

KASS

Kent Association of Scottish Societies

Newsletter 65 – May 2016

EDITORIAL

Once again I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this (your) KASS Newsletter.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of KASS or the Editor (though some may be!).

Clearly there is much going on in Kent, so why not see first-hand (visit) and let's support each other!

Nigel Hewitt, Hon. Secretary KASS

Chairman's Report



It is always very nice to be welcomed to club evenings and club dances as the representative of KASS, though all club members can be seen as representatives of not only their own club but also as representing KASS. There is one particular club where I am greeted as, "the spy from Head Office"

however as this welcome is done with many of the club members saluting it does not seem as though the "spy from Head Office" is regarded as anything other than a friend, which is wonderful.

The other thing that is gratifying to see is the large number of Scottish Country Dancers who stick to the etiquette of the dance and wear the kilt with pride without causing any embarrassment (especially when seated). On the subject of dance etiquette I came across this from the Frankfurt Scottish Country Dance Club and thought you might like to have a look at it:-

Ten Commandments for Balls and Socials

These may not have been carried down from Mount Schiehallion on shortbread tablets, but anyway, you will not make a mistake by trying to adhere to them:

1. Thou shalt not overestimate thyself when asking people to dance, lest thou beest embarrassed if the set breaketh down six times out of eight because of thee.
2. Thou shalt dance now and then with other people than thy spouse and immediate

clan – possibly even with someone from the other table or yon wallflower from the outer reaches of the hall.

3. Thou shalt not walk on the dance floor too early, neither shalt thou do thus alone, for lo! the MC will announce the dance when it is time, and even in Scotland it taketh at least two to dance.
4. Thou shalt join a set at the bottom and not in the middle (especially if it hath already been counted), lest thou not cause much wailing and gnashing of teeth before the dance hath even started.
5. Thou shalt count the lines if thou art the top man, for the knowledge of one's station in the set produces good will in all men (and women!) (If thou art a woman on the men's side, this commandment applieth to the next man down the line should thou not wisheth to do it thyself.)
6. Thou shalt look at thy partner during the dance and not at thy »Pilling«, so that she (or he) may remain friendly towards thee and thou mayest ask her (or him) to dance again.
7. Thou shalt not hinder thy neighbour's dance by returning from thy Down-the-middle-and-up on bar 9, blocking forever the centre of the set with extra twiddles and hand-clapping during a half diagonal reel of four, or otherwise not acting as a team player acteth.
8. Thou shalt honour thy musicians that thy dance may be long into the night and they might even repeat a dance that thou hast liked. But similarly shalt thou help thy MC; clap both loudly and long, but remain on the dance floor if thou wilt do that dance again or clear it speedily if not.
9. Thou shalt not chide, lest thou be chided – for verily, nobody hath appointed thee (of all people!) judge of thy neighbour's dancing ability or outlook on what is enjoyable. If thou must chide people, become a dance teacher and chide them in thy class; at balls and socials it is an abomination.
10. Thou shalt enjoy thyself – in spite of these tedious commandments – and help others enjoy themselves, too.

I am sure all of us are guilty of transgressing at least one of these 'commandments' in our dancing careers be that career longer or shorter than the dancer who has just pushed in to a convenient 4th place because they didn't know the dance.

As a final point please remember this motto: Most of all, smile and enjoy yourself! It's contagious!

Dick Barford

KASS Challenge Cup



I wonder if anyone remembers this little cup. It obviously goes back a fair while as this one is dated 1964. I have a little idea of what it may have been for but I am sure some of you

who will have been members of SCD Groups within Kent know about it and maybe have a story to tell. If you can throw any light on the history of this cup then please send any detail to the KASS Secretary.

Nigel Hewitt

NEWS FROM THE CLUBS

Cobtree Scottish Country Dance Group

Following the Burns Supper period, Cobtree decided to hold a 'No Haggis Tonight Dance' in the Grove Green Community hall dancing to recorded music. Initially the committee were unsure what the response for tickets would be like as this was the club's first venture into a dance in February, but we needn't have worried as all the tickets were sold two weeks before the event. It had been decided that ticket sales would have to be limited to 60 as the hall will not comfortably accommodate any more, and this decision was justified as the hall was full. Once again we were very sorry to have to turn people away.

A dance programme had been devised by using the first letters of the dance title (No Haggis Tonight Dance) as the first letter of the dance name. Hence the letter 'N' was the Nurseryman, whilst the 'O' was the Orwell Lodge Strathspey. It

was a little daunting to find 3 dances beginning with a G that were possible to include and known to dancers, but we managed it.

The dance appeared to be very well received by the dancers who came from many other Kent clubs as well as by the members of Cobtree.

I wonder what title we can dream up should we decide to hold a dance again in February another year. Watch this space.

We are delighted to say that we should have room for all at the Summer Dance being held on June 25th in Ditton Community Centre, dancing to Ian Muir of Prestwick – look out for further details appearing soon.

Dick Barford

Meopham Scottish Country Dance Group

CHRISTMAS, SPRING DANCES AND HAGGIS SUPPER

Christmas tunes rang out played in reel and jig time. This made for another successful evening at Meopham Scottish Country Dance Club's Christmas dance held last December at Culverstone Community Centre.



Chris Dewhurst and his band played for the first time for a Kentish Scottish dance club. The family band Chris, wife Julie and son Nick come from Lichfield in Staffordshire and Meopham SCDC were very pleased to welcome them to their Christmas dance. All the dancers were delighted with the music played in Chris Dewhurst style with clever renderings of Christmas tunes wound into the dances music.

Chris and his band will be playing at the KASS Autumn Dance in 2018.

Meopham SCDC also holds a club Haggis Supper at Meopham Village Hall in January for club members and invited guests who attend Meopham events. A little more informal than Burns suppers the evening consists of easy dances and a haggis supper provided and cooked and by the club members. Alistair MacDonald was once again invited to address the haggis which he does with great style. In the past Jean Fox and Alistair's father Dr. Bob Macdonald have done the honours. We are lucky to have another Macdonald to continue with the tradition.



Our Spring Dance held on 12th March at Culverstone Community Centre also proved successful with Caledonian Reelers playing for the dancing. Meopham SCDC continue to book popular live bands for their events which add to the enjoyment of the evening. Ian Muir of Prestwick and Frank Reid's Band are booked for the next two dances in 2016 and 2017. Don't miss dancing to these popular bands.

Meopham SCDC is holding a Tea Dance on Sunday 18th September 2016 from 2pm -5pm at the Village Hall in Meopham. The programme will consist of easy dances suitable for less experienced dancers. All dances will be walked through beforehand. A cream tea will be included in the price of admission.

KASS Tea Dances were discontinued a couple of years ago when it was felt we had to twist people's arms to hold them. However clubs are still welcome to hold a tea dance if willing and any reasonable losses will be met by KASS.

Meopham hope to welcome friends and dancers to this informal and popular afternoon of dancing.

JANE WHITTINGTON MSCDC
KASS events co-ordinator

Dover Scottish Country Dance Group

The Dover group has settled in to its new venue, Temple Ewell Village Hall, for its regular Monday Club nights. Small, but nicely formed, the Dover group has attracted a few new members who are enjoying the delights of reels, jigs and the "slow ones"! Sadly, our very first Social Secretary, Helen Funnell, organiser of those delicious assorted salad suppers we became famous for at Dover Dances held at the Grammar School, died in February after a long and courageous battle with cancer. In the late 1990s Helen, along with her brother John who also danced, attended local dances and even KASS Balls with other members of the Dover group and mum, Mary, came along too!

Alan French

South East London Scottish Association

Thanks Richie!

The St Andrew's night celebration for SELSA was a particularly special event because it was the last performance by our bandleader Richie Ahearn. He has led the Dalcassian Country band for us since before the turn of the century. He was presented with an engraved quaiach by one of our senior members Dinah Macfarlane. At our next event, Burns at Oakley House Bromley, the Dalcassian Band played for us again, still in fine form despite Richie's retirement. We had an excellent evening with several new members and a healthy crowd of young people giving extra sparkle to the occasion.

Jude Mackenzie
Chair
SELSA

Orpington & District Caledonian Society

In 2015 Orpington continues to dance under the guiding hand of our President, Angela Campbell. In the autumn we enjoyed a different St Andrews, convened by Roger Randell on a normal Club Night but with cake and we concluded the year with our first "Band Free" Hogmanay, convened by Margaret Briggs and Joan Kinnear. It was excellent fun with a tasty supper followed by a varied dance programme, Old Father Time, a

'handsome' first footer and a delightful young New Year.

Our Burns Supper, convened by Angela House, was sold out well in advance. The evening included humorous speeches, the Immortal Memory was given by Ken l'Anson, and a mixture of spirited dancing to the Caledonian Reelers. Over 80 people enjoyed our Ceilidh in February, convened and MC'ed by Hadyn Davies, it exposed many hidden talents. Entertainment varied between a rendering of a Frank Sinatra song (with Nancy), a dance by the Pink Ladies and a hilarious display by the Orpington Caledonian Synchronised Swimming Team led by Pauline Clift.



A visit from "Frank & Nancy"

The Monday lesson dance, devised by Angela, celebrated its 30 years with 30 dancers in red, white and blue.

The March On Dance, convened by Linda Scothern, with the Programme devised by Angela, who was also MC, proved to be very popular and with all the dances walked through it was a relaxed and very enjoyable evening.

All sections of the Club continue to run well. A select few enjoy John Cottrell's Monday afternoons numbers at the Monday Evening Lesson remain steady with many of our new Members making steady progress under Angela's tuition. The two Wednesdays with Don Ward and Angela are hard work but also fulfilling. We also remain appreciative of our Thursday MCs, Angela, John and Don who provide a mixed and varied programme.

Orpington now has its own web site at <http://www.orpingtonscottishdancing.com> which can also be accessed through the KASS web site. We continue to dance for a variety of organisations and the donations from these displays together with the money from the raffles at all our dances enable us to give to 2 charities each year. The charities this year are Sailability, who provide sailing opportunities for Children and Young adults with special Needs and Mindcare which provides help and support to 'Carers' in our Borough.

This year we have danced at St John's Friendship Club, at 2 Burns Suppers, 2 Brownie Packs and at a Care Home. In May we are dancing at a Nursing Home, St Olave's School, Orpington a Rainbow Pack, at Cooling's Garden Centre, Knockholt and at the MacLennan Ceilidh.

We are looking forward to hosting the KASS Ball and to our Summer Dance on June 4th dancing to Craigievar.

Deirdre Wilden

Sevenoaks Reel Club

It was a dark and stormy November night in West Kent, as excited travellers made their way from near and far to a lonely Community Hall. The car park was damp and gloomy and myriad fallen leaves circled in the gusty air but – lo! – in the distance shone a welcoming light.

A handsome lone piper played without the door as the wind made merry with his tartan streamers. The sound of the pipes guided visitors to the cheery warmth within where a welcome dram awaited the lucky travellers in the cosy bar. After slaking their thirst and exchanging greetings with new friends and old the dancers were ready for the Grand March, preceded by our gallant piper, into the hall where the doughty Strathallan band struck up the first dance of the evening, the Anniversary Reel.

So began the celebration event – many anguished months in the planning – to mark 60 years of Scottish Country Dancing in Sevenoaks. The rest you can imagine: smiling faces; great music from the enthusiastic musicians; the cutest dog on the band circuit; a supper buffet table groaning with nutritious and delicious delicacies; band and pipe solos to delight; the genial Master of Ceremonies Jim Winter presiding over all.

Spirits never flagged throughout the evening and at the very end the floor was still crowded with dancers. Carriages were summoned at 11pm and the tired but happy club members packed away the magic, the tinsel, the bunting.....

Josephine Ellis

Sidcup and District Caledonian Association

We joined forces with the North Kent Scottish Association for the Hogmanay Party. Alison Ede was the MC. The fun we had with dances and games kept us awake until midnight to see in the New Year.

Our next big event was the Burns Supper held at the John Fisher Church hall in Bexley. This very successful evening began with the traditional meal of Coq-a-Leeky soup, Haggis, Champit Tatties and Neeps followed by first class speeches. Dick Barford gave a new approach to the Immortal Memory by considering how Burns might have used modern social media. Tony Atkinson and Kay Byron were very entertaining with the toast to the Lassies and the reply. After the meal there was dancing - not just reels and strathspeys but also dances such as the Gay Gordons and the Dashing White Sargeant to encourage the non Scottish dancers onto the floor. Our MC, Loraine Chase, coped splendidly as always. Our thanks go to Maud Boorman and Rene Farthing for all the work they put in to organise the event and also to Terry Boorman for his beautiful programmes.

Despite seasonal coughs and colds attendance at practice evenings and dances has been reasonable.

We now look forward to our next big event, the President's Buffet Dance.

Wendy Carter

Isle of Thanet Scottish Country Dance Group

The Isle of Thanet is around 40 square miles in area and is situated on the most north-easterly edge of Kent, the Garden of England, with coast on three sides.

Thanet is proud of its 15 sandy beaches and bays which stretch from Pegwell Bay in the south to Minnis Bay in the north. Thanet's beaches are impossible to resist!!

Unfortunately, this comes at a cost!!

When the Isle of Thanet Group (and the Dover & Deal Group) have their social dances on a Saturday evening, we are limited to the dancers we can attract. Being surrounded by water on three sides, other than East Kent, we can only attract dancers from one direction ... Our West.

As you can appreciate, when we have a band playing for the Spring Ball the expenses rise dramatically and therefore we rely on the support from other Kent dancers to make the Ball successful.

We have just held our Spring Ball at Birchington Village Centre, dancing to The Caledonian Reelers. It was a great evening, 46 dancers attended and everybody enjoyed themselves.



Throughout the year we have 4 Saturday evening Social dances with recorded music, a Spring Ball with a band and a Ceilidh in December.

The Isle of Thanet Group meets on Wednesday evenings (term times) at the Holy Trinity & St John's C of E Primary School, St John's Road, Margate. We have a beginner's class from 7-7.45pm, and a general class from 7.45-9.30pm. All dances are walked through several times before dancing.

It has been lovely to welcome 6 new dancers to the group, so we now have 35 members altogether.

If you visit Thanet, on a Wednesday, please come along & join our Wednesday evening classes. All our Saturday social dances are advertised on the KASS diary and our group website. Look forward to seeing you!!

Helen Cole

Tonbridge Scottish Dancers

Tonbridge Scottish Dancers have enjoyed another successful term. We acquired a number of new members and two of our very active and loyal members celebrated their 80th birthdays within a few days of each other!

TSD are now in their 10th anniversary year and after numerous discussions and ideas we decided to celebrate by holding two different events to mark the occasion. Our first event, a celebratory meal, was held in the Tonbridge Church Hall just before Christmas. A member of our committee organized the food from a local take-away-restaurant and after an hour's dancing we tucked into a feast and had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. It was a lovely way to celebrate and we all went home feeling rather full!

Our next celebratory event was a Ceilidh for members of the group and their friends which took place on Saturday 13th February 2016 at the Village Hall in Hildenborough under the expert direction of Angela Campbell. Numbers were a little down on the Ceilidh we organised last year but this did not hinder, in any way, the success of the evening. The hall was decorated with our newly acquired bunting which looked absolutely fantastic! The bunting was made from pieces of tartan material cut into triangles and stitched together by a relative of one of our long standing members (thank you Clair's mum!).

The guests who joined in with the fun had wonderful expressions on their faces as they circled the wrong way, used their left hand instead of the right and often ended up with a different partner! As usual, the amazing selection of food was outstanding and so varied. I must congratulate our tea and coffee ladies as they did a grand job of making sure the tea was hot and the coffee was not too strong!

Another exciting piece of news is that we have just taken delivery of our long awaited Club Shield. Many hours were spent deciding on the design of

the shield and we are extremely proud and excited with the finished product.



Jacquie Richards

Tunbridge Wells & Crowborough Scottish Country Dancing Club

This year is the 60th Anniversary of our society. It was formed in the summer of 1956 in Crowborough and was called the Crowborough Scottish Country Dancing Group. It consisted of eight members who met in a private house to start with. About 10 years later it moved to Tunbridge Wells hoping to attract more members. In the mid-1970's it changed its name to its present name of Tunbridge Wells and Crowborough Scottish Country Dancing Group.

We hold two dances each year in our usual venue in Bidborough as well as a Hogmanay dance for our members plus a few friends. Last October's dance went well and our Christmas party was as popular as ever. We hope that the next dance on June 18th will be just as successful. Our Anniversary Dance will also be held in the Bidborough Village Hall on October 1st and will be limited to 64 tickets. Book early to avoid disappointment and help us to celebrate 60 continuous years of dancing.

Kathleen Allcorn

North Kent Scottish Association

North Kent Scottish Association continues to meet on Wednesday evenings at Barnehurst Golf Club for our Dance Circles and hold dances in March, May, July and November at St Martin's Church Hall Bexleyheath (see KASS Diary for detail). In November 2016 and July 2017 we will be having the Craigievar Band play for us. Alison Ede as always will put together a great dance programme.

The 2016 Burns Supper saw a change of venue to St Anselm's Hall and although the hall and the catering was excellent, the hall was just a little too large, so our Burns Supper on 21st January 2017 will be at the Stone Lodge Bowls Club in Cotton Lane, Dartford.

The number of dancers on a Wednesday does vary a bit and of course as with other clubs we could always do with a few more members - new members are always welcome!

Nigel Hewitt

KASS Website Report

Ken Hamilton gave a very detailed report on the first 10 years of the KASS Website at the last meeting.

I will be brief and just update the situation as it is developing.

The number of visits to the web site has continued to increase and that includes people who people who are coming back again. However they are looking at fewer pages, which is, I hope, because they are finding the information they want more quickly.

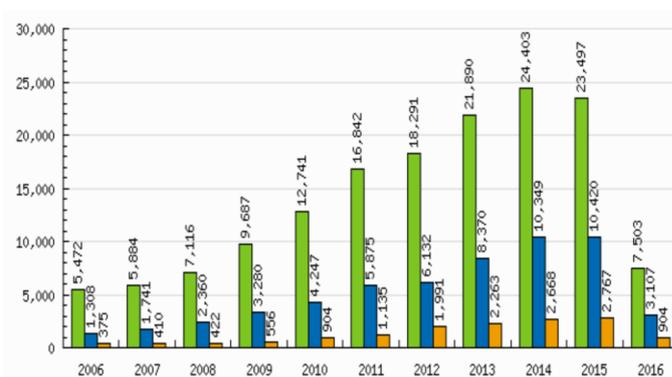
OTHER NEWS

New dancers at Medway

My name is Crystal and I started dancing at the age of six. I found I had so much fun learning new dances and meeting new people. I loved it so much that I started my grading for it but unfortunately couldn't continue. However, eight years later I am back dancing. Everyone welcomed me with open arms and my mum joined too. I find dancing is a great way to keep fit and have fun all at the same time. I would love for more people to join as I am, at the moment, the youngest in my group at 28. On a Tuesday night any age and any one is welcome. I am sure we would all love new members.

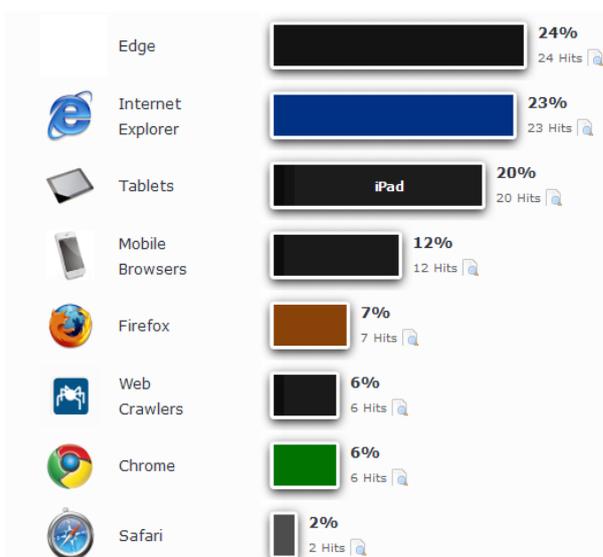
My daughter has been Scottish dancing since she was young and I got to know quite a few people from the group. As my children grew up I found I had spare time and few friends to share it with. I was invited by my daughter to an evening function and really enjoyed it, even though at the time I didn't know any of the dances. I went along to the classes and with help and support from all the wonderful people there, I soon picked them up. I look forward to class nights on Tuesdays and the functions throughout the year. The people are friendly and caring and we always enjoy the evenings spent together. I wish I had joined sooner.

Crystal Roberts and her Mum
Medway beginners' class held on a Tuesday night at St. Mary's Island Community Centre.



They mostly use Internet Explorer or Microsoft Edge but one in three is now using an iPad or other mobile browser.

That is important. If you look at the web site on a tablet or phone, particularly with a smallish screen some of the pages are not good to read or to move on from by touching the screen.



Compare the look of the Events page with the Home page. Even on a phone the Events page is easy to read when it first comes up. The Home page isn't.

To make the site easy to use on all devices will need a big change to the Menu and the Home page.

I am working on this.

Finally, a plea from those of us who update pages. Some clubs give us updates in good time and soon after the existing information is out of date. People will not come back to your page if the information is always out of date and we can't keep it up to date if you don't tell us what needs to go on the page!

Brian Knell

KASS COMMITTEE MEETING April 2016

The full KASS Committee Meeting was held at the usual venue of Cobtree Hall, Maidstone on 5th April, it was attended by 26 people representing 14 clubs. As always it was a very informative meeting and there was lively discussion on topics ranging from; booking at dances, what to do with the Chairman (well actually, the Chairman's Ribbon - which has become full!) club subscriptions to KASS (no increase for 2016!) and a good opportunity to let others know what is happening in various clubs. Detail of future events will be found on the KASS website and on the last page of this newsletter.

Dick Barford's term of office as KASS Chairman ends in October 2016. Usually the current Vice Chairman is elected as the new Chairman – thus in October if this happens we will need to find a new Vice Chairman. Any suggestions to KASS Secretary please

Club secretaries or reps will have access to the minutes via the KASS website in due course.

The next KASS Meeting (the AGM) will be held at Cobtree Hall on Tuesday 8.00 pm 18th October 2016.

Nigel Hewitt Hon Sec KASS

News Extras!

A KASS Meeting in School Holidays

When I was told the spring KASS meeting was being held on Tues 5th April, I realised this was during the Easter school holidays.

I had to decide whether we went away and I would miss the meeting or stay at home with the family and attend the meeting. Not wanting to miss the chance of having a family break I then realised I could do both!

I suggested we book our caravan holiday at the Bearsted Caravan Club Site!!

We arrived at Bearsted, with our caravan in tow, on the Sunday and then enjoyed 5 more days in the mid Kent area.

It is often said that people travel miles to discover new places but often don't visit places on their own doorstep.

We got out our maps, tourist information leaflets & our national Trust handbook out and planned our week according to the weather. (Also taking into account that the day often doesn't start until lunchtime by the time teenagers are up, washed & fed).

During the week, we visited Knole Park, Emmetts Gardens and Moat Park, had a 5 mile walk along

River Medway taking in Teston Lock & West Farleigh and had a shopping trip to Ashford McCarthy Glen Shopping outlet. During our travels we found a few country pubs to enjoy nice meals and a few drinks. We also managed to meet up with some friends.

On the evening of the meeting, I was sitting in the caravan with a mug of tea in my hand and our meal in the oven with plenty of time to cook. I felt quite smug as I knew I was going to arrive at this meeting nice and early as I was only 5 minutes down the road. After a while, reading the newspaper, I realised that I could not smell anything cooking in the oven. After investigating, found out that our gas bottle had run out. After getting it changed over, the meal then had to start cooking Guess what?

I arrived just as the meeting was starting - the joys of caravan cooking!

When we arrived back home on the Saturday, I text Nigel to tell him I had just got home "Where have you been ??????" came the reply.

Helen Cole Isle of Thanet

Thank you Helen - so now I know. Ed

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING IN BARBADOS

In February we once again escaped winter for a month and joined my sister in Barbados. It is the island where our family grew up, so we frequently return to enjoy the tropical weather and familiar places and faces.

Our holiday was in two parts, firstly in a house near the coast on our own, and secondly further inland in the countryside, where we stayed with my sister and brother in law. Proximity to the coast meant walks on the nearby beach in the early morning or in time for the evening sunset, and swimming in warm, clear blue seas. It also meant busy streets, noisy car horns and traffic queues, but many places were within walking distance. The country was quieter, and the walks took us through fields with the St George Valley in the distance – looking very much like scenic parts of English countryside!

Our visits to Barbados always include Scottish Country dancing! We nearly missed our first evening as our car had a flat battery and refused to start. Undaunted we went to the end of the road to get a bus but instead had a ride in a 'ZR' – so called because of their registration number- these are mini vans which run on the bus routes, but which cram passengers in and drive at breakneck speed, playing very loud music! It was quite an experience and in my seat behind the driver I shut my eyes and hoped for the best!! Our ride was luckily only ten minutes, and we got there safely. Two of the dancers, Doug and Anita from Canada, gave us a lift home and enabled us to get to know them better. They holiday there for several months every year and enjoy dancing and snorkelling.

The class is run by Ken Thomson and his wife Margot, and as many of you know, it is where Harry and I met in 1985. There are still a few dancers from those days, as well as many new ones, and some, like us who are on holiday for a few weeks or months. We are always given a very warm welcome, and certainly feel at home. Ken often gets us each to teach a dance of our choice, but sometimes with little warning!! We dance at the Yacht Club, from 7 – 9 pm with no break and only ice water to refresh us! Despite ceiling fans and open doors we get very warm so most people wear shorts or sun dresses. We often call into a restaurant beside the sea for a cool drink and snack afterwards and think how lucky we are to be there!

The highlight of the dancing took place on our last Saturday night when we all met at a hotel for a

light supper followed by dancing round the pool and under the stars – very romantic but very hard on the feet! The other hotel guests were intrigued but not inclined to join in.

All too soon it was time to say goodbye to our international dancing friends, with promises to dance together again next year and spend some of the winter in the warm Caribbean.

Margaret Anne Robertson
Medway & District Caledonian Association

Reel of the 51st From an article in The Scots Magazine by Neil Griffiths Sent in by Kate Middleham and abridged for this newsletter

The name of J.E.M "Jimmy" Atkinson will grace the pages of Scottish popular history. For Jimmy created the Reel of the 51st, a dance known and enjoyed by Scots the world over and performed whenever Caledonian toes start tapping. Lt Atkinson, aged 26, was serving with the 7th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and was captured in 1940 at St Valery when the 51st (Highland) Division surrendered to Rommel's six divisions having valiantly fought their way across France and served alongside the French. On the long march to Oflag VIIC at Laufen Castle, Atkinson's mind focussed by way of diversion, on dancing and he came up with a reel based upon their St Andrew's Saltire. Jimmy's concept had firmed up but was running into practical problems, not least because of the absence of music. "We would whistle the tunes" he recalled as the Germans had captured and destroyed the bagpipes. There was something wrong with the opening steps too. Lt. Colonel Tom Hunter was in the Camp and had been chairman of the influential Perth Branch of the Scottish Country Dance Society, who suggested some changes to the opening.

The steps had been sent home but censors were wary of letters incorporating phrases such as "cast off three places, five to eight lead up to the top corners.....". A demonstration was required to convince them it was not the most elaborate code. Lt. Col. Hunter's wife worked on the steps and began to distribute them as a Red Cross fundraiser. Mrs Hunter was inundated with orders.

Why is this reel so popular? It is simple, it was written by soldiers for soldiers who were recalling bits and pieces from the past, and ended up with a mixture of Scottish Reform, Lady Susan Stuart and

Hamilton House yet with special characteristics of its own.

Jimmy Atkinson passed away in January 1997, the last of the group of originators. He lived to see a 30 minute documentary screened by BBC Scotland on the previous St Andrews Day. His fame grew in the 1990s when the reel's status and origins were confirmed as part of the nation's life.

RSCDS Book 13 includes this:-

This dance, planned by Highland Officers, was first performed in a P. O. W. Camp in Germany in presence of Major-General Sir Victor M. Fortune, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., the Divisional Commander, who granted permission to name it "The Reel of the 51st Division" to commemorate the Division in France, 1940.'

AND FINALLY....

FUTURE KASS EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

HIGHLAND BALL - 14th May 2016
with Nicol McLaren - Hosted by Orpington & District Caledonian Society

KASS WALK – 12th June 2016 -
Hosted by Canterbury St Andrews

AUTUMN DANCE – 12th November 2016 with Caledonian Reelers - Hosted by Dover Scottish Country Dance Group

HIGHLAND BALL - 13th May 2017
with Jim Lindsay

AUTUMN DANCE – 11TH November 2017

HIGHLAND BALL – 12th May 2018
- with Ian Muir

AUTUMN DANCE – 10th November 2018 – with Chris Dewhurst

HIGHLAND BALL – 11th May 2019

AUTUMN DANCE – 9th November 2019

Further details will follow from the Events Co-ordinators.

If your club would be willing to host a KASS event then please let one of the Events Co-ordinators know. It is not such an onerous task as the events Co-ordinators kindly do most of the work!

KASS Diary

It would be very helpful if clubs could give the KASS Secretary, dates of dances well in advance particularly if they hold dances on the same Saturdays in the month. Whilst exact details may not be available if the dates (at least) are known then these can be included in the KASS Diary. This would give other clubs trying to fit dances in, an opportunity NOT to clash dates with other clubs. Also if you are aware of the dates of dancing holidays (when maybe a significant number of people will be away) then that information too would be helpful to put in the KASS Diary

Club Contact details

If there are changes in contact for clubs (Secretary, KASS reps etc.) the please don't forget to let the KASS Secretary know so that the contact list can be updated.

Dick Barford has very kindly offered to take the reins of KASS Newsletter Editor from the May 2017 edition. In the meantime any articles for the November 2016 edition of the Newsletter should be sent to the KASS Secretary.