

**The Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston, MA, Inc.**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 7 June 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. by President Jeremy Thorpe.

Jeremy opened the meeting with a few comments.

- Thank you to everyone for participating in this second AGM being held via Zoom. (A total of 53 members participated.)
- As we all know, it has been an unusual year with a great deal of virtual dancing occurring in an effort to stay connected and thus being able to stay “open” through these virtual events.
- If you are uncertain about dancing in your area, please check out the information available through the CDC concerning the incidence of COVID-19 in your community.
- This year, Exec added a Non-Discrimination Policy which is available on the Branch website.
- Thank you to the members of the Teaching and Music Committee for their hard work to provide virtual events – Karen Sollins for running several events, Debbie Jarvis for providing video editing, and Charles Liu for arranging and running some events.
- Thank you to Lois New for her innovations in providing virtual dancing events.
- Thank you to John Crabtree for providing the link for this meeting.
- As always, thank you to you the membership for maintaining this community.

**Minutes of the SAGM:** The minutes of the SAGM, November 9, 2020, were approved as distributed.

**Election Results:** Susan Haines read the results of the recent Branch election. Twenty-seven ballots were cast to re-elect Marsha Byrnes as Vice President and Cathy Crabtree as Treasurer. Also elected to three-years terms as at-large members on the Executive Committee were David Grubb and Ted Randolph.

**Treasurer’s Interim Report:** Our fiscal year ends on September 30, so this is an interim report. Treasurer Cathy Crabtree reports that the total cash on hand is currently at \$73,574. Membership fees are behind from those of last year, and memberships continue to trickle in throughout the year. Grants totaling \$3380 were received and \$2580 were paid out. Expenses include \$259 in fees to Square, Inc, \$211 for software and domain renewal fees, and \$2449 for insurance, including policies for General Liability, Commercial Umbrella (new), and Directors and officers (new).

**SDCEA:** Report submitted and presented by Vickery Trinkaus-Randall. This was a very different year due to COVID for activities revolving around SDCEA, a 501c3 nonprofit group. Due to health, there was some turnover in the group, and they would like to thank Bob Littlehale and Peter Tandy for their extensive work and behind the scenes contributions.

This past year, a number of new persons were invited onto the group and took advantage of Zoom to represent a larger geographic region.

- The group has been meeting to assess its goals and wants to invest in the future of both dancers and musicians. They are also going to put in place term limits.
- The group made the decision that there was no need to add to the Zoom events and the SDCEA fundraising dances for 2020 and 2021 were cancelled.
- In 2020, the SDCEA received \$14,629 in donations. \$12,671 was brought in for the COVID-19 fund but there were also contributions recognizing Nancy Rawson and other individuals.
- For 2020, SDCEA costs included the Ed Rawson Fund Class Awards (\$479), administrative costs and COVID-19 grants (\$7595). Donations from the COVID-19 fund were made to classes to assist with expenses and to musicians who had lost livelihood monies. The SDCEA is grateful to the many persons who organized the fundraisers, with the most recent being the Virtual Highland Ball.
- Since there were no in-class sessions, there are no Ed Rawson awards to be made in 2021. For 2020, there were no scholarships awarded for Pinewoods, NH Highlands, or the Highland Ball. These awards are administered as 50% of the cost and are given up to 3 times per individual. They also encourage persons of all ages to apply, anyone who needs either assistance or care for someone so that they can attend.
- The members of SDCEA are Rebecca Gore (Treasurer), Julie Mullen (Clerk), Vickery Trinkaus-Randall (Chair), and Kendra Eshelman, Emily Peterson, and Ross Parker (members at large).

**Membership:** Peter & Mary Olszowka, membership chairs, presented their report. This table provides a comparison of membership numbers between 2020 and 2021.

	1/4/20	6/6/21
Benefactor Couples	4	3
Benefactor Singles	14	13
Sustaining Couples	9	8
Sustaining Singles	7	11
Basic Couples	31	29
Basic Singles	79	68
Limited Income	12	8
Youth	1	1
Associate	18	
Associate Single		7

Associate Couple		7
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Peter and Mary have plans to build a tool which will automate much of the work of maintaining the membership data and extracting reports from it. This tool would also provide for more self-service via the web for the membership to perform common activities, such as edit their data, check their membership status, or renew their memberships. This tool is just in the brainstorming stage, and they will consult with Exec extensively before constructing and publishing such tool.

A question was asked as to whether the Directory could go onto the website. The answer is “yes.”

**Mailing List:** John Crabtree is maintaining the Mailing List. He has lists from previous Concerts, names for people requesting hard copies of the *Tartan Times* and is compiling a list for Highland Ball sign-ups.

**Boston Scottish Country Dancers (Demo Team):** Laura DeCesare, Team Administrator, forwarded her report. The BSCD has been on hiatus during the pandemic but hopes to resume rehearsals in the fall. They are actively looking for new members! If you are interested, contact artistic director Andy Taylor-Blenis at ataydance@gmail.com. You can also find her contact info and the contact info for team administrator Laura DeCesare in the branch directory.

**Teaching and Music Committee (TMC):** Debbie Jarvis, Chair of the Teaching and Music Committee submitted and presented this report.

This year has been quite an unusual one, to say the least, and the Teaching and Music Committee has been busy despite the cancellation of so many in-person events. TMC has continued to meet monthly and has brainstormed how to hold events virtually in ways that would keep our community as connected as possible in a year when we have needed friendship and normalcy so desperately.

Weekly Monday classes have continued via Zoom thanks to the dedication of local teachers and also musicians who have been able to adapt their presentation styles. In addition to these usual classes, the Third Sundays initiative was started. Once a month on a Sunday afternoon, a guest host would run a small event. These have included a Family Hooley, a Burns Night, a glimpse into the branch’s past, discussions about the relationships between tunes and dancing, and more. Hosts have been local members as well as guests from as far away as Scotland. One silver lining about having events via Zoom is that people from all over the country and even the world have “attended.” A huge thank you to Karen Sollins for taking ownership of this series and ensuring its success. As more and more events were cancelled, TMC became exceedingly aware of how the teaching and music community has been affected financially. TMC has been an advocate for musicians and, eventually, also teachers to be compensated via the SDCEA’s Covid-Relief Fund. As many events as possible were moved online and asked that event

participants consider donating to the fund. The community has been profoundly generous and has allowed for those who need aid to be able to apply for it.

On that note, TMC also worked closely with the Canadian-American Club, the Branch's physical home, to help them in their fundraising efforts to keep the Club open and spread the word far and wide about their Gala, which was a huge success.

The spring still include NEFFA and the Highland Ball weekend. Local members including Charles Liu, Jennifer Schoonover, and Tom Pixton contributed to the online NEFFA grid, and the Highland Ball weekend was moved online as well. Friday night was a small but warm social evening, and the Ball itself featured stellar music from Katie McNally and friends, enabling dancing and general ball festivities.

Of course, ever-evolving discussions of Pinewoods have dominated TMC meetings and even required an extra emergency meeting or two as more definitive information was received. TMC is elated that camp will happen this year and hope to be able to plan a much more normal week in 2022.

On a personal note, Debbie would like to thank all of the members of TMC for their perseverance, flexibility, and dedication to our branch over this past year, as well as the community at large for continued support on Zoom, behind the scenes, or patiently waiting until we can all dance together again in person. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful community!

***Tartan Times:*** Barbara McOwen submitted and presented the report.

The *Tartan Times* is published every other month, near the beginning of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th months - which is January 1st, March 1st, May 1st, July 1st, September 1st, and November 1st. The volume number changes on September 1st, which Barbara believes used to be the beginning of the membership year. Volume 1 (according to the staff mathematician) would have been September 1st, 1957. Hugh Thurston was one of the early Editors, and Evelyn Murray has been the Editor since (possibly) the mid-60s. About 5 years ago, Barbara came on to assist with proofreading and computer issues. Although she is not anything close to a computer whiz, she began taking on more and more of the layout, and later, the content. In the fall of 2019, Evelyn moved back to England and she, either by chance or by design, has been leaving more and more of the decisions and content to Barbara. Barbara admits that she is not good with deadlines and the TT deadline hits her like a ton of bricks 6 times a year.

Meanwhile, Tom Pixton, along with Meyer and Laura Billmers, have established a very beautiful and up-to-date website for the Boston Branch. Barbara has looked at other large Branches in North America and found that some Branches have discontinued their newsletters in favor of their websites. There is some question in the Boston Branch as to whether to continue with the *Tartan Times*. Barbara feels (coming from a neutral standpoint of course) that a newsletter can cover things which the website cannot, and vice versa. She is pretty sure there is room and need, for both. Barbara has always appreciated Evelyn's egalitarian and personal approach to the material and has tried to continue that, and she is quite sure that a newsletter can help gather people together in a very personal way that has been helpful during our long sequestration.

Some Branches have their previous newsletters on their websites. Barbara thinks this is a good way to go – members would be able to look at previous activities for their dates, staff, dance programs, committees, and things like that, which can help in planning future events. We can start to get a feeling for the people involved and a perspective on the history of the Branch and of Scottish Country Dancing. Barbara has subscribed to the TT since 1974 and has almost a complete collection from then to the present. She thinks the many missing issues exist somewhere in the archives or in someone's personal collection. Barbara would be willing to take this on as a project, especially if someone would be willing to take on the 6-times-per-year deadlines.

**Website:** The report submitted by Meyer, Laura, and Matt Billmers was read by Meyer. This has been a most unusual year for the webmasters. Since all in-person activity has been cancelled, they have transitioned to having a focus on online activities. Their first duties during the pandemic were updating and marking various activities' webpages with the appropriate cancellation notices.

Next, they were asked by Exec to add a section to the home page with a link to the Financial Aid page announcing a new SDCEA scholarship fund for musicians who have been impacted by the coronavirus. They added links and text to the Financial Aid page as well as to the new scholarship fund. In addition, they added a page for direct assistance to musicians. Exec put out a call to local area musicians who wanted to be included on the Donate to Musicians page. So far, 13 musicians have responded with a brief blurb about themselves and information about how the Branch can help support them, ranging from Venmo accounts to buying their CDs and books. The links to the new SDCEA scholarship fund and to the Donate to Musicians funds are featured prominently on the home page.

The webmasters' next task was to change class listings to include those classes that are holding online sessions: Albany, Brunswick, Cambridge Class, and Great Barrington. They included dates, times, and contact information for how to get the Zoom links. As classes and other events began to come online, some classes and events have been recorded. They have implemented a new Movie Gallery page and have been posting recorded movies as the event organizers have provided them. Right now, the Cambridge Class section of that page has recordings of 18 events, not only class meetings, but also special presentations, and last June's end-of-season (virtual)ice cream social and dance party, and a special Burns night party.

In addition to the Cambridge Class recordings, the Branch has held a variety of events -- 18 of which have been recorded. These include a musicians benefit concert, the Pinewoods staff concert, the Pinewoods (virtual) auction, various Third Sundays sessions, and a Pinewoods narrated slide show.

In July, RSCDS headquarters decided to do a week-long series of Zoom meetings featuring various summer activities that were not happening in person this year. The Boston Branch was asked to provide a dance lesson which was done by Jen Schoonover and called Call of the Pipes. A slide show about Scottish Sessions at Pinewoods camp was also included. Linda McJannet wrote a narration for a 12-minute set of slides, and Meyer

turned them into movie format with background music and the narrative synchronized to the slides themselves. Shameless plug - if you have not seen it, you should watch. If nothing else, it will get you in the mood for Pinewoods next month (if you have been) or make you want to go (if you have not). The slideshow is on the movie gallery page under the Other Boston Branch videos section, and also on the About Pinewoods Camp page. Now that Pinewoods has opened up for in-person sessions, the webmasters are busy supporting the organizers by updating the Scottish sessions page and the ESCape page with information as it comes in. In addition to the online registration page for Scottish sessions, the theme for the week has been posted and the evening dance programs along with notes and diagrams.

The webmasters maintain two mailing lists which are used to send out announcements about upcoming major events. One is the mailing list for members of the Branch, which currently has 183 email addresses. They also send announcements to a list of people who have expressed an interest in Branch events. These people have filled out a form on the Subscribe page of the web site and can unsubscribe using the same page. The Branch interest list contains 178 email addresses. All announcements of general interest are sent to both lists. Only Branch-specific announcements, such as the AGM or SAGM, are sent to the members' list alone.

Usage is down. During the month of May, the website had 217 clicks. By far the largest number (194) were for Pinewoods Scottish sessions, followed by ESCape and then by the Highland Ball, which was held virtually in May.

Thank you to the webmasters for all the technical support they provide for the Branch all the time, not just during the pandemic, but always!

**Calendar:** Jeremy Thorpe reminded everyone to send their calendar information to [calendar@rscds.org](mailto:calendar@rscds.org), particularly for dance class events being held via Zoom.

**Equipment:** If you need to borrow the equipment, Thom Howe can be reached by emailing [equipment@rscdsboston.org](mailto:equipment@rscdsboston.org).

**Archives:** No report at this time.

**Bookstore:** Dawn and Mike Little, the Bookstore Managers, are stepping down. Laurie Somario will be undertaking this role, starting with Pinewoods.

**Pinewoods Camp:** Bruce Mabbott is the RSCDS representative to the Pinewoods Executive Board.

Pinewoods Camp will be open this summer! Yay!

The Board is planning a slightly abbreviated season, with camp opening on June 25th. Scottish Sessions will be in mid-July, although unfortunately the Board did have to trim it by an evening. Sorry about that!

The Pinewoods Board is so happy that the woods will be filled with laughter, dancing, and merriment again, after nearly two years with no campers.

Pinewoods also has a new Executive Director. Her name is Chris Jacobs, and she is officially starting on June 15th. She will overlap with Warren Anderson, the Interim Executive Director, so she can get the lay of the land before camp starts.

Pinewoods had a wonderful workday on Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>. The workday was attended by many Scots, so thank you for representing. Many cabins were opened, and many docks were installed. The workers got to meet Chris, the new Executive Director, and she seems fabulous. It was a huge help to camp to get a lot of opening work done in a short period of time.

Most capital projects were put on hold during the pandemic, however regular maintenance work was obviously done. More dangerous trees have been removed proactively, and the winter was quiet, which is always welcome. Due to the price of lumber, Pinewoods is very happy that it mills a lot of wood from trees that are taken down!

As ever Pinewoods is also incredibly grateful to the generosity of the Scots, especially in times like these. Pinewoods Camp knows that it can weather this due to your generosity. Thank you again!

That is all the news from Pinewoods Camp, Inc.

**ESCAPE 2021 Update:** Report submitted and read by Daniel Potter, co-chair of the ESCAPE Committee.

After a year away from Pinewoods, the co-chairs are so excited to be back for ESCAPE! For those unfamiliar with the session, ESCAPE, or ESC, stands for English, Scottish, and Contra dancing, and the session combines all three traditions. While this year's schedule is not yet complete, it will feature both beginner and advanced classes in each tradition, which makes ESCAPE the perfect place to try a new style of dance. Other activities include ritual dancing and singing, and in previous years, campers have offered impromptu sessions on various topics during free periods during the week.

ESCAPE will run in its normal time slot, which this year will be Monday, July 5th through Friday, July 9th.

ESCAPE aims to be an open and affirming community, and, as has been done in previous years, English, Scottish, and Contra dancing at ESCAPE will be taught and called using gender-free terminology.

As with Scottish Sessions, only fully vaccinated individuals will be able to attend ESCAPE. This means that young children of staff are unable to attend. Additionally, due to border closures, international campers are not permitted. Because all campers and staff will be vaccinated, masks will not be required at camp, but campers are welcome to wear them if they feel more comfortable doing so.

The current registration is at 74, which places them at a loss. By this date (June 7th) in 2019, there were 109 people registered, and the final number for 2019 was 127. Given the continued understandable concern over COVID but also the increased opening up across the United States, there is no way to predict what the final numbers will be. However, the co-chairs hope to have more people register so that camp feels a little fuller (plus there would be a smaller loss or even break-even). Ideally, there would have been between 100 and

125 people at camp. If you are at all interested, you are encouraged to attend ESCape! The co-chairs would certainly love it.

Staff for ESCape 2021 is as follows:

Teachers: Jenny Beer (English), Marc Hartstein (Scottish), Maia McCormick (Contra), Nancy Barbour (Molly dancing)

Musicians: Peter Macfarlane, Adam Oleksa, Kristen Planeaux, Dan Emery, Lydia Ievins, Beth Murray, Terry Traub

Session Rates:

\$380 for CDS-Boston/RSCDS (any branch) members

\$390 for non-members

\$285 for campers ages 13-25

You can register for ESCape here: [bit.ly/ESCape2021](https://bit.ly/ESCape2021) The co-chairs hope to see you at camp!

**Scottish Sessions Pinewoods 2021 Update:** Co-chair Laurie Somario reports that applications are being accepted for this year. To date, there are 116 people for Session I and 95 for Session II with capacity set for 125. Applications are still being accepted.

**Joint Ceilidh 2020:** Linda McJannet presented the report on the Joint Ceilidh. As everyone is probably aware, the Joint Ceilidh sponsored by the RSCDS Boston Branch, Highland Dance Boston, and the Scots Charitable Society of Boston, which was planned for November 14, 2020, at the Irish Social Club of Boston in West Roxbury was cancelled because of the pandemic. The organizers are hoping to participate in a similar event at the same location on November 13, 2021. Details are still being worked out, but current plans call for supper (perhaps the same excellent meat pies as in 2019), demonstrations of Highland and Scottish Country Dancing, and social dancing for all. Please save the date and let us hope to share a lively evening of Scottish food, fun, and dancing in the fall!

**Pinewoods Benefit Ball 2020:** No report was available at this time.

**Highland Ball 2021:** Marsha Byrnes reports that the virtual Highland Ball was quite successful and brought in over \$1000 in donations. Thank you to Charles Liu who did a tremendous amount of work to put it all together and utilized MCs from all over the Branch. Hopefully the 2022 Ball will be more normal. Elizabeth Anderson will be co-chairing the 2022 Ball along with Marsha.

**RSCDS AGM 2021:** The Headquarters AGM will be held in Perth, November 5- 7, 2021. It could possibly be a virtual event. If anyone would like to be a delegate and represent the Boston Branch, please express your interest to any member of the Executive Committee.

**Class Reports:** Class reports were received and placed on file from Bedford, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelmsford, Great Barrington, Newton, and Stow, Massachusetts, from Greenland, New Hampshire, and from Brunswick and Kennebunk, Maine. Gary Apfel



presented a verbal report on the Fairlee, Vermont class, and Lois New spoke concerning the growth and success of the Albany, New York virtual class.

**Other Business:**

- Jeremy Thorpe thanked Karen Gansz and Winifred McGowan for their service on the Executive Committee.
- There is a vacancy on the Nominating Committee that needs to be filled.
- The Canadian-America Club is looking to re-open on Friday July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Haines, Secretary