

The Tartan Times

Volume LXVI, Number 2
November/December, 2017



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:* Marsha Byrnes;
Secretary: Susan Haines; *Treasurer:* Cathy Crabtree; *Members at Large:* Janet Anderson,
Sue Chari, Sharon Gilmour, Cathy Goode, Jeffrey Hopper, John Salyards

Teaching & Music Committee *Chair:* Charles Liu

Nominating Committee *Chair:* Ed Pokrass • **Pinewoods Benefit Ball 2017** MaryEllen Scannell

Highland Ball 2018: *Contact:* To be announced

Fall Concert 2017 *Artistic Director:* Robert McOwen; *Producers:* Linda McJannet & Cathy Crabtree

Pinewoods Scottish 2017 *Co-Chairs:* Laura DeCesare and Ross Parker

Pinewoods ESC 2017 *Contact:* Meghan Murray • **NH Highlands** *Contact:* Roberta Lasnik

Demonstration Team *Teacher:* Andy Taylor-Blenis; *Administrator:* Laura DeCesare

Bookstore Dawn & Mike Little • **Equipment** Peter Tandy • **Archives** Gregor Trinkaus-Randall

Membership MaryEllen & John Scannell • **Directory** John Scannell

TAC Representative Patti Tillotson • **Mailing List & Database** Peter Tandy

Keeper of the Class Listing Barbara McOwen

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

The Boston Branch Website is www.rscdsboston.org

Exec Committee Class Liaisons: *Brookline, Cambridge & Newton MA:* Sue Chari

Brunswick, Kennebunk & Belfast ME, Greenland & Nashua NH, Chelmsford, MA: John Salyards

Stow MA: Sharon Gilmour • *Burlington, Montpelier & Fairlee VT, Albany NY:* Jeffrey Hopper

Salem, Great Barrington & Northampton MA: Cathy Goode

THE TARTAN TIMES is published by the Boston Branch for its members. A free copy is sent to every North American Branch and to nearby Affiliated groups if they send their email. Annual subscriptions are available for \$10. Checks should be made payable to RSCDS Boston Branch

(Canadians, please send a money order in U.S. funds).

Mail to Cathy Crabtree, Boston Branch Treasurer, 3 Patriots Dr., Lexington, MA 02420

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 proof read 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 for the Tartan Times from the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee would like to remind the membership of two important upcoming events. The Semi-Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday November 6th at the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, starting at 7:45 PM. Please consider attending and then dancing the evening away! The second event is the Fall Concert which will be held on November 11, 2017 at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum in Lexington, MA. with shows at 3 and 7:30 PM. The featured performers are Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas along with Campbell Webster, Highland Dance Boston, and the Demonstration Team of the RSCDS Boston Branch. Robert McOwen is the Artistic Director and Linda McJannet and Cathy Crabtree are the co-producers. Ticket information is posted on the Branch web site.

The Executive Committee is always looking at ways to attract new, young dancers. The New York Branch has had some success when offering beginner classes in conjunction with Adult Education Classes. Is this something we could attempt? Please stay tuned as we continue with our research, and, as always, your thoughts and suggestions are always welcome. — *Respectfully submitted, Susan Haines, Branch Secretary*

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Boston Branch
24th Annual Concert of Scottish Music and Dance

Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas

Campbell Webster (pipes)
Highland Dance Boston
and the Demonstration Team
of the Boston Branch

Saturday, November 11, 2017

3:00 and 7:30 pm

Scottish Rite Masonic Museum
33 Marrett Rd., Lexington, MA 02421

Info: concert@rscdsboston.org or 617 492 8180
<http://rscdsboston.org/event-fall-concert.html>

Mail orders filled as received. Sorry, no refunds.
(Please use separate forms if ordering for both shows!)

Name _____ # Adults non-members _____ @ \$27
Address _____ # RSCDS members _____ @ \$25
City/State/Zip _____ # Students _____ @ \$15
Telephone _____ # in Group (≥8) _____ @ \$22
Seat preference ___ Orchestra ___ Mezzanine Total: \$ _____
Wheelchair? ___yes
Email address (for future concert notices only) _____

Which show? Circle one: 3:00 PM or 7:30 PM

Make checks payable to *RSCDS, BOSTON* and send with a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) to:
RSCDS Concert, c/o Laura Billmers, 66 Lowell St., Lexington, MA 02420-2810

Orders received after Nov. 3 or without a SASE will be held at the door in your name. Thanks!

To order online, visit www.mktix.com/rscd (service fee added: \$2.00-4.50 depending on ticket price).

New Year's Day Dance & Potluck Dinner

3:00 p.m., Monday, January 1, 2018
Church of the Good Shepherd
214 Main St., Nashua, NH

Music by "Highland Whisky"

Christine Anderson, fiddle Gillian Charters, bass
David Arnold, piano Howard Lasnik, percussion
Guest musician: Terry Traub, accordion and fiddle

\$12 (\$10 Boston Br. member), plus a main dish, salad, or vegetable to share.
More info? Contact Loren Wright, 603-891-2331 NashuaSCD@comcast.net



The Northampton Class



New Year's Day Dance

Monday, January 1, 2018

First Churches' Lyman Hall, Northampton, MA (enter on Center Street, across from the Iron Horse.)

Music and Times To Be Arranged

Potluck • \$1 plus dish to share
\$10 RSCDS members, \$12 for non members



Contact Karen at 413-527-3407



The Capital District NY Scottish Country Dancers
(RSCDS Boston Branch)



NY Capital District Fall Frolic

October 28, 2017

YWCA, 44 Washington Ave., Schenectady, NY

Music by Boston Hospitality
Ed Pearlman and Beth Murray

Saturday: 1:00-2:30 Workshop – Beth Birdsall - Newbitz House
3:00-4:00 Party Review – Beth Birdsall - Newbitz House
7:30 Dance Party at the YWCA (\$25 at the door)
Sunday: 10:30 Brunch at the Newbitz House (Bringing a dish optional)

Contact: Lois New 518-383-6580 or loisscd@gmail.com

Pinewoods Benefit Ball

Saturday, December 9, 2017
The Bridge at 211
211 Bridge Street, Salem, Massachusetts

Note the date; this is a week later than usual due to other conflicts at 211 Bridge Street.

New Book Workshop, Welcome to Book 51: 2:00 PM admission \$6.00

Potluck: 6:00 PM \$1.00 + a pot
Dancing: 7:00 PM admission \$28.00

All proceeds go to support Pinewoods Camp, Inc.

Music by

Fiddle Fancy

Terry Traub & Catherine Miller with Mike MacNintch on bagpipes



Stow Class Party



7:30 pm., Saturday, November 18, 2016

Stow Town Hall, 375 Great Road, Stow, MA

RSCDS Members - \$7, Non-RSCDS Members - \$10, Families - \$10 maximum

Musicians: Nora Smith & Jerome Fung

MCs: Gregor and Vickery Trinkaus-Randall, Susie Long, & Jeanetta McColl

Hooper's Jig	8x32J	RSCDS MMM2
The Cabrach	8x32S	Goldring, 24 G & S Dances
Jessie's Hornpipe	8x32R	RSCDS Book 8
McDonald of the Isles	8x32S (3C)	Haynes, Carnforth #2
The Edinburgh Toy Shop	8x32J	RSCDS Book 51
The Black Leather Jig	8x32R	Selling, Delaware Valley Silver
John McAlpin	8x32S	Foss, Galloway
The Stow Alert	8x40R	McColl, To Friendship

Intermission

Northern Harmony	8x32J	Trinkaus-Randall, 50 yr. Boston Branch
New Park	8x32S	RSCDS Book 19
The Westminster Reel	8x32R	RSCDS Book 45
Catch the Wind	8x32J	RSCDS Book 45
Sugar Candie	8x32S	RSCDS Book 26
Rest and Be Thankful	8x32R	Grampian

Directions from the east: 1.) Take Route 128 to Route 20 towards Waltham. Turn left towards Route 117 going west. Take Route 117 approx. 14 miles to Stow center. The Town Hall is just after the traffic light on the right. 2.) Take Route 2 to Route 62 in Concord. Turn left into West Concord and follow Route 62 into Maynard. Go straight at the traffic light onto Rt. 27. At the junction with Rt. 117 turn right and see above.

Directions from the north/west/south: Take Rt. 495 north or south to exit 27 (Rt. 117). Go east on Rt. 117 for approx. 4.5 miles to the center of Stow. Town Hall is directly in front of you at the fork in the road.

Parking: Park on the side of Crescent Street or at the Town Building across Rt. 117 from the Town Hall.

CALENDAR OF SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE EVENTS AND CONCERTS - LOCAL AND AFAR

October

28th *** NY Capital District Fall Frolic, p 5

November

3-5 Kingston Branch 50th Workshop and Ball, rscdskingston.org

3-5 RSCDS Annual Conference weekend and AGM, p 13

3-5 * Fiddle Hell, Westford, MA, p 10

4th *** Technique & Fun SCD Workshop, p 16

6th *** SAGM - Semi-Annual General Meeting, see below and p 2

7th *** Boston Branch semiannual Meeting, see below.

11th *** Boston Branch annual Scottish Music & Dance Concert with Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas, p 3

12th * Canadian American Club Gala Benefit, p 10

18th *** Stow Class Party, Stow Town Hall, MA, contact Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, p 6

25th Montreal Branch Fall Social at the Red Barn, contact Holly Boyd

December

9th *** Pinewoods Benefit Ball, p 5

17th *** Brookline Class annual Christmas Party, with MC Susan Long; contact Brookline Class

January

1 *** Northampton MA New Years Day Potluck & Dance Party, p 4

1 *** Nashua NH New Years Day Potluck & Dance Party, p 4

7th *** Brookline Class annual Twelfth Night Dance and Supper; contact Brookline Class, p 8

19-21 * Boston Celtic Music Fest, p 10

Save the date:

*** Scholarship Dance, Saturday March 24th; contact Gregor Trinkaus-Randall

* NEFFA - New England Folk Festival - April 20-22, 2018, in Mansfield MA - neffa.org

*** Fairlee Class Spring Dance - May 12; contact Gary Apfel

NY Pawling Weekend - May 11-13, 2018

*** Boston Highland Ball Weekend - May 18-20, 2018 [*Note change of weekend*]

Code Breaker: *** an event sponsored by the Boston Branch, ** other SD events within the Branch area, and * of possible interest (perhaps a concert) within the Branch geographic area.

The purpose of this Calendar is to not only provide a listing of current events, but also to note future events. This helps in planning an event to avoid clashes and conflicts. So it would be great if future planners of Branch and Class events would send to Evelyn and Barbara just the date, name of event and if possible a contact name. When all the pieces are together then it would of course be put on the website. – *Ed.*

BOSTON BRANCH SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, November 6, 2017 at 7:45 pm

The AGM will take place in lieu of the Monday night Cambridge Class in Watertown, at the Canadian-American Club, 202 Arlington St, Watertown, Mass. Admission is free, and there will be free dancing after the meeting.

BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

Please renew your membership for the 2017-18 year if you haven't done so yet. The membership form can be downloaded from the website. If you don't renew soon, this is the last issue of the Tartan Times you will receive. The cutoff for being listed in the Directory is November 6th, 2017. For any questions regarding membership, please contact MaryEllen Scannell, Membership Chair, at Membership@rscdsboston.org

10 Rules for Beginning Dancers

1. Relax. Everyone was a beginner at one time.
2. Don't Panic. If you mess up, smile, apologize, and go onto the next figure. It is more important to be in the right place at the right time than to complete the last figure. Cut your losses and catch up.
3. Smile. No one (except your poor benighted teachers who do not know any better) ever looks at footwork at a dance. And no one asks a pair of feet to dance.
4. It is the custom to change partners for every dance and women should have no qualms about asking men to dance (or other women or for men to ask men).
5. Thank your partner at the end of a dance. You might even try to remember their name if you can, when you thank them.
6. Don't look at the floor, it did not ask you to dance. Eye contact is a crucial part of dancing. Flirting is not required, acknowledgement is.
7. Ask experienced dancers to dance with you. They will help point you in the right direction if you get confused and are often thrilled to be of service.
8. Being part of an inactive couple does not mean being inactive, it means being supporting. Be aware that actives need your support too.
9. Smile. It not only helps you feel like you are having fun, it makes your partner feel like both of you are having fun.
10. Remember after you have learned what you are doing that there will be a beginner out there who will need your help. So relax, smile and dance away.

The Brookline Class Twelfth Night Dance and Supper

Sunday, January 7th, 2018*

Parish House, Church of Our Saviour
25 Monmouth Street, Brookline, MA

(additional parking next door)

MCs – Flo Hearn, Heather Day, Evelyn Murray

Music – TBA

Cost \$12 for RSCDS members, \$15 for non members

Contributions to the refreshments are welcome

Information: rscdsboston.org

*or Evelyn - athollbrose@verizon.net, or Flo - hearn2@verizon.net

**function will be postponed to the next Sunday 14th January if Brookline has a parking ban in place*

SCOTTISH DANCE CLASS LOCATIONS

MASSACHUSETTS

- Bedford:** Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30 pm, Bedford Senior Center (COA), 12 Mudge Way, Bedford (yellow bldg. behind Town Hall). Register at Senior Center as guest. All levels welcome. Heather Day, 617-244-6914, hdshoes14@gmail.com
- * **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
 - * **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:** Year-round, First Fridays 7-9 pm at the Chelmsford Community Center at 31 Princeton St, North Chelmsford. Beginner & family-friendly. Contact Rebecca Gore at rgore@gmail.com or 508-574-1533
 - * **Great Barrington:** Year-round, Wednesdays 7:15-9:15 pm, Berkshire Pulse, 420 Park St., Housatonic, 3rd floor. Contact Ted, 413-698-2944, tedfr@rnetworx.com or Maria, 413-344-3023, mariaw235@gmail.com
 - * **Newton:** Sept to mid-June Wednesdays 10:30 am - noon. Newton Lower Falls Community Center, 545 Grove Street, Newton. July-Aug at VFW Post 440, 295 California St, Newton (park in the back parking lot). 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 Ave.), Florence (nr. Northampton). Contact Karen Lavallee-Tente, 413-527-3407, or text to 413-210-8012.
 - * **Salem (Wee Bluets):** Year-round, Thursdays, 8-10 pm, adult beginners 7:30. The Bridge at 211, 211 Bridge St, Salem. Contact MaryEllen Scannell, weebluets@rscdsboston.org, 617-462-1925
 - * **Stow:** Sept-June, 2nd and 4th Fridays. Footwork/figures: 7:15, social dancing 8:00-10:30. Old Stow Town Hall, 375 Great Road, Stow. Contacts: Vickery Trinkaus-Randall, vickery@bu.edu; Marcia Rising, 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
- Blue Hill:** Year-round, Wednesdays 6:30 pm, The Grange, Route 15, Blue Hill. Contact Mike/Dawn Little, 207-348-9308; mjlittle2318@hotmail.com; sugarmaple111@hotmail.com
- * **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

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- * **Greenland (Seacoast Dancers):** Oct-June, Tuesdays 7:15-9:15 pm. Beginner's class upon demand. Greenland Parish Hall, 44 Post Road (Route 151), Greenland. Contact Merrill Henderson, crone4702@gmail.com, 207-409-9050 or Laurie Stevens, 603-501-9488, seacoastdancers@rscdsboston.org
- Lancaster:** Sept-June, Fridays 7:30 pm, Lancaster Town Hall, Lancaster. Contact Bill Tobin, 802-751-7671
- * **Nashua:** Aug-June, Wednesdays 7-9 pm, Church of the Good Shepherd, 214 Main St., Nashua. Contact Loren Wright, nashuascd@comcast.net, 603-891-2331

VERMONT

- Burlington:** Mondays, 7-9 pm; Champlain Club, 20 Crowley Street, Burlington. Contact Connie Kent, 802-355-5901, constancekent@gmail.com
- * **Fairlee:** Sept-June, Wednesdays 7-9 pm, Fairlee Town Hall, 75 Town Common Rd. (just off Route 5, Main St.). Contact Gary Apfel, fairlee@rscdsboston.org, 802-439-3459
 - Manchester Center:** On hiatus until further notice. Contact Holly Sherman, 802-362-3471, hovashe@yahoo.com
 - * **Montpelier:** On hiatus until further notice. Contact Martha Kent, mdkent@comcast.net, 802-879-7618

NEW YORK

- * **Albany:** Sundays, 6:30 pm, Newbitz House, 85 Mann Blvd, Clifton Park. Contact Lois New or Cecil Lubitz, 518-383-6580; loisnew@nycap.rr.com; clubitz@nycap.rr.com

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

NOTE: 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/pdf/FullFlyer.pdf. For updates, please email classes@rscdsboston.org

MUSIC PAGE

Fiddle Club News

Boston Scottish Fiddle Club • Sessions on 3rd Wednesdays, 7:30-10:00 at the Canadian American Club, led by Katie McNally & Neil Pearlman - November 15, December 20, January 17 • Meetings/Workshops on 1st Sundays, 2:00-6:00 in Belmont, November 5, December 3rd, January 7. • The BSFC Orchestra welcomes instrumentalists at all levels

Strathspey & Reel Society of N.H. • Gatherings on last Sundays, September through June, 12:30-4:00 in Concord, N.H., include workshops, refreshments, sessions, rehearsals. The next gathering will be October 29th, 1-5 pm, and will feature Peter MacFarlane. Peter's focus will be: "Lyricism in Playing Scottish Traditional Music" • www.srsnh.org

Canadian American Club • Gaelic Club on 3rd Sundays, 4-6 pm, October 15, November 19, December 17 with traditional music, cash bar, refreshments, a family place where everybody knows your name • Regular dances and concerts and celebrations at the Club

Concerts

Boston Branch annual Concert - two shows on Saturday November 11 in Lexington, MA, featuring Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, with Campbell Webster - see p.3 for details.

Childsplay will be in Bangor, ME on Nov. 17, Portland, ME on Nov 18, and at the Somerville Theater for two shows on Nov. 19. With Hanneke Cassel, Keith Murphy, Ralph Gordon, and many other star performers, with the fiddlers all playing violins made by famed Cambridge luthier Bob Childs. www.childsplay.org

Burren Backroom Series - *Maeve Gilchrist & Keith Murphy* November 8; *Tony McManus* December 13; More - burren.com

Passim - Aine Minogue, Celtic Harper - 2 shows on Saturday December 23rd - www.passim.org

Festivals

Fiddle Hell - Weekend of November 3-5. A yearly gathering of fiddlers to meet, jam, learn, dance and have all kinds of fiddle fun. Many great sessions & workshop teachers. www.reinerfamilyband.com/introduction

Can-Am Club Gala Benefit - Sunday November 12, 1-7 pm - Andrea Beaton with Janine Randall headline a day of music, traditional Cape Breton set dancing and fun! Performers include - Boston Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Jen Schoonover's Cape Breton Step Dancers, Catherine Miller & Terry Traub, Maggie MacPhail & Caroline Dressler.

BCMFest - Boston Celtic Music Festival - Weekend of January 19-21, in Cambridge, Mass.

Fiddle Tours

Walking & Music in Scotland with Ed Pearlman

Hike in the day with hiking guide - Dorothy; music at night with musical guide - Ed Pearlman

For musicians, dancers, listeners, walkers - limited to 7 travelers in each tour

Trip 1 [New!] – June 16-25, 2018: Burns & Borders

Trip 2 – June 29 - July 7, 2018: Niel Gow's Scotland

Trip 3 – July 11-21, 2018: The Outer Hebrides

Trip 4 – July 24 - Aug 5, 2018: The Northern Islands

Go to www.edpearlman.net/scotland to sign up for emails, with details coming in October

PEOPLE NEWS

Sylvia Miskoe and her accordion student, *Anne Baier*, have just received a grant for a Traditional Arts Apprenticeship in Accordion Music of New England and Scotland. It is supported in part by a grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant runs from November 1 until August 30, 2018. It requires a minimum of 65 hours of contact, documented; and a community presentation at the close of the term.

Sylvia has been playing accordion for dancing, both Scottish and New England, since college. She was a founding member of The White Cockade Scottish Dance Band and the Strathspey and Reel Society of New Hampshire. Anne studied classical piano as a child. She was given an accordion at age 60 and began taking lessons with Sylvia three years ago.

“We are both fair chuffed.” – Sylvia

Angela Atwell spent part of the summer in Scotland and England, staying for the latter in Evelyn’s home in Surrey. She managed to spend time in Edinburgh attending events in the Edinburgh Fringe as well as the Tattoo. Angela dances with the Brookline Class.

Doris Possi is turning 90 years of age on November 2nd, do send her a card to congratulate her. She is a long time member and was a very active member of the demo team for many years. Her son David helped at the Food booth for several years as Doris was in charge of the performing Groups at NEFFA. Her Scottish roots come from Down East, in other words the Maritimes of Canada. Doris has always been an avid dancer, and a great support to the Boston Branch, as a Life Member, and our Membership Chair for a number of years.

Jean Farrington together with *Evelyn* will be representing the Branch at the RSCDS annual Conference weekend and AGM being held as usual at the Bell Centre, Perth, Scotland.



While *Anne Hooper* was in Brattleboro, Vermont, last week, performing the Bach B minor Mass, she had two great visits with *Sally Dee*. No visit is ever complete without a rousing rendition of *The Marquis of Huntly’s Farewell*. Sally listened intently on both occasions to that and to many other favorite tunes. She was also treated to Anne’s imitation of the way she used to dance backwards across the hall, while explaining just about anything to the Weebluets. Sally’s most poignant remark however was, “Isn’t musical magical?”



The History of Scottish Country Dancing – by John Trew

[This was taken from a lecture given by John at an unnamed event]

The origin of Scottish Country Dancing is very vague, but it is probably associated with the practice of religious rites and as far as we know at present, the dances may well have started with the Druids who are the current “cult” religion of these ancient times. Some credence is lent to this belief by the discovery of a symbol in the form of the outline of the floor pattern of the reel of four as it is currently practiced by a few dancers of demonstration team quality, but few others! This symbol, found on the Standing Stones (a Druid Relic in Orkney), indicates at least an association with astronomy, religious worship and dance. Other authorities, however, believe that it is more associated with the serpentine symbol of Caduceus and therefore relates more to medicine than dancing. Since it is known that the Druids held a number of curious festivals, including fertility rites, perhaps both interpretations are fairly close to the truth.

Legend tells us that the sword dance comes from the time of Macbeth, the famous Shakespearean character, who was killed at the Battle of Dunsinane by Malcolm Canmore, or “Bighead,” as he was known to his fellow princes. “Bighead” took his dead enemy’s sword, crossed it, and danced around uttering strange yells and incantations. These must have been reported by the local media for he was subsequently crowned king and married a saint from Hungary by way of England called Margaret. This put a stop to his wild ways and such dancing was not heard of again for a number of years.

The foursome reel was discovered years later and was thought to be a residual rite from the Druidic cult since it seemed to represent two stages battling for the attention of a doe, a form of fertility rite. Those of us who have watched certain members of the branch performing similarly, will recognize that it does not only happen during the foursome reel that these male posturings resemble that of the ancient stag enticing a female. It is difficult to find out what went on before the year 1700, as the Scottish Church in older times strongly disapproved of dancing and all forms of enjoyment. This meant that the poor people had to enjoy these pastimes secretly. This did not, however, stop the nobles and landed gentry enjoying their pleasures. Indeed, a king, James VI, is on record as having paid a Scottish Country Dance Teacher, one William Hudson, the sum of one hundred pounds to teach his royal person to dance. This is just a little more than the stipend currently paid to our present teachers [i.e. school teachers, as Scottish country dance teachers are unpaid], even allowing for inflation.

Mary Queen of Scots, despite the thundering of John Knox, introduced a number of dances from France with accompanying terminology illustrated in the term “Pas de Basques” or Basque step, and not as it is commonly called by Glaswegians of our acquaintance “Paddy’s Bar.” Lots of these dances were passed down from mother to daughter and father to son by word of mouth, and this accounts for the amount of talking which takes place prior to and during dances of this genre and explains why the teachers are ignored or cannot be heard in classes.

The farming and country folk of Scotland frequently danced in the fields and those of you who are familiar with the *cotton* unpredictable climate that prevails in Scotland might reason that this may account for the other peculiar steps required to perform country dancing, for example, pointing the toes to shake off the mud or the little spring-hop to get over the furrows or grass tufts, etc. I am sure that there might be other reasons to avoid contact with the various items of farm debris which may have been lying around, but perhaps we need not research that avenue further.

In the cities, dancing was a much more sedate affair at the various balls and assemblies. The gathering was controlled by a formidable lady known as the “Directress,” who presided over these gatherings with steely control. Not only did this lady say who could or could not attend, but she also allocated the places in the dance on a very specific preferred basis and woe betide the miscreant who would dare usurp her rule.

These dances were the opposite of the country form which went on ’til the wee small hours of the morning. The big city assemblies started at six and generally finished at nine p.m. at which time the gentlemen escorted their ladies home and thereafter resorted to the howfs and taverns there to satisfy their lusty appetites more suited to men of high quality and low moral fibre.

[continued on page 13]

[continued from page 12]

During the late 1800s the advent of the waltz and other such sensuous music almost put paid to the healthy flailing of limbs that marked country dancing and so demoralized the Scottish people that the native reels almost disappeared. In 1923, it fell to the lot of a Glasgow physical education teacher of honourable Irish descent. Jean Milligan, and a lady of Scottish breeding, a Mrs. Stewart of Fasnacloich, to resurrect the old art of reeling and setting in the dances which thousands are enjoying today in an ardent resurrection of Scottish Country Dance performances.



HAVE SHOES WILL TRAVEL

A Workshop in Connecticut

Saturday, October 28, 2017

South Britain Congregational Church Parish House
693 South Britain Road, Southbury, CT 06488.

Cost: \$38 for workshop, potluck dinner & dance; \$25 for dance only

Workshop: 1:00 PM - 4:45 PM with a short mid-class break

Teacher: Ellen Ternes

Pot Luck dinner: 5:15 PM - 6:45 PM

Dance: 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Music by Millbrae (Terry Traub & Anne Hooper)

Some dates for your Travel Calendar

Nov 3-5, 2017 – RSCDS AGM Weekend – rscds.org

Nov 11th 2017 – Toronto Branch Day School. See www.dancescottish.ca for more info

Nov 17-19 2017 – San Francisco Branch annual weekend at Asilomar, Pacific Grove CA. Contact www.rscds-sf.org/ for more info

March 3-4, 2018 – New Haven Ball Weekend; West Hartford Conference Center, CT

July 27 - August 5, 2018 – TAC Teachers' Weekend and Summer School, Minneapolis, MN

July 8-15, 2018 – 43rd Australian Winter School at Tomaree, Hunter Valley Branch. For more info: www.hvws2018.com

December 5th – Talk on the Ship “Hector,” which brought many people from Scotland to the Maritimes.

Location: Quincy Historical Society, Quincy, MA. Time: 8:00 pm. Contact Evelyn for more info.

The Lives and Loves of the Haggis, by Jack Rosenfield

[From the NY Branch Newsletter May 1992]

I would like to discuss the etymology of the word “haggis.” Unfortunately, Webster doesn’t give the origin, but it is rather obvious. There are only three other words with the same root H-A-G-G: haggie, haggard, and haggada. The Scots renowned for their thrift, might well have **haggled** for this culinary treat. A little haggis goes a long way, so anyone with a steady diet of haggis might look **haggard**. However, the majority of the scholars tend to support the theory that the true root of the word stems from the Hebrew, **Haggadda**, the name



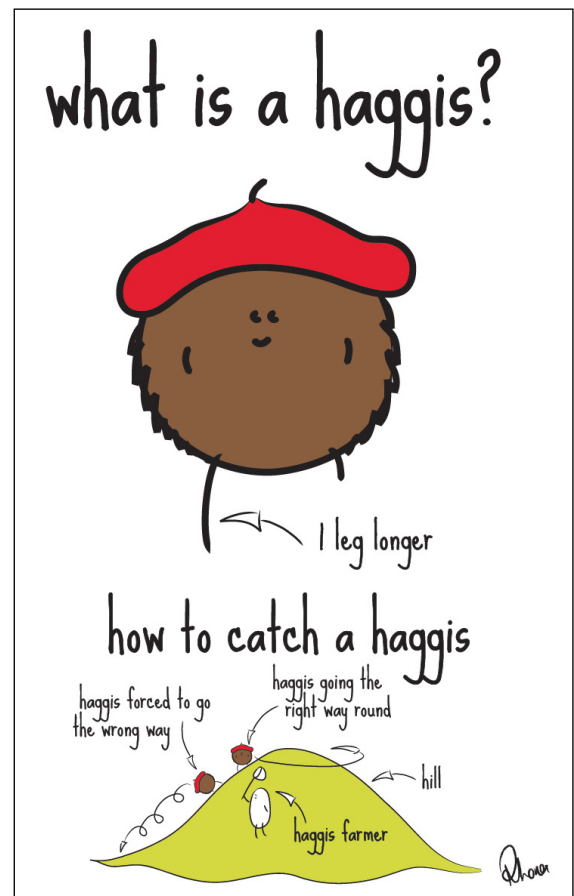
of the book that recounts the exodus from Egypt, which Jews read each year during their Passover celebration. In fact, there is a song always sung at this joyous festival, which goes “Had gad ya, had gad ya; my father bought for two zuzim; had gad ya.” this means, “Only one haggis, only one haggis; my father bought for two pennies; only one haggis.” The Hebrews may have eaten haggis during the 40 years in the desert, but when they had something better to eat, they forgot about haggis.

Cuddly not seen in zoos

The second definition in Webster’s refers to the brown furry animal, genus herbivores, species regurgitorium, that roams the highlands of Scotland. The lore of the haggis is vey rich. I cite for this research Andrew Webster, a kindly Scot, who frequently recited Burns’ “Address to the Haggis” for the Westchester Scottish Dance Society on similar occasions years ago. The haggis is a cute little animal that scampers around the Scottish Highlands. Since they are rarely seen in zoos, we are generally not aware of the physiological peculiarity of the haggi (the plural of haggis is haggi) — namely that their legs are shorter on one side of their bodies than the other. On the one hand, this makes them singularity well adapted to running around the hills. On the other hand, it has divided the species into two distinct groups, the shortleft group and the short right group. These are alternatively referred to as the anticlockwise group and the clockwise group, respectively. Thus the short left male must mate with the short right female. Occasionally, a short left mare (that is how the female is denoted) will give birth to a short right kitten. This is a tragedy, since the infant must be given up for adoption by a short right family or sees its parents only twice during each circuit of the mountain.

Haggis Bi-ped and Bi-sexual

There is another peculiarity of the haggis, namely they change sex every seven years. You can imagine the confusion this causes. Not only does the stag haggis have to find a mate of the same shortage group, but he has to find one born the same year as he was (or some multiple of seven years). Otherwise, when one of them undergoes its sexual transmutation, it is necessary for the two of them to find other mates. Haggis, although adorable animals, are not known for their brains, and stag or mare couples have been known to remain together for months before realizing something was amiss. An additional problem concerns resolving which of the two mares or two stags gets custody of the children.



For Halloween: We have the RSCDS published dance The Fairy Dance, in Book 3, to the tune Largo's Fairy Dance, by Nathaniel Gow, 1763-1831. The dance itself is apparently relatively modern, ca. 1900. Although with the ending as published the dance could be much older. Then we have this story about the fairies. – Ed.

The Fairy Ring – by Norm McCallum

[from the Newsletter of the Orange County Branch, March/April 2015]

What are the chances of dancing Iain Boyd's round-the-room dance "The Fairy Ring" and then staying in a cabin at 6,700 ft. with its own fairy ring? The cabin was near Bear Mountain and the fairy ring was a grass circle 6 feet around, ringed with white stones among pine needles and cones. It lay under Ponderosa pines and was a fine place to nap, if you were not bothered by sleeping above a fairy ring.

Having seen fairy circles and fairy hillocks in Scotland, I was leery of encroaching on this fairy ring as I remembered the dangers of doing so as described in this old Scottish rhyme:

The Fairy Ring

"He wha tills the fairies' green
Nae luck again shall hae
And he wha spills the fairies' green
Betide him want and wae
For weirdless days and weary nights
Are his 'till his deein' day
But he wha gaes by the fairy ring,
Nae dule nor pine shall see.
And he wha cleans the fairy ring
An easy death shall dee".

By the way, the Gaelic word for fairy is *sithean*, a word which is found in connection with knolls or hillocks, giving rise to eerie names such as *Sithean Mor* and *Sithean na Raplaich*. Passersby have heard piping, music and laughter from such places.

As a youngster, I spent summers at Portnahaven on the island of Islay which at that time still had many Gaelic speakers. Several times a day we walked to outlying crofts for milk and would pass mounds known to be fairy hillocks and I do recall little circles ringed with pebbles. There were also ancient ruined cottages which stood skeleton-like along our way and were so scary we would run furiously past them, often spilling the milk.

Fairie knolls and rings are dangerous places, as interlopers may offend fairies beneath and have spells cast on them. It is well-known that fairies live beneath fairy rings and knolls and many an unfortunate soul has been abducted and taken underground to live with the fairies. Robert Burns' poem "Tam Lin" was originally an old poem about a fairie demon who spirited a young maiden, Janet, away into the fairie kingdom beneath a fairie knoll.

Sir Compton MacKenzie's novel, *Hunting the Fairies*, is a humorous treatment of tourists in the Highlands searching for fairies and elves among fairy rings and knolls. They were urged to keep the fairies happy by leaving a wee dram or two of whisky each night beside the knoll. Sure enough, every morning the glasses would be empty, a sure sign the fairies had come and were pleased with the gifts.

Not all fairy rings are marked by stone. Many are ringed by flowers but most natural rings are caused by creepy organisms like toadstools and other fungi. Although there are scientific explanations for how these natural circles are formed by bacteria, spores and fungi, this is yet another good reason to stay away from fairy rings.

From: RSCDS BOSTON BRANCH
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

**COPY DUE DATE FOR THE JAN/FEB 2018 ISSUE IS DECEMBER 10TH.
PLEASE SEND MATERIAL FOR YOUR WINTER/SPRING EVENTS TO THE EDITOR.
DATES OF FUTURE EVENTS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR.
Note: Class Events flyers are limited to a half page: 8 1/2" wide by 5 1/2" long**

RSCDS Boston invites you to a
Scottish Country Dancing Workshop
In Brunswick, Maine

Led by **Howard Lasnik**
Music by Christine Anderson and Dave Arnold



Improve your Scottish country dancing by:

- developing better understanding of common steps and formations and transitions between them
- anticipating transitions
- using your hands and eyes, not just your feet, for transitions
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We hope to help you feel at ease and increase your enjoyment in dancing!

All dancers are welcome!

Saturday, November 4, 2017

Workshop: 1:30 to 3 p.m. – Social Dance: 3:15 to 4:30 p.m.

Topsham Grange Hall

47 Pleasant Street, Topsham, Maine (at the Brunswick Class location)

RSCDS Member \$10, Non-Member \$12

Contribution to refreshments welcome!



For further information, contact: Charles Liu (617) 216-5519 or charles.liu@alum.mit.edu
Brought to you by RSCDS Boston Teaching and Music Committee and the Brunswick Class