

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

Jan. 29, 2014

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

Not Present: Kat Dutton, Alex Hall,

Meeting called to order by Jean Farrington at 7:26

1. **Minutes from the previous meeting:** MSP to approve the minutes as amended.
2. **Treasurer's Report (Bob):** Bob reports that the federal income tax form has been filed and the 1099 forms have been issued.

Century	\$34,138.93
Lloyds	\$778.06
Total	\$34,916.99

3. Reports from Liaisons.

- a. **Fall concert** [Nov. 7-8, 2014] (John): Jen has selected Parcel of Rogues as the headliner musicians for the concert. They can cover the piping themselves. (They had an alternative invitation for that evening, so John spent some time exploring alternative dates, but the other options didn't work out, and Parcel of Rogues opted to go with our show on the planned date.) The plan is to go back to our traditional format, with a Friday rehearsal and two performances on Saturday.

John distributed a spreadsheet with a proposed budget. The hall fee has gone up some, and our budget last year ended up being cushioned some by the cancellation payment from Blazin' Fiddles. We will need to sell a bit over 60% of the seats this year to cover our expenses. The Museum people note that we could now explore alternative lighting people, while before they were limiting us to a single supplier.

We talked some about the ticket price. It hasn't gone up for a few years, but if we raise it, that might affect the number who come. Maybe a student price, or a lower price for some seating areas, though most seats are pretty good.

MSP to approve the tentative budget, with the ticket pricing to be resolved later.

- b. **Highland Ball** [May 10, 2014] (Bob): The chairs have started outreach and publicity. All of the Ball information is now on the website, and Sara has made up flyer application packets to distribute to classes. She is also working on sending out info to former Branch members.

For 2015, we now have a signed contract with Frost and Fire

- c. **PW Benefit Ball** [Dec. 6, 2014] (Betty): Anne Hooper has agreed to play and assemble the band, and Jean has let Hannah know that. Bob reports that MaryEllen has agreed to be co-chair with Hannah.

Vickery raised concerns about the low attendance at the event this last year, , with attendance 10 lower than the previous year, and particularly noting poor representation from Exec. Regarding scheduling, the Sunday afternoon slot a few

years back seemed to draw better, though that was also the first year in the new hall. We also talked about general trends in party attendance, and age cohorts in the dance community. The Chairs had considered offering a lower rate for students. Offering rides could help, since some younger folks may not have cars. The Salem class is much smaller than it used to be, and thus can't provide that much support.

- d. **ESS Pinewoods** (Jean): Jerome Fung joined the meeting, and distributed a draft budget. Exec and the Committee are both concerned to ensure that the event not lose money, and there was extensive discussion. Some concern was expressed about the estimated income. While the visiting dance group that was part of the session last year will not be there this year, the Committee is hoping to be able to attract some of the American ritual dancers who were involved with that visit. Jerome noted that they are certainly planning to more than cover the Pinewoods minimum. Their staff come from various East Coast areas, which should help attract folks.

There was also concern about four co-chairs all getting full scholarships. Perhaps half scholarships would be enough, or cutting back to two co-chairs.

The current budget also provides scholarship support for party organizers. Folks noted that those positions used to be volunteer. They were first made scholarship positions to try to attract extra people. Jerome noted that last year, only two of the parties actually ended up being organized by scholarship people, so those expenses may not all materialize. A single "party czar" could be another model.

MSP to approve the budget with these recommendations. Bob gave Jerome the PCI contract, and they reviewed the schedule for when payments are due.

The Committee is proofing the application forms, which should go out later this week. Jean asked if they have email records from previous years, to send invitations to, and Jerome said that they do have that data, at least for the years since he's been involved.

- e. **PW Scottish Sessions** (BDan): No further update.
- f. **NH Highlands** [Aug 22-24, 2014] (Vickery): Nothing to report.
- g. **Branch Activities at NH Highland Games** (John): No report. John plans to pick up with the Games organizers again in February.
- h. **Teaching Music Committee** (Betty): Last week's TMC meeting was snowed out, and has been rescheduled for tomorrow evening.
- i. **Tartan Times** (Beth): Nothing new to report.
- j. **Demonstration Team** (Alex): The BCMFest and Ancient Universities demos both went well. NEFFA and a couple other potential demos are being organized. Jean asked about the teaching sessions at NEFFA. We should encourage teachers to offer sessions.
- k. **Membership** (Bob): As of today, the Co-chairs report 239 Branch members, 15 Associate, for 254 total.

Bob presented a proposal from the co-chairs that we shift our membership year to coincide with the Headquarters membership year. That would mean joining up

by June, with the membership year beginning on July 1. Then they could send our member database to Headquarters at the same time as Headquarters is posting their new list. There was extensive discussion. Many Exec members were concerned that many classes are ramping down in the late spring, and that it would be hard to convince members to sign up at the point in the year when classes wouldn't begin again until September. People also weren't clear on what the advantage to us would be of aligning with the Headquarters year. Others noted that shifting the membership year might have advantages or disadvantages for the SDCEA scholarship application process, or for certifying Branch classes for insurance coverage. No action was taken on this at this time.

There was no word on availability of the directories. There was some discussion about making directory updates during the year. When this was discussed months ago, the Members Only area of the website was judged to be insufficiently secure for posting addresses and emails. Updates could be included in the Tartan Times, though if we later decide to post the Tartan Times on the website, the same security issue would arise. We could send out emails to the Branch email list periodically with directory updates.

Two former Branch classes, Albany and Kennebunk, wish to be reinstated. Both do now have the required 8 members. We approved that they be re-qualified as Branch classes.

Heather Day had sent a note requesting that the Newton morning class be accepted as a Branch Class. MSP to approve them as a Branch class.

The Chelmsford group is interested in becoming a Branch Class, but they have not officially applied. Vickery will let them know what the process is.

There was further discussion about Branch classes. While it's great to see new groups gathering, the costs to the Branch of a class that needs insurance coverage and that hosts a Branch party and requests a music subsidy is far in excess of the net income realized from eight Branch members. Bob will need to check which of the classes require insurance coverage. We also talked about whether there should be a time window for when a group needs to have its 8 members. The insurance renewal date is currently April 25, but we could ask to shift it.

Also see below regarding the process by which changes in Branch Class status get tracked on the Class List.

1. **Web Site and Publicity (Kat):** No report from Kat.

Barbara McOwen had talked with Lance, asking about the procedure for making changes in the class list. After some discussion, Exec decided on the following procedures, depending on whether or not the change involves a group's Branch Class status.

Changes in Branch Class status are actions of Exec, made on the basis of requests from the classes combined with information from the Membership Chairs, supplied to Exec through the Membership liaison. When Exec takes action to qualify or disqualify a group as a Branch Class, the Secretary will send notification to the class contact person, copying the Class List Custodian (currently Barbara McOwen), the Webmasters (who maintain the HTML version of the list), the Membership chairs, and the Tartan Times.

Other changes (in times, addresses, contact info, etc.) should be sent by the class

contact person to the Class List Custodian (currently Barbara), who will make the changes in the PDF listing and send notification of the changes to the Webmasters, Membership Chairs, and Tartan Times. If class contact people or other folks associated with classes contact someone other than Barbara about making changes to the list, they should be thanked for submitting the information but gently requested to send the information to Barbara instead.

It may be helpful if Barbara could send out a note to the class contacts, letting them know that she is the Class List Custodian, and that notice of changes should be sent to her.

- m. **Bookstore** (Vickery): Mike Little is ordering books and CDs for the Ed Rawson awards.

Too late for the meeting itself, Vickery passed along the following Bookstore news: The Bookstore is now on-line. There is a pdf of the entire inventory accessible by the bookstore link on the Branch website. People can see what we have available and then contact us to order. There will be a paragraph or two in the Tartan Times about this in the next issue. We hope to attend the Boston Ball and bring the Bookstore with us in May. As always we want to know what books people are looking for, open to suggestions of books and CDs.

- n. **Class Liaisons:**

- 1) Albany: Ed, Neil, and Lilly Pearlman will be playing for the Scottish sessions at the Dance Flurry on Feb 14-16, which will include a ball and tea dance with some teaching and two demos. Lois is hoping to pick up some new dancers.
- 2) Belfast: No report
- 3) Brookline: Their 12th Night party on Jan 5 was not as well-attended as in previous years. They are now meeting at the Brookline Academy of Dance, with 1+ sets. That is a small space, but it works.
- 4) Brunswick: No report
- 5) Cambridge: They had 5 sets on Monday.
- 6) Chelmsford: They have received another grant
- 7) Fairlee: No report
- 8) Great Barrington: No report.
- 9) Greenland: Continuing
- 10) Kennebunkport: They took December off, and resumed with 12th night. They are beginning to plan for a DownEast Fling on June 14. Merrill Henderson is continuing to work on teacher training.
- 11) Montpelier: Their Scottish Social will be April 12 in the afternoon, with Peter Macfarlane. There is a save the date flyer up on the website, with program and cheat sheet to follow.
- 12) Nashua: Nothing new since their New Year's party
- 13) Northampton: No report

14) Salem: No report.

15) Stow: They had two four-couple sets once and three four-couple sets once, with six beginners.

4. Old Business

5. New Business

a. **SDCEA:** Their benefit dance will be March 1. Unfortunately, that means a conflict with the New Haven Ball.

6. Next Meeting

a. Feb. 26 by conference call. BDan will send around a phone number for a “FreeConference.com” connection, and folks should call in at 7:15.

b. March 26

MSP to adjourn at 9:20.

Respectfully submitted,
Lance Ramshaw