

Calvin Celebrates 60 yrs



Calvin Closing Night, May 2007

From the Chair...



Jean Lindsay

Welcome back to dancing! I hope you had a good time this summer and are looking forward to having fun on the dance floor!

People volunteer for many good reasons.

Studies by Harvard University show that people who take part in volunteering regularly enjoy benefits similar to those who exercise regularly.

Participating as a volunteer is a great way to meet others and learn new things and has been shown to increase endorphins and decrease stress levels (www.health.harvard.edu/blog/many-ways-volunteering-good-heart-201606039726).

Special thanks to all volunteers who have contributed in the past and to those who continue to volunteer in a variety of ways.

There are always volunteering opportunities throughout the year; some dancers take part via committees and others join in as needed. There are many things to do: big or small contributions, your help will be most appreciated. Interested in volunteering? Contact waynefraser@me.com

Our 60th Anniversary Dance will be held the evening of November 25 at the beautiful Sala Caboto venue. Society Chair-Elect, Andrew Kellett, our Guest of Honour, is coming from Scotland to join in this celebration.

Warm regards,

"There are shortcuts to happiness and dancing is one of them."

...Vicki Baum



Fiona Morton

In early 1957, Lindsay Kilmer approached the minister of Calvin Presbyterian Church, Dr. Douglas Herron, and asked whether a Scottish country dancing group might be formed at the church, but Dr. Herron felt there would not be enough interest. That summer, Prof. Ronald Smith invited young people at Calvin to join the summer dancing programme of the Rosedale Group at Craighigh Gardens Park. Those who participated were immediately determined to start dancing at Calvin.

Margaret Birnie, Edward Mason, and Forbes Brown approached the Toronto Branch of the RSCDS and secured the services of a teacher. Alex MacGregor started teaching the Calvin Group on October 21, 1957, in the lower hall of the church, with piano music provided by Stan McKee. Toronto Branch monthly dances were located in the hall until it could no longer accommodate the numbers. The Scottish dancing group was intended to provide fellowship and activity for the congregation as well as the community and, at the same time, to interest those who joined the dancing in becoming members of the church. Association with the church continues today.

After about a year Alex MacGregor was transferred to the DEW Line and Calvin obtained the services of Matthew Sutherland, a member of professional demonstration teams in Scotland and an instructor to members of the Royal Family. He agreed to instruct the group until a new teacher was found. Coll Black was engaged to teach in 1959 although he already had a class at St Paul's Anglican Church. St Paul's eventually asked that group to give up the room in which they danced, and Coll asked Calvin if the two groups could be combined. An agreement stipulated that the Calvin name was retained.

In early 1960, through the Toronto Association, Calvin attained the services of Iain Macfarlane. Born in the Outer Hebrides and a Gaelic speaker, Iain had an extensive background in teaching Scottish country dance. He taught Branch and Candidate Classes, organized the first Toronto Children's Festival, and gave the Tartan Ball its current name. He encouraged newer dancers to attend the Tartan Ball mainly to observe and to dance only three dances that he ensured they learned. (In those days dances at the Tartan Ball were introduced by name only; there was no briefing.) Iain was a meticulous adjudicator and teacher and was in demand throughout Canada and the United States. Iain's wife Cathie was the Toronto Branch's first treasurer and served many roles in the Association and at Calvin. She was a great asset to our organization.

Calvin was also fortunate in having Isabelle MacPherson, a dedicated teacher and a charter member of Calvin, conduct beginners' classes in the upper hall. Sessions were held in fall and winter and the attendees would graduate to the social dancing downstairs.

Iain retired in 1980 after leading the group for over 20 years. Frances Gray took over as

Calvin's 60th, continued from page 1



Neil Gray, Nancy Stokes, Isabelle MacPherson, Douglas Smith, Frances Gray
~ Frances' retirement, May 2010 ~

our teacher and was our inspiration for 30 years. Frances was always calm, in total command, and encouraging to Calvin dancers. Under her excellent tutoring, we participated in all Gala Days, danced at demonstrations and the CNE and SkyDome, and performed at military institutions, retirement homes, and churches. Frances also taught teacher candidate classes and adjudicated at examinations. Neil, her husband, danced with us, looked after Frances' musical equipment, and he was a generous supporter of the Calvin SCD group.

Calvin has been especially blessed with our teachers who were awarded the Scroll of Honour: Iain in 1992, Frances in 2000, and Isabelle in 2010. Calvinites also served as Chair of RSCDS Toronto: Iain MacFarlane (1963-65), Frances (1977-79 – the first woman to hold the post), and Douglas Smith (1995-97). Douglas is a long-time member, and he still dances at Calvin.

In September 2005 the Scottish country dance group was invited to be part of Calvin Presbyterian Church's commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of the opening of the church. The event was celebrated with a buffet dinner and ceilidh, and members of the Calvin

group danced two demonstration dances. It was a delight to be part of this celebration as we met at the church each Tuesday evening from September to May since our founding. The Calvin group routinely enjoyed live music at our weekly meetings from 1957 until 2004. Musicians included: Stan Hamilton, Ed Brydie, Angus MacKinnon, Elma Grech, Anne Robertson, Bobby Frew, Larry Pichko, and Don Bartlett. Don Bartlett still honours us by playing at Calvin's Christmas and May parties.

At one time Calvin had 20 sets in the hall. Our numbers have drastically declined since those days, but we continue to dance enthusiastically and to reach out to new dancers. Frances retired in 2010, and Vicky Zeltins has been our teacher since then. We have come full circle in many ways. Vicky was in Isabelle MacPherson's beginner class, then joined Calvin social group, then The Finlay Dancers, progressed to her Teacher's Certificate, and now has returned to Calvin. Our 60-year celebration will be at the church. Don Bartlett will play and, by coincidence, the date given to us by the church is October 21, exactly 60 years since our first meeting. Happy Birthday, Calvin SCD group, and many happy returns. . . . *Fiona Morton*



Don Bartlett will play for Calvin's 60th Anniversary Dance:
Saturday, Oct 21
1:30-4:30 p.m.



Dance Dufferin Grove

Dance Dufferin Grove enjoyed good weather the evening of August 24. Keith Bark and Deirdre MacCuish Bark led Toronto members and eager bystanders in an outreach event adjacent to the weekly farmers' market. Easy Scottish country dances attracted numerous participants, young and old, from an enthusiastic audience.

Dancing at Dufferin Grove has become a regular feature of late summer, and it's now listed in the park's calendar. Events such as Dance Dufferin Grove increase awareness of Scottish country dancing and help us reach a diverse audience with our dancing and music. . . . *Paul Barber*



Dancing In The Park

Dancing in the Park this year was favoured by two lovely June evenings in the park itself. On the two rainy evenings we danced comfortably in the cosy confines of the parish hall of Church of The Ascension.

Thanks to good member turnout, ten sets was typical. Many spectators and beginners joined in and went home with info about dance classes.

Many thanks to Scotch Mist for their wonderful music and to the volunteer briefers: Teresa Lockhart, Moira Korus, Arlene Koteff, and Jean Noble. Thanks also to our volunteers who helped on the four evenings.

. . . . *Dave Drewette*