

RSCDS Toronto

www.dancescottish.ca

From the Chair...



Louis Racic

March has arrived and we are all looking forward to spring.

In any other year we would also be looking forward to our March Beginners' Dance. This is the dance where newer dancers who have been taking lessons at our classes are invited to join the larger dancing community. It is a dance we look forward to the most. Last year the March

dance was the first one cancelled because of COVID. We have not danced since. For the newer dancers out there... hang in there. We will be dancing as soon as we can.

New dancers are always a bit nervous when they attend their first dance. Some are very nervous. One told me the feeling was abject terror. It can be scary. I remind them that we all started as beginners.

I have been dancing for 30 years, but I still vividly remember the first monthly dance I attended. It is seared in my memory. My wife, Joanne, and I had taken Branch Classes and studied the dances. We felt ready but were nervous.

Our plan was to arrive especially early and review the dances for that extra layer of comfort. Well, it did not go as planned. What is that Burns' line, "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men, gang aft a-gley". Traffic was horrendous that night so our drive to Hodgson Public School took much longer than we thought. Finding parking was a nightmare. There were a lot of people coming to the dance, so the parking lot and side streets were full. We arrived not quite late but anxious. We paid, hung our coats in the change rooms, and came out onto a crowded floor. We found each other, ready to review the dances just as the MC called us to take partners and make up sets. Gulp! So much for that extra layer of comfort.

It was exciting and a bit scary. Happily, we were not first couple. We made it through the first dance and calmed down a bit. This was much bigger than what we experienced in our classes. These dancers moved much quicker than we were used to. They were flying down the middle and up with hair flying like the wind. Corner-partner turns were speedy twirls. This was wild abandon compared to the pedestrian pace we were used to. This was the big leagues. But it was fun. *Boy, was it fun!* Many of the experienced dancers took us under their wing, and we danced every dance. It was an exhilarating evening.

Keep safe,

...Louis Racic

SET & LINK

The Toronto Ball that became Tartan

[We are lucky to have a dancer who attended the Tartan Ball before it was the Tartan Ball. Fiona Morton recounts a few memories from the past.

...Laurie McConachie]

I attended the first official Toronto Branch ball in November 1957, at the Granite Club, when it was on St Clair Avenue. This was the inaugural year when Toronto's Scottish country dance group became a Branch. Miss Milligan was part of that process. She came from Scotland and attended the Toronto Ball as Guest of Honour. (The ball was not called the Tartan Ball then; it became the Tartan Ball on March 13, 1964.)

I had been dancing at Rosedale Presbyterian with Professor Ronald Smith for about a year, but I changed to the Riverdale group that fall. Jack Geddes was the teacher and, in late September, he decided to form a demonstration team. He gathered about 10 of us together and told us about the upcoming ball and the special guest. I grew up in Scotland so I knew about Miss Milligan. I had met her as a child and remember being terrified of her. She came to my junior school in Troon to examine our teacher during a gym class. Our demo team for the Toronto Ball included Sandy Bain, Guy Morton, Jean Larmour (née Robertson), Hughina Wilson, Betty Leeson, Pierre Bastien, me, and others that I regret I cannot remember.

At the time, I did not know any of the group or their names, but one young man stepped forward in front of everyone and asked me to go to the ball with him. I did not know what to say. If I said no, perhaps no one else would ask me, so I said yes.

That young man was Guy Morton, who became my husband of 51 years!

I do not think there was a sit down dinner, but there was food part way through the evening. The well known – and wonderful – Stan Hamilton & The Flying Scotsmen provided the music. This was before Bobby Brown. It was a very beautiful and exciting evening. Miss Milligan sat on a chair on the dance floor with the band on stage behind her. She seemed to be scrutinizing everyone, but was probably thoroughly enjoying herself.

I love that we now have a Grand March and a speech by the Guest of Honour. In 1957, there was none of this. I do not even remember the programme, but it is a long time ago!

...Fiona Morton

More about Miss M. in Keith Bark's article, pg. 7



Fiona Morton, ready for the 1957 Toronto Ball



Fiona Morton at the 2019 Tartan Ball

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

Moir 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

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.

Contact [Moir 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. Teacher Alma Smith introduces basic steps and a variety of step dances, plus Highland steps used in Scottish country dance.

Contact Alma Smith: asmith26@cogeco.ca

LAST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH:

Ceilidh Dancing ~ 8 p.m. - 9:00

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 Zoom Event



Saturday, March 27 ~ 12:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Toronto time)

Registration has been brisk; if you plan to join us, please register now to ensure you have a spot. Our excellent teachers are:

- ◆ Sue Porter (Oban, Scotland) ◆ Fiona Miller (Lethbridge, Alberta)
- ◆ Don Bartlett, our talented musician for the Tea Dance, will provide some insights about the music he will play.

Programme: Two classes (attend one or both, as desired):

- 1st class for Basic/Intermediate
- 2nd class for Intermediate/Advanced,

Tea Dance at 3:00 p.m. ~ There will be regular intervals of socializing time in chat rooms between events. Or, use the time to step into the kitchen to seek refreshments. [Tea Dance cribs and video links](#)

Venue: Suitable space in your home. No travelling required!

Fee: \$5/ person (for all or any part of the day) • [Download the brochure](#)

Registration and other information online at :

www.dancescottish.ca/Whats-On-Near.html

Or contact theresamalek@rogers.com

N.B. This virtual workshop is one day only.

We hope to return to the usual three-day event in 2022.



Saturday, March 20, 2021 ~ 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. Online Concert via YouTube

6 p.m. Pre-Show Party / 8 p.m. After Party are live via Zoom

Tickets start at \$10 and details are available on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/129942414259>

In the comfort of your own living room enjoy a concert of Celtic music favourites in a production of virtual choirs featuring members of the Amadeus Choir. [\[Several of our dancers sing in this choir\]](#) You can also participate in fund-raising pre- and after-party shows offering Celtic-themed activities such as a travelogue, beer tastings, Scottish country dancing (offered by Moira Korus), sing-alongs, fantastic raffle baskets, 50/50 draws and more. The concert is available for viewing on YouTube for two weeks while the pre- and post-events are live, only on March 20. Proceeds from this event will support the Amadeus Choir in continued choral excellence.

Teachers' Pet Dances: Georgina Finlay



Georgina Finlay

[The Montgomeries' Rant](#) (R8x32, *Book 10*) is a favourite as I have lots of happy memories dancing this reel at balls and monthly dances over the decades with so many good friends.

[Mairi's Wedding](#) (R8x40, *Thirty Popular Dances, Vol 2*) is also a fun dance as the formations are quite simple and the music is so joyful.

[The Saint John River](#) (S4x32, *New Brunswick Collection*) was a favourite strathspey for my demonstration teams. I love the clever way the dance mirrors the ebb and flow of the river where it meets the Bay of Fundy.

[Johnny Groat's House](#) (R8x32, *Book 18*) is a dance that my children's classes enjoyed as it's lively and relatively simple.

[Petronella](#) (R8x32, *Book 1*) is another children's favourite. Once again, it's lively and allows young dancers a chance to practise (and often show off) their pas de Basque.

[Saint Andrews Links](#) (S3x40, *St Andrews 75th Anniversary*) I've included this as it really is a favourite, not just because I devised it, but because it reminds me of where I was born and grew up, and where I first learned Scottish country dancing, a life-long passion.

...Georgina Finlay

ST ANDREWS LINKS

S 3x40 : 3C (3C set)

Georgina Finlay, *75 Years of Dancing in St Andrews*

- 1-8 1s Set Adv, Turn 2H to face up; 1s Cast 1 pl, Pet turn, End: 1L btn 2s, 1M btn 3s (2s up #5-6)
- 9-16 Set & Link for 3, twice
- 17-24 3s+1s+2s Circle 6H round & back (finish as at end #16)
- 25-32 ½ RSh Reels of 3 across (RSh:person on R); 1s Turn 2H, end 2nd pl own side, All Set
- 33-40 1s, followed by 2s, dance up btn 3s, Cast off to end: 3 2 1; 2s, followed by 3s dance dn btn 1s, Cast up to End: 2 3 1

Grace Notes



Wendy Hanton

d. 19 January 2021

Wendy died one month shy of her 85th birthday. Wendy was a warm and caring person in whose company you could not but smile and laugh. Wendy immigrated to Canada from England at age 12. Her most cherished activities were Scottish country dancing, and camping and

canoeing in Algonquin Park. Wendy was also famous for her home-made shortbread and butter tarts. She danced at Hillcrest and Scarborough. Our condolences to her family.

Full obit: [Click here](#)

Becoming Scottish Country Dancers

My husband and I were married in 1982 and moved to London, Ontario, to start our internships. We thought it would be fun for each of us to choose a non-credit course at the University of Western Ontario. Blake picked Mandarin; I picked Scottish country dancing. I had never tried it before, but having spent four years in residence at Trinity College, University of Toronto, I had heard about the Scottish country dancing there, led by Professor John Hurd, and I always thought it might be fun to try.



Blake Woodside & Anne Curtis

The classes in London were conducted by George Emmerson*, who was very serious about footwork. Half of every class was working on technique. My legs were sore for quite a while. I quickly realized that in addition to the classes, there were evening events in the community, and it would make sense if Blake was a Scottish country dancer as well. Soon after my course started, I came home and told him he had to sign up too — after all, he's the one who's Scottish on both sides! He did start the dancing, but then had to drop Mandarin after the first semester, so I am responsible for the fact that he can't speak Chinese.

We danced in London for four years, but then we moved back to Toronto and were busy raising our three sons, so there was a long hiatus before we picked it up again around 2010. We started going to Newtonbrook on Monday nights when Kathleen Kynoch was still teaching. We found it to be a friendly and welcoming group. Over the years, several other teachers took over, including Tony Szeto, Blair Gerrie, and Gordon Hayburn, but when the church we were based in decided to do a renovation, the group decided to disband rather than relocate. Most of the dancers also danced with other groups anyway.

In 2018 we started dancing with the group at Glenview Presbyterian, which was larger, and more ambitious in the number and variety of dances every week, but still friendly and welcoming.

We have never made it to a Tartan Ball, but we are looking forward to dancing again once the pandemic is over. We love the music and the exercise for both mind and body. It is a great way to spend time with people. The Tartan Ball is our goal. We just need to be confident that we know all the dances well enough that our set will stay on track. Practice makes perfect.

...Anne Curtis & Blake Woodside

Scottish Country Dance Quiz

Carrie Rose and Scott Higgs, two DC/Philadelphia area dancers, came up with a great video quiz. They dance the first 8 bars of 11 popular dances – in 3.5 minutes!

Can you guess what they are?

For an extra challenge, mute the audio.

Answers at end of video.

<https://youtu.be/XfaU0Bu4QyQ>



"Do you and John ever share Burns' poetry in the original dialect over breakfast or tea?" Not your typical Wednesday phone question from a fellow Scottish country dancer.

My first response was, "No, do you?" Wait, hang on... I did have a relevant, but different experience in which a dance solved a mystery.

For more than 25 years, a large painting has hung on our living room wall. It was painted by John's great-grand-uncle, Brodie Crawford, who was born in the 1870s in Scotland and later moved to Canada to be close to family.

Brodie spent his time between Toronto, at John's grandparents' home in summer; and Ashern, Manitoba, in winter. He was a prolific artist, producing over 200 paintings — none of which he ever sold. Brodie (Uncle Brod as he was known by family) always said that if he sold his paintings, he would be obligated to paint what others would like, and therefore could not be true to his artistic spirit. Paradoxically, he made his living by painting murals in many Manitoba churches and, for a period, in Toronto painting furniture for a furniture maker. While in Ashern, he lived with his sister and her family. Her husband, William Stark, decided to fulfil a dream, "a stone mason's dream of building and living in his own castle", and he went on to build a stone home designed and built in true castle form. It was named Glencora Castle,

Dancing solved an art mystery...

but commonly called the Stone Castle by locals in Manitoba. Brodie did many paintings at Glencora Castle. They were shared with family, and many of his works decorated this magnificent home. He also painted murals on the castle walls.

Brodie died in 1957, leaving his work where it hung in the castle, and some with family in Toronto. When his sister died, all the pictures, according to Brodie's wishes, were given to John's grandmother. The Stone Castle was sold, but it fell into disrepair and was demolished.

When John's mother and stepfather downsized to a condo about 25 years ago, we acquired a number of Uncle Brod's paintings.



One big painting we chose is a bewitching scene. We loved the image but had no idea what it was about. I thought it presented a magical theme, a tale of long ago, but we didn't actually know.

Then, at one of Deirdre MacCuish Bark's Friday night dance classes, Deirdre taught a dance called *Tam O'Shanter*. As she described the dance metaphor, the details started to feel familiar to me: the witch Tam called Cutty Sark because of her flowing white dress; the devil playing bagpipes; the wild dancing around a fire; the ruins of an old haunted church; and a face peering in through a stone window, enthralled by the scene below. I immediately thought of Uncle Brod's mysterious painting.

At the next Woodglan pub night, at our home, I asked Keith and Deirdre to take a look at our painting. They confirmed it was, indeed, a depiction of Robbie Burns' poem *Tam O'Shanter*. Mystery solved!

Now we know what Uncle Brod was interpreting in this painting of his — and we enjoy it all the more. ...Susan and John Clark

The dance that triggered the discovery was *Tam O'Shanter*, only recently attributed to Ann Malley, who used to teach youngsters in Burlington. *Tam O'Shanter* was danced at the 2016 Toronto Family Ceilidh

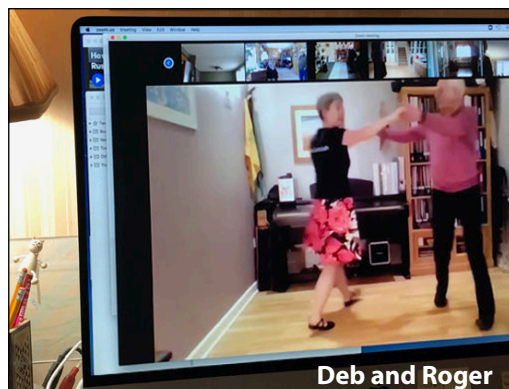
A Special International Beginner Class and Tribute to Robert Burns – How it came about

I have been very impressed how Scottish country dancers around the world have supported one another through the social isolation of this pandemic.

The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS), coordinates Scottish country dance groups worldwide. Since April 2020, it has hosted online dance classes, with roughly 1000 participants each week, from the comfort of their own homes – wherever that may be in the world. Many Toronto area people join the weekly classes, chatting online to fellow dancers in places such as Auckland, London, Glasgow, Madrid, San Francisco, and Calgary.

I was excited to see Deb Lees and Roger Malton, from Newcastle upon Tyne, teaching one of the Wednesday RSCDS classes. It was a great class, with Roger accompanying Deb on fiddle and playing some local Geordie tunes. But as the class included Highland steps, I knew it would be challenging for the dancers who have joined my Zoom beginners' class and who have no previous SCD experience.

I know Deb and Roger from when I lived in Newcastle upon Tyne, so after their class, I contacted them and asked if they would be willing to do a similar class, but more suited to brand new Zoom dancers. They



Deb and Roger

readily agreed, and we decided that close to Burns' Day would be a good time for the class – hence the special beginners class on January 17.

The class was well attended with about 50 participants. Many were beginner dancers from the GTA, but people from as far away as South Africa also signed in.

Deb worked on set and cast, including it in the strathspey, *Miss Stevenson's Fancy*, and the jig, *The Hollin Buss*. Roger played traditional tunes from the Newcastle area, and some well-known tunes such as *The Iron Man*.

The class was followed by social dancing to CDs, including the two dances taught in the class. Roger generously, spontaneously, and unplanned played music for *The Hollin Buss*.

The afternoon ended with *Auld Lang Syne* as a virtual group tribute to Robert Burns.

It was a wonderful introduction to the world of Scottish country dance for people exploring it on Zoom, and a welcome distraction from the pandemic for all. My sincere thanks go to Deb and Roger for providing a great afternoon of music and dancing. [And the dancers thank Alma for organizing the workshop.]

...Alma Smith

A Burns' Supper at Home



Alex and Nancy with a treasured antique tea towel embroidered in tribute to Burns

In an effort to maintain some ordinary activities but also counteract boredom, Alex and I decided to carry on the tradition of Burns' Night.

Supper wasn't entirely traditional – the haggis was missing, but it did include neeps and tatties, and certainly there was a wee dram of whisky afterwards. No kilt in sight but attire was plaid, and I wore a wee thistle brooch inherited from Alex' Scottish grandmother.

Of several videos watched over a week, our favourite was the first one. It was produced by The Scottish Society of Ottawa and it followed the traditional format of a Burns' Supper.

Entertainment included a handful of pipers and drummers from the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, the Fiddlares (young siblings Wilson and Lucy from the Ottawa Valley), a compilation of over a dozen dancers from the Macdonald Highland Dancing Association (all performing at their own homes), six dancers from SCD Ottawa Branch (pre-pandemic) dancing on Parliament Hill a medley of a strathspey, *An Elephant Never Forgets*, and *The Wee Bairnie Jig*, and recitations of Burns' poetry, including *To a Mouse* – the line "the best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley" more apt than ever.

Address to a Haggis was done solo by Ronald Roach, so we missed the traditional slap on the belly of one of trencher bearers!

Graham McTavish, a Glaswegian actor, delivered the Toast to the Immortal Memory, which is well worth listening to. Graham put an interesting twist on the last verse of *A Man's a Man for a' That*, adapting it to suit the current world situation.

Renowned fiddlers, Donnell Leahy and his wife, Natalie McMaster, did the Toast to the Lassies and the Reply.

The event concluded with music from various YouTube videos. We especially enjoyed the Scottish group Breabach playing pipes, fiddle, whistle, guitar, and singing in Gaelic. From their website, I discovered one of their pipers is from Edmonton.

This year our community didn't hold hands for *Auld Lang Syne*, but nevertheless we stayed connected through video and newsletter. We look forward to the day we are together once again.

...Nancy Duffy and Alex Sutton

To watch the Scottish Society of Ottawa Burns' Night video:

<https://youtu.be/zj68MjZ8eaA>

[Hints: • Really gets going at time code 7:30

• Graham McTavish' Address is at time code 29:18

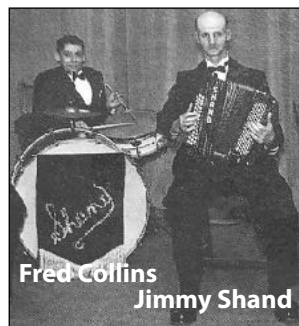
• [The Fiddlares](#) have many YouTube videos.]

Fred Collins remembers Angus Fitchet and Sir Jimmy Shand

My drumming career began at age twelve, with pipe band drumming lessons at the 29th Boys Brigade in my home town of Dundee. A member of the BB introduced me to Scottish country dancing at a church hall where Angus Fitchet played on Monday nights. Angus had his son playing drums, so I sat with the band at intermission chatting about drumming and bands, etc. About halfway through that season, his son was unable to continue with Monday nights, and I was asked to fill the position — thereby eliminating my future prospects as a premier Scottish country dance teacher!

Angus was a character and a great story teller. At intermission, he would spin entertaining tales. One that stands out to me relates to J.B. Milne and, yes, Angus wrote the signature tune for his friend J.B. They attended public school together, and took fiddle lessons. At recess, they played pitch and toss – you throw a coin to the wall and whoever is closest gets the advantage of taking the coins, throwing them into the air with one hand, and catching as many as you can with one hand. J.B. was so competitive, he would not allow the game to end until he was winning. As teens, they played together for silent movies in the pit of a theatre.

J.B. eventually became a millionaire, owning most of the movie theatres in Scotland. I would watch him drive by my workplace every day in his Rolls Royce. By contrast, the Fitchet band's transportation was an old ambulance Angus had purchased. He chose not to remove the ambulance signs — I guess he was never late for a gig!



Fred Collins Jimmy Shand

While I continued to play Monday nights with Angus, three members of the BB and I formed our own SCD band, "The Gie Gordons". At the time, the popularity of SC dancing was growing rapidly, particularly on Scotland's east coast, with dances most nights in various church and industrial halls. There were seven bands in Dundee alone, one of which was (Sir) Jimmy Shand. He moved from Auchtermuchty

to Dundee to work at Forbes Music Store demonstrating and selling accordions, and he remained there during the height of his career. His band members were also from Dundee and area. Jimmy's house was on a circle and, in summer, he would come out with his accordion and play in the street, with all the neighbours dancing, be it old-time or Scottish country. Whoever and whenever people visited his home, he would strap on his accordion and give you a tune. My occasional stints with his band came through my association with his drummer, Owen McCabe, affectionately known as "Wee Owny".

I had a Saturday morning bakery delivery job and Owen was a customer. I would often stop and chat. If the occasion arose where he was unable to play and I was available, I would fill in for him.

The late fifties/early sixties saw many concert parties from Scotland touring Canada and the U.S. The first Toronto concert that Ed Brydie and I attended was Jimmy Shand at Massey Hall. Ed was a pupil of Shand's so we both knew him well. After the concert, we joined him backstage and during our chat Jimmy looked at us and, in true Fife accent, said, "If you twa lauddies are haein ony trouble, I'll gae ye yer fares back hame." This was the true measure of the man; he was indeed a gentleman.

...Fred Collins



Moira Korus

Toronto represented at RSCDS Online Class

Wednesday, 2 p.m. in Toronto. After a steady stream of greetings and much anticipated weather reports from around the globe, it's time for the big reveal — the WHO and the WHERE of the weekly RSCDS Dance Scottish at Home online class.

The mystery location on February 10? Toronto. The mystery teacher? Moira Korus. Full of positive energy, Moira runs the session with boundless enthusiasm and bounce. She starts with a getting-to-know-you jig from Book 51, *And for the Young Ones*.

Continuing, in preparation for a second dance, Moira focuses on pas de Basque, on

the simple, yet important, teaching points:

- executing three distinct beats, and
- ensuring the travelling pdb accomplishes travel on the first beat.

The demos were crisp and clear, and the bright red of her trews set off her ghillies, allowing for good focus on footwork. Building up to the Hello-Goodbye Poussette, Moira ends the session with *The Ullapool Ferry*, a reel from Book 52.

Moira's variously coloured bean bags for marking set positions are a hit. So is her class. Thanks come from near and far. Behind-the-scenes music man, Keith Farrell, also receives thanks.

Congratulations, Moira, for being the first from our city to guest teach at this weekly class. ...Halyna Sydorenko

Stepping gaily in PEI

The step dancing Zoom sessions listed in *Set & Link* caught my eye. It brought back wonderful memories of a vacation in Prince Edward Island — a long time ago, before Susan and I started dancing.

We were staying near Charlottetown and heard about an event across the island at a community centre in Malpeque Bay. We drove there and, first of all, enjoyed a wonderful small-town supper (but no one said, "Keep your fork Dude. There's pie."). We and the children then moved into the assembly hall where we immensely enjoyed a marathon step dancing competition, followed by a fiddling competition. Contestants were grouped by age, starting at five years old and going up through late teens.

The step dancers were accompanied by my favourite Canadian professional fiddler, Graham Townsend, and his wife, Elinor. They played whatever the children asked for, and for as long as they kept their feet clomping up and down. One very young step dancer didn't know when or how to stop. He just kept dancing, hands at his side, and looking straight ahead while Graham kept playing and giving him quizzical glances.

Graham finally figured out he would have to concoct a final chord to end the perpetual motion.

The dancing portion of the evening took almost three hours, and after a short break the young fiddlers began.

We stayed for a while but it was getting late and we had to drive back across the Island. It was a wonderful evening. ...Andy Lipchak



sketch by Margo MacKay

Catching up with Meg

Unexpectedly, I was asked to write about what I have been up to in the five years since my last Scottish country dance class at Rosedale. Unfortunately, there has not been as much dancing as I hoped. I spent most Saturday mornings of my childhood at the Rosedale youth group with Teresa Lockhart and Moira Korus. These classes were instrumental in boosting my confidence, encouraging friendships and teamwork, and making the awkward pre-teen Meg somewhat more graceful (which was, and is, a losing battle).

When I graduated from high school in Toronto, I moved to Nova Scotia to take a bachelor's degree in English literature at Acadia University in the beautiful Annapolis Valley. For my first year, I simply enjoyed the natural beauty of the stunning valley, living independently, and attending classes. In my second year, I was put in touch with the local group, the Valley Scottish Dance Society, led by Duncan and Maggie Keppie. I found with them a wonderful group of people who simply love dancing. Everyone is encouraged to dance, and there are many opportunities for everyone, regardless of level or experience, to learn new dances and attend various events. The group is welcoming and friendly, generously accepting a university student they did not know. Unfortunately, I had to stop going to dance classes so I would have enough time to write my undergraduate thesis on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Now graduated from Acadia University, I have moved across the pond to York, England, to take a master's degree in medieval literatures and languages. Before the pandemic broke around the world, I had been looking forward to finding a Scottish country dance group in my local area here. Obviously, I have not yet been able to find a group, and physical distancing is rather impossible when dancing. However, I have much hope for the summer as things begin to look more positive here in the U.K.

While I have no definite plans for what I will do when this degree is over, nor where I will live, whether in Atlantic Canada or somewhere in the U.K., I know that I will always have a home in Scottish country dancing, as well as with the amazing global community of dancers, and for that, I am supremely grateful.

...Margaret Finlay



Meg Finlay

✋ Editor's Note* on Stepping gaily in PEI

DONALD HOLMES: I've been there; done that too. There is also a best fiddlers' concert in Rollo Bay at the eastern end of PEI; an outdoor event with non-stop fiddlers. My favourite venue is the School of Piping in Summerside. It's the training ground for pipers, dancers (Highland, Irish, cloggers, etc.), and singers and story tellers.

An American driving by the site once commented: *These Canadians really take their plumbing seriously, don't they?*



Keith R Bark

Keith Bark: Decoding the Teachers' Panel and RSCDS TA

Scottish country dancing existed in Toronto well before the 1940s, but more in the style of Reelers rather than the manner promoted by the RSCDS. Matthew Sutherland came to Toronto in the late 40s and after a few years he formed a group with a few other dancers who wanted to dance in the RSCDS manner and learn more of the RSCDS dances. Over

the next few years, several groups emerged and followed the same pattern. All the groups were led by experienced dancers who had been taught the RSCDS style but none was a qualified teacher.

In 1955, these groups got together and Toronto became an affiliated group of the RSCDS, and Matthew Sutherland became the Teacher-Adviser for the groups. They could not become a branch at that time because there were no qualified RSCDS dance teachers.

Over the next few years, further groups started and the popularity of Scottish country dancing increased. The Oakville groups became RSCDS affiliated, and Hamilton was accepted as a branch as it had some qualified RSCDS dance teachers.

At the Pinewoods (Boston) weekend in July 1957, Miss Jean Milligan, co-founder of the Society, was invited to attend the Toronto Ball that November. After the Toronto dancers returned home, they further decided to invite Miss Milligan to come, at Toronto's expense, in September to examine potential teachers. This she did and six Toronto dancers, including Matthew Sutherland, were confirmed as qualified teachers. The others were Anne MacLeod, Alex MacGregor, Eddie MacDonald, John Wevers, and John Gowans. One other dancer, Coll Black, had also been to St Andrews that summer and passed, so Toronto now had seven qualified teachers. Miss Milligan declared that Toronto was now a branch. She returned in November to attend the first Toronto Branch Ball, held at the Granite Club.

Thereafter, the Toronto Branch always had a qualified teacher on its Executive to establish approved teaching practices and classes and advise on other RSCDS principles: having dance instruction classes teaching RSCDS steps and formations, and classes teaching potential new teachers. The social dance groups continued to operate as individual entities but supported the branch in its endeavours of monthly dances and an annual ball.

As the popularity of Scottish country dancing in Toronto increased from first year membership of 176, to over 1000 in the 70s, and up to 1300 in the mid 80s, so the number of qualified teachers increased and there was a huge demand on the Branch Executive teacher.

Consequently, in 1994, the teacher on the Executive formed a panel of teachers to assist in the duties: to maintain, review, and advise on Branch Classes, devise monthly dance programmes, Tartan Ball, Children's Gala Dance, Dancing in the Park, Workshop teachers, Branch Class teachers, etc. The elected teacher on the Executive would be the Chair of the Panel, and the teachers on the Panel would be a broad representation of active qualified teachers in the Toronto Branch area.

The actual duties of the Panel have remained largely unchanged since then, but the reporting and representation have changed. When the Branch incorporated and became the RSCDS Toronto Association, the Panel elected its own Chair and reported to the Program Director, who was not necessarily a teacher. Later, the position of Program Director was split into two positions: Program Director, and Education & Training (E&T) Director. The Teachers' Panel now reports to the E&T Director. There is a hope and understanding that the E&T Director should be a qualified RSCDS Teacher, but that is not a requirement, a situation that could result in having no teacher on the Board.

The current E&T Director is Tony Szeto – a qualified RSCDS teacher.

The current Teachers' Panel comprises:

• Keith R Bark (Interim Chair) • Arlene Koteff • May Divers • David Booz • Blair Gerrie • Nigel Keenan • Vicki Zeltins (TAC Representative)

Program Director, Kevin Moloney, and TA Chair, Louis Racic, are also invited to Panel meetings, along with the E&T Director.

We recently had two meetings to which all Toronto qualified teachers were invited to gather ideas and suggestions on how we should work and proceed in the future. The Panel Directors and Chair are assessing the suggestions to see how we should update/amend the Teachers' Panel mandate to serve RSCDS TA for the next several years. COVID has stopped us dancing, except by Zoom, but it has given us an opportunity to step back and review our processes. As ever, we aim to support the RSCDS TA on meeting [its stated objectives](#).

We are all in this for the fun and love of the dance. It crosses all social and physical borders as well as all ages and ethnicity – even those of us who are English!

...Keith R Bark



In recent weeks, every so often, I have been posting a number of my favourite Scottish country dance videos to my Facebook page and to the RSCDS Toronto page. I regard this, in part, as outreach to increase awareness of Scottish country dancing. The videos illustrate the geographic diversity of SCD, and how much parti-

cipants enjoy themselves on the dance floor. I also want to share my enthusiasm with other dancers and non-dancing friends. The feedback has certainly been positive.

One of my favourite videos is from a youth group in South Africa. They took *The Flying Scotsman* and added a few African twists, calling it [Shosholeza Meyl](#). There is a little tartan but no kilts in the video, which was danced in front of Cape Town's Table Mountain.

Close to January 25th (and closer to home), and I posted [Rabbie's Reel](#), which bears passing resemblance to *The Flying Scotsman*. We danced it at Dufferin Grove Park in 2011.

On a cold winter day, I shared [The Magic of Summer School](#). When we did this dance at Trinity, teacher David Booz urged everyone to look at the video, because these talented young dancers in New Zealand seem to float in air as they execute their paces. It's not a simple dance, but it's great fun to watch, and I would add, fun to do.

For Valentine's Day, [Love is in the Air](#) was the perfect dance. A key figure of the dance is the heart-shaped "figure of love" (hint: it is the one with a high five in the middle). The dance was devised by Violaine Eysseric of RSCDS Paris, and it's danced on the banks of the Seine. How they timed the arrival of the tour boat I will never understand.

[In 1993, at SkyDome](#), a performance organized by RSCDS Toronto featured the largest group of Scottish country dancers ever assembled at one time. Many in the stands had video cameras. I volunteered to edit the footage into a package, along with video we obtained from the SkyDome. I had the skills acquired as a producer at CBC; another dancer found some editing time (also at CBC) and this was the product. Given the era, the video quality is not great but the size of the dance is spectacular. All those on the field, including me, enjoyed ourselves immensely.

I hope everyone has a chance to enjoy these videos, and the others I have posted, and will post in the future.

...Paul Barber

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 elcunie@rogers.com 416.418-5494

Board Meetings, Scheduled Dates:

Mar 11 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 the 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.

RSCDS Toronto Association Board of Directors

Chair: Louis Racic	905.430-1255	louis.racic@gmail.com
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Secretary: Fiona Alberti	416.483-2213	fiona@alberti.ca
Treasurer: Wendy Fulton	416.951-5029	wbfulton@hotmail.com
Program: Kevin Moloney	416.425 1416	kevinmoloney@sympatico.ca
Membership: Bill Barber	416.540-4311	tobillbarber@gmail.com
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Education/Training: Tony Szeto	416.566-9386	aszeto2010@gmail.com



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Sheena Gilks	647.390-1076
Rob Lockhart (webmaster)	416.759-9845
Teresa Lockhart	416.759-9845
Marian White	416.781-7795
Judy Williams	416.924-3658

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

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Pandemic Pen Pals

In the autumn of 2020, two Grade 3 teachers at St. Clement's Girls' School in Toronto initiated an educational opportunity for their classes with senior citizens from St. Clement's Anglican Church.

The school has been affiliated with St. Clement's Church (1891), since its inception under the leadership of Canon Wesley Powell. The teachers' proposal was to have the girls write

a letter once a month to a senior church member.

Marian and I are among those selected seniors who volunteered to reciprocate.

There are lots of seniors much more elderly than we, but to an eight-year-old girl, 'senior' is relative!

Chloe's collage: Santa on skates Covid-19 sent the girls home to learn virtually, but they still managed, so far, two letter exchanges. The purpose of the project is twofold: to teach the girls to practise communication skills with someone whom they do not know; and second, to teach them to practise cursive writing. That feat in itself is noteworthy, and practically unique these days.

Marian's pen pal, Bianca, likes being close to her family and plays with her black and white dog, Oreos. Marian mentioned her hobbies of drawing and painting. My pen pal, Chloe, likes skating and playing piano. I told her I like music too and offered to show her some dances she and her friends could have fun doing some day when they are back in school, and we can all meet freely.

In the past, there was a large children's class of Scottish country dancers at St. Clement's Church where Grace Harris, with several helpers, one of whom was Maureen Richardson, had over 170 dancers. Perhaps Covid-19 will produce a renaissance.

Seniors can still dream, can't we? ...Donald E. Holmes

~ St Andrews Summer School ~ CANCELLED



With regret, the Society has made the difficult decision to cancel the 2021 St Andrews Summer School, July/Aug.

Many factors were considered, including:

- uncertainty about pandemic restrictions
- financial viability if international dancers couldn't travel
- University accommodation was severely limited this year

However, the Society, through **Dance Scottish at Home**, invites all members to enjoy any or all of the virtual events planned, and listed at: <https://www.rscds.org/events>

