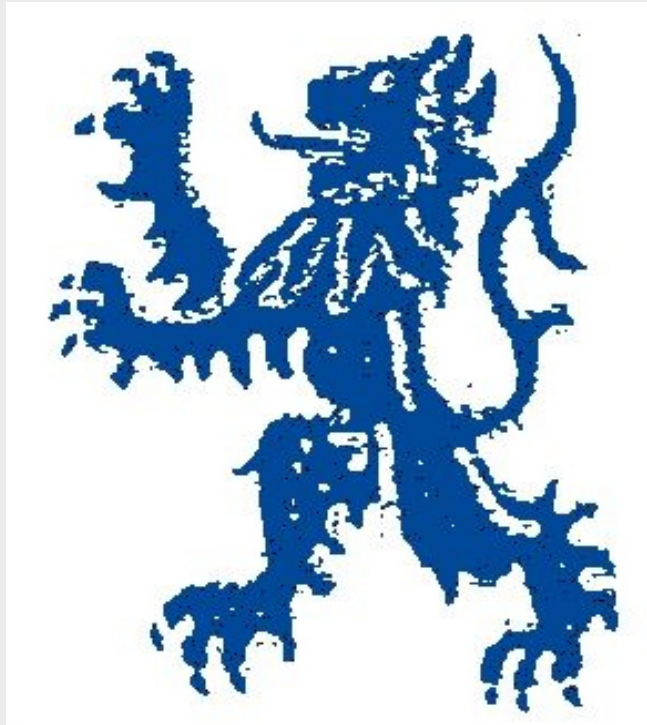


The Tartan Times

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*A publication of the Boston Branch of The
Royal Scottish Country Dance Society*

rscdsboston.org

A Note from the Editors

As we reported in a recent email to the membership, because of health issues, Cathy Fahey will not be able to take over as editor of the *Tartan Times*. Nikki Lauranzano, Cambridge Class member and creative writer, graciously (and enthusiastically) agreed to join Linda McJannet as co-editor for the foreseeable future.

As a reminder, beginning with this October issue, the *TT* will appear four times a year, and those who requested paper copies will still receive them. Fliers, save-the-date announcements, changes in class locations or times, etc., should now be sent to the Webmaster so they can be posted on the relevant web pages. You can also download the instructions and post and update your own event. Reminders can be circulated to everyone via email as you request. Event Coordinators: please post ensure your events are posted early! Dancers, please consult the Calendar (<https://rscdsboston.org/event-calendar.html>) for information about all Branch events!

Although Cathy could not take the reins as we hoped, by helping us reimagine the *TT*, she did the Branch a great service. Rather than reinforcing information already available on the website and sent via emails, we will seek out short pieces (250-500 words) on topics of interest to our community. This issue and those that follow will seek to realize Cathy's vision of the *TT* as a publication that informs, celebrates, and inspires our community.

(Editors' note cont on p3)

In this issue, Robert McOwen's contribution celebrates the inclusion of John Bowie Dickson's beloved Pinewoods Reel in RSCDS Book 53. Be sure to click on the link to the beautiful instructional video he and John Crabtree created for the main Society's website. Color-coordinated t-shirts and dresses enable viewers to identify the different couples. Both the dancers and the videographers did us proud!

Patti Tillotson contributes an informative account of Core Teacher Instruction (CTI), a program for teachers who wish to reflect upon their teaching and earn an RSCDS certification. Patti's fellow Brunswick Class member and teacher, Anne Johnson, recently completed the course under Robert McOwen's tutelage. She is the first Branch member to do so—well done, Anne and Robert.

Finally, Jen Schoonover shares insights from her wonderful book, *Dance Legacies of Scotland: The True Glen Orchy Kick*, published in 2021 by Routledge and co-authored with Mats Melin. (Many of us had the pleasure of meeting Mats at Pinewoods this summer). She and Mats seek to shed light on dances and dance styles (including but not limited to those developed by the RSCDS) based on manuscripts and first-person reports. They do so with a judiciousness born of bodily knowledge of the art they study. This article, like the other two, seems a trifecta that informs, celebrates, and inspires.

We will be delighted to hear from potential contributors—or about topics our readers would like to see discussed in future issues. In the meantime, welcome to the new *Tartan Times*! We hope you enjoy it, and we look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,

Linda McJannet and Nikki Lauranzano, Co-Editors
tartantimes@rscdsboston.org

Note: *Each issue of the TT will feature a different tartan border. If you'd like to know more about this issue's tartan, see page 17!*

Celebrating Pinewoods Reel

By Robert McOwen
Old Stow Town Hall, June 11th, 2023



Dancers for the videotaping (left to right): Laura DeCesare, Stephen Thomforde, Catherine Scannell, Charles Liu, Clara Stefanov-Wagner, Robert McOwen, Beth Birdsall, & Thom Howe

Pinewoods Reel (cont.)

As noted in the May/June edition of the Tartan Times, the RSCDS selected Pinewoods Reel to be included in Book 53, which came out this summer. The Society requested a videotape for the website. Andy Taylor-Blenis and I formed and rehearsed a team of dancers to perform for the videotaping at the Old Stow Town Hall. John Crabtree, our videographer, set up two cameras, an aerial view and one for ground level. The RSCDS webmasters did an excellent job of seamlessly integrating the two views.

The videos for all the dances in Book 53 can be seen at the link below. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iAlxJpwl0w&list=PLzsHuAqO3xGwe9yytS7E6RhVwMxV6OVFu>

Use the list of videos on the right to scroll through to find and see a lovely performance of the Pinewoods Reel! [Or Click Here](#)



John Crabtree, videographer

Since we were renting the Hall anyway, I thought it would be nice to hold a social dance after the taping to celebrate the event. With the Executive Board's approval, I asked Barbara McOwen to organize the music and MaryEllen Scannell to run the dance.

MaryEllen, Vickery Trinkhaus-Randall, Howard Lasnik, and Jeanetta McColl were the briefers for the seven-dance program.

Pinewoods Reel (cont.)

Each briefer told (often comic) stories about Pinewoods before they briefed their dances. This culminated in Jeanetta briefing of the Pinewoods Reel, preceded by her story about having been John Bowie Dickson's own partner for the debut demonstration of the dance at Pinewoods itself in 1969.



Jeanetta McColl, telling her story of the Pinewoods Reel

We had more than enough dancers for two 4-couple sets, and a bevy of musicians; including Susie Petrov on piano, Barbara McOwen, Catherine Miller, Debbie Jarvis, and Margaret Lepley on fiddles, Howard Lasnik on drums, and Stephen Thomford on bagpipes. It was a grand way to celebrate!

A few weeks later, Barbara and I were at the Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School in North Carolina, where I was one of the teachers. There, I met Luke Brady, one of the musicians and the music director for the publication of Book 53. At an afternoon event, Luke described pulling the new book together. From the beginning, the RSCDS wanted Book 53 to be a special publication, as it commemorates the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Society in 1923.

Pinewoods Reel (cont.)

They decided to involve the various Branches of the Society as much as possible, by asking each Branch to submit up to three dances and to evaluate the dances as part of the selection process. As the submissions came in, it was clear there two types: dances like Pinewoods Reel that were already popular but had never been published by the Society, and dances recently devised to commemorate the 100th anniversary.

The original plan was to publish twelve dances, the usual number, but the evaluations heavily favored the already popular dances. So in order to include enough new dances that celebrated the anniversary, the Society needed to expand the size of the book! Luke made the point that it was submissions like Pinewoods Reel that were responsible for doubling the size of **Book 53**. Yet another tribute to the signature dance of the Boston Branch!



Robert McOwen is well known in the global Scottish dance community as a teacher of Scottish country and highland dancing, co-founder of Highland Dance Boston, guitar and bass player and founding member (with his wife Barbara) of Tullochgorum, one of the first Scottish dance bands in Boston.

He is currently vice-chair of the Branch's Teaching and Music Committee. He recently retired from his position as Professor of Mathematics at Northeastern University.

Anne Johnson: The First CTI-Certified Boston Branch Teacher

By: Patti Tillotson, Brunswick Class



Photo occupants (left to right)
*Patti Tillotson, Merrill Henderson, Kate Babbitt, Anne Johnson,
Steve Spaeth, Sophia Adami-Sampson, Nina Beckwith, &
Rosemary Mason*

The First CTI-Certified Boston Branch Teacher (cont.)

As reported by Robert McOwen in the Tartan Times in 2021, the RSCDS has created Core Training for Instructors (CTI); a new program for those who aspire to teach Scottish Country Dancing. The program is designed for individuals who are interested in leading SCD groups, but who may not have the time, interest, or ability to pass the existing five-unit teacher training course offered by the Society. Such courses typically require a year of weekly candidates' classes with a local tutor and/or an intensive program at an RSCDS summer school in Scotland or Canada.

CTI, on the other hand, is a 1-on-1 mentorship between a "trainer", a fully certified teacher who has participated in CTI prep-training, and the "trainee".

The Society provides a list of participating trainers, and observations can be done remotely, so trainer and trainee need not be in the same geographic area - another plus. Once the pairs are arranged, the trainer observes the trainee teaching in their home environment and offers suggestions for improvement.



The First CTI-Certified Boston Branch Teacher (cont.)

The trainee's own dancing technique is not part of the evaluation. When the trainer feels the trainee is ready, a final teaching session is videotaped. If the trainer's recommendation is positive, the videotape is sent to the RSCDS, and the trainee receives a Statement of Proficiency as an RSCDS Instructor.

The Brunswick and Kennebunk, ME, classes are very proud to report that Anne Johnson, Member-at-Large of the Branch's Executive Committee and a Scarborough resident, just completed her training in the new program. She is the first person in the Boston Branch to receive the CTI certificate. Working with Robert McOwen as her trainer, primarily through Zoom, she spent a year and a half (with the summer off) working through the curriculum. The Brunswick and Kennebunk classes gave her opportunities to teach, and we are delighted that she can serve in the future as one of our instructors.

When asked to comment on her experience, Anne said: "I enjoyed the individualized experience of the training and the ability to complete it in my own time, fitting it into my busy schedule. Robert provided support and encouragement, and my class teachers and dancers made the process rich in experiences and fun at the same time!"

In addition to Robert, Branch teachers Charles Liu and Karen Sollins are certified to act as trainers. They are motivated by their love and dedication to SCD. As Charles put it, "We have many great dancers with deep knowledge and enthusiasm. It's a joy to help dancers to become great teachers." He likes being in a position to help prospective teachers, "to be even more effective in helping other dancers and promoting Scottish Country Dancing."

Editor's Note: With his permission, background information was adapted from Robert McOwen's 2021 report on the CTI program.

The First CTI-Certified Boston Branch Teacher (cont.)

Karen notes that, “The CTI program...is aligned with different teaching and learning styles, tuned to the individual. It puts primary emphasis on teaching in a real class, and it allows for a personalized teacher training experience.” She also looks forward to mentoring trainees in the future.

Congratulations and thanks to all the instructors (past and future) and to Anne for being the first Branch member to complete the CTI!

Interested in participating in CTI? For more information visit:
<https://rscds.org/learn/teacher-training/core-training-instructors-cti>



Patti Tillotson is the leader of the Brunswick, Maine Class, former member of the Executive Committee, former Bookstore Manager, and long-time dancer and teacher. Patti is also the owner of Thistles & Things in Harpswell, Maine, a gift store that specializes in Scottish items, including dance shoes and Celtic jewelry. She often brings her wares to Pinewoods and the brunch after the Highland Ball in May.



**DANCE LEGACIES OF
SCOTLAND**

THE TRUE GLEN ORCHY KICK

Mats Melin and Jennifer Schoonover



Insights from [Dance Legacies of Scotland](#)

By Jen Schoonover

They were shocked when I asked them not to point their feet. We danced Earl of Home as an up-tempo strathspey just as a team had danced it in 1935. I'll never forget the way the dancers beamed and shone as they jogged and skipped along, buoyant hearts driving the actions of the dance.

This may not be the strathspey you automatically envision. Usually, Scottish Country dancers are encouraged to extend sharply pointed toes while we dance to slower, smoother strathspeys.

Researching dance forms you have been trained in involves a degree of unlearning. While Mats Merlin and I collaborated on our book, [Dance Legacies of Scotland](#), published in 2021, we deliberately set assumptions about dance forms aside. We both have backgrounds in Scottish Country, Highland, and Step Dancing. These are taught as separate modalities today, but such distinctions were not so clear two hundred years ago.

Colonel Thomas Thornton wrote an evocative, fly-on-the-wall account of what he labeled Highland dancing in Dalmally, North Argyll, on October 9th, 1786. We step into the room via his words:

They were dancing a country-dance when we entered. The company consisted of about fourteen couple, who all danced the true Glen Orgue kick. I have observed that every district of the Highlands has some peculiar cut; and they all shuffle in such a manner as to make the noise of their feet keep exact time.

Insights from *Dance Legacies of Scotland*

(cont.)

Thornton's description of the ball he visited in western Scotland was published in 1804. One year later, Francis Peacock published reflections on the art of dancing following his long teaching career on the eastern side of the country. Peacock's book outlines philosophical reasons for why dance is important to all, as well as practical descriptions of the steps. At the end of the step descriptions, Peacock included the following advice about individuality:

"...you have it in your power to change, divide, add to, or invert, the different steps described, in whatever way you think best adapted to the tune, or most pleasing to yourself."

Dancing in Scotland two hundred years ago was clearly an expressive endeavor. However, the shuffling and improvising held up as hallmarks of the dancing of that time seem out of character with modern-day perceptions of Scottish dancing. To research this area, we needed to examine how Scottish dance evolved away from fostering varied expression of individual dancers and towards homogenized impression of technique by teachers and organizations.

Ironically, standardization of Scottish dancing in the twentieth century followed what has been categorized as an English model of dance education by Anne McKeen Stapleton, who compared early nineteenth-century dance manuals in her 2014 book, *Poined Encounters*. Scottish dancing masters' writings particularly highlight 'the importance of egalitarian education, adaptability, and personal expression,' while English dancing masters, through the 'rhetoric of science, math, and law [...] emphasize mastery and control.'

Insights from *Dance Legacies of Scotland*

(cont.)

Both impressive and expressive dance activities are beneficial. Practicing both pre-planned and spontaneous movements is constructive because both are important life skills. What sets dance apart in the realm of human movement, however, is the element of expression. Following the rules of a certain Scottish Country dance expresses that divisor's idea, but we can also express ourselves through the process of dancing. We may choose to take stronger steps when the music gets louder, approach gently when touch hands, or let loose down the middle and up. We can subtly shade how we move even while we follow the directions of a dance.

I understand that Miss Milligan made a point of not dotting every 'l' and crossing every 'T' in dance instructions so as to leave room for dancers to make personal choices. Expressing who you are and how you think and feel through your dancing is how you 'dance with your soul'. Scottish dancing masters valued such individuality. We can borrow this page from their manuals. If we follow our hearts when we dance, we won't ever have to be reminded to smile.



Jennifer Schoonover is a dancer, choreographer, and teacher of Scottish dance forms including highland, country dancing, and Cape Breton Step. Her interest in the history of Scottish dance has led her to research dances from non-competitive and non-standardized traditions; some of these are discussed in *Dance Legacies of Scotland: the True Glen Orchy Kick*. Jen's "Conditioning" classes at Pinewoods, which explore different points of origin from the primary elements of movement, are delightfully popular.

Mats Melin is a lecturer at the University of Limerick, Ireland. He has worked and performed extensively in Angus, Sutherland, the Scottish Highlands, the Hebrides, Orkney, and Shetland, promoting Scottish traditional dance in schools and communities.

(Biography transcribed from *Dance Legacies of Scotland: The True Glen Orchy Kick*)



This Times' Tartan

Pinewoods Jubilee

Designed by Joel LaMarre, Salem, MA
Day of the Tartan: July 10th **STA Ref#** 6818

This tartan was created to celebrate and commemorate the 50th anniversary (1953 to 2003) of Scottish dancing at the Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth, Massachusetts.



Color Representation

White - For the clouds and the cross of St. Andrew
Blue - For the waters of Long and Round ponds and the blue field on the Scottish flag
Azure - For the perfect summer day's sky
Black - For the ghillies on our feet and for the wood of the Highland Bagpipe
Purple - For the thistle, a Scottish icon
Green - For the canopy of pine trees
Yellow - Three golden stripes to represent the Jubilee years

Who's Who in the Boston Branch

Executive Committee

President - Linda McJannet - president@rscdsboston.org

Vice President - Marsha Byrnes

Secretary - Alena Taylor - secretary@rscdsboston.org

Treasurer - Cathy Crabtree - treasurer@rscdsboston.org

Members At Large - David Grubb, Ted Randolph, Connie Kent, Emily Russell, Kat Dutton, & Anne Johnson

Nominating Committee

Chair - Merrill Henderson

Members - MaryEllen Scannell & Ken Launie

Teaching & Music Committee

Chair - Debbie Jarvis

Vice Chair - Robert McOwen

Members - Laurie Somario, Marc Hartstein, MaryEllen Scannell, Jennifer Schoonover, & Susie Petrov

Note: Coordinators of the Highland Ball and of Pinewoods Scottish are ex-officio members of TMC

Branch Activity Coordinators

Membership & Directory - Anne Johnson - membership@rscdsboston.org

Equipment - Thomas Howe - equipment@rscdsboston.org

Bookstore - Laurie Somario - bookstore@rscdsboston.org

Webmasters - Meyer Billmers, Laura Billmers, & Matt Billmers - webmaster@rscdsboston.org

Tartan Times - tartantimes@rscdsboston.org

Co-Editors - Linda McJannet & Nikki Lauranzano

Circulation - John Crabtree

Who's Who in the Boston Branch

Branch Activity Coordinators (cont.)

Boston Scottish Country Dancers

Teacher - Andy Taylor-Blenis -

bscd_teacher@rscdsboston.org

Administrator - Laura DeCesare & Beth Birdsall

bscd_admin@rscdsboston.org

Mailing List & Database - John Crabtree

TAC Representative - Charles Liu

Youth Coordinator - Marsha Byrnes -

youthcoordinator@rscdsboston.org

Branch Event Coordinators

Fall 2023 Concert - Linda McJannet & Cathy Crabtree

Fall 2023 Concert Artist Director - Robert McOwen

Pinewoods Benefit Ball 2024 - MaryEllen Scannell

Highland Ball 2024 - MaryEllen Scannell & Sharon Gilmour -

highlandball@rscdsboston.org

Pinewoods Scottish 2024 - Keira Hartstein & Marc Hartstein

Summer's End 2023 (NH Highlands) - Roberta Lasnik

2024 Class Liasons

David Grubb - Fairlee, VT & Lancaster, NH

Ted Randolph - Albany, NY; Great Barrington, MA; & Northhampton, MA

Connie Kent - Chelmsford, MA; Salem, MA; & Stow, MA

Emily Russel - Bedford, MA

Kat Dutton - Cambridge, MA

Anne Johnson - Belfast, ME; Brunswick, ME; Bucksport, ME;

Kennebunk, ME; Greenland, NH; & Nashua, NH

Note: Branch members can find more contact information in the member directory:

<https://rscdsboston.org/membersonly/MemberDirectory2022-2023.pdf>

Meet Your Editors!



Linda McJannet discovered Scottish dancing as a diplomat's child in Bangladesh and has been dancing in Boston since 1981. In 2016, she retired from Bentley University, where she taught writing and Shakespeare to business majors, and now writes about Shakespeare and dance. She is currently a member of the Boston Scottish Country Dancers and the President of the Branch.

Nikki Lauranzano is a creative writer of transformative fanworks and other genres. To fuel her hobbies and feed the cats, she's a corporate manager for a home security alarm company. She has been dancing with the Cambridge Class for a year and is eager to be more involved with the Branch community.

