

## **Boston Branch of the Royal Scottish Dance Society**

### **Minutes of the Executive Committee**

August 27, 2014

**Present:** Betty Allen, Dale Birdsall, John Crabtree, Susan Haines, Alex Hall, Bob Littlehale, Linda McJannet, Jeremy Thorpe

**Guest:** Kendra Eshleman, Sara Pokrass

**Not Present:** Kat Dutton and Merrill Henderson

1. Minutes from the July 30, 2014 meeting – Corrections were made as follows: the number of empty beds at ESS was actually 23, not 43, and Jerome Fung’s name was misspelled. The minutes were approved with these corrections.
2. Treasurer’s Report (Bob) – The main checking account is at \$21, 851.64 and the Lloyds account is at \$704.71 for a total of \$22,556.35. The loss from ESS was \$7,999.31, while Scottish Sessions had a loss of \$1,369.93. Some camper musicians need to be paid, plus there are a few other expenses to be resolved. Due to donations from the Friday Welcome Party, some money may be returned.
3. Reports from Liaisons –
  - a) Fall Concert (John) – The tickets are on-sale, available on the Branch web site, the flyers have been printed, and 600 post cards will be available for distribution.
  - b) Highland Ball (Bob) – Co-chair Sara Pokrass was present for her report/update.
    - The main problem with the 2014 Ball concerned the catering. Sara and Ed Pokrass and Bob Littlehale met with the caterers to work out the issues. The caterers will give us a price break and will be adding extra wait staff. The caterers charge for actual numbers, not a set cost or a minimum number.
    - Sara is awaiting a few replies and will then work on the flyer, applications, and getting the information together for the web site. She will be e-mailing last year’s attendees with information concerning the earlier date and other details.
    - The goal for this year is a culminating, grand party for the Branch with photos of the “fun” things that occur in the Branch throughout the year.
    - Sara and Ed will be creating the budget, based off last year’s prices and incorporating any price changes. There may be people who would opt out of the meal in favor of a “Ball only” option. The goal would be for people to sign up for dinner and the Ball. Because there are only 125 seats for

dinner, there will be a line added to the application suggesting, "If there is a sell out on dinner seats, would you be interested in a dance only ticket."

- Sara reports that the application process is "insane" and asked about an on-line payment and application process. There are options, but the question is how we actually get the money and how long it would take to receive it.
- c) Pinewoods Benefit Ball (Betty) – Betty reports that she has reached out to Hannah but has not heard from her. She has been reminded that a budget is needed for the September Exec. Meeting. Jeremy will try contacting her.
- d) ESS Pinewoods (Susan) – Exec. went into Executive Session for this discussion.

Jeremy had talked with Judy Erickson of CDS Boston and will meet in September with Judy Savage from Pinewoods Camp, Inc. (PCI) and others. Of all the sessions at Pinewoods, nine involve English Dancing. ESS is not in our By-Laws, so we are under no obligation to sponsor it. We do provide insurance coverage (\$2080 for Pinewoods ESS and Scottish Sessions), but many of the attendees at ESS are not members of the RSCDS. Several years of losses from ESS have been quite detrimental to us, but we have had very little control over them. Hopefully, CDS will pay half of this year's loss (approximately \$4000 from CDS).

RSCDS has been decreasing expenses, but our funds are being cut each year and the rates to Headquarters keep increasing.

Pinewoods policy changed several years ago, so we are obligated to pay for a minimum of 115 whether or not they are filled.

There are other groups who would like space at camp, and PCI is looking at extending their season, earlier in the spring/summer and later into the fall. PCI is asking the four user groups before opening the new weeks up to other groups.

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved that the Boston Branch would not support ESS in its current form, but, if ESS does move forward, we would be willing to share/partner with anybody to produce an alternative session.

What that alternative session would look like is still to be determined. It could be a British Isles week to perhaps include Irish, CDS, Welsh, and RSCDS. Or, maybe it could be a Scottish session to include families with children. A Task Force is needed to do some research. Several people were suggested to serve on the Task Force.

A meeting will be schedule for Jeremy, Bob, Linda McJannet, and Beth Birdsall (any or all of them) with Judy Savage sometime in the next couple of weeks. Another meeting with Judy Erickson is also needed.

- e) Scottish Sessions Pinewoods (Linda) – Linda and Beth Birdsall have been brainstorming ideas for themes and other things. Linda also informed Exec. that she has a commitment on July 11, 2015 but that Dale and Polly Birdsall have graciously agreed to assist Beth at that time.

With the discussions concerning available weeks at Pinewoods, would we consider moving out of the July time? The answer is “No.”

- f) New Hampshire Highlands (Susan) – The weekend just occurred with 77 campers and 3 children attending. We are awaiting the results of the evaluations and will then start planning for next year.
- g) Branch Activities at New Hampshire Highland Games (John) – There will need to be some discussion about this for next year.
- h) Teaching and Music Committee (Betty) – The dances taught at Pinewoods have been posted on the Branch web site along with other documents and the new set of Core Dances. Gregor Trinkaus-Randall and Evelyn Murray will be working on the Highland Ball program, while Robert McOwen and Roberta Lasnik will do the Pinewoods Benefit Ball program. There was a brief discussion of perhaps doing the Pinewoods Benefit Ball as an afternoon dance as was done a few years ago.  
Betty Allen is working on a budget for the Candidates Class.  
A member-at-large representative is still needed, and Jeremy will be calling a suggested candidate.
- i) *Tartan Times* (Kat) – Evelyn and Barbara have had their struggles but are working out a system for working through putting the *Tartan Times* together. One problem is with fliers that are sent as documents and not as pdf files. The artwork and colorful borders sometimes do not transfer in the documents. Barbara is working on the re-designs of the cover and is getting more comfortable with adding photographs and fliers. Also, when there are changes to the Who’s Who, that information needs to be relayed to Evelyn and Barbara. There may be some challenges with getting the next edition together as both Evelyn and Barbara have some conflicts.  
There was some discussion concerning the cost of printing and mailing out the *Tartan Times*. Only three Branch members request a paper copy and about fifty are sent to other branches and countries. We could save \$400 if we were to stop mailing them. A vote was taken and Exec. decided to no longer mail the *Tartan Times*. Perhaps Kat could have this Discussion with Peter Tandy, Cal Perham, and Marcie Rowland.
- j) Demonstration Team (Alex) – The team is coming back from hiatus and will be rehearsing for the November Concert. The dances have been determined, and the music should be recorded any day now.

k) Membership (Dale) – MaryEllen and John Scannell have been working to make the Branch database compatible with Headquarters technology. As of August 25, 2014, there are 55 regular memberships, 16 benefactors, 9 sustaining members, 1 limited income, 14 associate members, and 13 members who paid \$10 for the *Tartan Times* for a total of 108. The good news is that so far, only 4 people have tried to join twice.

l) Web Site and Publicity (Kat) – The webmasters report that they have posted the Fall Concert page earlier than planned due to Susie Petrov’s radio spot concerning the Concert and the need for her to be able to properly publicize it.

They have also put up an online form for submitting membership applications. The form send an e-mail message to the webmasters, the applicant, and the membership chair and reminds the applicant to send payment to the membership chair.

The webmasters report that the new digital *Tartan Times* is much improved, but it is still a work in progress. One issue to be resolved is the proofreading particularly in relation to event dates. The dates in the *Tartan Times* and those on the website often disagree.

m) Bookstore (Merrill) – Mike and Dawn Little report that they had a successful bookstore at New Hampshire Highlands with Jean Farrington staffing it for them. They sold out of much of the “new” book and CD inventory and will place another order. They are trying to find sources to round the bookstore inventory out a bit. The bookstore will travel next to the Brunswick Party on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Lastly, they are working on updating the database for the Boston Branch website.

n) Class Liaisons –

➤ Brunswick, ME (Merrill) – The class starts up on Thursday September 4<sup>th</sup>. The Annual Fall Class Dance Party will be held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, and they are hoping that a lot of Boston people will be able to attend. The flier and dance notes are posted on the website.

The Brunswick Demo group danced at the Maine Highland Games, dancing on the Parade Field in the morning and then led one of two workshops with audience participation. They also set up an information booth with fliers of the Maine classes and other displays.

➤ Kennebunk, ME (Merrill) – The class starts up again on Sunday September 7<sup>th</sup>.

➤ Belfast, ME (Merrill) – No report at this time.

➤ Greenland, NH (Merrill) – Plans are under way to do a beginner class in September and then a 6-week course in October and November, leading up to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Dance. The classes will be held on

Tuesday at the church. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Dance, so they are hoping for a good turnout of Boston Branch dancers.

➤ Montpelier, VT (Dale) – The class is starting on September 10<sup>th</sup> offering two sessions of 9 and 10 classes respectfully. The price is \$32 for residents and \$48 for non-residents or \$5 and \$7.50 for a single class.

➤ Fairlee, VT (Dale) – The Fairlee Class does not hold regular classes during the summer, but four member attended Pinewoods, and the recently performed a demonstration for a community organization, The New Hampshire Branch of the Good Sam Club. Two dancers also attended New Hampshire Highlands.

The Fairlee Autumn Social will be on Saturday October 11<sup>th</sup> with music by Susie Petrov and Laura Risk (and possibly an appearance by Nick Williams). This is an afternoon event, and they look forward to seeing many fellow dancers.

➤ Salem, MA (Dale) – The Salem class has hosted most of the Candidates working on Level 2.

There were 2 to 3 sets for the summer classes, including 4 new class members. June and July, live music was performed by Dirk Tiede. He will continue to play when work allows.

The Salem April Party is scheduled for March 28, 2015, the date being decided after discussions with other classes who hold April or May class parties.

Salem also plans to host another Burns Supper in January 2015.

➤ Nashua, NH (Linda) – No report at this time.

➤ Brookline, MA (Kat) – Jean Farrington will be the contact person, and dancing starts again on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

➤ Cambridge, MA (Kat) – The Cambridge Class had good attendance during August with several new people and a strong beginner class. The teachers included Charles Liu, Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, Holly Sherman, and Dale Birdsall, and band leaders included Susie Petrov, John Chambers, and Barbara McOwen. August 18<sup>th</sup> was a special evening with Douglas Lawrence on fiddle and guest teacher Holly Sherman. Barbara McOwen put together a great band for the evening with Anne Hooper, Catherine Miller, Terry Traub, and Robert McOwen.

In order to cover weekly running costs, admission fees will be increasing by \$1 to \$9 plus \$5 for students, starting in September.

The class will be continuing with outreach to attract new members by

participating in the Watertown Town Day “Faire on the Square” later in September and will also sponsor “bring a friend for free” in September.

- Great Barrington, MA (Alex) – No report at this time.
  - Northampton, MA (Alex) – No report at this time.
  - Albany, NY (Alex) – Plans are underway for the Annual Fall Frolic. Music will be provided by the Pearlmans, and Dale Birdsall is leading a dance workshop.
  - Stow, MA (Betty) – No report at this time.
  - Chelmsford, MA (Betty) – The class met through July and August, including a full set on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. They also report 40 in attendance at the August Ice Cream Social and will re-apply for a music subsidy.
  - Newton, MA (Betty) – No report at this time.
4. Old Business – Discussions on the ESS action group and the TMC member-at-large are outlined in the aforementioned areas of this document.
5. New Business –
- a) Pinewoods planning meeting representatives – Discussed above under ESS Pinewoods.
  - b) Branch Communication Strategies (Jeremy) –
    - i. Committee mailing lists – Jeremy suggested setting up mailing lists for committees and classes with the ability to easily add or delete names and would like Karen Sollins to work with the webmasters.
    - ii. Facebook page – The page has been under-utilized.
    - iii. Boston Branch wiki – There has been a bottleneck of information, but with a series of wiki pages that multiple people could edit, this information could be made more readily available.
6. Next Meetings –
- a) September 24 – at Jeremy’s
  - b) October 29 – at John’s

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Haines