

RSCDS Toronto SET & LINK

A Bitter/Sweet Break

www.dancescottish.ca

From the Chair...



Louis Racic

Spring has sprung. Winter is behind us (we hope!), the robins have returned, and we are starting to enjoy warmer and sunnier days. April usually heralds the end of the dance season with our AGM and Volunteer Appreciation Dance. Our virtual AGM will be held on April 24. Unlike this time last year, we are all getting quite proficient with Zoom meetings. All adult members of the RSCDS Toronto Association will be sent an invitation to the AGM in early April. As with previous meetings, you need to pre-register to obtain a Zoom link. I encourage all members to attend.

We do not have volunteer awards to present this year; however, recognition is due to two groups that have kept us engaged with our Scottish country dance community this year.

Firstly, thank you to all of those that have been holding virtual zoom dance classes during this past year. These include Keith Bark, Deirdre MacCuish Bark, Arlene Koteff, Moira Korus, Halyna Sydorenko, Alma Smith, and Alan Rosenthal. These classes are thriving and provide not only a variety of dance classes — Scottish country, Step and ceilidh dances — but also a social time with our friends and fellow dancers. I have enjoyed the classes I have attended. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Secondly, I commend Donald Holmes and the members of the Newsletter Committee, including Sheena Gilks, Rob Lockhart, Teresa Lockhart, Marian White, and Judy Williams, for keeping us entertained and informed even though there were no face-to-face dances to advertise or to comment upon after the fact. Early on in the pandemic Donald told me they would keep publishing *Set & Link* as long as they could find sufficient content. Congratulations on a job well done.

Best wishes for a Happy Easter. ...Louis Racic



Laird Brown

Over the last year, I have been asked on many occasions "How am I doing not playing?"

To be honest, it has been "Bitter Sweet". I have been in a band playing accordion for 28 years without a break. The weight of my accordion (33 lbs.) has taken a toll on my left shoulder. I drive a mini-van to carry sound equipment that has caused hernia surgeries for band members over the years, no kidding. We spend hours driving to and from gigs in the worst of conditions. Musicians don't

celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, or family functions. Why not? 'Cause we're usually at a gig. We keep entry level jobs so we are available to play at a moment's notice. A band spends hours upon hours creating new sets and writing new music. I stress out about tempo, making mistakes, how many bars to play. So, do I miss this? Not on your life. This is the "SWEET" part in taking a break.

The "BITTER" part, that's easy. I want so much just to have a tune with the boys, and play for the dancers, that I'm willing to put up with the twaddle above.

I have used the down time wisely. I went through thousands of pieces of music, some written on envelopes, scrap paper, one tune on a cigarette pack, and I've organized original music by Bobby Brown and various composers. These efforts led to a new music book, *The Scottish Accent Collection: 113 Canadian Compositions Written in the Traditional Scottish Style*. The music written by Bobby Brown, Kathy Fraser-Collins, Laird Brown, Donny Wood, Rob Wolanski, and Etienne (Steve) Ozorak, includes reels, jigs, strathspeys, waltzes, marches, polka, and slow air. It was just published by the members of The Scottish Accent band, in conjunction with TAC. Thanks for the printing, TAC! [[TACbooks link](#)]

I was asked to give my five favourite tunes – a great question. I thought about it, but there is no way to give a list. I love hundreds of tunes and, as a musician, each tune has something special. To pick one over another is impossible for me. Some tunes make me cry, some make me smile, and some make me drive my foot into the ground.

Tunes are very personal. Some melody lines I hear, and I feel a musical conversation happening. For example, *June Darge's Strathspey*, written by Jimmy Darge for his wife. In the first 13 bars, he's asking a question in my mind, and it doesn't matter what the question is. On bar 14 he answers that question. That one little bar, bar 14, soooo powerful! On the other hand, if I were to give my Top 5 Scottish dances: *The Wild Geese*, *St John River*, *Red House*, *Duke of Atholl's Reel*, and *The De'il Among the Tailors*.

I miss all the dancers, and I am looking forward to seeing you soon. Cheers.

...Laird Brown



The Scottish Accent Collection:
113 Canadian Compositions Written in the Traditional Scottish Style
Available from [TACbooks](#)

Virtual Classes

TUESDAY EVENINGS:

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

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS:

Humbercrest ~ 8 p.m. ~ 60-90 mins
Deirdre MacCuish Bark teaches.
All are welcome. To join, contact [Deirdre](#)
Glenview ~ 8 p.m. ~ 60-90 mins
Moira Korus teaches. All are welcome.
To join, contact [Erica de Gannes](#)

THURSDAY EVENINGS:

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

FRIDAY EVENINGS:

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

SATURDAY MORNINGS:

Rosedale Youth
Saturday Mornings ~ specific times for different classes
New dancers are welcome.
Contact [Moira Korus](#) 647.378-5753

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS:

Scottish Step Dance for Beginners
2 p.m. - 3:00
Alma Smith teaches basic steps and step dances.
Contact Alma Smith: asmith26@cogeco.ca

LAST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH:

Ceilidh Dancing ~ 8 p.m. - 9:00
Join Alan Rosenthal for some virtual ceilidh dancing.
Beginners welcome. You don't need a partner.
Contact Alan: ceilidh@alanr.ca
More info: www.alanr.ca/dance/virtualceilidh.html

RSCDS DANCE SCOTTISH AT HOME:

"Live" every Wednesday afternoon

- 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](#)

AGM • April 24 • 7:30

Board Bulletins

Nominations: Board Positions

The Nominations Committee is mandated to prepare a slate of nominees for each Board position and to present its recommendations to the Members for their approval at the Annual General Meeting April 24, 2021

The following members are proposed for Board positions:

Chair: Louis Racic
Vice Chair: Paul Barber
Secretary: Fiona Alberti
Treasurer: Wendy Fulton
Communications Director: Sheena Gilks
Education & Training Director: Tony Szeto
Marketing Director: Ron Macnaughton
Membership Director: Carol Ann Boothby
Program Director: Kevin Moloney

The deadline for current nominations has passed, but any member of RSCDS Toronto can nominate a Member for future positions. Contact: Liz Clunie, Chair. Nominations Committee 416 418 5494

Motion: Financial Engagement

Be it moved that the financial engagement of the financial records of RSCDS Toronto Scottish Dance Association for the 2021 fiscal year be a compilation engagement.

Board Meetings, Scheduled Dates:

Apr 7 May 10 Jun 10

April 24, 2021, Draft AGM Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Appointment of Parliamentarian and Scrutineers
3. Motion to Accept the Agenda
4. Motion to Accept Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting
5. Motion to Accept the Minutes of the November 2020 Special General Meeting
6. Business Arising from the Minutes
7. Reports from the Board
8. Motion regarding financial engagement for the year.
9. Report of the Nominations Committee
10. Election of the Board of Directors
11. New Business
12. Motion for Adjournment

Motion: The Board moved that the financial engagement of the financial records of RSCDS Toronto Scottish Country Dance Association for the 2021 fiscal year be a compilation engagement.

All adult members of the RSCDS Toronto Association will be sent an invitation to the AGM in early April. You must pre-register to obtain a Zoom link.

Teachers' Pet Dances: Paul Maloney



So many great dances to choose from... so few choices allowed! For me, always, it has to start with the music. And then there are the movements to express that music.

I'll begin my five-dance program with *Seton's Ceilidh Band* (J4x64 bars, Bruce Fordyce, *Morison's Bush Collection*). Fordyce wrote both the dance and the music. Such fun figures to dance, and one's partner is always close by.

Next is *The Minister On The Loch* (S3x32, Roy Goldring, *Thirty Popular Dances, Vol 2*), wonderfully accompanied by Muriel Johnstone's tune, *Compliments to Robert MacKay*. Losing oneself in this gorgeous music, one can become the Rev'd Robert Walker figure skating upon Duddingston Loch— with the added advantage of having a partner, throughout.

Third is *The Irish Rover* (R8x32, James Cosh, 22 SCDs). Many recordings feature the traditional tune of the same name. It's even sung by Johnny Forrest on the Music Makars recording. Constant movement and diagonal half rights and lefts at the end. Pure pleasure.

Fourth is *Bonnie Stronshiray* (S8x32, Robert Campbell, *Glasgow Assembly*), danced to the set of tunes by Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent. Bob's figures and Bobby's music are perfectly wed. Sublime!

Fifth, is *Whigmaleeries* (R8x32 bars, Derek Ivory, *Imperial 2*), danced to the set of tunes by Hugh Ferguson and the Dalriada Scottish Dance Band. From the opening "turn simple" to the final four half reels, it feels so good.

Now, if I am allowed an extra, it is *St. Andrew's of Brampton* (R4x32, Ann Campbell, RSCDS Book 37), danced to David Cunningham's Encore set. At St. Andrew's of Brampton social group, it's our dance. We've danced it many, many times. But I never tire of its figures, and I love Cunningham's hornpipe version.

Thanks for indulging me and letting me declare my desert island choices.

...Paul Maloney

Origins of Seton's Ceilidh Band

[Adapted from the dedication of Bruce Fordyce, dance devisor, and composer of the lead tune, as published in the *Morison's Bush Collection*.]

Jack Seton was Drum Sergeant in the Glasgow Police Pipe Band. In 1950, he emigrated to New Zealand with his wife and son to settle in Hastings, where he became a probation officer. It was not long before he became drumming tutor to the Hastings Scots Highland Pipe Band, and timpanist in the local orchestral society. Jack's style of drumming revolutionized pipe-band drumming in New Zealand.

Jack started a Scottish country dance group, the Hastings Scottish Country Dance Club. He travelled extensively throughout the country, and in 1953 was instrumental in forming the Wellington-Hawkes Bay Association of Scottish Country Dance Clubs, of which he was the first President.

In 1954, Jack Seton, Bruce Fordyce, Nancy Baxter and Shirley Child ran the first Summer School of Scottish country dancing ever held in New Zealand. From such small beginnings eventually arose the NZ Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

About 1959, Jack Seton formed a small dance band to play live for Scottish country dancing and to record the music. The ensemble was in great demand particularly in the lower half of the North Island.

So, in 1961 when I composed the tune and devised the dance, there was no need to search for a title. There it was — full of life and vigour, fostering Scottish tradition and bringing joy and pleasure to many, many people.

So long as *Seton's Ceilidh Band* is danced the world over, may it continue to be a memorial to one of the finest cultural ambassadors Scotland has ever had.

TORONTO'S TEACHERS

32 bar Reel for 4 couples in a 4C set

Devised by Ann Campbell on May 3, 2011, for all the teachers in the Toronto Association (no matter where in the GTA they live), without whom we would have no Scottish country dancing.

- 1- 8 1s+4s CROSS RH & CAST 1 place (2s+3s step up/dn #3-4)
1M+4M, 1L+4L TURN LH once round, end with 1s facing up, 4s facing down on sidelines
- 9-16 All dance REELS of 4, passing RSh to enter the reel. At the end of reel, 1M & 4M, 1L & 4L pass by RSh & curve in to face each other on sidelines. 2s+3s face partners across set.
- 17-24 All dance a GRAND CHAIN: 2s & 3s Cross RH to begin while 1M+4M, 1L+4L Change place RH
- 25-32 All Set, 1s+4s dance RHA ☒ way;
All dance BtoB with partner.

Repeat from new places

Recommended music: "The Bridgwater Geordie"
Scottish Measure SCD Band, *A First Dram*

Said Hamlet to Ophelia:
I'll draw a sketch of thee,
What kind of pencil shall I use?
2B or not 2B?



Are you ready to dance again?



Margaret Rieger

What a silly question! Scottish country dancers worldwide are more than eager to take the floor again. But are you ready? Are you fit specifically for the stresses of dancing?

Many dancers over their dancing years have experienced torn muscles, sore joints, fatigue, and other aches and pains. Some issues may have resolved during this pandemic hiatus; some may be lingering. This is a wonderful opportunity of time to see to these issues, have them assessed and dealt with in preparation for the return of the dancing season — a Tune Up!

For those who have remained active, are you ready for the specific demands on your body that dancing imposes? Are you flexible enough, strong enough, do you have sufficient breath, are you coordinated enough?

As we age, what was simple to do at 20 becomes a challenge by 60. For example, the floor seems to be much farther away. We do modify our steps almost automatically, less 'push' to our strathspey travelling step, or less hop in our skip-change. This year has found us sitting more, in front of screens, reading books, working from home without the usual colleague breaks, generally less active. As the saying goes, if you don't use it, you lose it. Our backs stiffen, our hips don't have the turnout, our foot point isn't as elegant. What is lost in flexibility at one joint often is compensated for by another. For example, less outward turn at your hip can result in more inward rotation of your knee and more pronation in your foot, resulting in knee pain, plantar fasciitis, etc.

Being fit also requires strength. Having sufficient strength to do the task and enough strength overall to control, protect, and support the joints in action is essential. We have all heard about



"core" strength, the mantra of all thorough fitness routines these days. It certainly makes sense. Without strength in our abdominals and glutes, our limbs don't move as efficiently; our joints, ligaments, and muscles are subjected to extra strain. We expose our bodies to the possibility of injury, especially when we aren't prepared.

Will you make it through 32 bars of a invigorating reel or jig? Can you maintain your good technique through 32 bars of a three-couple strathspey done three times with no rests? Endurance. Cardio fitness. Many have been walking regularly throughout the pandemic or participating in other cardio workouts. Great. It all contributes to overall fitness. But if you haven't, don't be surprised if you are a little short of breath.

Coordination and balance are also necessary for SCD. We move quickly, change directions often and quickly. What about birling? Even the most accomplished ballet dancer has to work up to full fitness after such a long time off.

We all long to be dancing again – for the exercise, for the mental challenge, and especially for the wonderful community of Scottish country dancers. Now's the time to consider how to be ready, both physically and mentally. Maybe, if available, try the ZOOM classes offered by the Society, or some of our local social groups, or workshops offered here and around the world. Whatever choices you make, please always remember, when we do take the floor again, be gentle with yourself. Curb your exuberance. UNDERDO it, don't OVERDO it, especially at the beginning — whenever that may be.

...Margaret Rieger



The moths dined well on this kilt

Moths in my kilt—Not welcome

It is now a year since many of us have worn a kilt, because we stopped when Covid-19 shut down our dancing activities. Now is the time to check those precious and costly garments for unwanted guests—

specifically, moths. Moths love dark places and natural oils (body oils, spills, etc.), so the pleats of a kilt hidden in a dark closet can be breeding grounds for them.

Storing kilts in a zippered garment bag is a deterrent to infestation.

Moth balls are usually effective, but they stink.

Cedar balls are somewhat effective, but they need sanding occasionally to release the natural esters that moths dislike.

Cedar shingles are strong, inexpensive, and release esters that are effective with little maintenance.

In desperation, placing a kilt in a plastic bag in a freezer for 24 hours will kill moth larvae. It is the larvae stage of the moth that causes damage to fabric. Why is it that a wool sweater or pleated skirt, necktie, or woolen triubhas stored in the same closet as a kilt will be attacked by moths before a kilt? The looser weave of the former quartet is more attractive than the tight weave of a good weight, 13- or 16-ounce kilt.

Kilts are best stored when dry. If your dance exertions produced perspiration, leave the kilt open overnight (lining side up for perspiration to evaporate). My first of five kilts has escaped a moth visitation/invasion for over 40 years.

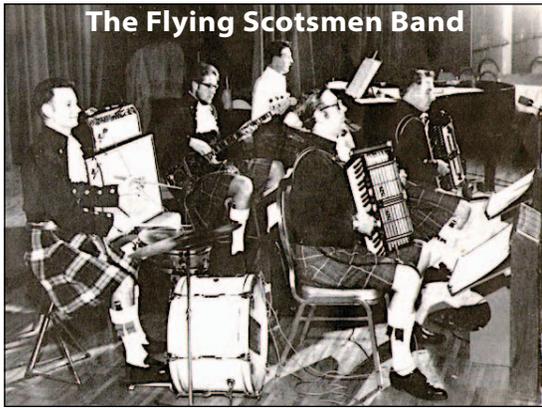
The other four, while newer, are also pest free. When we are vaccinated, when Covid-19 is under control, and when health officials give us permission to meet again safely in social groups, I'll not be concerned about moths, because bright light is also their enemy.

...Donald E. Holmes



A well-cared-for MacLaine of Lochbuie dress tartan kilt

Fred Collins: Stan Hamilton & The Flying Scotsmen



The Flying Scotsmen Band

Fred Collins • Don Wood • Stan Hamilton • Bobby Brown • Bobby Frew

My tenure with Stan Hamilton had a rather inauspicious beginning. His drummer from London was unable to make an engagement on the Toronto Island, an annual event which came to be known as the Island Fling. Upon arriving at the docks, I mistakenly drove up the wrong wharf as the ferry was docked at the

wharf to my right. I immediately reversed, but there was a gap I hadn't noticed and, luckily, given my speed, the car bridged the gap with my rear bumper resting on the ledge and my rear wheels spinning freely. To add insult to injury, the other band members and dancers on the ferry were shocked witnesses to my misfortune. Fortunately, I was able to exit the driver's side onto land; a right

hand drive would have seen me in the water. I was able to rectify the situation by having a towing company hoist my car onto land in time to catch the next ferry and play the first dance.

A few weeks later, I was asked to become a permanent member of the band, which began my 46-year friendship with Bobby Brown. Shortly after I joined the band, we were in need of a bass player so Stan reached out to his friends, the Wood family, whom he had known in London through his association with Bill Wood, who was a fiddler. They were now living in Scarborough, and their son Donny was a student at Cedarbrae Collegiate and had been playing guitar. Stan arranged a band meeting at their home to hear him play bass and, of course with Donny's obvious talent, he got the job. I do enjoy reminding Donny that I was *invited* to join the band whereas he had to *audition*! Interestingly, his first engagement with the band was also the Island Fling. My association with Donny has now surpassed 55 years, and I treasure his friendship.

Stan's band was unique, innovative, and, in many ways ahead of its time. A perfect example of this would have to be the locomotive-inspired *Flying Scotsman* track which incorporated the sound effect of the train bell (actually a shock absorber) played by Bobby's sister, Jean Anderson.

[Ed. - The track is **amazing** – to hear it [click here](#).]

This track was copied and recorded by a number of well-known musicians including The Alexander Brothers. The Flying Scotsmen band made many trips, including a regular gig in Maxville, Ontario, where Kathy and I now reside on our farm. It was a sociable time, and we were a highly sociable band. The majority of gigs were followed by house parties, and we were always happy to partake. Looking back, we no doubt had numerous angels on our shoulders guiding us safely home. Incredibly, given our Canadian winters, I believe we only missed two engagements because of weather – Windsor and Boston. There were many nights we probably shouldn't have been on the roads. However, those angels again!

After seven seasons with this incredible band, I stepped down due to increasing job commitments, but I maintained a close association with all the members for many years following. I have always credited Stan for influencing my strathspey playing. He would always say, "Freddie – just flow ... Fred Collins



Stan Hamilton

Marmalade: A Scottish Invention



Marmalade is a jam-like preserve generally made of the pulp and rind of oranges (*Webster's Dictionary*). The word is derived from the Portuguese

"marmelos" meaning a paste of citrus fruit.

Marmalade as we know it today can be traced back to 1797. Legend has it that a Spanish ship took refuge from a raging storm in the sheltered harbour of Dundee, Scotland. On board was a consignment of Seville oranges. Dundee grocer James Keiller purchased them on speculation and took them home, but Mrs. Keiller found they were too bitter to eat. She, being a canny Scot and not wanting the oranges to go to waste, saw the potential of these bitter Spanish oranges. She boiled them with sugar and the resulting product was a delicious preserve: marmalade.

Today, the practice of making marmalade is observed in many households in Canada during January and February when Seville oranges from California become available. Recently, in our kitchen in Goderich, we indulged in "canning" marmalade, which resulted in 78 jars (for personal consumption and gift giving).

In honour of this well preserved tradition, we offer. . .

ODE TO MARMALADE

Precious Scottish invention

We love you more than most

For we have you with our breakfast

As jam upon our toast.

With your tangy bitter flavour

You are also tart and sweet

On frosty days or in summer's heat

You're our early morning treat.

... Lourdes Genosa & Nigel Keenan



Dear Editor...

Tartan Ball Nostalgia

I am in a Covid-induced cleaning up mode. I found a file with old copies of *Set & Link*. October 2009 has an article by Louis Racic, relating his first Tartan Ball [1993]. I thought it a nice contrast to Fiona Morton's memories of the Tartan Ball in the March issue. Jim and I were at the 1993 ball. I remember I even danced with the General. And wasn't that dress Mary Ann wore simply gorgeous! Fond memories. ... Liz Stark



Mary Ann & Gen. John de Chastelain, 1993 Tartan Ball

“I’m 94 this morning, aye I’m 94 t’day”

To recognize over 70 years of composition, a three-part, two-hour, YouTube presentation of John Beckwith’s songs aired on Sunday, March 7. Unfortunately, the presenter, confluenceconcerts.ca (presided over by John’s son, Larry Beckwith), limited general availability to two weeks, now expired.

John’s wife, Kathleen McMorrow, graciously offered the ensuing article for Scottish dancers.



John Beckwith and Kathleen McMorrow at the 2020 Tartan Ball

John Beckwith could have been singing [this Will Fyffe song](#) on his birthday on March 11, or he might have had a song of his own running through his head. John, who has been a Scottish country dancer since the late 1970s, has written more than 170 compositions, including four operas, a dozen orchestral works, chamber and solo works, songs and works for chorus. He studied piano performance and composition in Toronto (1945-50) and Paris (1950-52), then made his career as a composer and writer. He taught at the Faculty of Music, University of

Toronto, serving as dean 1970-77, and as first director of its Institute for Canadian Music from 1985 until his early retirement in 1990.

Many of his pieces have historical or regional Canadian themes; for example, his documentary cantata *The Hector* gives a 20th century view of the adventure that brought 200 Scottish immigrants to Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1773. In creating original songs he has often chosen texts by Canadian writers, including James Reaney, Margaret Lawrence, bp nichol, and Margaret Atwood. And he has made many arrangements of songs from Canadian traditions, including one group titled *I Love To Dance*.

A few SCD influences have crept in. He wrote a *Sonatina on Mairi’s Wedding* for flute and piano in 2013. His 2018 piece for piano and percussion, *Meanwhile* (in the sense of simultaneous actions as in *Australian Ladies*), [can be viewed on YouTube](#).

Family connections entitle John to his MacLeod of Skye kilt, made for him during a sabbatical in Edinburgh in 1985. Up to and including the February 2020 Tartan Ball, he wore it with great pleasure, enjoying the gentle exercise and warm companionship of the Trinity group led by David Booz.

... Kathleen McMorrow

.....
The Boy from Canada, a fun, cheerful song by John: <https://youtu.be/ZCmcyBICf3U>
.....

Did you miss it? RSCDS’ Online Classes

If you miss any of the Society’s Wednesday afternoon tutorials, you can still access all previous classes since March 2020. Find them at this link: <https://www.rscds.org/get-involved/dance-scottish-home/online-classes> Sessions are listed by Teacher, Content (steps & formations featured), and Dances taught. Clicking on the Class date links you to the class you wish to view; no passcode required.

Not all the recorded classes begin immediately, but you can scroll forward to find the actual start of the lesson, often at the 20 minute mark.

You will not be viewing a class live, so you do not have the same opportunities to chat or ask questions through the session.

Thank you to all the people whose wonderful hard work makes these remarkable classes available to us, whether live on Wednesdays or through the recorded sessions whenever we wish.

Catching up with Sam

I started dancing in the children’s class at Rosedale Presbyterian Church when I was three years old and continued to learn from some of the best teachers (Lorna Larmour and Moira Korus to name two), every Saturday morning for 15 years. I wouldn’t have spent my weekends any other way. I had some amazing experiences; the most notable was taking summer school in 2007 at St Andrews, Scotland. That is still one of my favourite trips to date. I still dance once a year at the Tartan Ball.



Samantha & Mehdi Baharmast school in 2007 at St Andrews, Scotland. That is still one of my favourite trips to date. I still dance once a year at the Tartan Ball.

It’s been 12 years since I left Rosedale, and my life has been busy since then.

Once I graduated from high school, I got a job in a great office. After five years, I realized I wasn’t meant to hold a conventional office job and decided to pursue my dream of becoming a makeup artist for TV and film. At the College of Makeup Art and Design in Toronto, I graduated top of my class and jumped right into my new career. Working in my dream job is an amazing feeling as I never have two days that feel the same. Both of my parents worked in the industry, and it felt as if I was following in their footsteps and joining the family business. My father, David Mephram, in addition to being Santa for the Rosedale dancers, was a location scout for TV commercials. My mother, Laurie McConachie, was the producer and main liaison between advertising agencies and their clients and the film director. In the past four years, I have worked on many shoots, including commercials and movies and even had my work displayed on billboards.

In 2018, my boyfriend, Mehdi Baharmast, and I became engaged after dating for almost six years. In 2019, we had the most beautiful wedding in Trelawny, Jamaica, with 40 of our closest friends and family.

In March 2021, we are excited to be welcoming our first child, a baby boy. I hope to get this little boy into a kilt and onto the dance floor one day!

... Samantha Mephram



Leo David Kenneth Baharmast

Born March 26 at 1am

8 lbs 2oz, 20 in long

Congratulations! to...

Sam, Medhi, and new grandma Laurie McConachie.

A Winter Evening ~ Winter School 2021

I'm not languishing in the the Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry, Scotland, nor dressed in my finery awaiting a dance at the Blair Atholl Castle Ball. I am, however, joined by members of my international family of Scottish dancers from Japan, Canada, France, Ireland, etc. — all from my den in Toronto. My first RSCDS Winter School experience.

We learned our host, and next RSCDS Chair, the memorable William Williamson, was able to wear his kilt once more without moving the belt hole, much to his wife's surprise and the envy of many of those observing the evening's events.

We were given a programme of familiar dances (now think... what's "familiar" for a possible thousand dancers? Some feat!). Dances included *Joie de Vivre*, *Duke of Atholl's Reel*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, *The Balmoral Strathspey*, and *Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan*. I was ready, the heels of my scuffed ghillies shoes raised, poised for flight. The 2022 Winter School teachers, Sue Porter, Fiona Mackie, and David Hall, introduced and expertly briefed the dances, then we could dance or watch a collage of fellow dancers from various parts of the world dancing the same dance. The RSCDS organizers also provided interesting historical points, along with dance videos from various branches.

I'm sure I won the Dance Quiz and earned the top prize — oh, no, there wasn't one, the prize was as virtual as the dancing.

Throughout the evening, we were entertained by stories, the Winter School musicians (Mo Rutherford and Neil Copeland, Adam

Brady, and Shona MacFadyen), and skilled step dancers cheekily interrupted.

How many spied the well-dressed fox staring into the hearty hearth with its warm log fire in William's den?

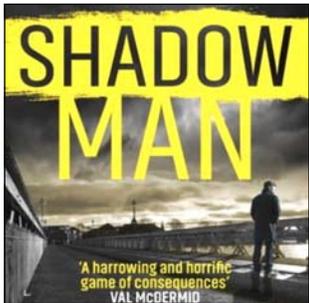
There was also a little "chat" from Cheryl Catt who wrote: "I have a fun memory of dancing an unconventional version of this dance (*Flowers of Edinburgh*) at an after party (at TAC Summer School) with tonight's host." I was at that same afters party a few years ago when suddenly Cheryl was chased, then scooped up in William's arms, and the pair ran away with the dance. Another great celebration!

[William and Cheryl kindly gave permission to share [the video](#)]

Thank you to all who made the afternoon Winter School session possible, and no airfare required. ...Teresa Lockhart



Literary Diversions



[Shadow Man at Indigo Books](#)

Shadow Man – A group of friends, with whom I attended Inverness Royal Academy in the dim and distant past, met up through Zoom. One friend was one of my bridesmaids 50 years ago. The conversation turned to books, particularly those set in our home area of the Scottish Highlands and the town of Inverness. My friend

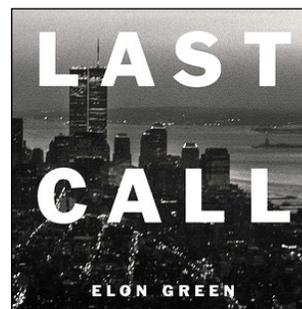
(whose usual reading is medieval Italian literature) recommended a book for light relaxation. It's a detective thriller series by Margaret Kirk, set in Inverness.

In the first of the series, Detective Inspector Lukas Mahlar returns to his home town and is immediately embroiled in an intriguing mystery. TV star Morven Murray is found murdered on the eve of her wedding, hours after a quarrel with her sister Anna. Entwined with this is the gangland style murder of a local police informant. Scottish mystery writer Val McDermid describes *Shadow Man* as "a harrowing and horrific game of consequences".

The small town of my childhood, Inverness has become a city. There are frequent references to familiar places: Bught Park, the Ness Islands, Tomnahurich, and the area called The Crown, near where I lived. The action moves to surrounding areas and mentions Ben Wyvis, the Black Isle (not an island), and the bridge to the Black Isle. When I was a child, there was only a ferry, which closed on Sundays by 6 p.m. If you missed it, you had to drive the long way round the head of the Firth.

Having devoured the first book, I downloaded the second, *What Lies Buried*, which continues the story of the two principal characters Lucas and Anna, with plenty of plot twists, leaving clues for future themes! A third book, *In the Blood*, comes out at the end of April. I can hardly wait!

...Deirdre MacCuish Bark

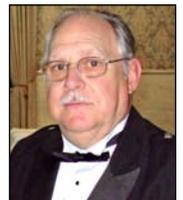


[Last Call at Book City](#)

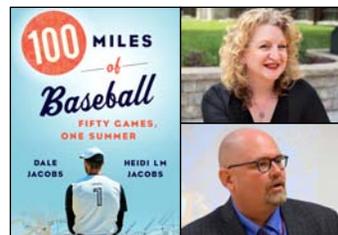
Last Call – This fact-based gruesome account of love, lust, and murder in New York tells the story of the "Last Call Killer" and the gay community of New York City he preyed upon. The killer eluded discovery for a decade. What's the connection to RSCDS Toronto?

The crime was solved thanks to

Woodglen dancer, Al Pollard. Before retirement, Al was a detective, and head of the Toronto Police, Forensic Identification Services. Al's evidence solved the case of the Last Call serial murderer.



Al Pollard



100 Miles of Baseball – RSCDS Windsor dancer, Heidi Jacobs, and her husband Paul, have a new book that explores the stories, and emotions evoked by 50 games in one summer within an easy drive of home. [From biblioasis.com](#)

Virtual Events

April 6 ~ Tartan Day

Wear the tartan on your daily neighbourhood walkabout.

April 17 ~ Virtual Spring Dance, RSCDS Montreal

Music by Tartan Ties (Kathy Fraser-Collins, Fred Collins, Judi Nicolson, Ian Muir) [Brochure](#) Event is free, but donations are appreciated. [Registration](#)

April 21 ~ Great Scots!

An event of our friends at the St Andrew's Society of Toronto. See details below. Free (but donations gratefully accepted).

April 23 ~ 170th Anniversary of 1st Canadian Postage Stamp

Ideal time to use your "I've been meaning to write" postcard.

April 24 ~ RSCDS Toronto AGM ~ 7:30 p.m.

All members will receive a timely email with details for joining.

July 2021 ~ TAC Summer School ~ Via Zoom

The AGM will be held virtually July 24, 2021.

Summer school details, teachers, musicians...TBA

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

Nov. 6, 2021 ~ 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 are hopeful this event will be real, not virtual.

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...)

Great Scots!

Canadian Authors with links to Scotland

~ April 21, 7:30 p.m. ~

Doug Gibson, prominent Canadian publisher, past President of St Andrews Society of Toronto, and notable wit will lead us on a fascinating journey through history, with stories about well-loved authors against their historic background.

To register by email: [Click here](#)

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Please send submissions to Set&Link by the 10th of each month. Send to Donald Holmes deholmes@sympatico.ca

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Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Events

Virtual Spring Fling 2021

April 17, from Aberdeen

Dancers age 12 - 36 from around the world are invited to join this virtual event.

To get in the loop join our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/rscdsspringfling>

or visit:

<https://abzspringfling2021.wordpress.com>

St Andrews Summer School 2021

Officially cancelled, but...

Intelligence reports suggest some sort of virtual summer dance event *may be* under consideration at HQ.

www.rscds.org/events/summer-school-2021

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

We have reserved a space for you...

The *Set & Link* committee invites you to submit articles, or events, of interest to Scottish country dancers. If you are uncertain about your proposed article, please confer with our Managing Editor, Donald Holmes.

As always, submitted articles are subject to editing for space, and because, as you know...

Commas save lives!

"Time to eat children."

