



Arlene Koteff
Toronto, Ontario

Toronto-born-and-bred, Arlene began Scottish Country Dancing through a chance visit to the Orillia Scottish Festival many years ago. Who knew there was Scottish dancing in Toronto as well?!

As her children grew, she immersed herself more deeply into dancing and travelled to various day workshops as well as TAC and St Andrews summer schools. Ultimately, she obtained her teachers' certificate in order to spread the enjoyment that is Scottish country dancing to others. She has been the full-time teacher at the Bloorlea social group, now located at the Alderwood Community Centre, since 2014 and has guest taught at various social groups and events since 2013. The pandemic brought the additional challenge of teaching and dancing on Zoom with a set of ghosts to challenge the brain and entertain the neighbours who happened to walk by the front window. She has also called dances at a number of ceilidh events, taught at the St. Andrew's Ball practices over the last two years and taught at the West End Workshop and the Valentine's Workshop in Alliston.

Through the years, she volunteered on the Tartan Ball, Program, West Toronto Ball and West End Workshop committees. After earning her full certificate, she joined the Teachers' Panel, organizes the West End Teachers' Workshop and led the demo pool from 2018 until COVID shut it down. When the effect of the pandemic on dancing became apparent, she agreed to take on the role of vice chair on the Toronto Board to help with the rebuilding process. By the time the Stoney Lake Weekend arrives, the transition to chair will be complete.

A retired college professor (medical office administration), her newest role is grandma to a beautiful girl. At weekly visits, Olivia loves bopping to reels and jigs, so the next generation of dancers is on the way!

What hasn't been mentioned is that the Stoney Lake Weekend has always been one of Arlene's favourites, one which she considers as the official start of summer. Being invited to teach here is an honour and will provide an opportunity to provide a warm welcome, create and renew connections, and share the joy of dancing.

Stoney Lake Dance Weekend Musicians

Don Bartlett



Don was born in Toronto. His family includes a strong legacy of church musicians, including Henry T. Smart who wrote “Angels from the Realms of Glory” and many other hymns.

Don grew up in Scarborough and attended Fallingbrook Presbyterian Church, where Hughina Wilson taught SCD to children on Saturday mornings. He enjoyed the dancing, the music, and the sociability. His favourite recordings were by Stan Hamilton & The Clansmen (later The Flying Scotsmen).

Dancing was great, but Don wanted to play the music, too. Hughina gave him the RSCDS Graded Book with music, and, with little musical training, he struggled to learn his first tune (a jig, Lord Cathcart). Jean Anderson, Bobby Brown's sister, gave him valuable tips. Before long he learned his first strathspey, Mrs. Stewart Nicholson — the only tune he had both on paper and on a recording (Stan Hamilton's).

Soon Don, still in his teens, was playing for many events as a solo pianist and as a member of Angus MacKinnon's band—one of three bands active in Toronto at that time. He played for dance weekends, workshops, and special classes, including classes with Miss Milligan. With Angus MacKinnon, he played for grand balls from New York to Montreal.

In 1972 Don formed his own band, The Scotians. Even though there were now four bands in Toronto, Don was called to play 60 to 70 events a year. Certain tracks on his Don Bartlett & The Scotians recordings are the gold standard for particular dances around the world. (Don's Davy Nick Nack is particularly famous.) These days the band is Don Bartlett & The Scottish Heirs, and it includes his daughter Jacquie on fiddle, daughter Lesley on electric bass, and friend Blair Mackenzie on fiddle. In 2020, Don recorded a solo piano CD, a few copies of which are still available. Don finds great pleasure in passing the wonderful heritage of Scottish country dance music along to his daughters, and to dancers of all ages.

Blair Mackenzie



Blair is a retired lawyer who has played violin and viola for many years. He plays weekly at PSCDS dance practices. He and Helen Batten provide live music for all PSCDS monthly dances. He plays occasionally for Scottish Country dancing at other locations in Ontario as a member of Don Bartlett's band, Don Bartlett & The Scottish Heirs. Blair and his wife Kathleen, a keen dancer, live in Lakefield, Ontario.