

**The Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston, MA, Inc.**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 1 June 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 7:46 p.m. by President Jeremy Thorpe.

Jeremy opened the meeting with a few comments.

- Thank you to everyone for participating in this first AGM being held via Zoom. (A total of 37 members participated.)
- These are unusual circumstances, and it is difficult to not be able to meet in person and to enjoy dancing together. In spite of everything, the Branch is doing well.
- No matter how long this situation lasts, our goals will be to continue to promote Scottish Country Dancing and music and to support our musicians as their income has been impacted by the shutdown.

**Minutes of the SAGM:** The minutes of the SAGM, November 4, 2019 were approved as distributed.

**Election Results:** Susan Haines read the results of the recent Branch election. Ten ballots were cast to re-elect Jeremy Thorpe as President and Susan Haines as Secretary. A show of hands of the meeting participants reaffirmed the results. There are still two open at-large positions for the Executive Committee.

**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 \$75,490. Membership fees are ahead of last year, but we are paying more to Headquarters. Memberships continue to trickle in throughout the year. A grant of \$2400 was received from the SDCEA to pay the Highland Ball Weekend musicians. The Joint Ceilidh made \$700, and there is some Pinewoods Scottish Sessions money from deposits in the account. Expenses include fees to Square for online payments, insurance, music subsidies, and the purchase of some new sound equipment (speakers, amp case and cable).

**SDCEA:** Kendra Eschleman read the report submitted by Vickery Trinkaus-Randall. Sadly, the committee reports that the benefit dance scheduled for March 20 was cancelled due to COVID 19.

The committee met with Laurie Somario over Zoom and offered scholarships to 10 individuals to attend Pinewoods. Since Pinewoods was canceled, they are reserving these slots for next year, provided that the applicants still need assistance and complete a scholarship request as required for SDCEA's non-profit status.

Rebecca Gore (treasurer) reported that there is about \$27,000 in the account for 2019 (approximately as they must pay some administrative charges).

The committee revisited their 30+ year old organization and made some changes to the governance. They voted to establish 5-year time limits for Board Members, to be introduced in such a way as to include an overlap of members and allow for a rolling

change to maintain expertise. The committee is looking for new members from musicians and dancers!

The Ed Rawson awards are listed below by class – congratulations!

Albany , NY – Tammy Hinkell  
Bedford, MA – Tina Miller  
Belfast, ME – Suzanne d’Corsey  
Blue Hill, ME – Kathleen Henderson  
Cambridge, MA – Janet Black and Caroline Margiotta  
Greenland, NH - Barbara Briggs  
Kennebunk, ME- Kevin Ford and Leslie Popefka  
Newton, MA – Cynthia Kablaoui  
Northampton, MA- Josephine Burnett and Thomas Hutt  
Ted Randolph’s youth class – Bronwyn Dix

The committee discussed and supported the concept of expanding their charge to supporting musicians and at this time specifically supporting musicians or dance groups that supported musicians during the time of COVID19. They have set up a pay button and established a musician/group specific application form.

SDCEA Committee members include Vickery Trinkaus-Randall, President; Julia Mullen, Clerk; Rebecca Gore, Treasurer; and Members at Large – Emily Peterson, Bob Littlehale, and Kendra Eschleman.

**Membership:** No report was submitted. MaryEllen and John Scannell are retiring as Membership co-chairs, so replacement chairs are needed. If anyone is interested, please contact Jeremy. Thank you, MaryEllen and John for your years of service!

**Mailing List:** John Crabtree is now maintaining the Mailing List. He has lists from previous Concerts and about 20 names for people requesting hard copies of the *Tartan Times*.

**Boston Scottish Country Dancers (Demo Team):** Laura DeCesare, Team Administrator, presented the report.

The world looks vastly different than it did at the last AGM. At that time, Laura stood in front of the membership at the Canadian-American Club, telling everyone about the team’s upcoming performance at Dance for World Community in Cambridge. That performance was a lot of fun, as it always is. After DWC, they went on their summer break, and they resumed in the fall to start rehearsals for the Joint Ceilidh in November. One of their suites was comprised of dances by friend and stalwart Scottish dancer Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, who we lost in August of 2019. Another Ceilidh performance dance was Robert McOwen’s “Jigsaw,” which the team performed at NEFFA several years ago and enjoy reviving as often as they can. Their third suite included two Boston favorites, Bees of Maggie Knockater and 1314.

The team also went “on tour” in the fall of 2019 when four of their members traveled to Vermont to take part in a Highland Games festival run by the bagpipe team of the Branch’s own Stephen Thomforde. They were joined by dancers from Vermont for a brief demonstration and participatory dancing.

In January, the team performed select parts of their program at the Ancient Universities Burns Night. They then started their rehearsals for NEFFA. Loren Wright had once again created a great suite for them. The team worked on it for weeks, had all of the difficulties worked out and were ready to do full-on run-throughs, and then, the festival was cancelled. As everyone knows, that proved to be the first of many cancellations. The team had been scheduled to perform at the Festival of Colors in Lexington in May and the Dance for World Community festival in Cambridge in June. Both have been postponed to next year.

Some team members have been participating in the Boston Branch virtual program, and they are starting to think about having possible virtual rehearsals or team meetings in the summer. They very much hope to be back in their regular studio in Lexington in September, and if not then, as soon as possible.

**Teaching and Music Committee (TMC):** Charles Liu, Chair of the Teaching and Music Committee, reported on the activities of the Committee in the past year.

The responsibilities of the Teaching and Music Committee (“TMC”) include planning and organizing the teaching and music aspects of the Highland Ball, Pinewoods Scottish Sessions, and other events to promote Scottish Country Dancing and musicianship.

In September, TMC hosted a family picnic and dance led by Jen Schoonover at Salem Willows Park. Then, during the winter, they hosted two Scottish Dance Workshops, one in Fairlee, Vermont and one in Brunswick, Maine, led by Jen Schoonover and Charles Liu, respectively. TMC would like to thank each class for their support in making the workshops possible and for helping to promote Scottish Country Dancing.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, many events that TMC was planning and supporting, such as the Highland Ball and Pinewoods Scottish Sessions, had to be cancelled. Other cancelled events they were planning for included the NEFFA dances led by Karen Sollins, Cathy Fahey, and Howard Lasnik, and A Little Hooley, a family dance and singing event in conjunction with the Boston Gaelic Club led by Jen Schoonover. The TMC would like to thank all of the organizers for their efforts in putting together these events. They are quite pleased that the co-chairs for the Highland Ball and Pinewoods Scottish Sessions have all agreed to return to chair the events again next year. And finally, TMC would like to thank the organizers and staff who had already committed to 2021 events and have kindly agreed to defer their work to the following year.

In hoping that dancing will occur next summer, TMC is pleased that the entire teaching and music staff of 2020 Pinewoods Scottish Sessions have agreed to return next year. It is something to look forward to.

While everyone is missing dancing together due to social distancing, the TMC continues their work to promote Scottish Country Dancing and a sense of community among our dancers. They are organizing a Ceilidh and other events to connect dancers virtually during the time when many would have been at Pinewoods. These events will also raise funds for Pinewoods Camp Inc. and for the SDCEA Musician Scholarship Fund. TMC is encouraging Branch classes to offer online classes. They are happy to see that the Cambridge and Salem classes (together), and the Albany and the Brunswick classes have tried virtual classes in various formats to keep dancing and music going while distancing continues.

As always, TMC would like to thank all Branch members for their support and continues to welcome your ideas in any areas where TMC can help to promote Scottish Country Dancing and musicianship.

Members of TMC include Marsha Byrnes, Kat Dutton, Debbie Jarvis, Robert McOwen, Ellen Scannell-Woods, Jennifer Schoonover, Karen Sollins, Laurie Somario and Charles Liu, and observer Elke Baker.

***Tartan Times:*** Barbara McOwen read the report prepared by Evelyn Murray.

So far this year, Barbara McOwen and Evelyn have produced four issues. The last one is really a combined 4 & 5 as there was obviously little to report on events coming in the months of May and June and possibly July. In July, they plan to review the situation as to whether to prepare a July/August issue. Barbara and Evelyn need the organizers of coming events to help by keeping them in the loop as planning (or cancelling) occurs. If all event chairs could keep them informed, that would be wonderful. E-mail is particularly useful. Also, of course, if a committee chair needs help or has a general piece of info to impart, that could also be included in the next issue. too. Effective communication is so valuable particularly now when it is important to tempt people back and to be involved with the Branch in some way after the shutdown.

Another change is that John Crabtree has joined the committee to handle some communications and the paper copies for each issue. He also emails issues of the *Tartan Times* to a number of other RSCDS Branches in the northeast to keep them up-to-date with Boston Branch news and also ask them to keep Boston informed of any useful info about events they will be planning in the future.

It would be good to include activities that members have been doing during this crisis, so do send photos and brief descriptions at any time to either or both Barbara and Evelyn.

Without Barbara's great efforts with the lay out, Evelyn would not be able to continue. She is getting used to her new computer but is not as nimble with it as she would like.

**Website:** The report submitted by Meyer, Laura, and Matt Billmers was read by Meyer. Usage on the website has been steadily declining for the past 4 years. This year's statistics show about the same traffic as last year, about 44,000 page requests since January 1. The largest sources of incoming requests are first, rscdsboston.com (which is a mirror and redirects to the .org address), followed closely by Google and Facebook. The largest number of requests by type are for jpg images in the photo gallery.

There had not been any major design changes to the site until the current coronavirus crisis occurred. Since then, events have had a major impact on the site, keeping the webmasters quite busy. The remainder of this report will describe changes due to the current crisis.

- The first impact was the huge number of cancellations. Since virtually every event has been cancelled, they have been busy removing entries from upcoming events and updating the major event pages, such as Pinewoods sessions, the Highland Ball, and New Hampshire Highlands.
- Secondly, they implemented a page for people to make donations directly to our musicians who have lost their income from gigs. A number of musicians responded to Jeremy's call and provided bios and information about how to contribute directly to them. This new page is under Member Resources and is titled "Donation to musicians." There is also a link on the home page to the same resource.
- Thirdly, they have been working with the SDCEA, who has created a new tax-deductible fund with a separate donation process (online or paper form) for people who want to help musicians in a way which is not targeted to a particular person but rather is handled through the SDCEA's tax-exempt process. The Complete Fund Descriptions document has been updated to reflect this new fund and is posted on the Financial Aid page. In addition, the webmasters have posted the paper form and online donation form for people who wish to donate to this new fund and have posted an online application form for musicians who wish to avail themselves of this new fund. To increase visibility, the donation forms are now referenced on the home page.
- The webmasters have updated the Cambridge Class page and the upcoming events listing on the home page to mention the new bi-weekly online Zoom classes.
- And finally, they have added a new Movie Gallery section to the site, just under the Photo Gallery pulldown on About the Branch. Currently, the Movie Gallery page has the recorded Zoom sessions for Robert McOwen's "Dance to the music (with furniture)" class and Susie Petrov's class about Scottish music. They will continue to add recorded Monday classes as they occur.

They will also be adding Branch-wide recordings not specific to the Monday classes. Several of these are under production and will be coming soon.

**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:** John Salyards reports that Exec had approved the purchase of some new equipment (speakers, stands, bags) by Thom Howe who manages the Branch sound equipment. Thom is also checking on mixers before making a purchase. He 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. The new manager will take over as soon as travel is permitted.

**Pinewoods Camp:** Bruce Mabbott is the RSCDS representative to the Pinewoods Executive Board. He reports that since his report at the SAGM, a lot has been happening in the world, and, unfortunately, Pinewoods could not be our haven away from real life. As everyone is aware, all of the summer 2020 camp sessions were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pinewoods Board could not risk the health and safety of their community, crew, and volunteers. It was a hard decision to make emotionally, however, it was an easy one to make for everyone's health and safety.

The Pinewoods Board looks forward to camp returning in 2021 and the bonhomie being even livelier to make up for missed time.

Obviously, camp being closed for an entire season comes at a price. The Board will save some money in expenses by not being open, however, they will lose significantly more in campers fees. Pinewoods has built up a rainy day fund for exactly this scenario (having to stay closed for a season, although they hypothesized that it would be due to hurricane or wildfire damage!), however, it will put a sizable dent in their savings. Stay tuned for fundraisers to help Pinewoods recover from this!

Since the crew had already been hired for this summer by the time the decision to shut down programming had been made, the Board voted to pay each crew member an amount equivalent to approximately 4 weeks wages. Whilst this will not fully compensate the crew, the Board hopes it will help them stay on their feet and also to encourage them to come back in following years.

Moving on to more mundane matters:

Bruce will be taking over as Vice President on the Board of Directors for Pinewoods Camp Inc. in October. This brings with it added responsibility and commitment. Initially it will just be for a year as he is finishing out a term, but it could be extended. Hopefully, it will give him a louder voice, and as the Branch representative, there is no downside to this!

The Executive Director, Carl, had a quiet winter at camp weather wise, which is good! It meant that camp could get a head start on some maintenance and improvement issues such as:

- New handrails have been installed at a lot of cabin entrances.
- New roofs on 13 more cabins (all cabins now complete)
- Lots of new window screens.
- Remodel Crew bathroom behind Headington, adding skylights and ventilation
- Cornrigs (behind Fine Companion) addition for crew housing
- Emergency flood lights at C# were installed
- New kitchen in Cottey House
- New porch outlets in Grenoside (ideal for mobility scooters)
- New landing for Bookstore and Program Providers office

More tree clearing happened this off season and more brush is being removed to reduce flammable underbrush.

As ever Pinewoods is also incredibly grateful to the generosity of the Scots, especially in times like these. The Board knows that the camp can weather this due to the Scots' generosity now and in the past. Thank you again!

That is all the news from Pinewoods Camp, Inc. and the Board is looking forward to 2021!

**Joint Ceilidh 2019:** Linda McJannet presented the report on the Joint Ceilidh.

On November 2, 2019, the second Scottish Ceilidh jointly sponsored by the RSDCS Boston Branch and Highland Dance Boston was held at the Irish Social Club of Boston in West Roxbury. This year, there was a third sponsor, the Scots Charitable Society, which combined its St. Andrew's Day Banquet and fundraiser with the Ceilidh. Once again, a grant was received from the NHSCOT Fund to support the event.

The Ceilidh committee included Robert McOwen, Karen Mahoney, Linda McJannet, Cathy Crabtree, Jen Schoonover, Abbie McQuarrie, and SCS President, Alan McCall.

As was the case last year, the evening was a spirited, family-friendly event alternating instrumental sets, Ceilidh dancing for all, and performances by Highland Dance Boston and Boston Scottish Country Dancers (formerly the Demo Team). Great music was provided by A Parcel of Rogues. Robert McOwen was performance coordinator; Karen Mahoney served as MC for the evening, while Jen Schoonover and Abbie McQuarrie led the social dancing. Andy Taylor-Blenis and Laura DeCesare also led the Scottish Country Dancers. Many volunteers helped with refreshments, ushering, decorating, ticket selling, managing the raffle, and more. Special thanks to Judy Reynolds Shaw whose efforts at organizing and serving refreshments –and making notes for next year--went above and beyond. Heartfelt thanks to all who lent a hand!

Attendees had a choice between tickets for the music and dancing only or tickets (\$15-20) including a fabulous dinner featuring meat or veggie pies (\$30). A cash bar was available,

and complimentary snacks, coffee, and desserts were included in the ticket price. The Ceilidh dancing was enthusiastic, and the event was well attended—so much so that they ran out of chairs! In the final accounting, each sponsoring entity split the modest profit, garnering \$770 each.

Plans for next year's Ceilidh are, not surprisingly, in limbo. Due to the ongoing novel corona virus pandemic, the committee does not know if the venue will be available or whether large groups will be able to safely gather in November, or, if they can, whether dancing hand in hand would be appropriate. They will keep you all informed as circumstances unfold. Stay tuned!

**Pinewoods Benefit Ball 2019:** No report was available at this time.

**Highland Ball 2020:** Marsha Byrnes expressed her appreciation to everyone who had said they would help with this year's Highland Ball Weekend and hopes that she can count on those people again in 2021. Marsha also reported that the concert by the Highland Ball Weekend musicians seems to have been a great success with about 100 viewers plus many views on Facebook after the event. A \$2400 grant from the SDCEA will be used to pay the musicians.

**RSCDS AGM 2020:** The Headquarters AGM will be in Perth on November 7, 2020. 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 Brookline, Cambridge, and Chelmsford, Massachusetts, from Greenland, New Hampshire, and from Brunswick and Kennebunk, Maine. Vickery Trinkaus-Randall also provided a verbal report on the Stow, Massachusetts class.

**Other Business:**

- Jeremy Thorpe thanked Sharon Gilmour and John Salyards for their years of service on the Executive Committee.
- Kat Dutton reports that there are a couple of events being planned to occur in July when Scottish Sessions would have been taking place. The TMC and the Pinewoods chairs are hoping that the staff musicians will provide a concert, and a Ceilidh is being planned to support the musicians and Pinewoods Camp, Inc. Acts for the Ceilidh are being solicited. Stay tuned for more information!

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Haines, Secretary