 38½ ins - £80

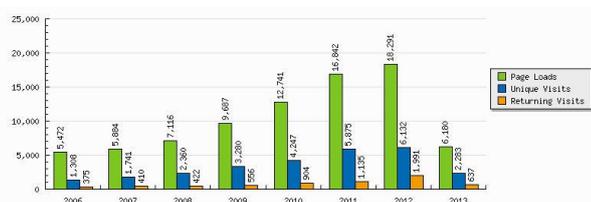
Also two pairs of dancing shoes (size 6)

- (1) anti-shock and anti-slip soles - £10
- (2) black leather suede soles (hardly worn) - £7.

Contact Derrick Reeves on 01843 846716 for more information.

KASS Website

Statistics from 2006 to 2013.



Website use continues to grow with 1,991 returning visitors in 2012. Part of the reason for this increase is that the World Wide Web is still expanding

but, and more important for returning visitors, the website is revised on a regular basis, giving people a reason to return. In 2012 the content of 112 pages was revised. Some of the revisions were technical changes but most were announcements and details of dances and, frequently, photographs of the events were posted shortly after the events.

The team maintaining the website has increased and this has made it possible to keep the website up-to-date. Brian Knell not only maintains the webpage for Sheerness but has also converted a number of the webpages to the centre screen layout and revised a number of club pages in my absence. The rest of the Website Team is: Linda McRitchie, who maintains the Isle of Thanet and Thanet Caledonian pages; Patricia Papa, who looks after the Canterbury St. Andrew's page; Tom Carter, who maintains the Sidcup page and Di Lewis has recently joined the team to maintain the Orpington page. In addition, there are many other volunteers in the clubs who provide the information for the revision of their club pages and this information is then posted onto the website by me or in my absence Brian Knell.

To comply with recent legislation, a 'cookies' policy has been added. This explains that to gather the statistics that are given in this report the website uses 'cookies' to identify if a computer is a first time visitor or a returning visitor and which pages are popular. Details of the 'cookies' policy is given on the Aim's page of the website.

Ken Hamilton (KASS webmaster)

Eighty years young!

Ann Keeble has been running Medway's afternoon dancing session at Bredhurst for many years. Her efficient, friendly and caring approach is well known to us all so her special birthday gave us a chance to show our appreciation and affection with a surprise party. We spread the word and though Ann



wondered why so many were arriving to dance, she knew nothing about the surprise until we played 'Happy Birthday' and Rita Menzies presented her with a bunch of flowers! (shown on the left)

We had a wonderful afternoon, much chatter and laughter and four sets dancing to a programme of familiar and easy dances – including the *Anniversary Reel, Birthday Special, Miss (Catherine) Ann* and *Cherry Bank Gardens*, reflecting Ann's love of gardening. Our tea break was enhanced by one of Ailean Baker's delicious fruit cakes as we all wished Ann a very happy birthday and many happy returns.

Margaret Anne Robertson (Medway)