

**Boston Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting**

June 26, 2013

Present: Betty Allen (by phone), Beth Birdsall, John Crabtree, Kat Dutton, BDan Fairchild, Jean Farrington, Alex Hall, Bob Littlehale, Barbara McOwen, Lance Ramshaw, Vickery Trinkaus-Randall

Meeting called to order at 7:33 pm by Jean Farrington

Initial Organizational Session

1. **Introduction:** Jean welcomed Kat, our new member, and reviewed the current issues and concerns, including the Ball, the Members area on the Website, the Tartan Times, and the need to increase membership. She also described how Exec liaisons work.
2. **Executive Committee Liaisons for the coming year:** Exec liaisons for the coming year were appointed, as follows:

November Concert	John Crabtree
Highland Ball	BDan Fairchild
Pinewoods Benefit Ball	Betty Allen
Pinewoods ESS	Jean Farrington
Pinewoods Scottish Sessions	Bob Littlehale
New Hampshire Highlands	Vickery Trinkaus-Randall
Branch Activities at NH Highland Games	John Crabtree
Teaching and Music Committee	Betty Allen
Tartan Times	Beth Birdsall
Demonstration Team	Alex Hall
Membership	Bob Littlehale
Web Site and Publicity	Kat Dutton
Bookstore	Vickery Trinkaus-Randall
SDCEA	Vickery Trinkaus-Randall
Equipment	BDan Fairchild
Nominating Committee	Beth Birdsall
Archives	Lance Ramshaw
Scottish Exchange (in abeyance)	(in abeyance)

3. **Class Liaisons** were appointed, as follows:

Betty Allen	Brunswick, ME Belfast, ME
Beth Birdsall	Montpelier, VT Fairlee, VT
Kat Dutton	Cambridge, MA
BDan Fairchild	Nashua, NH Greenland, NH
Jean Farrington	Brookline, MA
Alex Hall	Northampton, MA
Vickery Trinkaus-Randall	Salem, MA Stow, MA
Classes in abeyance	Kennebunk, ME Great Barrington, MA Albany, NY

4. **Other appointments** were made or confirmed as follows:

Membership Chair	MaryEllen Scannell
Membership Data/Directory	John Scannell
Tartan Times	Evelyn Murray
Tartan Times Mailing Coordinator	Marcie Rowland & Cal Perham
Bookstore	
Archives	Lance Ramshaw
Equipment	Peter Tandy
Web Site	Laura and Meyer Billmers
Database Mailing List	Peter Tandy
Demo Team Director	Andrea Taylor-Blenis
Demo Team Administrator	Karen Sollins

5. **Meeting Procedures:** Going forward, after distributing the initial draft of the minutes, the Secretary will only distribute revisions in cases where the changes substantively affect the meaning. Spelling and typographical corrections are welcome, but will be applied without requiring approval.

6. **Acknowledgements:** Jean will send thank-you notes to outgoing committee members and event chairs.

Normal June Agenda

7. **Minutes from the May meeting:** MSP to approve as distributed.

8. **Treasurer’s Report (Bob):** Bob presented the current financial figures below. Pinewoods camper fees are not included in those totals.

The Highland Ball had roughly \$4300 less income than budgeted. While the expenses were also below budget, the difference there was only roughly \$1,300, so the overall loss was \$3,034.24, which would roughly correspond to 41 additional attendees. This is significantly higher than the average loss over the last five or so years, which has run between \$1,000 and \$2,000. We broke even last year, but that

was unusual, perhaps reflecting especially strong publicity efforts that year.
MSP to approve the report.

Century	\$12,366.35
Lloyds	\$1,067.68
ESS CD	\$4,002.67
SCDS CDs	\$6,593.07
Total	\$23,206.52

9. Reports from Liaisons.

a. **Fall Concert** [Oct. 26-27, 2013] (John): Things are going along pretty well. A signed contract with the band is now in hand, and Robert is starting to work with them on program plans. Publicity will be important. The current Tartan Times includes a full-page ad. Creating a Facebook event page would be helpful.

b. **Highland Ball** [May 11, 2013] (BDan): BDan had sent around the results of our recent survey regarding the Ball. There were 23 responses. 12 cited one-time schedule conflicts as a problem, 4 mentioned cost, and 3-4 location. Only one person noted Mother's Day as a permanent conflict. Of the respondents who did not attend, half cited one-time conflicts, but we have no previous survey experience to compare that with. People also added extensive written comments.

We discussed the issues at length. Cost is certainly a major issue. There are mixed feelings about the hall venue. The dinner is a significant factor in the price, but some folks expect it. We did have one Ball a few years back with just heavy hors d'oeuvres and desserts, but some folks protested. A hall without a minimum could make a big difference, but having to bring in a separate caterer could be expensive. Some raised the issue of the cash bar, but others were happy not to be paying for other peoples' drinks.

Does the Friday night dance take away from attendance at the Ball? The general sense at the meeting was that it didn't draw away from Ball attendance, but added to the "weekend package" feel.

It is clear that we can't sustain losses like this year after year, so we need to look at alternatives. The Corinthian Hall in Melrose is one place that has been suggested. Bob agreed to take a look at it.

We should also be thinking about people who could chair the event.

c. **PW Benefit Ball** [Dec. 7, 2013] (Betty): Nothing to report. They will have flyers available at ESS and Scottish Pinewoods.

d. **ESS Pinewoods** (Jean): Jerome reports they now have 125 people signed up (including a bunch of Maple Morris folks), so they should be well over the minimum.

e. **PW Scottish Sessions** (Bob): Jeremy and Kendra report that both sessions are full, and that Session 1 has a waiting list. Liz has completed all of the musical arrangements for the evening dances. They have an initial, provisional housing assignment, and the buttons are done.

They would like to publicize this year that the RSCDS Member discount for next

year's Pinewoods will be \$25 for one session or \$40 for both sessions, and Exec agreed that that was a fine plan.

- f. **NH Highlands** (Vickery): Roberta reports that preparations are proceeding. They still have some spaces in the Lodge.

- g. **Branch Activities at NH Highland Games** (John): John pinged MaryEllen, but has not heard back. He talked with the Games organizers some while ago, but needs to follow up. Karen did send out a note recently to the Demo Team, asking about their interest.

Bob has not yet received any information regarding tent space rental or trophy sponsorship. We have often sponsored one of the fiddle contest prizes. If we do rent a tent space, we would need to staff it.

- h. **Teaching Music Committee** (Betty): The recent TMC meeting focused on final Pinewoods preparations.

No Exec members noticed any problems with the Candidate Class procedures document that was distributed at our last meeting. The TMC has apparently already sent it on to Headquarters in Scotland, and has received comments back.

Barbara asked about the use of the term "mentor". Betty explained that TMC had decided to use that word only for the officially required involvement of a fully-certificated teacher in the Part 2 preparation. Other terms were used for other types of support from more experienced teachers.

We reviewed the current Music Subsidy schedule, and decided not to make any changes.

- i. **Tartan Times** (Beth): Beth reports that Evelyn dropped the flash drive off at the printers again for this issue. They apparently scan it again themselves, which Beth says results in a cleaner version. We don't know whether or not they are charging extra for that step, as they do not itemize their charges. They then email the file to Beth, which works well for email distribution.

We also discussed ways of continuing to shift toward more fully electronic production.

- j. **Demonstration Team** (Alex): Six couples from the team have signed up to participate in the NH Highland Games, and Fall Concert plans are underway.

Karen suggested that the Demo Team could do videos of the more complex Ball dances, to be posted on YouTube with pointers from the Ball page. Folks felt that that could be very useful, and might even encourage a few more folks to attend.

There was some discussion about whether filming the easier or harder dances would be most useful. As with any publicity, the question is what the benefit would be, and whether it would be worth the costs. Barbara also noted that there could be copyright issues if either the dance or tune was not in the public domain.

- k. **Membership** (Bob): MaryEllen and John had sent a draft version of the membership form. While generally fine, there was some concern about their abbreviated phrasing of the teacher language. After discussion, the recommended phrasing is "RSCDS Teacher: Part 1/Prelim [box] Part 2/Full [box]". Or perhaps the boxes should go first, to better match the layout of the rest of the form.

Barbara introduced the following motion on recommended procedures for

distributing the membership form: (a) The Membership Form to be available at the June AGM, and at Pinewoods, and at the N.H. Highlands, and distributed to classes during the summer. (b) The Membership Form to be emailed and/or mailed to all current and all last-year members on or about June 15, along with a note stating that most memberships will expire on September 1st. (c) The Membership Form to be available on the website at all times; the new one to be available on or about June 15. (d) The Membership Form to be emailed and/or mailed to those people who haven't yet renewed on or about October 1st, with a note stating that the "grace period" ends on November 1st.

Jean suggested that these procedures should be added to our Policies and Procedures, in the Membership section. MSP to approve these procedures in substance, with the exact wording to be reviewed at our next meeting when we review the revised format of the Policies and Procedures generally.

1. **Web Site and Publicity** (Barbara): The Billmers reported a complaint from one member that they didn't send out an immediate message to the Branch email list when the Pinewoods Party themes were posted. They also declined a request from the Pinewoods ride coordinator to send out an email to the Branch mailing list. Exec supports the Webmasters in implementing a policy that tries to maximize communication while also avoiding email message fatigue.

Barbara noted that she has the word processor source for the class listing, and can also generate the PDF version from that. (The PDF and HTML versions are generated separately.) She is willing to continue to maintain this list, in consultation with the Billmers, but she would also be happy if someone else would like to take it over.

We discussed materials to add to the Members-only area. The Policies and Procedures document should go there when the new version is ready, along with the AGM and SAGM minutes from the previous year. Going forward, we would also like to begin posting the Exec meeting minutes.

BDan reported that the Branch Facebook page has been continuing at a low level, with maybe one new "like" per month. He posts notes there from time to time, and will add Kat as an Administrator on the page. A note was posted there about the most recent Advanced class.

- m. **Bookstore** (Betty): Jean has been talking with someone about taking on the bookkeeping and management part of this job, but hasn't heard back yet. The bookstore will be at Pinewoods.
- n. **AGM/SAGM** [Nov 11, 2013] (Jean): We settled on Nov. 11 as the date for the SAGM, location TBD.
- o. **SDCEA**: Vickery reported that Gail Wine has spent an enormous amount of time on the transition, taking over from Jeanetta as SDCEA Treasurer.
- p. **Class Liaisons**:
 - 1) Albany (in abeyance): Lois reports that they have several new dancers, plus two high school students. Their norm is now up to 6-8 dancers.
 - 2) Belfast: No report

- 3) Brookline: No report
- 4) Brunswick: No report
- 5) Cambridge: Things are going well. The final evening at Springstep was well-attended. Information about the summer schedule and the move to Fayerweather has been widely publicized.
- 6) Fairlee: Their Spring Social was a fine success despite the change in location. The class is now meeting back in the Fairlee Town Hall.
- 7) Greenland: No report
- 8) Montpelier: No report
- 9) Nashua: The Chelmsford class will be meeting on July 5. They do have A/C. They are looking for people who could come to teach.
- 10) Northampton: No report
- 11) Salem: No report
- 12) Stow: They had homemade ice cream and four sets at their end-of-season meeting.

10. Old Business

11. New Business

12. Next Meetings Schedule

- a. July 31 at Lance's

MSP to adjourn at 9:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lance Ramshaw