

Scottish Country Dancing Factsheet - February 2006 - www.scottishdancing.org

Subject matter	<p>Dancing as part of a set (e.g. 4 facing 4) therefore groups can learn together.</p> <p>Formations such as circle, cross and cast off, advance and retire. Country Dance steps such as skip change, setting step.</p>
Level	<p>A beginner can easily learn a basic dance by the end of their first session. There are five levels: beginner, intermediate, advanced and very advanced as well as demonstration standard dancer and two teacher awards. As there are thousands of dances experience gained over time is also very relevant.</p>
Health Benefits	<p>SCD is weight bearing therefore it builds bone density helping prevent osteoporosis. It also reduces cellulite.</p> <p>It is mildly aerobic therefore helps improve circulation, strengthens heart muscles, and raises fitness levels. 30 mins of fairly easy dancing burns approx.160 calories: the equivalent of 20 minutes of vigorous swimming, a half hour of moderate housework, sponge washing the car or 13 hours of kissing [1] !</p> <p>Release of endorphins provides improved sleep patterns and reduced levels of stress and tension.</p>
Social benefits	<p>Building new friendships is a very common feature of SCD.</p> <p>Participation in a group activity builds self confidence through hands – on learning (or is it feet first learning?). SCD is a structured form of dance which men enjoy. It also appeals to those who regard themselves as “scientific” rather than “arty”.</p>
Practical Requirements	<p>Beginners: flat shoes, loose clothing. Dance floor similar to that used for aerobics.</p>
N. I. context	<p>Scottish Country Dancing became popular in Northern Ireland in the 1940’s. Ceilidh Dancing was part of many communities with Scottish ancestry.</p> <p>Social conditions and the popularity of free form music and dance in the 1970’s led to a dramatic decline in the numbers of people participating in SCD between 1976 and 1990.</p>
Cultural aspect	<p>SCD is a non denominational activity enjoyed all over the world. It uses both Scottish and Irish folk music. New dances are published each year so it is a living heritage.</p>
Cost	<p>A 10 week programme run by an RSCDS branch (includes teacher and insurance) costs approx. £40 [2] i.e. £2 per class.</p>
History	<p>“Country dances” from the court of Elizabeth 1 were popular in Scotland and in England. These “country dances” were pastoral dances set to Irish and Scottish tunes. There was the elegance and courtesy of the court and the energy of step of the old Viking inherited reels from Scotland. Scottish Country Dancing continued to flourish in Scotland after country dancing had died out in England. This art form was saved due to the work of two Scottish ladies, Mrs Ysobel Stewart of Fasnacloch and Miss Jean Milligan, who, after 1923, went about collecting old printed books of dances, taught a new generation of dance teachers, introduced some degree of standardisation and set guidelines for correct dancing technique [3]</p> <p>.</p> <p>They founded the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society www.rscds.org .</p>

[1] www.calorie-counter.net

[2] Feb. 2006

[3] Extracts from Factsheet The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society www.rscds.org