

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

“November” meeting on Dec. 4, 2013

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

Meeting called to order by Jean Farrington at 7:27.

1. **Minutes from the previous meeting:** MSP to approve the minutes as distributed.
2. **Treasurer’s Report (Bob):** Regarding the band Blazin’ Fiddles dropping out of the Fall Concert this year, Bob reports that in response to a letter from Linda McJannet detailing the Branch’s losses in wasted publicity, the band has deposited \$1870 into the Branch account. As a result, the concert now shows a profit of \$645.49.

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|---------|-------------|
| Century | \$39,129.62 |
| Lloyds | \$918.41 |
| Total | \$40,048.03 |

3. Reports from Liaisons.

- a. **Fall concert** [Nov. 7-8, 2014] (John): We are grateful to Linda for writing to Blazin’ Fiddles about covering part of the loss, and glad that the band complied. We talked about whether we’d be willing to schedule them at some point in the future, though not right away, and most folks seemed open to that, though it would presumably need to be in conjunction with a wider US tour.
The planned date for next year (penciled in with the Museum) is Nov. 7-8, with the rehearsal on the Friday evening and two shows on Saturday. A question was raised as to whether we have any flexibility for a second option.
John will be the Producer next year; Linda has agreed to support him in that, and to cover the publicity. We talked about possible Artistic Director candidates, and Jean will contact people. There haven’t been any discussions yet about headliners for next year.
- b. **Highland Ball** [May 10, 2014] (Bob): Sara and Ed presented a draft budget, largely following the pattern from last year, but adding small amounts for decorations for the Friday party and for button magnets.
Serving liquor is expensive, particularly due to the required police detail, but people noted that it has been long-time tradition at the event, and that people expect it. We should ask people about this in the post-Ball survey of participants.
On admission fees, there was some discussion about whether to offer a separate admission price not including the meal. There is a limit of 125 people for dinner, and if we end up over-running that, we would need to offer a separate price. On the other hand, we do want enough people eating to make it worth while for the caterer, and we were concerned that offering a reduced, non-dinner rate might result in too few people for the meal, so we decided not to do anything unless the final list turns out to require it.
MSP to approve the budget, with the same admission prices as last year. It is a requirement that our materials state that \$1 of the fee goes to the Memorial Hall

Preservation Fund. As stated in our Policies, we don't allow children under 16 at the Ball.

Sara and Ed described the slant that they are taking. They feel that the Branch is widespread but not that well connected. They plan to visit all the far-flung classes to take flyers, talk with folks, and try to involve them. They also took that into account in choosing MCs. They have asked Ellie Briscoe to do the Friday Welcome Party, with Mel Briscoe, Martha Kent (from the Montpelier class), and Donna Griffith (from Belfast) as Saturday MCs. Hannah McArdle will be doing hospitality, which will be important as part of encouraging participation from the more remote areas. They still need to work on arrangements for the Brunch.

Their next goal is a flyer, for the website and to take around to classes. The program should go to the Tartan Times in February for the March/April issue. The Friday program can be posted on the website, but doesn't need to be in the Tartan Times. Sending the Friday program out to the teachers relatively early would be good, so that they can review the dances in their classes.

Exec reviewed the dance program from the TMC, which looked fine.

- c. **PW Benefit Ball** [Dec. 7, 2013] (Betty): Things are all set for this Saturday. Not many people send in money in advance these days, since they know that the event is unlikely to fill up.
- d. **ESS Pinewoods** (Jean): No report.
- e. **PW Scottish Sessions** (BDan): Jeremy and Kendra presented a proposed budget. (This is on the early side for budgeting, but TMC wants to get the contracts out as soon as possible.) The PCI fees this year are up 1.5%. The teaching budget is up a bit due to Antoine's travel from Paris, currently budgeted at the \$1600 figure that Antoine himself suggested. While direct flights in summer can be pricey, Exec felt that cheaper one-stop flights should be available, and recommended offering travel up to a cap of \$1200.

The travel budget for musicians includes a \$500 contingency, but Liz estimates she'll be able to come in a bit under budget. Other line items total a bit lower than last year, since insurance was inadvertently double budgeted last year (both as its own line item and embedded in the PCI fees).

Kendra and Jeremy proposed increases of \$10 for Session 1, \$10 for Session 2, and \$20 for both sessions, but they also propose offering \$20 off for RSCDS members, so the actual net member prices will end up a bit lower than last year. Their budget predicts \$1854 profit for a full camp. Up to 15 beds could be empty before we would lose money. (There were 12 folks on the waiting list for Session 1 last year, of whom perhaps 8 were not offered places at all. Such folks should get lottery preference if they apply again this year.)

MSP to approve the budget.
- f. **NH Highlands** [Aug 23-25, 2013] (Vickery): No report.
- g. **Branch Activities at NH Highland Games** (John): Nothing to report. John hopes to get in touch with Patty Niscoe soon regarding plans for next year.
- h. **Teaching Music Committee** (Betty): The evening programs for Pinewoods have been submitted and are being reviewed by the subcommittee. They are planning

to go back to a 10-dance program for the first night of each session. The class grids have been completed, and preparations generally are moving right along. The Co-chairs have suggested replacing the Teacher's Choice Class with a Potpourri Class, encompassing a wider range of options including waltz, Latin dances, working with musicians, etc.

The committee had tried to arrange a session this Saturday to review local dances suggested for consideration for the new Book, but not enough people signed up, so they are now thinking of doing it in Stow next weekend, or perhaps at the Cambridge Class. The results would need to be submitted by the end of the year. Exec recommended using an existing class structure, rather than incurring the cost of a separate venue and musician.

- i. **Tartan Times** (Beth): Beth is continuing to work on the possibility of having someone pick up the role of layout editor. People noted that changes in class locations should be posted promptly.
- j. **Demonstration Team** (Alex): The team has two gigs coming up on January 11, BCMFest and the Ancient Universities, and Karen is soliciting team members to participate. There is also a Winterfest event in Chelmsford in early February, a Worcester Public Library event in March/April, and NEFFA in late April.
- k. **Membership** (Bob): No report. (The Scannells are traveling, and the request for info was not sent far in advance.)

Bob notes that the Chairs had the Directory information set by Nov. 1, but had to hold off on production since we say that people who join as late as the SAGM will still be included. Perhaps we should change the registration deadline for the directory to be Nov. 1, rather than the SAGM.

16 members listed themselves as "regularly attending" more than one class. While it's great that people are participating widely, this means that the required number of members for a Branch class may not map directly to actual income to the Branch.

- l. **Web Site and Publicity** (Kat): Meyer reports that the transition to the new year's members email list and new Members Only area password went smoothly. Exec members suggested the password to the Members Only area could be simpler next year.
- m. **Bookstore** (Vickery): No response received.
- n. **Equipment** (BDan): Peter requested that we approve purchase of a new mixer and new microphones (badly needed). At "Cyber Monday" prices, the mixer would be \$425 and the mics \$75 each after rebates, for a total of \$717.94. MSP to approve the request.
- o. **Class Liaisons:**
 - 1) Albany: No report.
 - 2) Belfast: No report.
 - 3) Brookline: The fee for their church hall has gone from \$35/night to \$50/hour. Jean has been looking around at possible options, identifying a dance studio

that's looking like a good option. Their 12th Night party will still be at the church, since that event needs a kitchen. They typically are getting 4-6 couples

- 4) Brunswick: Two new people have begun attending.
- 5) Cambridge: Attendance is steady at about 4 sets. The Canadian American club has been very welcoming, allowing use of the whole downstairs for Veronica's Attic one night. They are planning to use that same setup also for the Holiday party, to maximize dance space upstairs. Their contract there runs through Dec., and they will renew it through June.
Sound system setup is turning out to be a lot of work. They are trying to widen the list of volunteers.
They are looking forward to their Holiday Party.
- 6) Chelmsford (not yet a Branch class): The Nashua class has helped get this activity going. They have been enjoying an average of 23 people per session, with a minimum of 18. They received some support from the Chelmsford Cultural Council (for whom the report that we heard was prepared).
- 7) Fairlee: They are pleased with their social, held in October. Weekly attendance is running 10-14.
- 8) Great Barrington: No report.
- 9) Greenland: No report.
- 10) Kennebunkport: No report.
- 11) Montpelier: No report.
- 12) Nashua: No report,
- 13) Northampton: Consistently 4-7 couples. Party coming up on Jan 1: 5:30 pot luck, 7:30 dancing, with Peter Macfarlane and Peter Barnes. They asked about what other classes are paying per evening for halls, and there was some discussion.
- 14) Salem: No report.
- 15) Stow: They recently had 4 3-couple sets, filling the room.

4. Old Business

5. New Business

- a. Beth has a friend who is a digital archivist, working with the Dance Heritage Coalition, a NY organization that has a grant to preserve dance recordings in older formats (VHS), converting them to digital format and archiving them. Beth put them in touch with Lance and Peter. If anyone has other dance groups who might be interested, Beth could put them in touch.

6. Next Meeting

- a. December meeting postponed on Jan. 8 – at Bob's
- b. Jan. 29 at John's

MSP to adjourn.at 9:10

Respectfully submitted,
Lance Ramshaw