

Atholl Dancing Festival Beginnings

In 1976, Jean Swanston organised a Dancing Competition in the Mid-Atholl Hall, Ballinluig to raise funds for the Hall. 144 dancers competed – far too many for the small Hall, but because it was a beautiful day, most folk spent lots of time in the park having picnics and playing football. Thanks to the generosity of the judges (Betty Turkington and Sheena McDonald) and the pipers (Sandy Spence and Ian Duncan) who would not accept a fee, we raised £66 – quite a lot of money! By popular demand, the event was held the following year in the much larger Pitlochry Town Hall.

The Atholl Dancing Association was formed on 1 February 1979 with Barbara MacKintosh as the first Chairman. Part of the committee's remit was and still is to organise the Atholl Dancing Festival.

Pitlochry Town Hall remained the venue until 1983. In 1984 the Festival moved to its present venue, The Atholl Palace Hotel. However, in 1989 the Festival was held in the Ballroom of Blair Castle because we could not get this venue and in 1994 the Festival was cancelled because we could not get a venue. We love this venue, and whilst we know we are limited for space, we want to stay here. For this reason, from time to time we may have to refuse late entries or close the entry early.