

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

Sept. 25, 2013

**Present:** Betty Allen, Beth Birdsall, John Crabtree, Kat Dutton, BDan Fairchild, Jean Farrington, Bob Littlehale, Lance Ramshaw, Vickery Trinkaus-Randall

**Regrets:** Alex Hall

Meeting called to order at 7:26 by Jean Farrington.

1. **Minutes from the previous meeting:** MSP to approve the minutes as distributed.
2. **Treasurer's Report (Bob):** Bob reported the figures below. There is no final report from ESS yet.

Century	\$36,861.67
Lloyds	\$318.41
Total	\$36,180.08

**3. Reports from Liaisons.**

- a. **Fall concert** [Oct. 26-27, 2013] (John): Linda got word last Thursday that Blazin' Fiddles is not going to honor their contract. They tried to get year-long visas back in June, but were turned down, and since then, they have not even applied for normal visas. It seems that they are abandoning their US tour plans completely.

Robert and Linda immediately began exploring for a plan B. Robert has begun talking with local musicians (fiddle, piano, and pipes), and has received some enthusiastic responses. He and Linda have also been in contact with Karen and Andrea regarding the demo team. Meanwhile, Linda has contacted Laura to put a hold on ticket sales. So far, roughly 30 tickets have been sold for each show, with about a dozen envelopes not yet opened.

We discussed the tradeoffs between cancelling outright and continuing with local musicians. Roughly \$2200 has been spent so far, including \$1000 for the hall contract, with most of the rest for a mailing to Peter's hardcopy concert mailing list. John presented a draft reduced budget for a show with local musicians, including substantial savings on travel. His figures suggested that we might be able to cover our costs with ticket sales as low as 60-65% full.

We also discussed whether to stick with two shows or to drop back to just one. Linda is suggesting that we stick with two.

MSP to continue with the concert along the lines proposed, with two shows using local musicians. Exec suggested that Robert might want to offer a flat rate for the band, in case they decide to invite friends to join them. Exec also felt that it would be helpful if the musicians could pick a snappy name for themselves as a group.

We talked some about how to publicize the change. We will need a corrected flyer, probably printed in just black and white. We would rather not do a full secondary hardcopy mailing, due to the expense. If we could send email to the Pinewoods list, that would notify folks who received flyers at camp. Fortunately, Linda had not yet sent out the blast of publicity notices to local media outlets, so

those will be able to be correct from the start.

The note from the band's agent apparently did recognize some financial responsibility on their part for our extra publicity and other expenses. We should track those expenses (definitely including the extra deposit that we paid to the Museum for the rooms where the band was planning to lead music workshops on Sunday morning) and contact the band concerning them. They could deposit pounds into our Lloyd's account.

- b. **Highland Ball** [May 10, 2014] (BDan): Sara and Ed are moving ahead with planning. BDan gave Sara the timeline and the list of volunteer slots that need to be filled. (We have talked about developing a more complete job description, but BDan sent what we currently have available.) Sara asked about the contact person for Memorial Hall, who is Bob at the moment, but he will transfer that role to Sara. (The hall insists on having just one contact person.) Bob also sent Sara a draft contract to send along to Hanneke.

Sara and Ed have found a location for the Brunch. For the Welcome Party, they were quoted a price of \$300 for the Weston church hall, up from \$210 last year. We talked about possible alternatives, including the hall where the Salem class dances, the First Unitarian Church in West Newton, the Unitarian Church in Concord, or the church hall opposite the Colonial Inn in Concord. Jean will inquire with her English dancing contacts about the West Newton church.

For the Ball itself, there is a limit of 125 for dinner, though there is plenty of space for folks who come later to dance. If the caterer doesn't have a minimum, we can sell both with dinner and without dinner tickets right from the start.

Bob was surprised to note that the budget for last year's ball included \$200 for the band at the Brunch, but some members recall that we did discuss this. People urged that the Brunch band in the future be an unpaid pickup band.

When talking with candidate bands for this year, BDan learned that Frost and Fire (including Peter Macfarlane and Viveka Fox) would be available and interested for 2015. MSP to sign them up for May 9, 2015.

- c. **PW Benefit Ball** [Dec. 7, 2013] (Betty): Betty distributed the dance program, which looks fine.
- d. **ESS Pinewoods** (Jean): Jean will push the ESS folks on getting their financial report in.
- e. **PW Scottish Sessions** (Bob): Bob went over his figures with Jeremy, and their numbers agreed to within \$1.34. There are a few folks who haven't sent in their expenses yet, and Jeremy is working on contacting them.

Looking toward 2015, Beth is interested and willing to be an Assistant Chair this year looking toward being a cochair in 2015. She will think about somebody else who could work with her.
- f. **NH Highlands** [Aug 23-25, 2013] (Vickery): The committee is going through the evaluations, in preparation for a phone meeting. They have finalized the dates for next year with the camp.
- g. **Branch Activities at NH Highland Games** (John): John would like to set up a conversation with the Games people to revive this in future years, and asked who

should be involved in that meeting. It would be great if we could find a member who is a regular at the Games and who would be willing to put energy into developing this.

- h. **Teaching Music Committee** (Betty): Betty reports that most of the TMC meeting focused on Pinewoods 2014. A couple of the teachers that they contacted were not able to do it, so they are extending their list of candidates. The MCs for the evening programs are being contacted.

Three Advanced classes are planned for the fall, with Lance & Cathy Goode in October and Jen Schoonover and Norah Smith for November.

- i. **Tartan Times** (Beth): Beth reports that it took her a while this time to connect with Evelyn, but that she will pick the thumb drive up after work tomorrow and email it out by Friday. She will talk with the printers about setting up a standard scheme for them to email her a copy, even if that costs us a bit extra.

We also talked about how to move forward with a transition to a more modern approach to layout, with a separate Layout Editor. Beth will talk with one person who might be able to do that.

- j. **Demonstration Team** (Alex): [from Alex by email] Rehearsals are progressing. The team has been going through the various dance sets of Karen's, Robert's and Andy's. Karen and Robert have assigned partners for their sets, and Karen has written up her set already. Andy will have her dances finalized shortly. The team did not rehearse on Sunday the 15th because the church was not available, but will be practicing every week now till the concert.

- k. **Membership** (Bob): MaryEllen reports 140 members currently, with 11 Associate members. 97 members from last year have rejoined. MaryEllen will be teaching the Chelmsford class on Oct. 4, and will encourage membership.

John is sending notifications to the class leaders regarding the number of members required to retain Branch Class status. Bob suggested that we set the SAGM as the cutoff date for those class membership limits. MSP to make that change to our policies and procedures document, adding the sentence in bold to the appropriate paragraph regarding Branch class status, as follows: "A minimum of eight members of the group must be Branch members. **Compliance will be determined based on the number of class members who have applied for Branch membership as of the date of the Branch's semiannual general meeting.** All dancers in the group should be encouraged to become members of the Boston Branch and to participate in Boston Branch activities."

Bob will remind the chairs about sending out membership renewal notices to folks who have not rejoined.

- l. **Web Site and Publicity** (Kat): Meyer is still working on getting Lance a way to post Exec minutes himself, but there have been changes to the security procedures at the host site which may prevent that.

Meyer suggests that Exec members look over the Website to stay current.

- m. **Bookstore** (Vickery): Mike and Dawn are actively taking on the bookstore management. They have most of the stock in their possession now, and they are

going to order some additional materials from Headquarters. Patti is doing the accounting for this quarter, after which they will take that over as well.

- n. **SAGM** [Nov. 11, 2013]: For the SAGM night, we'll need the chairs left up at the Canadian American Club.
- o. **Archives** (Lance): Lance took a box of Archives materials up to the UNH Durham library last week, and met the folks there. With word spreading about their interest in traditional dance and music, they are receiving large volumes of material from many different groups, most of which is being kept in numbered boxes at a remote storage location, but they urge members interested in working with the materials to contact them.
- p. **Class Liaisons:**
  - 1) Albany: They are sorry to have had the schedule conflict with the Boston concert, but their Fall Frolic is now a fairly small event. Their class is cooking along weekly, though with minimal numbers.
  - 2) Belfast: No report.
  - 3) Brookline: They are getting roughly a set a night.
  - 4) Brunswick: No report.
  - 5) Cambridge: The transition to the Canadian-American Club seems to have gone fairly smoothly. They certainly plan to stay there past December, but they are still keeping their eyes out for possible better long-term locations.
  - 6) Fairlee: Class began again this Saturday. They have a wedding and a town hall demonstration coming up. Their fall social dance will be on Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - 7) Great Barrington: Alex sent email that he had tried to contact Susan, but had not heard back. Then he realized that they have switched class contacts. He will endeavor to get an update from the new contacts next month as they were recently an official class and hopefully will be so again.
  - 8) Greenland: No report.
  - 9) Kennebunkport: No report.
  - 10) Montpelier: No report.
  - 11) Nashua: No report,
  - 12) Northampton: Alex sent email that classes have started up again for the year. The class remains small, but has had two new dancers coming so far this month.
  - 13) Salem: MayEllen reports that the class is sustaining with 2+ sets weekly. They had a meeting of the class teachers regarding strategy for 2014, the class's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, beginning with a Burns' Night celebration on Jan. 25, which is their actual anniversary date. They are currently fielding dancers for a demo at a local farmers' market on Oct. 5. There will be no class on Oct. 3, due to the Salem Haunted Happenings Grand Parade.

14) Stow: No report.

#### **4. Old Business**

- a. **August Mailing.** The materials went out to the class contacts by email, and have also been posted on the Members' Only portion of the website. There have been some updates to the Who's Who and Teachers and Musicians list, which Lance intends to update with the webmasters from time to time.

Jean raised the question of whether updates to general Branch emails could be posted on the website, but people recalled our sense from earlier discussions that the security of the Members' Only area was not adequate to support posting of Membership Directory data there.

#### **5. New Business**

- a. Jean notes that a 2 GBP increase in the dues will be put forward at the Headquarters AGM. She plans to vote against it, and she wonders if there is some way to contact the other overseas branches about this.
- b. On Sept 14, Betty and Jean went to Pinewoods for the Users' Group Meeting. A number of planning committees were set up, including one looking at scheduling. There are a bunch of area dance groups that would like to host sessions at Camp, but there are no open slots in the current schedule. PCI's goal, naturally, is to keep the camp full, since that's what their budgeting is based on. If current user groups are not able to get their numbers up, PCI may have to step in. One option discussed was combining some of the smaller sessions.

#### **6. Next Meeting**

- a. Oct. 30 – at Bob's
- b. Dec 4 (Our "Nov" meeting postponed)

MSP to adjourn at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lance Ramshaw