

# RSCDS Toronto

[www.dancescottish.ca](http://www.dancescottish.ca)

From the Chair...



Louis Racic

**Well, another dance season is coming to a close.** Or more accurately, another season of not dancing face-to-face is ending. This has not been the type of dancing year I had hoped it would be. As Chair, I looked forward to welcoming you to our dances and events, greeting friends, and

meeting new dancers. Alas, it was not to be. If we are still not able to dance in person next year at this time, I will become known as the (yikes!) Covid Chair, where we were not able to dance in person during my entire two-year term. Perish the thought. I certainly hope that does not come to pass.

Although there have not been any events to attend, the board continues to meet monthly. We continue to plan. However, it is difficult as there is still a great deal of uncertainty in when we will start and the availability of venues. We will remain nimble. As I write this, we are in the midst of our latest lockdown, which is expected to be extended. We hope it hastens the end of this pandemic. The current expectation is that most of us will have been fully vaccinated by September. Then we will wait patiently until the physical distancing restrictions are lifted. If all goes well, we will be back dancing by the end of this year.

Best wishes for a lovely summer. I will be enjoying the sunshine and tending my garden. We will regroup in the fall and hope to be back to more normal activities.

...Louis Racic

## Top of The Table

The novel coronavirus pandemic has challenged dancers' resilience and tested our members as never before. Some have forged new ways of dancing only because we were cut off from traditions we love so much.

With sidewalk cafés gradually reopening (or not) and restaurants begrudgingly restricted for some time yet to come, my dining room table, likewise, also sits largely unused and has been so for over a year. Until last year, the *Set & Link* committee enjoyed treats around my table at the end of our monthly meetings. When these meetings in person ceased, our committee communicated, as we still do, via email. This practice began with a major flood in our house on January 11, 2020, the night of the monthly dance. With all rooms flooded in my basement, I was unable to handle a meeting the next week or even the next month. After that, the pandemic took over. We are still on email, but not Zoom.

Having friends sit around my dining room table reminds me of an amusing account George Emmerson\* tells in *Scotland Through Her Country Dances* (1981, Second ed.). With thanks to Amazon, a used copy of this long-out-of-print book was available in Canada. It had been owned by Stella Rennie in Edmonton, whose address label is affixed to the index page. I investigated what connection she may have had to Scottish dance. After some sleuthing, I learned from Irene Townshend, who teaches adult classes in Edmonton, that Stella used to teach the Ellerslie Scottish country dance group in Edmonton. Later Stella moved to Victoria, and died about one year ago.

Emmerson tells of the Groat family members who would vie for seating at the head of the table. The account refers to John O'Groat's House built in the 1870s at the northernmost part of mainland Scotland. [Johnny Groat's House](#) is a dance familiar to many of us. Disputes arose at Groat family gatherings held on the anniversary of their arrival in Caithness on the subject of precedence at the table. John Groat was perplexed but not beaten. With eight claimants to the top place — the place by the door — he built an octagonal house with eight doors and eight windows within which he placed an octagonal table and thus enabled everyone to be seated at the top of the table. From family strife, emerged ingenuity and creativity; harmony was restored.

The Emmerson book, as Hugh Foss describes it, is "the most concise and lucid account of the subject he has read, a dissertation on the music and Scottish Country Dance and on such related topics as Highland Dress and the Tartan. The major portion of the book, deals with the meaning and significance of, or the story behind, the titles of most [167], of the Scottish Country Dances in the R.S.C.D.S. collection. This involves much of the history, social as well as political, folklore, and poetry of Scotland."

I have spent more money on books this past year than I have on gas. When we are vaccinated and can safely meet in person to dance, to converse, and to eat together, I will gladly spread my dining room table for the long-awaited luncheon promised so many months ago to the hard-working and loyal *Set & Link* committee — all of whom merit a seat at the top of the table.

...Donald E. Holmes



.....  
• **Your next *Set & Link* will be September** •  
• We hope the September issue will be about •  
• resumption of in-person dancing. We wish you •  
• all a lovely, safe, 2-dose summer, and we look •  
• forward to receiving your stories of summer or •  
• dance. Thank you to all the contributors who •  
• help keep *Set & Link* lively and interesting. •  
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# Virtual Classes

## TUESDAY EVENINGS:

Erin Mills / Bloorlea ~ 8 p.m. 60-90 mins (ends mid-June)  
Keith Bark and Arlene Koteff teach week about.  
All are welcome. To join: [Keith](#) or [Arlene](#)

## WEDNESDAY EVENINGS:

Humbercrest ~ 8 p.m. ~ 60-90 mins (ends mid-June)  
Deirdre MacCuish Bark teaches.  
All are welcome. To join: [Deirdre](#)

## THURSDAY EVENINGS:

Basic Technique ~ 8 p.m. ~ 60-90 mins (ends mid-June)  
Keith Bark teaches Basic Technique for Level 1 and Level 2  
Toronto Association classes.  
All are welcome. To join: [Keith](#)

## FRIDAY EVENINGS:

Woodglen ~ 8 p.m. ~ 60-90 mins (ends mid-June)  
Deirdre MacCuish Bark teaches.  
All are welcome. To join: [Deirdre](#)

## SATURDAY AFTERNOONS:

Scottish Step Dance for Beginners  
2 p.m. - 3:00 (continuing until further notice)  
Basic steps and step dances.  
Alma Smith: [asmith26@cogeco.ca](mailto:asmith26@cogeco.ca)

## RSCDS DANCE SCOTTISH AT HOME:

"Live" every Wednesday afternoon until mid-July

- To receive a link to join live classes: [Sign up here](#)
- To access previous classes and podcasts: [Visit here](#)
- To see Global Virtual Listings: [Visit here](#)
- To learn about, and see video of basic steps and formations, explore: [This link](#)



Dear Editor...

**RE: Origin of Seton's Ceilidh Band (April S&L)**— Very warm greetings from New Zealand. I really enjoy reading your excellent publication. I was very interested to read the article about Jack Seton. Bruce Fordyce deviser of *Seton's Ceilidh Band* was one of the founders of the Hastings Scottish Country Dance Club and danced with us for many years as did Jack Seton.

We are immensely proud of *Seton's Ceilidh Band* and were asked to dance this at Bruce's funeral service in 2004 which we were honoured to do. It is a very popular dance which we all enjoy. Bruce devised many other dances and accompanying tunes. This year in June our Club is celebrating 70 years of dancing – quite an achievement. We hope all of you are back dancing soon.

...Very kind regards, Val Mitchell – Hastings Scottish Country Dance Club

**RE: Vive les Belles Rebelles!** — I enjoyed the Lady Mackintosh article. There is a dance in Book 3 for both Lady Mackintosh and her husband. It is one dance with two names, one pro-Jacobite (*Lady Mackintosh's Rant*) and the other pro-government (*The Duke is Welcome to Inverness*). It is from Rutherford's 1756 collection. The whole May issue was interesting reading, thank you all.

...Keith Bark

[Ed. The dance has two chords... for the 1st couple to change sides.]

**RE: The Machine Without Horses** — I was interested in the item in the issue about the dance *The Machine Without Horses*. In my late teens I worked at STV (Scottish Television) in Glasgow, which was set up by Canada's Roy Thomson in 1957. A year later STV launched a show called "Jig Time", which was hugely popular. It featured Scottish country dancers as well as choral and folk singers. You can see a recording of the initial show at the link below. It features *The Machine Without Horses*.

<https://musicontv.scot/?p=94> ... David Hunter, Scottish Studies

[Ed. Be sure to explore the link provided. It's a wonderful, joyful presentation of Scottish country dance.]

**RE: The Machine Without Horses** — I was Treasurer at the 2010 TAC summer school, at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University. One of the principal teachers was Alex Gray, from Wales (and, at the time, Chair of RSCDS). While he was teaching us to dance well, he unwillingly acquired a machine without horses — someone stole the wheels off his rental car! To mark the occasion, Alex devised a new dance, *Machine Without Wheels*.



... Rob Lockhart

## Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent on BBC Radio Scotland ~ Reprised



**Take The Floor** has, for decades, presented Scottish dance bands and music on BBC Radio Scotland. In 1999, the late Robbie Shepherd and a BBC crew came to Rameses Temple on Keele Street to broadcast an evening with Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent. [See also Fred Collins' article, page 7]

About 400 dancers attended. The hall was crowded; dancers had to take shifts. *Set & Link* spoke to a few people who were there. Herewith... selected comments:

- ◆ Robin and Sharon Wood attended. Sharon remembers dancing *The Canadian Barn Dance*. Robin still has the programme.
- ◆ Keith and Deirdre Bark attended. Keith thinks the programme was devised by John Christie, and one of the dances was Bob Millar's square set dance, *Bobby Brown's Canadian Breakdown*.

Dances were briefed prior to airtime. There were no tickets... everything was free and (presumably) paid for by BBC, and arrangements were between BBC and Bobby Brown, so it was not a Toronto Branch event, though the Branch did supply dancers.

There was a quiz the following morning (Canadian time), and Deirdre won. School friends in Scotland recognized her voice and phoned to let her know or ask if it was really she.

- ◆ A lady, who shall remain anonymous, got her hair done and wore a formal gown for what she anticipated would be her television debut on the BBC. She wondered aloud, "Where are the cameras?" She was the best dressed, most glamorous person on the radio!

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BBC have made the broadcast available online for a limited time, **expires June 13**: [LISTEN HERE](#)  
The broadcast features an interview with Laird Brown.

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## Teachers' Pet Dances: Jean Noble



Jean Noble

[Inverneill House](#) (R8x32, John Drewry, *Book 35*).  
Lots of room for eye contact, and I enjoy bars 25-32 when second and third couples dance petronella as first couple cast so all meet on the sidelines on bar 32. So great for covering.

[Gang the Same Gate](#) (S8x32, Milton Levy, *Book 36*)  
Lovely music. Lots of opportunity for eye contact — and I do like the formation Set & Link for Three.

The first time I was taught this formation (in St Andrews), I just thought it was "magic" the way each person got into position so fluidly.

[The Frisky](#), J8x32, Robert Bremner, *Book 26*

Love the music! The dance has simple formations but requires careful phrasing. I am sure Miss Milligan passed me on my prelim because I asked for the music for *The Frisky* to teach skip change of step.

[The City of Belfast](#) (S3x32, Lucy Mullholland, *Book 48*)

Beautiful music and the dance flows easily.

[General Stuart's Reel](#) (R8x32, C Menzies, *Book 10*)

What I consider a "Golden Oldie". Great music and well-known formations.

...Jean Noble

### *Me and My Shadows*

32 bar Jig, Reel, or Strathspey for one dancer in a 3-couple imaginary longwise set

Written March 21, 2020, by Marie Ziccarelli, in the midst of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

This dance is intended for individual use. Dance one time from one position, then select a different position to dance from the next time. The dance should present an interesting exercise for practising our dancing skills from each position. There is no progression because during the pandemic, we are trying to prevent progression.

- 1-4 All set.  
1M casts 1 place (2M step up) while 3W casts up 1 place (2W step down)
- 5-8 1M+3W cross RH, cast 1 place to their right to finish in each others' place (2M step dn, 2W step up #7-8)
- 9-16 All dance Set & Link for 3 cpls TWICE.  
Finish: 1M, 2W, 1W on men's side & 3M, 2M, 3W on ladies' side.
- 17-20 All set.  
3M casts 1 place (2M step up) while 1W casts up 1 place (2W step dn).
- 21-24 3M+1W cross LH, cast 1 place to their left to finish in original places (2M step dn, 2W step up #23-24)
- 25-28 2s turn RH 3/4 to finish in centre, 2M facing dn, 2W facing up, & set
- 29-32 2s petronella to 2nd place on own sides.  
With hands joined, all set.

## A Noble Education

Dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from the curriculum of all noble education; dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and, need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen?

...Friedrich Nietzsche

## Teachers' Pet Dances: Marie Ziccarelli

**Special Guest Appearance:** Marie Ziccarelli of RSCDS Buffalo, and former Chair of Teachers' Association of Canada, shares her favourite dances. She titled her submission: "A Very Difficult Assignment".

Upon being asked to name my favourite dances, I soon realized it would be easier to name my least favourites — the list would be shorter. As I glanced through lesson plans and dance programmes from the past, I discovered it was not necessarily the dance itself that appealed to me, it was the music. The dance programmes reminded me of evenings when the band was hot, and I thoroughly enjoyed dancing every and any dance. After taking a good look at the list I accumulated, a predominance of strathspeys was readily apparent.

- [Bonnie Stronshiray](#) (S8x32, Robert Campbell, *Glasgow Assembly*)
- [The Dundee Whaler](#), (S4x32, Roy Clowes, *Ormskirk 1*)
- [From the Broomielaw](#) (S4x32, Anna Holden, *TAC Silver Anniversary*)
- [The Minister on the Loch](#) (S3x32, Roy Goldring, *Thirty Popular Dances, Vol 2*)

All four dances have a balanced and symmetrical construction. All promote good phrasing without being forced — a natural length



of step and pace which leads to an elegant dance experience. I remember an evening dance at TAC Summer School many years ago when I was still new to dancing. My partner for *The Minister on the Loch* was a very talented Japanese gentleman. I used every ounce of skill and technique I had to keep up to the level he was dancing at. When I got to the bow and curtsy at the end, my legs were shaking. That was one intense strathspey! It felt so wonderful that I left the dance so I could hold on to that feeling for the dance, the music, the phrasing, and the connection with my partner and the set.

My quicktime favourites are truly ruled by the music. The most basic dance with the right set of tunes is far more enjoyable to me than a challenge when I am at a dance. I prefer to leave challenges for classes and workshops when we are building our skills and aiming for improvements. At a dance, I want to revel in the movement and the music.

- [Flowers of Edinburgh](#) (R8x32, RSCDS Book 1)
- [Maxwell's Rant](#) (R8x32, Rutherford, RSCDS Book 18)
- [Mrs Macleod \(of Raasay\)](#) (R8x32, RSCDS Book 6)
- [Good Hearted Glasgow](#) (J8x32, Knapman, *Guide to SCD*)
- [The Highland Rambler](#) (R8x40, Roy Goldring, *Thirty Popular Dances, Vol 2*)

My thanks go to the musicians, whether recorded or live, because for me, the music makes the dance soar.

...Marie Ziccarelli



# VIRTUAL Spring Fling

24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021

Happy to Meet • Sorry to Part • Happy to Meet Again

It has been a difficult year-and-a-bit for Scottish dance events, with restrictions on travel and social gatherings clearing our calendars of the usual workshops and social dances and replacing them instead with Zoom gatherings. The organizers of the Aberdeen Spring Fling decided to make the best of this difficult situation and put on their event virtually, allowing the young and young-at-heart from around the world to join.

The day started with a beginner/intermediate class taught by Angela Young, originally from Aberdeen, familiar to many in Toronto from the November Workshop in 2019, accompanied by her husband Graham Berry on the piano. Angela taught the *Canonbie Ceilidh*, *Jig to the Music*, *Miss Hadden's Reel*, and the *Balmoral Strathspey*.



The advanced class was taught by Louise Msika, accompanied by her husband Josh on the low whistle. She focused on dances with links to the city of Aberdeen, as well as John Drewry, including the *Granite City Reel*,

*Twixt Don and Dee*, and the *Compleat Gardener*.

The classes were followed by a session where, in small groups, participants could devise their own ceilidh dance – perhaps some will appear on the dance floor in the near future. The day finished with the opportunity to join Zoom breakout rooms and chat with other participants, as well as a ceilidh featuring both live and recorded music.

The virtual format allowed for dancers from across the world to connect with dancers joining in locally, in Aberdeen. One participant took advantage of a sunny day in Aberdeen to dance in her back garden. Participants from far away included dancers from Europe, North America, and Japan. While it wasn't possible to gather and experience the feeling of bon accord in person, the virtual event spread the spirit far and wide. I am grateful to the organizers of the Aberdeen Spring Fling for putting on such a wonderful event.

The Spring Fling Committee in Toronto remains hopeful that we can welcome Spring Fling to Toronto in the future. This past year, we have been happy to meet over Zoom, and we are sorry to be parted, but we are all looking forward to meeting again to dance in person.

...Erica de Gannes

- ◆ You can view the entire Spring Fling event [here](#).
- ◆ The Ceilidh following the Spring Fling may be seen [here](#).

## AGM Report

The start to our 20th annual AGM (our second on Zoom) was delayed as we attempted to locate the voting function. For many of us it had moved from “participants” to “reactions”. To further confuse the matter, voting appears in different places on various devices. A Plan B for voting was established so we could get underway. By the time the first vote was needed (only a few minutes in) almost all of the 65 participants had found the button. As all votes are considered carried with a majority, we had more than enough green check marks to proceed. It did make me long for a live AGM, where the only possible voting hazard might be a flying sandwich as someone chose to support a motion over-enthusiastically. As secretary, I am expected to take notes, so I was unable to scroll through the gallery images to see familiar faces with new hair-dos.



The reports this year were rather sparse, as the only dancing activity for the year has been online. Many thanks were given to the teachers who offer online social groups and classes, and to the whole *Set & Link* team who have kept us so well connected. The Board was able to report that we've had time to analyze the survey results and use the information gathered to help us think about future events. Detailed planning can't occur right now, as we don't know which venues will be open to us, how many dancers will return, and the all-important question – when will physical distancing restrictions be lifted?

The names of the tutor shadows, for the next Teacher Candidate Class, were announced. We really hope that Alma Smith and David Booz get a chance to shadow soon. The members then voted to have a Compilation Engagement of our finances for the 2021 financial year.

Thanks were given to Bill Barber for his years as membership director, and we welcomed Carol Ann Boothby, who is taking on the job.

Thank you to all our members for continuing to support the Association and to the 69 who came out on Saturday night. We couldn't do it without you.

...Fiona Alberti, Secretary



## “A New Dawn” tartan

This design represents the new dawn rising from the United Nations 2021 climate change summit in Glasgow this November. Conference branding is rooted in the MacGregor tartan – associated with the town of Callander and the remarkable scientist of that name whose discovery in 1938

linked the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide to human activities, primarily through burning fossil fuels. The COP26 colours of blue, green and white surround the new dawn — representing the hopes of up to 30,000 delegates, that the conference will herald new initiatives, new targets, and new achievements to tackle the global climate emergency. Info:

[BBC-tartan-the-misunderstood-icon-of-scottishness](https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-58123456)

## Glenview's End-of-Season Ceilidh



Tom Clark was able to clone himself and simultaneously perform on five instruments

On May 12th Glenview Social Group wrapped up its dancing season in style. More than 40 people tuned in for the year-end Ceilidh. Many had been coming to weekly dancing; others joined in, glass of wine in hand, ready for the entertainment. At least one kilt was dusted off for the occasion. One dancer stayed up way past his bedtime and joined in from England. We were treated to live music by Fred Moyes for the dancing.

Between dances, the various talents of the group were shared. An original poem by Barbara McNutt, based on a post-dance conversation, started us off. Jean Noble, David Booz, Alison Booz, and Sheena Gilks also shared poems, ranging from midges to *Lochinvar*. Scottish Step is a form of dance that lends itself to small spaces and Halyna and Moira each shared a dance with us.

Due to the wonders of modern technology, Tom Clark was able to clone himself and perform on four different recorders and a keyboard, set to 'harpsichord', all at the same time. He played *Innsbruck*, a beautiful 15th century song by Heinrich Isaac.

Lyn Barsevskis shared a lovely *Scarecrow Dance* video, suitable for dancers of all styles, which was performed to *Scary Scarecrow*, a song for which her father, Paul Aird, wrote the lyrics. Scary Scarecrow used to reside in a cornfield by Highway 400.

The Clunies took us on an historical walk through Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. One of the stops was the St. Andrew's Society monument which has plaques for two of Glenview's former teachers: Bill Stoddart and Robin Matheson.

Suzanne Dubeau recited a previously 'lost Shakespearean sonnet' that was disseminated by one Erik Didriksen a few years ago. Most appropriately, ABBA adapted it for *Dancing Queen* during the disco era but it seemed a fitting way to end our strange dance season. I usually am away for Glenview's Ceilidh (which occurs at Hogmanay, not in the spring) so I really enjoyed the chance to see the variety of talents hidden among our dancers.

...Fiona Alberti



## The Scary Scarecrow Dance



Levi, Jared, & Ethan Bailey perform SCARY SCARECROW



Diana and I wanted to give our father, Paul Aird, a gift for his 91st birthday. In 1999, Dad had written and published a collection of stories, including *The Scarecrow Jig*, about a scary

This is Scary scarecrow planted in a cornfield to protect the crops from crows and other seed-eating birds. He constructed his own scarecrow and for 20 years he placed it (with permission) on various cornfields beside Highway 400, halfway between Toronto and Barrie. Dad wanted travellers to see his Scary Scarecrow, since Scary represents the songs, stories, and art that are born on farms.

Dad also wrote lyrics for his *Scary Scarecrow* song. Luke Mercier composed the music and Mary Lambert sang the words.



For his birthday, Diana and I decided there should be an official *Scary Scarecrow* dance. To create the dance, I commissioned Ron Wallace, with his background in Scottish Country Dance, Highland Dance, and Hard and Soft Shoe Step Dancing. Ron also arranged a video of *Scary Scarecrow* performed by three of his dancers (Levi, Jared, and Ethan Bailey). Dad was tickled with the results.

◆ Please enjoy watching it on Dad's website [loonsforever.ca/songs](https://loonsforever.ca/songs)  
◆ or on [Ron Wallace's YouTube channel](#) ...Lyn Barsevskis

## Catching up with Vic Kurdyak



Vic Kurdyak was a demo pool dancer and a regular presence at Toronto events for years. He's now retired from dance. I recently called Vic to find out how he's doing. The twinkle in his eye came through clearly in his voice. Every two weeks he Zooms with family, and after a weekly shopping trip, it's a game of chess with his daughter. He keeps his fingers nimble too, playing Scottish dance tunes daily on his fiddle.

...Halyna Sydorenko

[Donald Holmes adds: At a monthly dance Vic mentioned he bought a new red kilt the same tartan as mine. He said Richardson's gave him a great deal on it because it was custom made for a man whose fiancée cancelled the wedding. Vic asked me, "What's the name of your tartan?" I replied that it's MacLaine of Lochbuie, dress tartan. He said, "Oh, I call mine MacJilt."]



# The Fine Art of Standing Still

As dancers, we appreciate the experience of dancing our “turn” as first couple; then we step down to the bottom of the set to stand still. We can rest... perhaps admire our colleagues or partner, prepare for our next turn, or just listen to our fine musicians while the dancing continues. Standing still does not mean standing idle. Standing still is an integral part of the dance, whether you are an active dancer or a supporting dancer awaiting your turn. Technically, one stands in 1st position at the ready, arms by the side, with correct posture, smiling (of course), eyes watching, ready to dance. The standing couple, whether at the top or foot of the set, also has the important function of maintaining the set size (width & length).

Maintaining a balance of dancing and standing is a challenge to devisors. Think about dancing a three-couple dance in a four-couple set. Poor 4s... their job is to stand for 32 bars while the three other couples enjoy dancing. Or are they? In many traditional dances (e.g., *The Duke of Perth*), as the 1s are busy dancing for all 32 bars the first time through, the 2s and 3s dance only 14 bars. In the ever-popular *De'il Amang the Tailors*, 1s dance 32 bars, 2s dance 24 bars, 3s 8 bars, and 4s zero bars. In *Mairi's Wedding*, 1s dance 40 bars, 2s and 3s for 24 bars, as 4s wait, standing still for 40 bars.

Sometimes a dance instructs us to stand still even when we're one of the active couples. In *Minister on the Loch*, the 1s and 3s dance double figures of 8 around the 2s who stand still, elegantly one hopes, in the centre of the action.

Such periods of great activity followed by periods of inactivity, are also reflected in the origins of Scottish country dance. Years (and years) ago, the Druids danced, but then dancing seemingly disappeared, for a variety of reasons, including strong Scottish church disapproval of dancing, associated as they imagined with witchcraft. Then, Mary Queen of Scots introduced French dances at her court, and round the room dances became all the rage. Flows and ebbs.

Country dancing developed in the early 18th century, as dancing masters and families passed along dances by word of mouth, and many events, like ceilidhs or “harvest-home” celebrations were enjoyed. Queen Victoria, as noted in a previous S&L article, indulged in dancing with great zeal.

Dancing continued, especially in Scotland, until about the First World War. Then again, dance rested and waited.

Scottish country dance was reawakened when Miss Milligan and Mrs Stewart formed the SCD Society in 1923, and we continue to enjoy the benefits of their work today.

In this time of pandemic, we are asked to “stand still” and to stand apart. Understanding how standing still is a necessary part of the dance's design as we stand at the ready helps us prepare for our inevitable return to dance.

We are still standing still, waiting and reely ready for our next turn. Wait, did I just hear a chord?

...Teresa Lockhart



Andy Lipchak

# The Pandemic Rant

I don't know where it all has gone.  
I don't know what I feel.  
I haven't danced for quite awhile.  
Tell me... *what's a reel?*

It's just a memory, I know.  
It was so long before.

Now I'm looking out the window  
And life's become a bore.

I've hardly seen my closest friends  
And nothing feels the same.

I know I have a wife somewhere.  
Hmmm... *what was her name?*

I'm always in a muddle  
And scared of what's to be.  
Would it help if I could dance again  
And do a reel of three?

We always used to go each week.  
The hall was really big.

We shared the floor with all our friends.  
But tell me... *what's a jig?*

It used to be so very clear.  
I knew just where to stand.  
But moving was another thing.  
So *that's* an allemande!

I tried to do as best I could  
But was often at a loss.  
I always headed up or down  
When I should have danced across.

I think there was a set of eight  
Though I always seemed the last.  
I thought I knew just where to go.  
Why did everyone scream, *Cast!* ?

The teacher overlooked our flaws.  
Though we tried hard to obey,  
My feet went right, my body left.  
Hmm... there's something called strathspey.

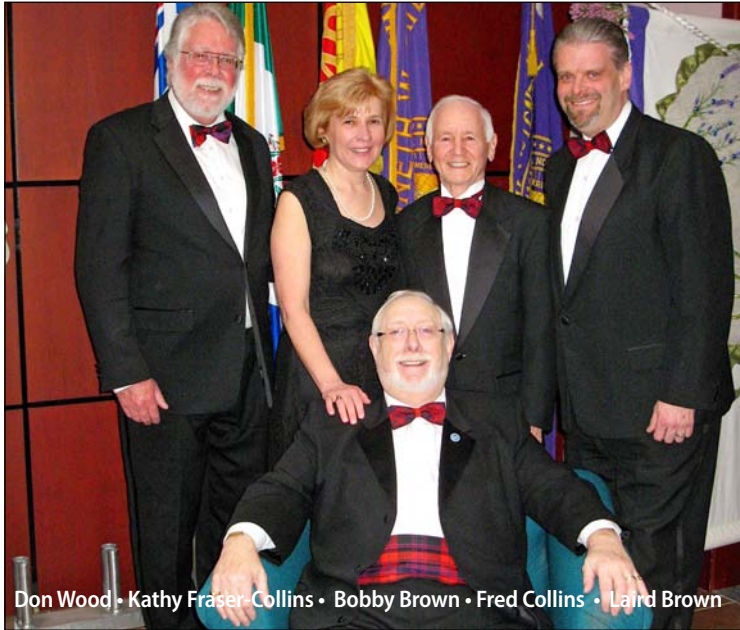
I used to know the steps, I'm sure.  
Though I was always late.  
I like straight lines, I can't get lost.  
Why dance a figure eight?

Though I gave my job up long ago,  
I still have lots of fire.  
So it hurts my feelings when I hear  
The teacher yell, *Retire!*

And now I've got my shot, I'm fine.  
There's nothing left to chance.  
We'll make it through and be all right,  
*If we only get to dance.*

...A. Lipchak [www.andylipchak.com](http://www.andylipchak.com)

# Fred Collins: Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent



Don Wood • Kathy Fraser • Collins • Bobby Brown • Fred Collins • Laird Brown

My association and friendship with Bob began when I joined the Flying Scotsmen. Laird and I became the clowns of the band and so it seemed logical that we should continue the fun with the Scottish Accent. Many will no doubt remember the infamous "Collinso Brothers". [See inset]

In the summer of 1981, Bob asked if I would be interested in joining the band; the timing was perfect as I was now available to play again. The time commitment with the Scottish Accent was intense. We played virtually every weekend and many gigs entailed hours of travel, and full weekends on the road. I think it's no exaggeration to say that the Scottish Accent, and music in general, was Bob's life. He was an uncompromising leader with a phenomenal musical ear. He knew exactly what he wanted from his musicians and was very capable of demonstrating from any position in the band – yes even drums. He worked diligently on choice of tunes, arrangements, tempos, and sound, and he was less than tolerant if anyone had anything critical to say. The band held their collective breath when we saw anyone approach the stage with a definite purpose, followed by sighs of relief if it turned out to be nothing to upset him.

Bob was adamant about fulfilling all engagements, be it through hail, snow, or sleet. Even sickness was not an excuse. One gig that defied him though was a Kingston Burns night in January. Kathy and I, who were now living on our farm, were travelling west on the 401 and when we began to run into snow we stopped at a Tim Hortons near Brockville. At the table next to us were two OPP officers who happened to overhear us discussing the Kingston job and the weather. They advised us that the storm was coming our way and that the 401 was closed at Cobourg. We immediately called Bob, who was now around Ajax, and gave him the news whereupon he responded with his usual "It's fine here." It was only when we asked the officers to speak to him that he reluctantly agreed to turn home. I believe that was the only engagement that we didn't make, but not for lack of trying. Once again, there were many nights we really should not have been on the road, but we somehow managed to stay safe through it all.

When we weren't scheduled for gigs, Bobby would schedule recording sessions, and there were a lot of them. Bobby loved the studio! We were the only band outside Scotland to record a live broadcast of *Take the Floor* for BBC at the Rameses Shriners Temple. We were also the first band outside Scotland to record a book for the RSCDS – *Book 12*. While the Scottish Accent Band will be remembered by Scottish country dancers on this continent for its four decades of live music, it was our involvement with concerts, recordings, and tours with other musicians such as Graham Townsend, John Allan Cameron, Rudy Meeks (another fall of the drum throne episode here), Alasdair Fraser, and the Cape Breton Symphony Fiddlers that made this band well known abroad.

Our trips included a concert in Berlin, Germany, with the Cape Breton Symphony and tours of Scotland, the Orkneys, and Shetland. Bob and I loved to reminisce about our first concert in Scotland in 1982. It was at the Dunblane Hydro and seated in the front row were Angus Fitchet, John Ellis, Jim MacLeod, Ron Gonnella, and a variety of other great local musicians. While this didn't seem to faze the other members of our group, Bob and I were pacing back and forward wondering "what the heck are we doing here?" — *talk about taking coals to Newcastle!* The concert and tour was a total success, and we were able to breathe once again. This was a great era with many laughs and superb music.

May 3, 2021, marked the 10th anniversary of Bob's passing and we continue to be grateful for the many fantastic memories, stories, and what we now affectionately call "Bobbyisms".

...Fred Collins



## A couple of Bobbyisms...

- ◆ If someone commented that the music was too loud at the front, Bobby usually suggested that they dance at the back.
- ◆ If Bobby happened to make a technical slip whilst playing (which was very rare) he would immediately shout "What was that?" ...as if something had distracted him. We, being of no help, would look at him blankly and say: "We didn't hear anything."

## The Dancing Collinso Brothers





# Events & Aspirations

## July 24 ~ TAC Summer School ~ Via Zoom

AGM: July 24, 2021, other events July 28-31.

LATEST UPDATES: Registration opens May 15, 2021

There is no fee but donations are welcome.

Virtual Summer School events will be held from Wednesday, July 28th to Saturday, July 31st. Open to ALL dancers of ALL levels. You do not need to be a member of TAC. The Committee has planned classes, presentations, evening dancing and music, a concert, a ceilidh, and a silent auction. There will chat and socialize time at virtual after-parties following the Welcome Dance and the Ball.

Teachers: Ron Wallace, Alan Thwigg, Geoffrey Selling

Musicians: Tartan Ties (Judi Nicolson, Ian Muir, Kathy Fraser-Collins, and Fred Collins) for the ball; Tartan Ties, Mary Ross and Terry Traub for a musicians' concert Thursday evening.

Details are on the TAC website, Summer School menu. From there you can register, see a schedule of events, view dance programmes, read about the teachers and musicians, learn how to submit details about a Ceilidh act, and how to donate to the Silent Auction.

Visit: <https://tac-rscds.org>

## 2022: May 7 ~ RSCDS London Ontario Branch 60th Anniv.

Details to follow: <https://www.rscdslondoncanada.org>

## 2022: Sept 25 - Oct 02 - 45th Australian Winter School

RSCDS Western Australia Branch invites dancers for a great week of dancing with terrific teachers and musicians.

Info: <https://winterschool2020.com> (Yes, the weblink is correct.

Originally planned for 2020 but then... )

## 2022: Nov. 5 ~ 100 years of Dancing in Waterloo Region

Kitchener-Waterloo Branch was established in 1960; Blair Scottish Country Dancers group was established in 1980. Add those legacies together and we can celebrate 100 years of dancing in Waterloo Region. We hope this event will be real, not virtual.

## Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

### St Andrews Summer School 2021

Virtual ~ Week of 18th July

The virtual Summer School will take place during the week of 18 July, with further details to be announced shortly.

[www.rscds.org/events/summer-school-2021](http://www.rscds.org/events/summer-school-2021)

### Dance Scottish at Home

On holiday: 16 July until the end of August.

All those talented people working so hard to keep us connected need a break.

[All past Dance Scottish at Homes](#)

### Planning for Resumption

This Fall, we hope...

This autumn, when (some) members can return to dance, the Society envisions that DSAH in its current format will reach its natural end point.

Planning for the next version will ensure that the much valued, direct communication with members, will continue.

Helpful suggestions for members, in preparation for the return to dancing, will be produced during the summer.

Specific up-to-date advice, provided by Sport Scotland, will also be shared.

### 100th Anniversary of RSCDS

November 26, 2023

Big plans are afoot to celebrate this historic milestone. Branches are encouraged to develop their own projects.

[www.rscds.org](http://www.rscds.org)

## Grace Notes

### Henry Albert Gibbs

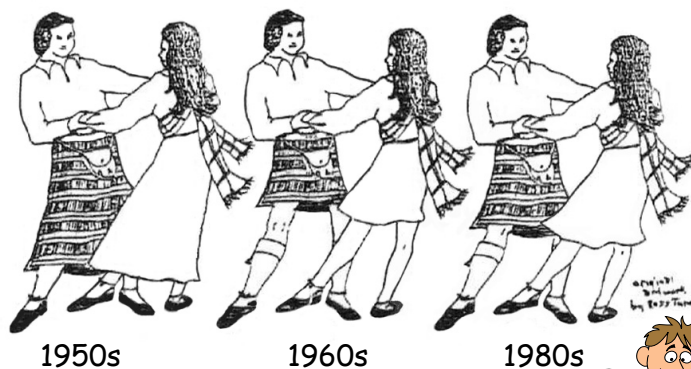
17 February 1922 - 10 May 2021

Henry was a commissioned officer in the 1st Punjab Regiment of the British Indian Army. He was active in Gilbert & Sullivan operettas and he was President of the Toronto St. George's Society. He and his wife Dorothy danced at Grace Church-On-The-Hill and Glenview. He was a great conversationalist, with many stories. He also studied Highland dance. For many years he enjoyed the challenge of identifying exotic trees in York Cemetery. We extend sympathy to his family.



Dorothy & Henry

## IF KILTS FOLLOWED FASHION TRENDS...



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