



From the Chair...



John Clark

December 13 was the Family Night Christmas dance and what a success! We had many from the Rosedale class, quite a few from beginners' classes, and a great showing from our

members. I believe this is the favourite dance of the year. Of course, we were blessed with the wonderful music of Scotch Mist. Thank you to everyone who by their presence and joy made this occasion so wonderful.

In the New Year, we reflect on the past year and think of friends who have left us, and of new friends we have made throughout the dance community.

We have a great opportunity to bring this joy of dance to others, so I ask that one of your 2015 resolutions be that you invite one non-dancer to try Dance Scottish. Some social groups will be happy to get them started if they can't attend either of the beginner classes. What a thoughtful stocking stuffer it would be to give the gift of dance.

Video links are on our website, dancescottish.ca, so that you can review the dances for the program on January 10, 2015. Please come and support us.

I know the teachers will be preparing us for the upcoming 52nd Tartan Ball on February 21. At the Family Night dance, Laurie McConachie, Chair of the Tartan Ball Committee, announced that the Guest of Honour will be Michelle Dubé. What a great job she did getting Michelle to join us. Michelle and her husband Mark are learning to dance as well.

Michelle is co-anchor of CTV News, so if you haven't sent in your order for tickets yet, do so because here is a great opportunity to meet a charming young lady.

Congratulations to Anne MacKinnon, who won the Early Bird Draw for a room at the Royal York on the night of Ball.

On behalf of our family, I wish you and your families all the best in 2015.

Michelle Dubé Our 2015 Tartan Ball Guest of Honour

We are pleased to announce that Michelle Dubé will be our Guest of Honour at the 52nd Tartan Ball. Michelle was named co-anchor of CTV News Toronto in September 2012. Since then she has become a familiar face on both the *News at Six* and *News at Noon* programs, alongside Ken Shaw. She first joined CTV News in April 2009 as reporter and fill-in anchor.



Michelle recently married Mark Ferguson, whose family has strong Scottish roots – Mark's parents were born in Scotland. His father came from Paisley while his mother, Anne Ferguson, hails from Glasgow and is an active Scottish country dancer in Hamilton, Ontario. Michelle and Mark are excited about the Ball and keen to share the Tartan Ball dance floor with us.

Michelle started her reporting career with CHCH in Hamilton in 2007. She soon started anchoring weekend newscasts and then became co-anchor of the evening news program. At that point the bilingual journalist (she speaks French and English) was one of the youngest news anchors in Canada.

In 2013, the Women's Executive Network recognized Michelle with the "Most Powerful Women Top 100 Award" in the Future Leaders category. Since she joined CTV, Michelle's stories have been featured on both local and national newscasts, covering an impressive range of issues. She has interviewed US talk show queen, Oprah Winfrey, conquered the CN Tower Edgewalk on live TV, and reported from a highway brought to a glacial halt by a raging snowstorm in southwestern Ontario.

Michelle was born in California but moved as a child to Hamilton and now calls Toronto home.



... Laurie McConachie, Tartan Ball Convenor

The Tartan Ball Wants You

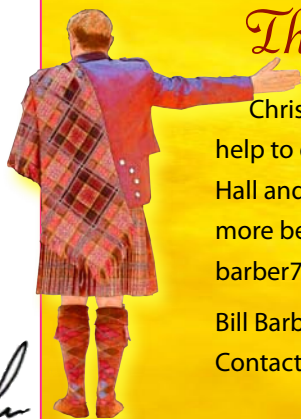
Christy Barber and the Ball Decorating Committee need your help to decorate the Concert Hall. We meet at 9 a.m. in the Concert Hall and have coffee and treats while we make the room even more beautiful. To help, please contact Christy at:

barber72@sympatico.ca

Bill Barber, Chief Marshal, needs line marshals for the evening.

Contact Bill Barber at: william.barber054@sympatico.ca.

... Laurie McConachie, Tartan Ball Convenor



The 52nd Tartan Ball

Date & Time: Saturday, February 21, 2015 (Reception @ 5:30)
Place: Fairmont Royal York Hotel
Music: Scotch Mist

Miss Bennet's Jig	8x32 J	RSCDS Book 20/3
Monymusk	8x32 S	RSCDS Book 11/2
Jessie's Hornpipe	8x32 R	RSCDS Book 8/9
The Flight of the Falcon	8x32 J	Anniv. Tensome
Dancing for Pleasure	3x40 S	TAC 50th Anniv.
Glastonbury Tor	8x32 R	RSCDS Book 47/11
Interval		
Rodney's Rant	8x32 J	Diamond Jubilee/4
Pleasure is Mine	6x32 S	Goldring G&S
The Fairbridge Reel	3x48 R	RSCDS Book 45/10
Inverary	8x32 S	MMM/35
Starlight	8x32 R	RSCDS Book 44/1
Interval		
The Luckenbooth Brooch	8x32 J	Glendarroch Sh28
The Flower of Glasgow	3x32 S	RSCDS Book 46/9
Georgie's Jig	4x32 J	RSCDS Leaflet 32
Where Friends Meet	8x32 S	Magic Medicine
Bratach Bana	8x32 R	Bon Accord Book
Extras		
The Scots Bonnet	8x32 J	RSCDS Book 10/9
The Banks of Allen	6x32 J	MMM/3
First Love	8x32 S	Let's All Dance, Too

At the Tartan Ball, please consider those who are allergic to perfumes.

Thank You! Thank You!

What a pleasure to have so many attend the Family Night Dance on December 13! We had a grand total of 179. We had many beginners attending their first dance, nervous, but ready to do their best (see picture on page 3); youngsters bringing their energy and exuberance to the floor; and experienced dancers ready and willing to help.

The music by Scotch Mist was great, as usual – and we had a visit from Santa Claus, who was in top form. It was a wonderful evening.

The Early Bird Draw for a room at the Royal York Hotel the night of the Tartan Ball was won by Anne MacKinnon and the 50/50 draw was won by Pat Asada. Congratulations to both.

The next Monthly Dance is 8 p.m. on January 10, again at Crescent School, with music by Scotch Mist. I hope to see many of you there.

The Monthly Dance committee thanks everyone for adhering to the rule of wearing proper shoes in the gym, and again we remind you this will be an ongoing policy.

...Forbes Duncan



The poussette in The Punch Bowl was uplifting!

Special Events

Broadlands: Hugh Foss "Song" Dances with Teresa Lockhart



Sunday, January 18 ~ 2 - 4 p.m. ~ \$5/dancer
Broadlands CC, 19 Castlegrove Blvd., Don Mills

Hugh Foss was a cryptographer at Bletchley Park and helped crack the Japanese codes. The eccentric, bearded Foss always wore sandals and American allies called him "Lend-Lease Jesus". Teresa will decrypt his newly republished *Dances*

To Song Tunes. Great music! (Intermediate/Advanced dancers).

South Simcoe Valentine Workshop

Saturday, February 14 ~ 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. ~ \$35/dancer

Knox Presbyterian Church, 180 King St. S., Alliston



Bring your loved one to Alliston for a workshop with Moira Korus and Lou Emslie. We'll have music by Laird Brown and Don Wood, and a country lunch. 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. A Tea Dance follows at 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Contact: Irene Wilson 705 435 2361.

30th Annual West End Workshop

Saturday, March 28, 2015

Turner Fenton Secondary School, Brampton



Teachers: Ron Wallace (California), Scott Reid (Hamilton), Keith Bark (Mississauga).

Musicians: Don Bartlett, Laird Brown, Fred Moyes
 Cost: \$58 Workshop, lunch and Tea Dance, \$30 Youth, \$20 Tea Dance only. Ron will also teach Erin Mills, Friday, March 27 and a Teachers' Workshop

Sunday, March 29. Contact: theresamalek@rogers.com

46th Annual West Toronto Ball

Saturday May 9, 2015

Columbus Event Centre, Lawrence Avenue West & Dufferin Street

Save the date for the West Toronto Ball. NEW LOCATION — The 2015 West Toronto Ball will be held at the beautiful Columbus Centre at Lawrence Avenue West and Dufferin. (www.columbuseventcentre.com) Music by Scotch Mist.

Special Tartan Ball Practices

Prepare for the event of the year at these special Ball-centric sessions. \$6/evening at each venue. All are welcome.

Calvin: Three Sessions

Tuesdays, January 20, 27 & February 3 ~ 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Avenue (Yonge & St Clair)

Jan 20: Last 5 dances • Jan 27: Middle 5 dances • Feb 3: First 6 dances

Glenview: Two Sessions

Wednesdays, February 11 & 18 ~ 8 p.m.

Glenview Presbyterian Church, 1 Glenview Ave. (Lawrence & Yonge)

• Feb 11: 1st half of the Ball programme; Feb 18: 2nd half of programme
 Go through the complete ball programme over the two-week period.
 Info: www.glenviewscd.org or Ron Coffin: coffin5494@yahoo.ca

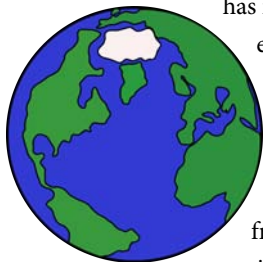
St Clement's: Tartan Ball Run-through

Monday, February 16 ~ 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Bishop Strachan School, 298 Lonsdale Road, Forest Hill

Test your Tartan Ball readiness with a run-through of the programme, top to bottom. Have a fun night of dancing while reviewing the dances.

RSCDS International Branch



The International Branch (IB) is a branch like any other, except it has no set geographic location and it's organized entirely electronically. Anyone can join. Keith and I are newsletter members as our formal membership is with the Toronto Association. IB was originally formed to provide a home branch for those dancers who lived too far from any local branch. At one point it was considered to be a replacement for headquarters members, although these are still in existence.

The branch has a large international membership, which is reflected in the articles that appear in its newsletter, published every quarter. According to the September 2014 edition, members have attended a Commonwealth Ceilidh in Hawaii, a music workshop in Lisbon (Portugal), and summer schools in Colorado (TAC), Massachusetts (Pinewoods), and St Andrews (Scotland).

IB holds social get-togethers at various summer schools. We attended one in Colorado this summer, hosted by two IB members.

Each year on the Saturday of the RSCDS AGM, the Branch organizes a lunch meeting. This year at the AGM in Perth, Keith and I attended the lunch, meeting with dancers we have come to know over the last 14 years.

The branch runs weekends and workshops in different countries. Coming in May 2015 is a weekend in Copenhagen, Denmark. Our applications are in already!

They are excellent at sending timely information to all their members, thus keeping us in touch with dancers world-wide.

The branch has been in existence for ten years and to celebrate is publishing an anniversary book of dances. These are being tested at this time and the eventual book with either be available electronically or possibly in printed form.

... Deirdre MacCuish Bark

Visit International Branch at www.rscds-ib.org

Association Classes

All classes run for 10 weeks, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. and cost \$100. Please note, all dancers, except first term beginners, must be members of the Toronto Association. Cheques are payable to "RSCDS Toronto". Contact: Glenna MacDonald 416 763- 0073 glenna.macdonald@sympatico.ca or the Class Reps.

Level 1 Beginner Classes: for inexperienced dancers

Mondays: St. Leonard's Anglican Church
25 Wanless Ave. (2 min from Lawrence Station, off Yonge)
Jan. 5 – Mar. 16, 2015 (no class Feb. 16, Family Day)
Teacher: Barbara Taylor
Class Rep: Cheryl Catt 416 484 9620 cherylcatt47@gmail.com

Thursdays: Eastminster United Church
310 Danforth Ave. (2 min from Chester Station on Danforth Line)
Jan. 8 – Mar. 12, 2015
Teacher: Maureen Richardson
Class Rep: Margaret Roper 416 285 0367

Level 2 Mastery Classes: for dancers wishing to improve knowledge of basic formations, and expand their dance experience

Thursdays: Eastminster United Church
310 Danforth Ave. 2 min from Chester station
Jan. 9 – Mar. 13, 2015
Teacher: May Divers
Class Rep: Margaret Roper 416 285 0367

Another Profitable Year!

At the November Toronto Workshop dancers again were also invited to shop - for Toronto Association T-shirts, dance books, and at the "Gently Used Clothing Boutique". There were bargains galore to search through, all for rock bottom prices. Happy customers went away smiling, pleased with their new treasures. As a result of the selling expertise of our team — Sue Ann Bryce, Evelyn and John Holmberg — we took in \$1375.00, including Mr. Harper's HST.



We still have a good selection of Bonnie Prince Charlies, kilts, and tartan skirts. Robbie Burns Day is coming up. Arrange an appointment with Margaret.

As people were generous in their donations (and *do* start thinking ahead about donating), and the committee had such fun, they are willing to stage the 6th Gently Used Clothing Sale at the next Toronto Workshop in November 2015.

... Margaret Rieger 416 467-9083

50-50 Draw

Proceeds from 50/50 draws at Monthly Dances support Dancing In The Park.

At the December 13 dance Pat Asada won \$154.



Some of the folk from Beginner Classes who came to dance at the December Family Christmas

Piping for Dance: A Piper's Point of View

Pipe Major (Master Warrant Officer) Iain Lang, CD 48th Highlanders of Canada
Iain Lang first learned the pipes from his father, James Lang, starting in 1977. Since 1982 Iain's been a member of the 48th Highlanders of Canada Pipes and Drums and he is now Pipe Major. He also piped with the Band of the Ceremonial Guard, Ottawa and at the Canadian Forces Music Centre Detachment Borden as Senior CF Pipe Major, and CF Piping Instruction Coordinator. He has instructed pipers privately and in groups since 1987. At St Andrew's College, Aurora, he taught beginner pipers in the Middle School Arts Program, and intermediate pipers in the Junior Cadet Pipe Band. In 2012 Iain became accredited to adjudicate solo piping contests in North America.



PIPE MAJOR Iain Lang

Nothing can beat live music, especially for dancing. Flexibility is much greater and the atmosphere of the hall is filled with vibrations of the instruments and steady pulse of the dancers' feet on the floor. Piping for dancing, be it Highland, Scottish country, or ceilidh, is no exception. The energy of a night of dancing is felt by both the dancers and the musicians.

I have been playing for dancing with the 48th Highlanders of Canada Pipes and Drums since I joined in 1982 and as the Pipe Major since 2007. We perform for dancing several times a year, the biggest event being the St Andrew's Society Charity Ball at the Royal York in November each year where the pipe band provides the ballroom with music for ceilidh dancing (and a few Scottish country dances) for the entire night. We also play for dancing at smaller events for regimental balls and dinners throughout the year. Sometimes the piping is provided by a band or just one piper.

Piping for dancing, especially ceilidh and Scottish country, is not as common a gig for a piper or pipe band as one might imagine. More commonly, a ceilidh band features accordions, fiddles, keyboards, and drums. Many pipe bands and pipers have no experience piping for any kind of dancing. Commonly now, Highland dancers choreograph a dance to the band's music rather than the band providing music for set dances. Often the performers dance

to recorded music rather than live music to ensure the tempos are consistent with what they have rehearsed.

Bagpipes have a long tradition of providing music for all forms of dancing. From early beginnings, pipers played music for Highland dancers of Scottish Regiments and at local competitions. Pipers also regularly supplied music at community dances that were the beginnings of the ceilidh and Scottish country dancing of today. Some of the dances are named after famous regiments, historical battles and events, and even after items of daily rural life. But, over the years, the fiddle has often taken away the job the piper used to do at these dances.

Pipe music has developed as an art form driven more by piping competitions than playing for dancing. In the early days, many top pipers were also competitive Highland dancers. Great 19th century pipers such as John MacColl, D.C. Mather, and Angus MacPherson balanced equally successful dancing and piping careers, eventually concentrating on their work in piping. Much of the early compositions were used for dancing at community dances. However, as the music developed for competition, tunes became more intricate and now competition reels are often not suitable to play for dancing.

Piping for dancing requires some knowledge of the dances. Different levels (standards) of dancers require different tempos for the dances and pipers must aim to produce a steady and appropriate musical accompaniment to the dance. Tempo is the most important attribute. Jigs and reels are normally played between 108-120 beats per minute. In bands, the drummers are the metronomes and keep the tempo steady throughout the night.

When piping for ceilidh dancing, the dancers usually continue until the pipes stop, leaving the dancers at the mercy of the pipers. Therefore, pipers need to know the length of the dances to be able to provide music that will satisfy the number of steps and the number of repetitions of a particular dance.

Dances are described by their music type, length, and number of repetitions. A strathspey which has 32 bars and is danced 8 times will be described as an eight by thirty-two strathspey; the written form will often be shortened to 8x32 S to fit on a dance card or programme. These help the piper determine how many tunes and how many times to play a set of tunes to satisfy the dance.

Although most dances are 32 bars (what most would call measures) repeated 8 times through, there are many variations. If not specified, a good length for the 16-bar dances is probably 4-6 times 32 bars (i.e., 8-12 times through the dance). For 32-bar dances such as *The Dashing White Sergeant*, it would be 6-8 times through. Set dances like *Strip the Willow* continue until the original couple is back to the top (should be roughly 8x32 for a 4-couple set).

Piping for one or two dances is not a gruelling job. Piping for an entire night of dancing can be an exercise in stamina for the pipers and a trial of their repertoire to keep the music interesting and non-repetitive. Simple marches in 2/4 and 6/8 time can be substituted instead of reels to help provide more variation in repertoire and to allow the tempo to be maintained more easily.

Piping for dancing can be great fun. Seeing people enjoy the music, and providing traditional music for a traditional Scottish activity, and knowing the culture is being perpetuated and enjoyed like many have done in the past, is also a satisfying feeling. In the 48th Highlanders, it is a tradition to use the pipers for entertainment including dancing, and it is a pleasure to share our tradition with the events that ask us to provide pipers for dance music.

...PM Iain Lang

David Pogson: Through the Eyes of Experience

Arthur David Neil Pogson:

January 23, 1920 — December 23, 2014

We send condolences to David's family. David served in the Royal Navy from 1939 in various war theatres and retired as a Lieutenant-Commander in September, 1956. A month later, David, Jean, and their dog KoKo packed bags and sailed for Canada, where they took up Scottish country dancing; and made long-lasting friendships. David was Chair of RSCDS Toronto from 1969 to 1971.

David's final request was that well-wishers raise a glass to speed him on his way to join his late wife, Jean (who died February 8, 2011).

On November 24, 2014, Donald Holmes of the Set & Link committee visited with David, who was pleased to share these reminiscences of RSCDS Toronto.



From its inception, the Tartan Ball had been a hugely popular, elegant occasion where the dances were announced by name only. With a limited repertoire of familiar dances and standard formations, the emphasis was on dancers knowing the dances and being able to have fun and socialize between dances. Over time he has, as he says "softened my position." He thinks we now do need briefing at the Tartan Ball because of so many modern dances, new or unfamiliar formations, and dancers without a SCD background. He maintains his belief that competitions are good for children because they enjoy competition, and he is pleased that medal tests are now being offered to children.



David's dance career began in the Barracks of the Royal Navy in Chatham, England, where an officer asked if anyone would be interested in SCD. It was deemed "funny dancing and there was no skip change of step involved". He and his wife Jean joined Professor John Wevers' class at Don Mills in the 1960s. Subsequently, they danced with East York and they were on one of Bob Millar's demonstration teams. Incidentally, one of these demonstration teams consisted of vertically challenged people! Upon Bob Millar's retirement, David and Jean joined Newtonbrook. After Jean's death, he stopped dancing and, in retrospect, regrets that decision because it cut him off from the camaraderie, friendship, and wealth of support so freely offered by Scottish country dancers.

The surname "Pogson" is of early medieval English origin, derived from the mother's lineage—one of only a few names that do. Its first recorded spelling was in 1440 in *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sheffield Manorial Records*. At 94 years of age, David is astute, articulate, and a delightful conversationalist.

... Donald E. Holmes

[David read this article one week prior to his death—and he loved it. On January 3rd, Donald read this article as David's eulogy at the funeral]

Shiftin' Bobbins' St. Andrew's Celebration Dance

Saturday night traffic gridlock did not deter over 50 dancers from Toronto and points beyond Hamilton all the way east to Kingston to celebrate St. Andrew's Night at Grace Church-on-the Hill, home of the Shiftin' Bobbins Social Group.

The event, which was sold out weeks in advance, reflected truly a Scottish theme, from *Glasgow Highlanders* and *Scottish Reform* to a new dance tribute to the *Old Forth Bridge*. Even Rabbie Burns was given a nod with some flirty strathspeys!

Musicians Laird Brown and Donny Wood were outstanding, with dancers requesting encores late into the evening. The "bring and share" treats were a true midnight feast. A special thanks goes to those involved in planning and clearing up later than expected.

Another such event is planned for next year. The band is already booked, as is the larger Parish Hall.

Shiftin' Bobbins is a member-run social group now in its fifth year. It meets one Sunday afternoon a month in central Toronto with a certificated guest teacher who brings a program for those already comfortable with RSCDS formations. Shiftin' Bobbins is open to any experienced dancer who feels ready for the challenge of something new.

Details of the remaining 2015 sessions, including the season closer with live music by Fred Moyes, are posted at <http://shiftinbobbins.webs.com>, or follow the link from Social Groups: www.dancescottish.ca

... Jon Allen-Friend



Dear Editor...

In praise of the third corner...

The wonderful November monthly dance program had my two favourite "B" dances. Both Bonnie Stronshiray and Bratach Bana have a moment when you turn someone on your own side.

There are various ways to describe that. The full instructions for Bratach Bana mention "1st couple turn their own First Corner (who is in their partner's First Corner's place)". This is too wordy. In the rush of a dance, especially the second time through, it can be hard to remember who that person is.

That's why I suggest more use of the term third (and fourth) corner position. That is a location in the set which people can go to. The dance briefs used that term.

I've heard third corner is a relatively recent term. I think it makes for easier dancing.

... Ron Macnaughton

Board Bulletins

Nominations for Scroll of Honour



The Scroll of Honour is awarded for exceptional contribution to the RSCDS at large, in addition to locally. It is the Society's highest honour.

If you wish to nominate someone, consult RSCDS Toronto Secretary, Nancy White, for requirements of the process.

Nominations for Branch Award



The Society Branch Award recognizes service to a particular Branch/Association. Nominations are reviewed, and one is selected (though couples may be jointly honoured), by the Toronto Board then sent to Scotland. Consult Nancy White for nomination requirements.

Deadline: Nominations, including details of service for either Scroll or Branch Award, must be submitted to Nancy White nawhite15@gmail.com by **31 January 2015** to be considered by the RSCDS Toronto Board.

Volunteer Appreciation Awards

Let's honour the unsung heroes in the dance community! Our many activities and social groups depend on volunteers who toil quietly behind the scenes.

Social groups:- Nominate a volunteer who's invaluable to the group and also participates in RSCDS Toronto events. The Board may also nominate people.



- Who makes things run smoothly?
- Who brings in and encourage newbies?
- Who's been on the group executive for years?
- Who brings cookies and juice?
- Who always helps out?

Let them know you noticed by nominating them for a Volunteer Award.

The criteria can be viewed on the website via the Members' Home page. Previous outlines for Volunteers can be read under VIPs.

Deadline: Submit nominations, including details of service, to Nancy White nawhite15@gmail.com by **15 February 2015**

Nominations: Board Positions

The Nominations Committee is mandated by the Toronto Association's *Procedures Manual* to prepare a slate of nominees for each Board position and to present its recommendations to the members for approval at the Annual General Meeting. There are currently two positions on the Board of Directors to fill:

1. Vice Chair
2. Director at Large for Marketing.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, or wish to suggest someone qualified for any Board position, please contact a member of the Nominations Committee.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the website (Members' Home Page).

For all Board positions, be prepared to commit to at least two consecutive one-year terms. In the case of Secretary, Membership Director, Program Director, Communications Director, and the two Directors at Large (Marketing and Education & Training), once elected to the Board, they may be re-elected for up to five additional one-year terms. The Treasurer can be re-elected indefinitely until a suitably qualified person is nominated.

The Vice Chair position should be filled by someone who:

1. has previously served as a member of the Board,
2. has been a former Executive member,
3. has been a Convener OR,
4. has been a Committee Chair.

The incumbent Vice Chair is expected to fill the position of Chair, with a two-year commitment in each role.

Nominations Committee Members:

Ken Adamson Stella Henderson Ken MacKinnon
Marian White Margaret Rieger (chair) 416 467 9083
Email: margaretrieger@rogers.com

AGM Motions Deadline



The RSCDS Toronto annual general meeting in April may seem a long way off. But according to our bylaws, motions to the meeting must be submitted by February 24 – 60 days prior to the AGM.

Any member who would like to submit a motion should send details to Nancy White nawhite15@gmail.com or to John Clark clark62@sympatico.ca.

Yes, Halyna, there is a God — and *she* is Scottish!

As I pack for my first trip to Scotland, I know I mustn't forget my dancing shoes. After all, we're going to share dances from Laird Brown's *Coast to Coast* CD with local dancers in Crieff. But fellow dancers in Toronto have only one piece of advice for me: Don't forget an umbrella!

Scottish weather did not disappoint. Drizzle followed us through the peat moors of Lewis; a drenching caught us on a boat tour of Loch Ness; and a deluge threatened us as we prepared to cross to Stornoway. But when we reached Skye the heavens brightened and out came the sun. As glorious radiance spilled out onto the blackened rock of the Cuillin peaks, age-old greys and blues and greens vibrantly came to life.

Stewart Bennett planned our visit to Skye at least a year in advance, and now we had been granted picture-perfect weather. Stewart remarked, "God must be Scottish." Not one to miss a beat, Muriel Nicoll completed the thought – "Yes, *she* is!"

Our picnic on Skye was a high point of our two-week Scottish trip. After a short boat ride from the village of Elgol, we spread out on rock formations that were as smooth as the seals that splashed about nearby. Sandwiches were readied right on the rocks – salami, ham, and cheese. Red and white wine was poured. Shortbread and squares were passed around. And everyone basked in the sun.



Our adventure took us to many interesting destinations: for example, the Famous Grouse Experience, which is the oldest whisky distillery in the country; Scotland's Secret Bunker in Fife; and the fantastic Whalebone Arch on our southerly trek through Lewis. However, simple moments made the trip unforgettable, like the minute of silence we were asked to observe by our guide high up in the Highlands during a Land Rover safari to the exclusive Red Deer Park. "Listen," he says, "to the breathtaking sound of nature." We all stand in awe of our surroundings and we listen.

I listen again, this time for the skirl of the bagpipes. We are due for an early ferry departure from Harris and our own Peter Cotton

pipes his way down the corridors of our hotel to provide the 5 a.m. wake-up call. Travellers on Stewart Caledonia Tours are treated no worse than folks on *Downton Abbey*!

We are now in the Sligachan Hotel at the base of the Cuillins. This is our last evening with our bus driver, Dean. As others join in song, he tickles the ivories, picking up on the fly lilting favourites from years gone by. I listen.

And again, I listen. A poignant melody carries to the back rows of our bus. "O, cruel is the snow that sweeps Glencoe and covers the grave o' Donald." My eyes well up with tears. The plaintive voice is Stewart's. We are minutes from Glencoe.

Of course, when we hear the familiar first chord of a jig or a reel, we listen – all of us! *The Sailor* worked out pretty well, even as we pushed against gravity's pull on our ferry crossing to the Outer Hebrides. But dancing *The Falls of Rogie* over the Falls of Rogie on a three-foot wide suspension bridge proved to be an exercise in acute agility. With her usual charm, Carole Skinner got us through to the last chord. Laughing, and with relief spelled out on our faces, we skipped back to the safety of the rocky bank.

How wonderful it was to explore Scotland at a momentous point in its history. The historic vote of the Scottish Referendum wrapped up just nine days before my trip, and followed right on the heels of the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. Nothing spoke to me more than the fierce pride of country encountered in the average Scot. Take Rob Jr., the young lad who took us over to our picnic on Skye. His voice thrilled with enthusiasm as he spoke about isolated life on surrounding islands. How about our soft-spoken tour guide on Lewis and Harris? Some years ago he tied the knot with a local Lewis girl and became known as the "incomer who married well." Mr. Ryan knew the history of every square inch on these lonely islands. And how can one forget Mr. Henderson, master storyteller at Castle Menzies? All three engaged us with voices that rang out with a great love for this Gaelic land: you could almost hear a resounding "Yes!"

Holding my own against the wind, I find myself at over 3,500 feet. I'm at Cairngorm Mountain. The winds bear down at hurricane force speed. My kilt's in a whirl, my heart's in a swirl. I brace myself for the camera. And I smile for Scotland, the country I've come to love through my love of Scottish Country dance. I will definitely be back!

... Halyna Sydorenko



Upcoming Events: NEAR

Jan 10 ~ **January Monthly Dance** ~ Dance to the fab music of Scotch Mist. 8:00 p.m. at Crescent School.

Jan 17 ~ **White Cockade Dance** ~ Dance to recorded music, 8:00-11:00 p.m. at MacNabb Presby. Church, 116 MacNabb St., Hamilton \$7 for non-members.

Jan 18 ~ **Broadlands: Hugh Foss: Dances To Song Tunes** ~ Teresa Lockhart teaches sing-along dances devised by the Bletchley cryptographer. 2-4 p.m. \$5/dancer.

Jan 20, 27 & Feb 3 ~ **Calvin's Tartan Ball Sessions** ~ Calvin will teach the Tartan Ball programme over three weekly sessions, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Calvin Presby. Church, 26 Delisle Ave. (nr. Yonge & St Clair). All levels welcome.

Jan 25 ~ **Shiftn' Bobbins** ~ Moira Korus will teach challenging but fun dances at Grace Church-On-The-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. Info: www.shiftnbobbins.webs.com

Feb 1 ~ **Broadlands: Dances by Betty Grant** ~ Paul Maloney will teach dances dedicated to, or devised by our own Betty Grant. 2-4 p.m. \$5/dancer.

Feb 14 ~ **South Simcoe Valentine Workshop** ~ Teachers: Moira Korus and Lou Emslie. Music: Laird Brown and Don Wood. 9am - 1:30pm, at Knox Presbyterian Church, 180 King St. S., Alliston. Followed by a Tea dance 1:30 - 3:30 Info: Irene Wilson 705 435 2361.

Feb. 11 & 18 ~ **Glenview's Tartan Ball Practices** ~ Glenview offers Tartan Ball practice sessions the two Wednesdays preceding the Tartan ball. All are welcome for dance and refreshments.

Feb. 16 ~ **St Clement's Tartan Ball Run-through** ~ Test dance the Tartan Ball programme while there's still time for remedial classes. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the Bishop Strachan School, 298 Lonsdale Road, Forest Hill.

Feb 21 ~ **52nd Tartan Ball** ~ Concert Hall at the Royal York. Music by Scotch Mist. Get your booking in!

Mar 27 ~ **Erin Mills** ~ Ron Wallace (California) will teach the class. Details to come.

Mar 28 - 30 ~ **Annual West End Workshop** ~ Save the date! Teachers: Ron Wallace (California), Scott Reid (Hamilton), Keith Bark (Mississauga).

Mar 29 ~ **Teachers' Workshop** with Ron Wallace. Details to come.

Mar 29 ~ **Broadlands: Short Dances we Never Do** ~ Andrew Collins uncovers some short dances that are great fun to dance but rarely make it onto a dance programme. 2-4 p.m. \$5/dancer.

May 9 - **West Toronto Ball** ~ **Save the date.** New location: Columbus Centre at Lawrence and Dufferin. Music by Scotch Mist. More info soon.

Upcoming Events: FAR

Jan 24 ~ **48th Annual Celebration of The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns** presented by Buffalo Branch RSCDS at Amherst Community Church, 77 Washington Hwy., Snyder, N.Y. www.rscdsbuffalo.com or 716 833 3107

Feb 6 - 8 ~ **Arbrae's Winterlude Weekend & Ball, Ottawa** Experience Winterlude in Ottawa, and music by Torridon. Welcome dance, Sight-seeing, Slow Jam, and Ball in the beautiful Glebe Centre. Tickets: ewoodbury@sympatico.ca 613 746 5466 or visit www.arbrae.org

Feb 13-15 ~ **Aloha Dance Weekend** ~ Join us in Honolulu for weekend of dance lessons and social dancing. Teacher Linda Henderson; music by Humuhumunukunua'ua and Strathspey Society Band. Info: www.rscdshawaii.org

Feb 28 ~ **London (Canada) Branch Workshop** ~ Teachers Teresa Lockhart (Toronto) and Lou Emslie (Fergus). Music by Fred Moyes. Welcome Ceilidh Friday evening, Workshop, followed by a Tea Dance, and Sunday brunch. Info: Maureen Graham, moe.graham@hotmail.com 519 472 3422

Mar 6 - 8 ~ **Belleville Workshop and Ball** . Music by Scotch Mist. Teachers: Moira Korus (Toronto) & James Stott (Scotland). Info: Mike McCarey, mccarey@sympatico.ca

Apr. 24-26 ~ **Budapest Scottish Dance Weekend and Ball**, Teacher Janet Johnston, music by David Cunningham's band. Optional tour of Hungary is available. Info: www.bstkh.hu/ball2015 .

Apr. 25 - **Hamilton RSCDS Branch 60th Anniversary John Middleton Ball**, at Scottish Rite, 4 Queen St. S., Hamilton. Music: Scotch Mist. Registration forms at www.rscdshamilton.org Info: Annette Sabourin, annette1sabourin@hotmail.com or 519 647 3055

Aug 28-Sept 2 ~ **Saltzburg Workshop Weekend**, The Flying Scotsman SCD Group of Saltzburg will warmly welcome Ron Wallace, Liam Smith, James Gray, and you. Info: <http://goo.gl/BJj9hf>

Many more far away events are posted on the website: www.dancescottish.ca/Whats-On-Far.html

Demo Pool Practices at Broadlands

Sundays: 2 - 4

• Jan 4 • Jan 11

• Feb 8 • Mar 8

• Apr 12 • Apr 19

Contact: Stella Henderson 416 498 1940

Interested in joining? ... Contact Stella!
as_hen@rogers.com

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Events

Spring Fling

April 17-19, 2015 in London, England

A dance weekend organized for young people, by young people aged 12-35.
www.rscds.org/article/young-dancers

RSCDS Summer School

Choice of 4 Weeks: July 26 ~ Aug 23
St Andrews University, Scotland

A thousand dancers from around the world descend on beautiful St Andrews to learn more about dancing and enjoy dances; and to make new friends.

Info & Booking: www.RSCDS.org

2015 TAC Summer School

July 26 - August 2 in Farmville, Virginia



Join us for a week of Scottish country dancing in a beautiful location with some of the world's best teachers and musicians.

www.tac-rscds.org



Scotland's National Tourism Organisation

2015: A Year of Food and Drink
www.visitscotland.com

Visitors to the Visit Scotland website can win a trip for two to Scotland.

Attend Board Meetings

Any member of RSCDS Toronto is welcome to attend a Board meeting as a silent observer. Arrange your attendance with Secretary, Nancy White:
nawhite@gmail.com



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