

The Tartan Times

Volume LXIII, Number 3
January / February 2015



The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Boston Branch
c/o The Folk Arts Center of New England
10 Franklin Street, Stoneham, MA 02180-1862

WHO'S WHO IN THE BOSTON BRANCH

Executive Committee *President:* Jeremy Thorpe; *Vice President:* Betty Allen;

Secretary: Susan Haines; *Treasurer:* Bob Littlehale;

Members at Large: Dale Birdsall, John Crabtree, Kat Dutton,
Alex Hall, Merrill Henderson, Linda McJannet

Teaching & Music Committee *Chair:* Gregor Trinkaus-Randall

Nominating Committee *Chair:* Joan Hill

Highland Ball 2015 *Co-Chairs:* Ed & Sara Pokrass • **Pinewoods Benefit Ball 2015:**

Fall Concert 2015: *Artistic Director:* *Producer:*

Pinewoods Scottish 2015 *Co-Chairs:* Beth Birdsall & Linda McJannet

Pinewoods ESC 2015 *Contact:* • **NH Highlands** *Contact:* Roberta Lasnik

Demonstration Team *Teacher:* Andy Taylor-Blenis; *Administrator:* Karen Sollins
Bookstore Dawn & Mike Little • **Equipment** Peter Tandy • **Archives** Susan Haines

Membership MaryEllen & John Scannell • **Mailing List & Database** Peter Tandy

Directory John Scannell • **Keeper of the Class Listing** Barbara McOwen

TAC Representative Patti Tillotson

Webmasters Laura and Meyer Billmers • **Back-up Webmaster** Matt Billmers

The Boston Branch Website is www.rscdsboston.org

Exec Committee Class Liaisons: **Brookline, Cambridge:** Kat Dutton

Brunswick ME, Kennebunk ME, Belfast ME, Greenland NH: Merrill Henderson

Montpelier VT, Fairlee VT, Salem MA: Dale Birdsall • **Nashua NH:** Linda McJannet

Great Barrington MA, Northampton MA, Albany NY: Alex Hall

Stow, Chelmsford, Newton: Betty Allen

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The Tartan Times Editor, Evelyn Murray, may be reached at 617-864-8945, by email at athollbrose@verizon.net or by snail mail at 37 Blanchard Road, Cambridge, MA 02138-1010

Layout Editor Barbara McOwen; **Mailing Coordinators** Marcie Rowland & Cal Perham

IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE WEBMASTERS

Please proofread all information submitted for publication on the Branch website very carefully. The webmasters are happy to post event fliers and minicribs. However, it is considerably more work for us to have to do it more than once! If you have multiple documents to post, please try to submit them all at once, rather than piecemeal. Thank you in advance. — **Laura and Meyer Billmers**

Notes from the Executive Committee

At the November meeting, held on December 3, Exec. learned that although the November Concert was well received, it did not reach the break-even point for occupancy and has incurred a loss.

The replacement session for ESS will be called ESC for English-Scottish-Contra, and all aspects of the session (profits, losses, etc.) will be a shared 50/50 with CDS. The Committee members are Dan Blim, Meaghan Murray, and Stephen Thomforde, and they are in the process of finding teachers who are able to teach more than one genre. More information will be coming as soon as it is available. Meanwhile, plans for the Highland Ball and Scottish Sessions Pinewoods seem to be right on track, and the teacher candidates are preparing to take their exams in the spring.

— **Susan Haines, Branch Secretary**

RSCDS Boston Highland Ball Saturday, April 18, 2015

Memorial Hall, 590 Main St., Melrose, MA



The Boston Highland Ball 2015

Music by "*Frost and Fire*"

Peter Macfarlane, fiddle; Viveka Fox, fiddle; Aaron Marcus, keyboard; Hollis Easter, flute/pipes

MCs

Andrea Aeschlimann, Chris Harris, Beth Birdsall

Granville Market	8x32J	RSCDS 2 nd Graded Book
MacDonald of the Isles	3x32S	Haynes, Carnforth #2
Miss Johnstone of Ardrrossan	5x32R	Goldring, 14 Social Dances
Northern Harmony	8x32J	Celebrate 50 Years of Dancing
The Silver Tassie	8x32S	RSCDS Leaflet
The Montgomeries' Rant	8x32R	RSCDS Book 10
The Clachan	8x32J	Foss, Kendoon Dances
Gang the Same Gate	8x32S	RSCDS Book 36
The Westminster Reel	8x32R	RSCDS Book 45
A Trip to Drakensberg	8x40J	RSCDS Book 38
The Robertson Rant	1X80S (sq. set)	RSCDS Book 39
Caberfei	8x32R	18 th Century Book
The Laird of Milton's Daughter	8x32J	RSCDS Book 22
The Lang Whang	8x32S	Dunedin Book 1
Scott Meikle	4x32R	RSCDS Book 46
The Luckenbooth Brooch	8x32J	Dickson, Glendaroch #28
The Minister on the Loch	3x32S	Goldring, Graded & Social Dances
The Deil Amang the Tailors	8x32R	RSCDS Book 14

Reception 5:30

Dinner 6:30

Grand March 8:00

Ball 8:15

Admission includes \$1 for Memorial Hall Restoration Fund

\$75 Branch members \$80 Nonmembers

\$50 Full time students/Non dancers

See <http://rscdsboston.org/events-HighlandBall.html> for application, directions, cribs, Welcome Dance and Sunday Brunch information. Or contact Sara Pokrass (spokrass230@comcast.net)(508-362-5861)

BALLROOM ETIQUETTE

One of the newsletters the editor receives on an exchange basis is from the Hunter Valley Branch, NSW, Australia. Reading it each time often gives a sense of déjà vu, as similar problems, joys and experiences stretch across the miles from continent to continent. The following guide to ballroom etiquette was sent out by the secretary of the RSCDS Sydney Branch. It notes that it was written after discussion at the Interbranch meeting.

1. It is not acceptable to pre-arrange sets, or to dance exclusively in one set. Try to dance in different parts of the hall.
2. Invite your partner to dance. Choose a variety of partners. A lady may ask another lady to dance and it is usual for the person who did the asking to take the man's position.
3. If a longwise set is called for always join at the bottom of the line. It is rude to push in. Similarly do not leave a set once you have joined it.
4. It is usual for the 1st couple to number off the sets, then let the M.C. know how many couples are needed to complete the bottom set.
5. Listen quietly to the re-cap. This includes those folk sitting out the dance.
6. The dance floor is the place for social contact – it is rude to study dance notes once you are on the floor.
7. When the dance is finished, thank your partner, then thank the other dancers in the set – remember that without them you could not have completed the dance. After the dance is finished the floor should be cleared. The M.C. will instruct when to form sets for the next dance.
8. If there are musicians playing for the dance, turn and face them and acknowledge them in the usual way. Musicians spend many hours preparing the music and it gives them pleasure to be appreciated.
9. If you are a beginner dancer check with your teacher as to dances you can do off the evening's programme. Enjoy your new activity and don't be pushed into doing a dance to make up the numbers – you will jeopardise your own pleasure and everyone else's in the set.
10. If you are an experienced dancer remember that you were once a beginner too so give a pleasant smile, a friendly word, a helpful hand and this will make for a successful evening for you and everyone else.

With acknowledgement to: Rhoda Tanner of Auckland, New Zealand, Nova Scotia Branch Info Calendar

WHAT IS BEHIND A NAME? — CABERFEI — a Reel for 3C in a 4C longways set

The more correct name in Gaelic is Cabar Feidh which translates to Deer's Antlers. The dance figures allow the dancers to describe antlers specifically during bars 9-16, where

The first couple dances down between second couple for one step, then turning inwards (towards each other), lead up (with nearer hands) to top and cast off (on own sides) to 2nd place. Second couple step up on bars 11-12.

Then first couple lead down (with nearer hands) between third couple and cast up (on own sides) round them to finish facing first corners, (passing each other by the left).

The above quote is taken directly from the instructions for the dance as found in **Scottish Country Dances of the Eighteenth Century**. These dances are derived from a manuscript dated 1740, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and were written in Edinburgh by D. A. Young, W.M. in 1740. Jack McConachie edited and adapted the dance instructions to conform with modern presentation.



Sponsored by the RSCDS Boston Branch, www.rscdsboston.org

CHALLENGE SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLASSES

(formerly ADVANCED CLASSES)

Friday, January 16th, 2015 — MaryEllen Scannell
with **Howard Lasnik** video-taping the dancers

Friday, February 20th — Andy Taylor-Blenis

Friday, March 20th — SPECIAL Guest teacher Cecily Selling, PA

Cecily's topic is "Dancing beautifully whether the dance is easy or hard
Working on formations that require excellent handing."

Location: The Calvary Church, 300 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA
(big white church facility, same side and between the cinema and
Arlington Centre); ample parking on the street.

Cost \$10.00 (\$5.00 students)

Time 7:30 - 9:30 pm

Info: call Evelyn at 617-864-8945,
or Roberta at 781-643-3977





SDCEA Scholarship Dance



7:30 pm, March 21, 2015
First Parish Church in Weston
349 Boston Post Road, Weston, MA
Donation: \$20 (\$15 Students)

MCs: MaryEllen Scannell and Martha Kent

Music : *The Wisp of Thistle* (Jerome Fung, Catherine Miller, and Nora Smith)

Joie de Vivre	8 x 32 J	RSCDS Book 39
Royal Deeside Railway	8 x 32 R	RSCDS Book 40
Invercauld's Reel	8 x 32 S	RSCDS Book 11
The Flight of the Falcon	8 x 32 J	Priddy, Anniversary Tensome
Portnacraig	8 x 32 R	RSCDS Book 36
The Minister on the Loch	3 x 32 S	Goldring, 24 Social Dances
Craigeith	1 x 88 R (square set)	RSCDS Graded Book 3

Intermission

Roaring Jelly	8 x 32 J	Glendarroch #8
The Westminster Reel	8 x 32 R	RSCDS Book 45
This is No My Ain Hoose	8 x 32 S	RSCDS Book 15
Mrs. Stewart's Jig	8 x 32 J	RSCDS Book 35
Maxwell's Rant	8 x 32 R	RSCDS Book 18
Dalkeith's Strathspey	8 x 32 S	RSCDS Book 9
The Laird of Milton's Daughter	8 x 32 J	RSCDS Book 22

All proceeds benefit the RSCDS Boston Branch scholarship funds.

CALENDAR OF SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE EVENTS - local & afar

January 2015

- 16 *** Challenge Class w. MaryEllen teaching & Howard Lasnik video-taping, p 5
- 24 *** Salem Class Robert Burns' Celebration p 12
- 24 * Highland Light Robert Burns' Celebration p 12
- 24 * St. Andrews' Society NH Robert Burns' Celebration p 12

February

- 6-8 * Cardigan Scottish Weekend at Cardigan Lodge, NH
- 13-15 * Flurry Festival of music & dance, p 10
- 20 *** Challenge Class w. Andy Taylor-Blenis, p 5
- 28 *** Montpelier Class Party

March

- 7-8 * New Haven Annual Ball Weekend p 12
- 20 *** Challenge Class w. Cecily Selling, p 5
- 21 *** Scholarship Benefit Dance p 6
- 28 *** Salem Class annual Dance Party

April

- 17-19 *** Boston Branch Highland Ball Weekend, p 3
- 24-26 ** New England Folk Festival, Mansfield, MA

SAVE THE DATES

July:

- 6-10 *** English-Scottish-Contra
- 10-13 *** Scottish Pinewoods Session I
- 13-18 *** Session II

Code Breaker: *** an event sponsored by the Boston Branch; ** other SCD events within the Branch area; * of possible interest (often a Scottish concert) within the Branch area.

Please support events; the class/branch/group members work hard to put together their event, the musicians spend a lot of time preparing the music and rehearsing, the teacher(s) spend anxious hours planning programs, class material, etc. They appreciate seeing that their labours are not in vain when they look at a hall full of dancers all ready to put their best right (?) foot forward.....!

CALENDAR FOR THE RSCDS BOSTON BRANCH 2015 (CLASS PARTIES, EVENTS, BALLS)

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
JANUARY 2015			
1	Northampton New Year's Day Party	First Churches, Northampton, MA	Karen Levallee-Tente, 413-527-3407
1	Nashua New Year's Day Party	Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua, NH	Loren Wright, 603-891-2331, nashuascd@comcast.net
4	Brookline Class Twelfth Night Party	Church of Our Saviour, Brookline, MA	Evelyn Murray, athollbrose@verizon.net
24	Burns Night Supper & Dancing	Bolles Hall, Salem, MA	MaryEllen Scannell, weeblyuets@rscdsboston.org
FEBRUARY 2015			
28	Montpelier Class Party	Montpelier, VT	Martha Kent, mdkent@comcast.net
MARCH 2015			
21	Scholarship Benefit Dance	First Parish, Weston, MA	Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, 978-897-3997 Trink68@uwalumni.com
28	Salem Class Party	Bolles Hall, Salem, MA	MaryEllen Scannell, weeblyuets@rscdsboston.org
APRIL 2015			
17	Boston Highland Ball Welcome Dance	First Parish, Weston, MA	Ed and Sara Pokrass, spokrass230@comcast.net
18	Boston Highland Ball	Memorial Hall, 590 Main St, Melrose MA	Ed and Sara Pokrass, spokrass230@comcast.net
19	Boston Highland Ball Brunch	Lincoln, MA	Ed and Sara Pokrass, spokrass230@comcast.net
MAY 2015			
2	Fairlee Spring Fling	Town Hall, Fairlee, VT	Gary Apfel, 802-439-3459
JUNE 2015			
6	White Mountain Scottish Country Dancers Spring Frolic	Lancaster Town Hall, Lancaster, NH	Bill Tobin, 802-751-7671, billtobinharp@gmail.com
13	Downeast Fling	Kennebunk Town Hall, Kennebunk ME	Merrill Henderson crone4702@gmail.com 207-409-9050

PLEASE SEND ANY CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS TO Jean Farrington, jffar@verizon.net

SCOTTISH DANCE CLASS LOCATIONS

MASSACHUSETTS

- * **Brookline:** Sept-May, Sundays 6:30-8:30 pm, Parish House, Church of Our Saviour, 25 Monmouth Street, Brookline. Contact BrooklineClass@rscdsboston.org, Evelyn Murray, 617-864-8945; Heather Day, 617-244-6914
- Great Barrington:** Year-round, Wednesdays 7:15-9:15 pm, Berkshire Pulse, 410 Park St., Housatonic, 3rd floor. Contact Jean, 518-672-4243 or Ted, 413-698-2944
- * **Cambridge:** Year-round, most Mondays 7:45-10:15 pm, at the Canadian American Club (www.canadianamericanclub.com) 202 Arlington Street, Watertown. Beginners welcome! Contact Alex Bowers, CambridgeClass@rscdsboston.org
- * **Chelmsford:** First Fridays year-round, 7-9 pm at the Chelmsford Community Center at 31 Princeton St, North Chelmsford. Live music. Contact Rebecca Gore at rjgore@gmail.com or 508-574-1533
- * **Newton:** Wednesday mornings 10:30 am - noon. Sept through mid-June at Newton Lower Falls Community Center, 545 Grove Street, Newton. July and Aug at VFW Post 440, 295 California St, Newton. Contact Heather Day, 617-244-6914, hdshoes14@gmail.com
- * **Northampton:** Sept-May, Thursdays 7:00-9:30 pm, Florence Civic Center, 90 Park St. (enter on Cosmian), Florence (nr. Northampton). Contact Karen Lavallee-Tente, 413-527-3407
- * **Salem (Wee Bluets):** Year-round, Thursdays 8 pm, beginners at 7:30, First Universalist Church, 211 Bridge St., Salem. Contact MaryEllen Scannell, WeeBluets@rscdsboston.org, 617-462-1925
- * **Stow:** Sept-June, 2nd and 4th Fridays. New: childrens class 7:00, adult beginners 7:30, social dancing 8:00-10:30. Old Stow Town Hall, 375 Great Road, Stow. Contact Marcia Rising, marcia.mdrising@verizon.net, 978-897-2466
- Yarmouth:** Thursdays 7:30 pm, Yarmouthport Congregational Church, 329 Main St (Rt. 6A), Yarmouthport. Contact Marla Menzies, 508-432-3711

MAINE

- * **Belfast:** Year-round, Mondays 7:30 pm, American Legion Hall, 143 High St., Belfast. Contact BelfastClass@rscdsboston.org; Kim Jacobs/Bob Klein, 207-722-3139; David Thompson, 207-469-3293
- * **Brunswick:** Sept-June, Thursdays 6:30 pm, Topsham Grange Hall, Pleasant St, Topsham. Contact Patti Tillotson, 207-833-2329, pstillotson@gmail.com
- * **Kennebunk:** Sept-June, Sundays, 5:30-7:30 pm; Community House, Temple St., Kennebunkport. Contact Merrill Henderson, 207-409-9050, crone4702@gmail.com
- Stonington:** Year-round, Wednesday 7:00 pm; Island Community Center, off School St., Stonington. Contacts Mike / Dawn Little, 207-348-9308; mjlittle2318@hotmail.com; sugarmaple111@hotmail.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- * **Greenland (Seacoast Dancers):** Oct-June, Tuesdays 7:15-9:15 pm. Beginner's class upon demand. Greenland Parish Hall, Post Road (Route 151), Greenland. Contact Laurie Stevens, 603-380-2144, SeacoastDancers@rscdsboston.org
- Lancaster:** Sept-June, Fridays 7:30 pm, Lancaster Town Hall, downtown Lancaster. Contact Bill Tobin, 802-751-7671
- * **Nashua:** August through June, Wednesdays 7-9 pm, Church of the Good Shepherd, 214 Main St., Nashua. Contact Loren Wright, nashuascd@comcast.net, 603-891-2331

VERMONT

- * **Fairlee:** Sept-June, Wednesdays 7-9 pm, Fairlee Town Hall, 75 Town Common Rd. (just off Route 5, Main St.). Contact Gary Apfel, FairleeClass@rscdsboston.org, 802-439-3459
- Manchester Center:** Tuesdays 7-9 pm, First Congregational Church (on Route 7A, across from the Equinox Hotel). Contact Holly Sherman, 802-362-3471, hollyvalentine530@yahoo.com
- * **Montpelier:** Sept-May, Wednesdays 7-9 pm, Union Elementary School, 1 Park Ave., Montpelier. Contact Martha Kent, mdkent@comcast.net, 802-879-7618

NEW YORK

- * **Albany:** Sundays, 6:45 pm, Newbitz House, 85 Mann Blvd, Clifton Park. Contact Lois New or Cecil Lubitz, 518-383-6580; loisanew@nycap.rr.com; clubitz@nycap.rr.com

* Indicates classes sponsored by the Boston Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, www.rscdsboston.org.

Because of occasional weather and hall variabilities, etc, it's always advisable to get in touch in advance if you're not on a class contact list. To download this flier as a pdf, go to www.rscdsboston.org/FullFlyer.pdf. For updates, please email Classes@rscdsboston.org

MUSIC PAGE

DANCE FLURRY, FEBRUARY 13-15, 2015 — a festival of traditional dancing and music — 400 performers, 250 events, 5 locations throughout Saratoga Springs. The Festival headquarters is the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, 534 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY www.flurryfestival.org

THE BARRA MACNEILS, Coming to the Chevalier Theatre, Medford, on March 7, 2015 — “Canada’s Celtic ambassadors! For nearly three decades, this Cape Breton-based family group has thrilled audiences of all ages, both near and far, with their sparkling repertoire, vocals, instrumental prowess and vibrant showmanship.” Reserved seat tickets are \$31, \$26 (\$23/\$19 senior/student) are available at Medford Electronics, 25 Salem St., Medford, or call 800-838-3006. Canadian American Club Members Discount: call 800-838-3006, www.chevaliertheatre.com/event.htm Sponsored by the City of Medford, Friends of Chevalier Auditorium, and the Canadian American Club of Massachusetts.

THE GRAND MARCH

[The following is taken from the Toronto Association Newsletter, February, 2009 Set and Link. Donald Holmes is a member of the Newsletter Committee.]

Any branch member attending one of our major social events will be familiar with the spectacle known as “The Grand March,” the procession around the ballroom led by a piper in various formations of twos, fours and eights, finishing in a large diagonal cross or other variation. While the origins of the March are vague and there is no fixed pattern, yet it is generally used as an impressive pageant to signal the beginning of a gala, and for Scottish Country dancers, it helps us warm our leg muscles in preparation for several hours of dance to follow. The following was adapted from an article by Joe Murray of Ottawa Branch. — Donald Holmes

Have you ever wondered how the Grand March began? I [*Joe Murray, Ottawa*] was curious about the origin of the practice so I asked RSCDS HQ in Edinburgh and received a reply from the Hon. Archivist Marilyn Healy. According to Marilyn, her personal research indicates the Grand March probably began in the Victorian era and may have originated in the big Highland Balls of the late 19th century. Marilyn offered several references, the most significant being the instructions to dancers and the formal description of the practice in this excerpt from the Ballroom Guide publication c. 1886.

Before the assembly-night all ladies and gentlemen should have their gloves tied on so that there be no delay caused by their splitting -- being too small. Be at the hall a good half-hour before the commencement of the Grand March. If these hints are studied all will be ready to take their places in the March whenever the music begins. When the hall is crowded an inside circle (two couples abreast) should be formed; all the couples then following the leading couple or couples.

When the March is executed in two circles, march round in fours and lead up in eights, opening up for two reels abreast. When the Scotch Reel is finished all the gentlemen present right arm to partners and march around the hall behind the leading couple. Gentlemen take partners to seats, bow gracefully, and return to their own seats.”

.....Adapted from Joe Murray, Ottawa Branch Bulletin, April, 2008

The Toronto Editor, Carole Bell, noted further that Donald has found the writing of an informative article on the Grand March to be quite challenging as there is little published information on its origins and history. He will be delighted if any one can shed further light on the subject. To further confuse the issue, apparently when David Grant was Association Chair he used The Waltz Country Dance instead, to open the Tartan Ball and West End Ball. When I danced in Chelmsford, England, the annual Ball started with a Grand March and ended with Waltz Country Dance! So there is quite a bit of freedom to choose, for Ball chairs. — *TT Editor*

2015 SCOTTISH SESSIONS AT PINEWOODS
SESSION I: JULY 10-13 K SESSION II: JULY 13-18

Join us for Scottish Country Dancing in the woods of Massachusetts! Pinewoods Camp is located in Plymouth, between Long Pond and Round Pond, both of which are available for swimming, canoeing and kayaking. Campers stay in cabins and cottages – rustic, but with electricity and access to hot water – and dine together in a communal dining hall. Scottish dance and music classes are offered throughout the day, and every night there’s a dance party (with some of the best dance musicians in the world!) in an open pavilion among the tall pines.

We would especially like to encourage new dancers, younger dancers (18+), and Pinewoods first-timers to apply. Scholarships are available.

Costs are \$310 for Session I; \$415 for Sesssion II and \$675 for both Sessions.

Note that RSCDS members get \$25 off.

There are three fab dance teachers Graham Donald from the U.K., Linda Henderson from San Francisco, and Kathy Giacoletti from Delaware Valley, plus some of your fave local teachers. The music staff, led by Music Director Barbara McOwen, locally include Anne Hooper, Robert McOwen, Tom Pixton, Terry Traub and Campbell Webster. In addition there are two guest musicians – a pianist from Canada and a fiddler from Scotland.

The combined teaching and music staff are NOT TO BE MISSED!

For more information or to request an application, contact co-chairs Beth Birdsall and Linda McJannet, or visit the web site: scdpinewoods2015@gmail.com or phone 802-989-3147

www.rscdsboston.org/events-pinewoods.html



CELEBRATING ROBERT BURNS' MEMORY

Boston Branch members are invited to the Salem Class Celebration on Saturday 24th January. An invitation was sent out via email to members. Note that you need to make a reservation and also tell MaryEllen what you will bring to the refreshment table. Your party piece would add to the festivities!

The Highland Light Society are holding their Celebration on Saturday 24th January, at the Holiday Inn, Route 132, Hyannis, Cape Cod. Events include dinner, with an outstanding Bill o' Fare and performances by the Society's Scholarship recipients. Tickets are \$45 per person. Either call Jeannie Drinkwater or Christine Drowne at 508-207-8350 or send your payment to: Highland Light Scottish Society, P.O. Box 341, Yarmouth Port, MA 02675

The St. Andrews Society of New Hampshire hosts its 34th Annual Burns' Night Celebration, Saturday 24th January. At the Liberty Place Function Center, 1 Liberty Lane, Hampton, NH (near junction of 95 and 101). There will be toasts, bagpipes, haggis and cheer! Also appetizers, cash bar and buffet dinner. Tickets are \$50 each. The order form is on their website, jmaceye@icloud.com Send to Sherry Thompson, 51 Montrose Dr., Stratham, NH 03885

In addition there are a number of Burns Night celebrations in the Boston area at various restaurants and bars. Check around – no excuse to miss this highlight of the Scottish calendar!

New Haven Branch Annual Highland Ball Weekend, March 7-8, 2015

Music by *Saucy Bess* (Tom Pixton, Nora Smith and Catherine Miller)

The Ball on March 7th starts at 5 pm at the West Hartford Town Hall Conference Center, 50 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107. On Sunday March 8th, the Brunch starts at 11 am at the High Lane Club, 40 High Lane, North Haven, CT 06473. Cost: Ball & Brunch \$70/\$75; Ball without Brunch \$60/\$65; Full time student \$35/\$40; Saturday dinner only \$30/\$35; Brunch only \$25/\$30 [The first dollar amount is early registration, the second number is payment after 2/23.] Some hospitality available. Further info from the Ball Chairs: Karen Pestana 860-539-2944, kgpeстана@yahoo.com or Judy Locker 860-688-8037, jlocker24@hotmail.com

BOOK REVIEW - Growling in the Kennel of Justice by Allan Nicholson

The voices of 22 lawyers from Burns' era unite to unravel the secrets of Scotland's poet, Robert Burns. Blending Burns' verse, correspondence and law reports of the time, Nicholson has been able to build up a novel analysis of the legacy of the Scottish poet. See ISBN: 9781783064625

ROBERT BURNS AND “THE DANCE”

As Scottish Country dancers we owe much to Scotland’s most famous poet, Robert Burns. This is because more than anyone else it was Burns who was responsible for the survival of hundreds of Scottish tunes ... many of which we still dance [to] today. No doubt, you have heard again and again the stories about Burns’ “love for the ladies.” But what do we know about his encounters with the national pastime of dancing? Did he dance?

We know that he was socially popular as a teenager. In fact country dancing was one of his earliest social activities. In an autobiographical letter to Dr. John Moore when he was 25 years old, he stated

In my 17th year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this hour I repent, in absolute defiance of his commands.

Burns’ brother Gilbert later wrote that “Robert excelled in his dancing, and was for some time distractedly fond of it!” Their father, though, overcame his dislike of dancing schools to the point that he eventually allowed the rest of the family (who were fit for it!) to accompany Robert to class during the second month. It was at a dance in April 1785 that Burns met Jean Armour who became his wife.

As a teacher in the Branch (Toronto) Beginner’s Class, I love to meet the new students who join us in the dance each year, and especially those who continue – and become “distractedly fond of it!” As we prepare for our Beginner’s Ball, I am reminded of a poem written by a member of the Sarnia SCD Group. I’m sure it would be just what Robert Burns would have written had he penned an Ode to our beginners. — *Barbara Munro*

ODE TO SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCERS

by Rae Humphrey

*Fair fa’ your eager, friendly face,
Ye chosen o’ the Scottish race
Aboon them a’ ye tak your place
Tap o’ the set
Tae show aff a’ your style and grace
Wi’ each poussette.*

*In first position, second, third,
Ye listen tae the teacher’s word
As tirelessly she puts the herd
Thro’ a’ their paces.
An surely she gets some reward
Frae hopefu’ faces.*

*The lessons ye have every week
On steps, formations and technique
Are just no for the very weak
an’ those unfit
But every Scottish Dancing freak
Gets fitter yet.*

*An’ what thr’ whiles ye huff and puff
Ye never seem to get enough
An’ come on back fer mair sic stuff
As jigs an’ reels.
But when the teacher says, “Enough,”
“How guid it feels!”*

*Strathspey setting up an’ doon,
Hands across an’ six-hands roond,
The dance that makes ol’ Norman froon
Is St. John River:
Do we dance it when he’s aroond?
“No” says he, “Never!”*

*The lassies in their bonnie frocks,
The lads in tartan ties an’ socks,
A favoured few wi’ houghs
Attired in kilts.
An’ sic couthy, friendly folks
Frae a’ the airts*

*So here’s tae dancers everywhere
Lang may they loup across the flair
An’ aye be willin’ for tae share
Their fun wi’ all
In Scotia’s favorite bill o’ fare
A Country Dance Ball!*

*The above published in the Ottawa Branch, April 2009
Bulletin, Editor Brenda Stedman*

NAMES IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE CAN BE CONFUSING!

Much of the clothing and decorations worn at formal balls have names in another language, which could be confusing. Many are in the Gaelic, the ancient language of the Celtic peoples. The Scots and the Irish speak a related form; but travel south to Wales and the Welsh language is very different from that spoken in the Hebrides and for that matter spoken in central areas such as Perthshire until the beginning of the 20th century. This also applied to weapons worn in the 18th and 19th centuries, as most of the men in the Scottish regiments were recruited from the Highlands and thus often during this time period spoke little if any Scots or English.

Sgian Dubh (pron. *skeen-du*) — “The Black Knife,” a small dagger or knife carried by men, visible in their stocking to show they [are] armed but have no hidden weapons. Originally a hunting knife used for practical purposes, and when entering another’s home the knife would be placed in the stocking, the other weapons left outside. Often also used to spear meat from the communal pot. So the wee knife served many purposes.

Claymore (just as it is spelt) — Literally a “Big Sword.” The two handed double-edged broadsword with a blade approximately 40 inches long.

Claybeag (*clay-beg*) — Literally, a “Small Sword.” A one-handed basket-hilted Scottish broadsword popular with highland clansmen. Probably many such swords were used on both sides of the American Revolution as Scots fought on both sides.

Targe (*tar-gee*) — A leather covered wooden shield, usually with a spike which can be affixed to its center. Carried by 13th-18th century Scots, used both as a defensive and offensive weapon in battle. For a right-handed fighter the targe would be fastened on the left arm where it would both protect the wearer or be thrust into an enemy’s face, and a sword or dagger carried in the right hand.

Balmoral — The “Tam” style head gear developed in the 18th century today can come in shades of green or blue or military dark red as well as black.

Glengarry — Developed by the MacDonald of Glengarry when raising his regiment in the mid-18th century. Today, the Balmoral comes in different colours, although black is the one usually seen. Both the Balmoral and Glengarry can be plain, or have a checkered pattern along the bottom edge, called ‘dicing.’

Ghillie Brogues (*gilly-brogues*) — Scottish dress shoes which lace around the ankle and up the lower part of the leg. Reminiscent of the ancient deerskin foot coverings. These would have been more similar to our Scottish dance shoes – ‘ghillies.’

Sporran (*sporn*) — The leather bag suspended around the hips and hanging in front of the kilt, today used as a wallet or purse. Its origins are interesting as in mediaeval times no self-respecting Highlander would carry money in such an obvious place. If he did have money on him it would be in a leather pouch tied round his neck and hidden in his clothing. Meanwhile the sporran was where he would carry his raw oatmeal when travelling. During the time of the raising of Scottish Regiments in the Highlands the British Military moved the sporran to its central position and turned it into a non-functional purse, but made defensive, as now it was made of thick leather, often decorated with horse hair.

Ceilidh (*kay-lee*) — Literally, a visit or gossip session at someone’s home. The word would be passed around that at Iain and Mairi’s there will be a ‘singing’ or ‘talking’ (translate gossip) on Friday evening. The food was provided by those attending and everyone was expected to have a ‘piece’ to perform when called upon. Today generally used to signify a party, or social get-together. Maybe the idea of a ‘pot-luck’ came over with the Scottish settlers?

One of the few excellent resources of dancing and social activities in general in Edinburgh during the Eighteenth century are the letters of Captain Topham to a female friend. He had an excellent eye for detail, his descriptions clear and vivid. Usually we see only quotations such as in George Emmerson's A Social History of Scottish Dance. It was the period of the Enlightenment in Scotland, so Edinburgh had her Assembly, and dancing became one of the prime social activities of the day. Thanks to the San Francisco Branch for almost the whole of Captain Topham's letter:

Captain Topham's Letter 42 On the Assemblies, Public and Private" Edinburgh, May 19, 1775

To Miss Lucinda B _____,

.....But there is one thing at which I cannot be a little angry; that you should entertain such a contemptible idea of our amusements; I say our, for I have been in this country so long that I begin to think myself an inhabitant of it. Suffer me to inform you that we too have Assemblies, brilliant as the eyes of Beauties can make of them (with which this country abounds), and which every place of public resort in Edinburgh can boast of if they had no other inducements or charms to recommend them.

I assure you the Assemblies afford a very agreeable diversion: they are governed by seven Directors and seven Directresses, one of whom manages the dancing alternately and performs the part of Mistress of Ceremonies.

As the room is too small for the company who generally frequent them, it is imposible for all to dance at the same time: to prevent therefore the inconvenience and confusion which must necessarily be occasioned, the Lady Directress is obliged to divide the company according to rank and quality..., putting about twelve couple in a Set. After this etiquette is over, the first Set dance minuets, beginning in the order of the tickets which are distributed by the Lady Directress, and then one country dance in the middle of the room, which was surrounded by chairs to prevent the rest of the company from interfering with the dancers. At the conclusion of this the second set begin and then the third and fourth in their respective turns till all the sets have danced the minuet and country dance, and then the first begin again with a country dance and the others follow as at first.

This mode of conducting the Assemblies is much approved of by the inhabitants of this City and certainly has many conveniences, as you dance with the greatest of ease, order and regularity from having no crowd or interruption; besides you know your company which gives the public all the advantages of a private entertainment. But then the young Ladies, who are fond of dancing complain that by this means they are deprived of that pleasure, as it seldom happens that a Set can dance oftener than twice. Indeed the worst circumstance attending it is, that you are often prevented entirely from dancing, as there are too many Sets for it to ever come to your turn. For my own part I think that the comfort with which you dance balances every disadvantage and makes it upon the whole a most eligible form of an Assembly.

Were the Scotch Gentlemen disposed to gallantry this manner of managing the Dancing would afford them the finest opportunity they could wish, as they are left the whole evening to furnish entertainment for their partners. But observations on the clothes and dancing of the party who are performing too often fill up the vacant interval, and in stead of ogling, sighs, protestations and endearments, the Lady sits envying the more fortunate stars of her companion who is dancing, whilst her partner yawns for the approaching period of his own exhibition.

Ever since I have been in Edinburgh, the office of Lady Directress has been discharged by Mrs. Murray, sister to Lord Mansfield, who executes her part with so much success that the other Ladies fear to attempt it after her. Indeed she deserves every encomium that can be bestowed on her. As long as Mrs. Murray obliges the Public with her assistance, the City of Edinburgh cannot wish for a more agreeable entertainment than their Assemblies, but if any thing should happen to deprive them of her abilities it is imagined they would furnish themselves with a better room, where a different plan would be adopted.

How far it is better for a public amusement to be under the influence of a Lady, or how far the Scotch Gentlemen are to be justified in giving so much trouble and fatigue to the fair sex, I will not pretend to say. But thus far I can speak from Experience, that nothing was ever conducted with more propriety and regularity than they are at present, nor was I ever at an Assembly where the authority of the Manager was so observed or respected. With the utmost politeness, affability and good humor, Mrs. Murray attends to every one. All petitions are heard, and demands granted which appear reasonable.

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From: RSCDS BOSTON BRANCH
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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PLEASE SEND MATERIAL FOR WINTER AND EARLY SPRING EVENTS TO THE EDITOR.
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Note: Class Events flyers are limited to a half page: 8 1/2" wide by 5 1/2" deep**

Continued from previous page - Captain Topham

The company is so much more obliged to Mrs. Murray as the task is by no means envied. The crowd which immediately surrounds her on entering the room, the impetuous applications of *chaperons*, Maiden-aunts, and the earnest entreaties of lovers to obtain a ticket in one of the first Sets for the dear object render the fatigue of the office of the Lady Directress almost intolerable. I am sensible that few would undertake it, did not Mrs. Murray's zeal and endeavors meet with such universal approbation.

Besides minuets and country dances, they in general dance reels in separate parts of the room, which is a dance that everyone is acquainted with, but none but a native of Scotland can execute to perfection. Their great agility, vivacity, and variety of hornpipe steps render it to them a most entertaining dance. But to a stranger the sameness of the figure makes it trifling and insipid, though you are employed during the whole time of the operation, which indeed is the reason why it is so peculiarly adapted to the Scotch, who are little acquainted with the attitude of standing still.

Allemandes and Cotillions are neither admired nor known in public companies in this City. Those Ladies who have seen them danced in Paris or London, are unwilling to introduce them, well knowing how little calculated they are for the meridian of their country.

I was lately at an Assembly here on the Queen's Birthday where Mrs. Murray representing her Majesty presided in the chair and received the proper compliments. It was conducted with the usual elegance and propriety, and was so crowded that not half the Sets could dance that wished to do it.

But besides the general Assemblies, there are a number of private ones given by societies, clubs, or subscription, and every week is productive of something new. Among the rest, the matrons and married ladies give an Assembly and Entertainment to the young Ladies, to whom they distribute tickets to provide themselves partners. You may be sure the old ones are not backward in their invitation. Each of them is squired by some antiquated beau who with his best clothes, brushes up his best minuet and revives in imagination the feats of ancient times.

In return for this Ball, the Gentlemen of the Capilaire Club gave another [ball], equally elegant and polite, with a supper, ices, and everything that luxury can invent. *The letter ends with a few compliments to Mrs. B* ____.