

### From the Chair...



**Let me begin by wishing everyone a very Happy New Year.** The Virtual Christmas Dance via Zoom on December 12 was a great deal of fun. It was thrilling to see so many dancers attend,

which is a testament to our vibrant Scottish country dancing community. Keith tells me that there were 100 people who logged in from near and far. I had multiple screens full of dancers. It was nice to see so many familiar faces and to have a brief chat. It reminded me of why I enjoy attending monthly dances. I was also pleased to see so many new dancers whom I do not know and have yet to meet. I look forward to meeting them at some in-person dance in the future. Although we were all dancing in our own homes, it did feel as if we were part of a larger event. Some people danced and some just watched. Everyone seemed to have fun — just as it should be at a dance. Many thanks again to Keith and Deirdre for organizing and hosting the virtual dance.

Well, we are all glad to be at the beginning of a new year. At least we are glad 2020 is over. Last year was not much fun, as we all had to learn how to cope with the pandemic. We are all looking forward to getting back to normal. However, it will take a while yet. With the start of vaccine distribution, we can see a light at the end of this Covid tunnel. We hope the huge vaccination effort will run smoothly over winter, spring, and summer. We will be watching public health recommendations and will begin dancing when it is safe to do so. If all goes well, we hope to be dancing in the fall/winter of 2021. In the meantime, we have weekly virtual classes to keep us engaged and dancing. Based on the success of the virtual Christmas dance we will also be looking at hosting other virtual events.

Keep safe,

...Louis Racic

**JUDY WILLIAMS ~** Over the past few months, a narrow, awkwardly shaped 1.25 by 3 metre area in front of my computer has magically become a dance floor, and on Saturday December 12 it held more than eighty other people. All my life these days is on Zoom so this didn't seem unnatural. Outside the weather was nasty, but fortunately I didn't have to go out to get to the monthly dance. There wasn't room for a set, even if I could have had other people in my home, so things had to get creative and even strange. Circles became oblongs, rights and lefts were diagonal even when they weren't supposed to be, and corners could literally be cut.

If I was a woman, my partner was inside the branches of a giant houseplant, my first corner was the kitchen door, and my second corner was the corner of a sofa.

If I was a man, my first corner was a shelving unit and my second was my desk. Since there wasn't room for a set, these imaginary people had to occupy space already occupied by something else. Perhaps I was in a quantum universe?

Whatever it was, I am very grateful to Keith Bark and all the other teachers who have made these weird things possible. You have literally saved my sanity and everyone else's.



**KEN ADAMSON ~** When this pandemic is finally over, we are all uncertain of how healthy Scottish country dancing will be when we return to our dance floors. But one thing is certain; the health of the return certainly will be enhanced by the use of information technology that has been embraced by RSCDS members, both at the international and local levels.

The older technology of YouTube has been a nostalgic reminder of what we have been missing for these past ten months. The 'whoosh' at the start of Rob Lockhart's extensive library of dances performed in Toronto draws us into a world populated by recognizable friends. On occasion, when we see ourselves in these videos, it allows us to cringe at our mistakes. Rob has been charitable in not showing sets that sometimes collapse. However transitory, these peeks into the 'not-so-distance past' are delightful. Thank you, Rob.

A year ago, the word Zoom was an option on our cameras or a comic book graphic. It was also a golden word opportunity for Scrabble players if they drew a Z from the bag. But now, Zoom has become as common a word as traffic lights, although most of us can negotiate traffic lights far easier than Zoom. But the challenge is there!

Who cares if the music sometimes dies out; or we can see but not hear; or hear but not see all participants; or participants are near or far, big or small, muted or unmuted. It's a great opportunity for us to learn remotely and appreciate the learning mode that our children and grandchildren face every day. Yet we persevere, with the victory of seeing our friends and thinking 'DANCING' as a reward.

The December 12 Family Christmas dance led by Keith Bark was a huge success. The weekly 'dances' held by social groups and the Zoom interactions within groups are all preparing us for a healthy return to dancing. Information Technology has helped RSCDS Toronto to slay that aphorism: Out of sight, out of mind.

## 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

Maira 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 based on his 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**

**Family Class: 9:30am (30 mins)**

Young children can dance at home with parents/siblings.

**Intermediate Class (age 8+), 10:15am**

New dancers are welcome.

Info and Zoom password: [Maira Korus](#) 647.378-5753

### SATURDAY AFTERNOONS:

Scottish Step Dance for Beginners

**2 p.m. - 3:00 (starts January 9)**

Scottish Step Dance (a.k.a. Ladies' Step) is typically done solo; thus it's well suited to Zoom classes and increasingly popular with both men and women. Teacher Alma Smith will introduce basic steps and sample a variety of step dances. Also included will be Highland steps used in Scottish country dance (e.g. Glasgow Highlanders).

More info/register, contact Alma Smith: [asmith26@cogeco.ca](#)

### LAST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH:

Ceilidh Dancing ~ 8 p.m. - 9:00 (starts Nov 30)

If you're missing the fun of the Saint Andrew's Ball this year, come join me (Alan Rosenthal) for some virtual ceilidh dancing. Beginners welcome. You don't need a partner.

Register with Alan at [ceilidh@alanr.ca](#)

More info: [www.alanr.ca/dance/virtualceilidh.html](#)

## Special Class

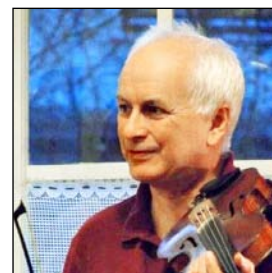
### Deb Lees of RSCDS Newcastle: *Scottish Country Dance for Beginners*

Deb Lees will teach a one-hour Zoom class on basic technique for new and beginner dancers. She will be accompanied by her husband, Roger Malton, on fiddle. Deb regularly teaches at St Andrews Summer School and at workshops around the UK and Europe. Deb and Roger live in Newcastle upon Tyne, England.

The class is aimed at beginners, but all are welcome to join. The class will be followed by a short session of Zoom social dancing, incorporating the elements learned in the class.

Info, or to register, please contact Alma Smith at [asmith26@cogeco.ca](#)

Alma teaches weekly Zoom Scottish country dance classes for new and beginner dancers on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. and Fridays at 10:00 am, and a social class for experienced dancers Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.



### DANCING DEVILS AND CUTTY SARKS: WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC IN ROBERT BURNS' SUPERNATURAL SCOTLAND

Thurs. 21 January 2021 ~ 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. EST



A FREE Zoom talk by  
Dr. Sierra Dye  
University of Guelph  
Centre for Scottish Studies

Presented by St Andrew's Society of Toronto and U Guelph CSS

<https://www.eventbrite.ca> (and search Dancing Devils)

### West End Workshop 2021

**SAVE THE DATE**  
Saturday, March 27, 2021



The West End Workshop is joining the trend and going virtual.

On the afternoon of March 27, 2021, from 12:30 to 5:30 EST.

More info will come in February.

## Teachers' Pet Dances: Pat Coyle

[Set & Link has asked teachers to name, and explain, their favourite 3 - 5 dances. As the 2020-21 programme devisor, Pat Coyle was asked first. Dance titles are linked to Toronto videos; book references are linked to instructions and diagrams.]

I have been asked to name three (or five?) of my favourites dances, which is difficult as I have dozens, both RSCDS and those by all the many clever devisors. However, I shall settle for a few which immediately popped into my head and are, of course, well known.

First, there is [Fair Donald](#) ([Book 29](#)) because strathspey is my favourite tempo. Could we have an all strathspey programme? Probably not anyone else's idea of fun! This dance allows so much interaction with my partner as the music carries us smoothly through our 64 bars.

A jig would be [Hooper's Jig](#) ([Miscellany 2](#)) which lifts everyone into the air with enthusiasm as, like many jigs, it is a wake-up call.

Another exciting "old" dance is that perennial favourite [Maxwell's Rant](#) ([Book 18](#)) — a joy to phrase, with music which carries you through even at the end of a long programme.

Finally, between three and five, I love [The Hunting Horn](#) ([SCD Archives](#)), a jig devised by Peter McBryde of Kitchener/Waterloo, the music for which, although seemingly galloping along, allows the double triangles to slip gently and smoothly through into the reels and onward into a second turn.

As I read through the above I see that, as for all of us, the music is the dance — be the pattern simple or challenging.

I hope to meet you dancing some of my many other favourites. Late next year perhaps? Meantime, enjoy the music!

... Pat Coyle, Uxbridge



## Writing a Winning Programme

[For several years RSCDS Toronto had a contest for members to submit a programme of dances for the April Volunteer Appreciation Dance, in accordance with guidelines from the Teachers' Panel. May Webster won the last contest with her programme.]

When I decided to try my hand at devising a programme, I did two things that gave the task direction: I picked brains (a resounding 'thank you!' to those whose brains I picked), and I referred to old programmes I still had.

I was advised that besides the usual numbers of jigs, reels, and strathspeys, I also needed to think of variety in terms of difficulty and document my choices. The documentation part was relatively easy, I had those old programmes and a version of MiniCrib on my computer. However, I had no instructions so I couldn't include dances I learned at the Demo Pool or social groups.

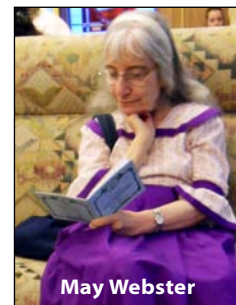
My main criterion in devising the programme was: What dances did I really enjoy dancing? I also thought of dances that hadn't been on programmes for a while.

By good fortune, while I was choosing dances, an article about figures appeared in *Set & Link* discussing what constitutes a difficult or basic figure, and what is in-between. I applied the knowledge I gained to classify the dances I wanted to include. I was told there could be only so many easy dances, and so many difficult ones, and most should fall into the intermediate group.

So I definitely had my terms of reference, and I did my best to adhere to them. I also kept in mind that variations in difficulty would work best if I did not group difficult or easy dances together. Few things are more frustrating than having to sit out several dances in a row because one is not comfortable doing them correctly! My aim was to keep sitting-out to a minimum.

I was certainly pleased to hear that my programme had been selected – though (perhaps to make sure I heard it right) I didn't say anything to anyone until the choice was made public.

I hope my programme will be danced sometime at a dance so I can enjoy the dancing as much as the devising. ... May Webster



[Editor's Post Script ~ May recently received an award from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto in recognition of her half century of service in choir, altar guild (doing, training, sewing), and organizing. Congratulations May.]

### May's Volunteer Appreciation Dance Programme

1. The Wild Geese	J8x32	RSCDS Book 24
2. Seann Triubhas Willichan	S8x32	RSCDS Book 27
3. Crom Allt	R8x32	RSCDS Third Graded Book
4. Muirland Willie	J8x32	RSCDS Book 21
5. City of Belfast	S3x32	RSCDS Book 48
6. Shiftin' Bobbins	R8x32	30 Popular Dances, Vol 2
7. Cutty Sark	J8x32	RSCDS Book 40
8. 1314	Med (S64+R64) sq set	Drewry, Rondel Book
9. Catch the Wind	R8x32	RSCDS Book 45
10. The Gilly Flower	J8x32	RSCDS Book 36
11. Balquidder Strathspey	S8x32	RSCDS Book 24
12. The De'il Amang the Tailors	R8x32	RSCDS Book 14
Extra: Reel of the 51st Division	R8x32	RSCDS Book 13

## The Zoomers

A 32-bar Strathspey for three couples in a four couple set

Devised by Ann Campbell on July 3, 2020, for Keith and Deirdre Bark to thank them for their Zoom classes.

(Notice the dancers never touch each other.)

Arlene Koteff recently taught the dance for one of the Erin Mills / Bloorlea Tuesday evening Zoom classes.

1-8: 1s+2s dance Double Figures of 8, 1s cross down as 2s dance up to begin.

9-12: 1s, dancing in to acknowledge one another, Cast 1 place (2s step up #11-12).

13-16: 2s+1s+3s dance Back to Back.

17-24: 1s+3s dance Double Figs of 8, 1s dance down as 3s dance up to begin. Finish: 2s facing at the top, and 1s facing 3s on the sides.

25-32: 2s+1s+3s dance a Grand Chain without giving hands. (2s cross to begin)

Repeat from new places.



# Serendipidance



Arlene Koteff

To commemorate Remembrance Day, I was preparing a military-themed programme for "Erin-Lea", the combined Erin Mills and Bloorlea Tuesday virtual social group. I came across a 32-bar jig called *General Ritchie's Reel* published in *Glasgow Assembly*, and devised by Oakville's Robert Campbell. He devised the dance in 1970 for General Sir Neil Methuen Ritchie, retiring Patron of RSCDS Toronto Branch.

That he was a highly decorated general who served in both world wars, was commissioned as an officer in the Black Watch, and that he came to Canada after retirement was another great Canadian connection. When General Ritchie first came to Canada, he was a director of the Canadian subsidiary of Tanqueray Gordon & Co., something many of us connect to! What sealed the deal is that our own Don Bartlett composed the lead tune, *Ten Minute Jig*.



Lucille Malek

When I announced the dance and gave a bit of the history, Theresa Malek announced that she thought she knew General Ritchie, through her mother and Moira Korus' Aunt Mary. Let me turn it over to Theresa for her part of the story.

Theresa: As Arlene described his career, I realized I knew the man through stories my mom [Lucille]

brought home from work. My brother Ed had mentioned General Ritchie's career a few weeks before in regard to the North African campaign and Normandy.

General Ritchie was Chairman of the Mercantile & General Reinsurance Company where my mom, brother and Moira Korus' Aunt Mary Johnston worked. I searched Mom's old work pictures and found a nice one of Mary and the General.

I had no idea he was connected to Scottish country dancing but was pleased to do a dance in his honour. A week later, Moira also taught the dance to her Glenview class. Maybe I'll get to dance it again once we are back dancing with friends.

Arlene: Just after Theresa and I chatted about this connection, I received an email from Don Bartlett, announcing his new CD, *The Well Tuned Piano*. While placing my order, I asked him about *Ten Minute Jig*.



Mary Johnston and General Sir Neil Methuen Ritchie GBE, KCB, DSO, MC, KStJ\*  
General Ritchie was Patron of RSCDS Toronto 1960 - 1970.

DON: I occasionally played for Bob Campbell at workshops or in Oakville, so we knew each other quite well. At some point in a class I was playing and he was teaching, Bob asked if I had a suitable tune for one of his dances (he didn't name the dance), and I played *Ten Minute Jig*, and he said he would like to use it for *General Ritchie's Reel*. I said, "But it's a jig," and he said he would still like to use it if that was okay with me, and I said yes. The name of the tune is because that's how long it took for me to think up the tune and write it down. Thanks for reminding me about it. I'm trying to gather up the better tunes I have written into one place so I can publish them. *Ten Minute Jig* qualifies as a "better" tune, but I haven't played it in years, and I had forgotten about it.

ARLENE: So often when we dance a dance, we don't know its history, but when there are connections like this, it is almost magical, and the story becomes woven with the dance and music.

...Arlene Koteff, and friends

\* GBE: Order of the British Empire KCB: Order of the Bath DSO: Distinguished Service Order  
MC: Military Cross KStJ: Knight of Order of St John

## Donalda Has Moved

Donalda McDonald has moved to a care residence in Orillia to be closer to family. RSCDS Toronto thanks her for her many contributions to Scottish country dancing: as teacher, consultant, substitute teacher (she always stepped in whenever needed), and dancer. We miss her sharp wit and marvellous stories.

If you would like to send her a card or note her address is:  
Champlain Manor, 65 Fittons Road West, Orillia L3V 3V2



## Congratulations Katie & Alistair!

"Hello from Montreal!"

We are happy to announce the birth of our daughter, Amelia Frances Charlotte Wood, born Thursday, November 19th."

...Katie and Alistair

Further congratulations to new grandmother, Joan Wood; to Aunt Jennifer Wood; and to Great Aunt Sharon and Great Uncle Robin Wood.



Dear Editor...

We are getting a bit mopey over the absence of SCD in our lives but absolutely need to tell you what a super job you and the "gang" are doing to keep *Set & Link* afloat for us. While we are electronically challenged and thus unable to do all this Zoom stuff, we are overjoyed to have your monthly newsletter to keep up with people we know and love — like Tom Kerr, Marjorie McLaughlin, Ron Wallace, William Williamson, Angela Young, and, of course, wonderful stalwarts like Don Bartlett and Donny Wood, Keith and Deirdre, Lyn Barsevskis, and Maureen Richardson. Thank you so much for keeping the flag flying for our "celestial recreation" and look forward to seeing all of you while we are still young enough to trip the light fantastic.

...John and Joan Reeves, Peterborough

# Hogmanay 2020 — Not a Creature Was Stirring

Hogmanay and Scottish country dance are intrinsically linked for us in Toronto! Over the past 40+ years Marian and I enjoyed Hogmanay where we would study dances for the New Year's Eve Ball, dress in formal Scottish attire, dance every dance, spend hours with many friends, enjoy delectable food at the end of the evening, and go home feeling that we participated in the best of celebrations. We were happy, tired, and sober. On a handful of occasions, we attended a house party with other Scottish dance friends engaging in a smorgasbord of food, drinks, and on one occasion, a whiff of snuff. As we plan for 2020, I imagine we, just the two of us, will sit in front of our television and reflect upon how New Year's Eve changed over the years.

As a child growing up in a farming community in Prince Edward Island, the tradition I knew was predictable but not glamorous. New Year's Eve and the following day were for family gatherings. Our mixed farm had 36 cows to be milked by hand, so my two younger brothers, my dad, my grandfather, and I did that chore twice each day. There are no holidays on a farm, especially with dairy cattle. All the animals had to be fed and watered and their stalls cleaned.

However, the real work for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day was in the house. There was the inevitable extra baking so that we would have lots of food on hand when people dropped in for a visit. About 10 p.m., each person was handed a dinner plate with two kinds of sandwiches, cookies, squares, and bars. There was always War Cake — essentially a spice cake with too much batter and too little fruit to qualify as fruit cake. When it came to War Cake, it was impossible to convince my mother the war was over. Real fruit cake saw the light of day on precious few occasions.

My dad's brother and his family lived one mile from us, and my mother was the fifth in a family of nine — all of whom lived within 13 miles of us, so we had lots of visitors, and we knew our first cousins as well as we knew our siblings. There were no invitations; relatives, and neighbours too, just showed up. All were welcome.

The big semi-annual chore was cleaning the house, top to bottom. That included scrubbing the ceiling in the large kitchen to remove collected layers of grunge — deposits from clouds of smoke; my father's roll-your-own Vogue cigarettes, my grandfather's Amphora pipe tobacco and King Edward Imperial cigars, and the wood and coal burning Enterprise stove. Scrubbing a



ceiling by hand is hard work. It's tiresome to hold your hands over your head for a long time but it was second nature to me by the time I learned Highland dance—I had experience. "Cleanliness is next to godliness," we were told. We five siblings wondered why God chose to live upstairs! When cleaning was done (as it always was), on New Year's Eve the kitchen door and the porch door (both without locks) were opened wide, regardless of weather conditions, to let out the old year and usher in the new. It was refreshing; it was tradition; it is still. Again this year, we opened our front door to let out 2020 and usher in 2021 but with much more reflection and a lot less celebration than formerly.

On New Year's Eve, many cultures perform rituals in the hope of banishing bad luck, bringing good luck, or fostering wealth. In Spain, it's good luck to eat one grape for each stroke of midnight. Danes throw glasses and plates at the doors of family and friends to banish bad spirits. In Brazil, an onion hung on the front door symbolizes rebirth.

In Scotland, good luck is brought by the first-footer (Gaelic: *ciad-chuairt*)—a dark-haired man, who must be the first to cross your threshold in the new year. He brings, typically, a piece of coal for the fire, and, typically, expects a dram of whisky.

In Canada, we countdown to midnight, raise a cheer then a toast to the new year, and like almost everyone around the world, we sing *Auld Lang Syne* in lusty voice and good company.

This year was different. Hogmanay for us was markedly quiet, distinct from previous celebrations, yet pleasant, even if imaginary. Not a creature was stirring. *Slàinte!* ...Donald E. Holmes



## First Footing vs. Good Footing

**FIRST FOOTING:** Common across Scotland. The "first foot" entering the house after Hogmanay's midnight should be a dark-haired man, bringing symbolic pieces of coal, shortbread, salt, black bun or a wee dram of whisky, all gifts ensuring good luck for the year.

**GOOD FOOTING:** "He's on a good footing with his boss." Where does this expression come from? During the reign of Henry VIII, the size of a man's shoe indicated his rank. Unimportant men wore a small shoe. Important men wore a large shoe to indicate that they were in good standing—"on a good footing" with the King.





## Life in the Time of Covid

*Love in the Time of Cholera* is a film based on a book of the same name. What I am about to write might be titled *Life in the Time of Covid*. I doubt it will ever be adapted for the screen. *Set & Link* asked me: How are musicians managing during this time of Covid; what are you up to?

Speaking for myself... In early February, I was on vacation with Christine and her family in Nicaragua. On return, I became ill and was diagnosed with pneumonia and low oxygen uptake. I was treated with a brief but effective antibiotic. My pneumonia cleared up, and I felt fine. I may never know if I had just survived a Covid infection acquired in Nicaragua or in one of the several airports involved in the trip. In spite of the possibility that I might, as a consequence, have developed some immunity, I have behaved very carefully, avoiding contact with persons outside our "bubble," and wearing a mask at all times when shopping, or doing anything else involving person-to-person interaction.

Christine's daughter suggested we would be less exposed to infection in a rural location. Thus, Christine and I moved from London to Chatham-Kent where Christine has a house on the shores of Lake Erie. I was kept quite busy cutting grass, trimming hedges, pruning trees, digging the garden, and planting tomatoes and potatoes (the tomatoes did well, potatoes less so) and, more recently, clearing eavestroughs in preparation for winter.

[Ed. - Dec. 15 Fred and Christine brought "holiday cheer" to a Zoom gig for RSCDS Kitchener.]

## Jess Houseley: Happy Memories

[For several decades Jess Houseley has run Celtic Connections, an afternoon social group at Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, especially popular with dancers who live north of City Limits. Jess has decided to retire. *Set & Link* asked for an interview.]



Jess said, "Celtic Connections is an amazing group of people, and I thank them for their friendship and camaraderie, their willingness to help in whatever way is needed, and their loyalty demonstrated to me for over 25 years." Jess added, "They had to put up with a lot too".

In her kindhearted way, Jess accommodated many requests from dancers. Her husband Mike always supported her in class and at home when they practised formations and dances, sometimes with kitchen chairs as partners. Always gregarious, she loved preparing for and teaching classes because she knew that Thursday afternoons would be wonderful times filled with fun.

She and Mike made many friends who still keep in contact, including soon-to-be 102-year-old Tom Gorman, whom they often drove home from her class, and Maureen Richardson, who attended the class solely to dance yet willingly assisted with teaching a dance or class when called upon.

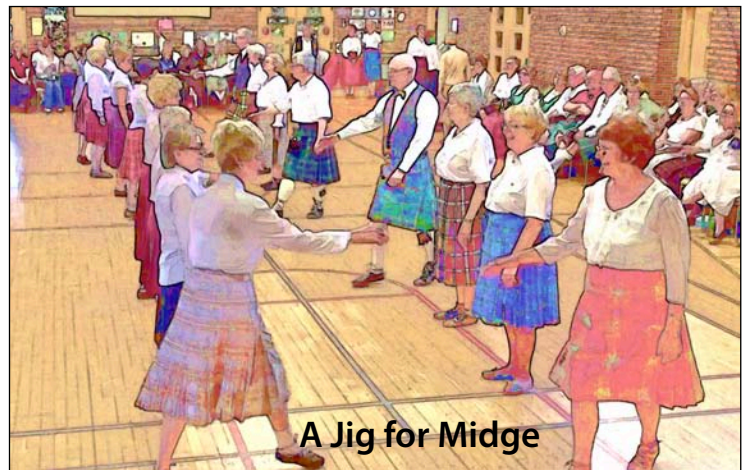
On the musical front, I have, after a summer hiatus, resumed writing music. I send my compositions to Frank Thomson in Aberdeen, who responds with praise or criticism as the tune warrants. The process of refining compositions can be time-consuming, but it offers opportunity for mental focus comparable with other forms of meditation, and it provides relief from the hum-drum distractions of daily life.



Frank Thomson

Demand for any form of live music is virtually non-existent, so playing is not something I do often. I wonder sometimes how difficult it will be to strap on the accordion and once again provide music for dancing, something I have enjoyed doing since I was 15 years old. That is when I joined Jock Finlay's band in the Town Hall in Aberfeldy for the weekly Saturday Night Dance. The dancing was primarily "modern" and "old time" but through the evening we would play for a *Broon's Reel*, *Strip the Willow*, *Dashing White Sergeant*, a Scottish waltz, an *Eightsome Reel* and, occasionally, a Quadrille (jig-time). Miss Milligan would have deplored the footwork, the almost non-existent handing, and the rambunctious birling — but the enjoyment was manifest.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that music consumed my life before the untimely appearance of this coronavirus. The extent to which I have successfully and productively used the time made available to me as a result of the pandemic is a question I prefer to avoid. Life in the Time of Covid is, at least for me, a diminished existence. Social interaction, an integral part of my musical and dancing life, is irreplaceable. ... Yours musically, Fred Moyes



Celtic Connections brought two sets to the 2010 Gala Day. This newly posted video is the only demonstration of this fun dance: <https://youtu.be/8vxjaJBL9E>

Among Jess's favourite dances are *Bonnie Stronshiray*, *Reel of the 51st Division*, *The Robertson Rant*, and *Glasgow Highlanders*, (for Mike, it is *Seton's Ceilidh Band*). However, without hesitation, and gleaming from the pinnacle of the Scottish country dance canon, is Eileen Orr's 96-bar strathspey *The Dream Catcher*. "It reigns supreme for me."

Thanks for your [contributions to Scottish dance](#) — well done Jess!

... Donald E. Holmes

## Reeling Connections with Geoffrey

Rob and I have joined an ongoing series of one-hour classes presented by Geoffrey Selling to elucidate the intersectionality between four forms of Scottish country dance: RSCDS style, Ceilidh, Old Time, and Reeling. No dancing; just listen and watch.



Geoffrey is a teacher/tutor/examiner — always well researched, prepared, organized, and entertaining. The two classes presented so far danced by at reel speed. In Class 1, we were given a general historical overview, illustrated by selected videos comparing various styles of country dancing, allowing us to gain a better appreciation for the distinctive qualities of the different traditions. For example, we were shown clips of *Dashing White Sergeant* in each of the four styles.

Class 2 focused on Reeling, a “close cousin of RSCDS dancers in many ways” — as demonstrated by video of a familiar dance in RSCDS, then Reeler style.

Reelers have their own casual style. They don’t point their toes, they don’t wear special footwear. Reelers engage in embellishment: much more birling, with two-handed or arm-gripped fast turns; double turns; and spinning galore. Reeling savours of danger. Compared to the RSCDS’ expansive and expanding repertoire, Reelers have a much more limited repertoire (about twenty dances, according to Jimmie Hill), and tend towards older, traditional dances. Scant attention is given to our beloved strathspeys. Unlike the gracious sociability of the mixing and mingling of RSCDS dancers, Reelers prefer to arrive with, and remain, in their own set. A Toronto dancer who attended a Reeling event in Sussex, England, told me how he “...struggled with some of the practices, including the few changes of partners!”

One of Geoffrey’s videos showed [Queen Elizabeth reeling](#), dancing *Eightsome Reel* with Prince Philip during a Ghillies Ball at Balmoral Castle. [Sidebar: [Michael Noble, elegant RSCDS dancer and husband of Jean Noble, attended a Ghillies Ball at Balmoral in 1959.](#)]

Whether Reeling with royalty, or demonstrating prowess gained by RSCDS teachings, there is much to be learned from the similarities and differences of all traditions of Scottish country dancing. Who knew the RSCDS style was only part of the Scottish dance story?

When I initially entered the addictive vortex of Scottish country dancing, I remember hearing sneering whispers about Ceilidh dancing. I struggled to keep the wall of divide strong between my RSCDS training and my enjoyment of Ceilidh favourites like *Strip the Willow* and *Dashing White Sergeant*. My Ceilidh quandary will have to await Class 3.

...Teresa Lockhart

For a more definitive exploration, see:

[Which is the “Reel” Scottish Country Dancing?](#)

by Geoffrey Selling, TACTalk, Dec 1999

## Reeling at Balmoral

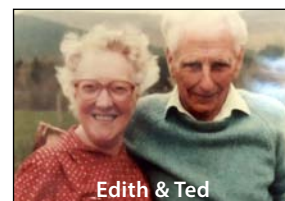
~ Notes from a phone conversation with Michael Noble, December 2020 ~



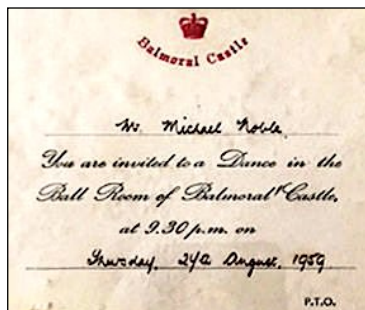
Born in Aberdeen, Michael Noble started dancing when eight years old under the tutelage of his aunt May Collie, a great friend of Miss Jean Milligan. He often stayed in the Balmoral area when visiting family.

**MICHAEL SAID:** Imagine... you are visiting your favourite relatives — your aunt who works as a table setter in Windsor Castle before shifting to Balmoral Castle — your uncle, a head gardener, who always wore a 1926 medallion for being a football star from Peterhead. Every summer, you are welcomed to their busy home on the Balmoral estate.

When I was sixteen, I stayed with Aunty Edith and Uncle Ted, with candles set out on the tables for light, no central heating of course. It is Scotland, in the country, in the '50s.



Edith & Ted



One afternoon, Margaret Bobo MacDonald, the Queen’s first nursemaid, and later her dresser and confidante, arrived for tea. At one point, Bobo turned to Aunty Edith and said, “Of course Michael will be coming with you to the Ghillies Ball this year, won’t he?” I held my breath.

I remember the Balmoral ballroom packed with workers from the castle and the royal family. And the oddest thing: the ball didn’t start until 9:30 p.m., after we had our dinner at home. I recall dancing the *Eightsome Reel* and *Dashing White Sergeant*, and sharing a dance with Aunty Edith. What an honour to be invited! As we walked home in the inky darkness, I remember looking up at the sky and pausing over my grand adventure. What a night!

...Michael Noble, as reported by Teresa Lockhart



Pres. Eisenhower   Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth   Michael   Princess Margaret   Prince Philip



# Board Bulletins

## Nominations: Board Positions

The Nomination 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 April 24, 2021**. Members are reminded any position can be proposed. Currently **Membership** is open.

If you are interested in serving on the Board or wish to nominate someone, contact the chair of the Nomination Committee, Liz Clunie, or download a Nomination Form from the website (Members Home page) to be submitted by February 20, 2021.

For all Board positions nominees should be prepared to commit to at least two consecutive one-year terms. The Secretary, Membership Director, Program Director, Communications Director, and the two Directors-at-Large (Marketing and Education & Training) may be re-elected for up to four additional one-year terms. The Treasurer can be re-elected indefinitely until another qualified person is nominated. The Vice Chair position should be filled by someone who:

- has previously served as a member of the Board
- has been a former executive member
- has been a convenor, OR
- 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.

**New non-board positions are also available:**

1. Assistant Treasurer for the general administration of the Toronto Association's finances. Basic accounting knowledge and intermediate Excel required.
2. Insurance Administrator for preparation and distribution of Certificates, requires use of basic Excel.

More information: Liz Clunie [elclunie@rogers.com](mailto:elclunie@rogers.com) 416.418-5494

## AGM Motions Deadline: Feb. 5

February 5 is the deadline for submission of motions from the membership for the 2021 Annual General Meeting. Submissions must have the support of 10 full members as indicated by their signature.

Send motions to Fiona Alberti at [fiona@alberti.ca](mailto:fiona@alberti.ca)

Motions received will be posted 60 days prior to the AGM.

## Board Meetings, Scheduled Dates:

Jan 6 Feb 8 Mar 11 Apr 7 May 10 Jun 10



Walking a Haggis

**Commemorating Bond**  
Bowmore Distillery has released 25 bottles of 1964 Black Bowmore single malt, in a bottle crafted from an actual piston of a 1964 Aston Martin DB5 (Bond's classic ride). This stirring tippie can be yours, if you're not shaken by the price: \$65,000. Pairs nicely with a good haggis.



## RSCDS Toronto Association Board of Directors

**Chair:** Louis Racic  
**Vice-Chair:** Paul Barber  
**Secretary:** Fiona Alberti  
**Treasurer:** Wendy Fulton  
**Program:** Kevin Moloney  
**Membership:** Bill Barber  
**Communications:** Sheena Gilks  
**Marketing:** Ron Macnaughton  
**Education/Training:** Tony Szeto

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**Newsletter Committee:**  
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Sheena Gilks  
Rob Lockhart (webmaster)  
Teresa Lockhart  
Marian White  
Judy Williams

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[marianwhite@sympatico.ca](mailto:marianwhite@sympatico.ca)  
[junit@pathcom.com](mailto:junit@pathcom.com)

## Some Hoped For Events

### St Andrews Summer School 2021

The Society Board hopes this will go ahead. Keep checking.

<https://www.rscds.org/events/summer-school-2021>

### TAC Summer School 2021, Calgary: July 25 - Aug 1

- Classes for all levels • Teacher Candidate Courses (units 2, 3, 5)

**Teachers:** Janet Johnston, Ron Wallace, Alan Twhigg, Barbara Johnston **Musicians:** Judi Nicolson, Ian Muir, Fred & Kathy Fraser-Collins, Terry Traub, Mary Ross Check updates: [www.tac-rscds.org](http://www.tac-rscds.org)

### Australian Winter School 2022: Sept 25 - Oct 2

Originally Scheduled for Sept 2020 <https://winterschool2020.com>

## Grace Notes



### Ann Boyd

12 February 1950 ~ 7 December 2020

Originally of Winnipeg, Dr. Patricia Ann Boyd (PhD English Literature), was an accomplished pianist and a keen Scottish country dancer until, in 1997, health issues made dancing impossible. For many years she danced at Trinity and Erin Mills Friday. Ann also served as Tartan Ball convenor. [Full obit](#)

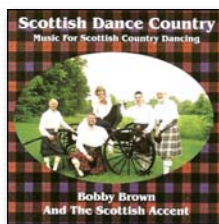


### Isabel Koopmans

d. 21 December 2020

A quietly graceful lady, Isabel Koopmans, was a University of Toronto graduate and a community Pharmacist in King City for many years. She was an active and compassionate lifelong volunteer. She and her husband, John Koopmans, were enthusiastic Scottish country dancers at Hillcrest. [Full obit](#)

## FREE... Vintage Vinyl Dance Music



Bobby Frew, Rob Gordon, Stan Hamilton, Lindsay Ross, Jimmy Shand and, of course, Bobby Brown. About 20 LP records made by these and other heroes of Scottish dancing are free for the taking – or for a donation to RSCDS Toronto, if you want to say *Thank You*. Digitizing technology could be used to make the contents more convenient for teaching purposes.

At present, the records reside in my house, which is close to the Jameson exit off the Gardiner Expressway. Call me at 416.535-1323 ...Ruth von Fuchs



**Please send submissions to Set&Link by the 10th of each month. Send to Donald Holmes [deholmes@sympatico.ca](mailto:deholmes@sympatico.ca)**