



Chairman's Message

Greetings Dancers,

Welcome to Louise Beaton, who is taking over production of the news letter and thank- you to Cheryl Perkins, who is retiring from that duty.

We have had two really great socials this season, well attended and with the wonderful music of Corryvreckan. While we continue to "talk" the dances I suspect that there will be fewer "walk-throughs" in the future. Thanks to Mary Bridson, we all have the dance instructions well in advance of the socials and with a little study we can surely master the patterns before dance night.

Our annual general meeting is approaching and some of the Society officers need to move on. Please give some thought to helping run the society and say yes when the nominating committee asks you to fill a position.

Happy dancing and keep smiling,
Ken. Galbraith,
Chairman, RSCDS, St. John's

Committee of management 2010-2011

Chairman: Ken Galbraith
Secretary: Kathy Simonsen
Treasurer: Eileen Collins
Members -at-large: Louise Beaton, Brenda Burness, Ingrid Pardoe

Mark your calendars!

Spring Social: March 26 at 8 pm at Vanier School

AGM and last class: April 18

A message from a friend from afar:

Hello Fellow Scottish Country Dancers:

Last spring, several dancers asked me to keep in touch after my move, so I send you all my greetings from Victoria, BC. Here is some information on my Scottish country dancing in Victoria.

In October, I joined one of two RSCDS groups in Victoria, based on proximity to my home. At 120 members and growing, the "Van Isle" branch is the larger of the two branches. Five weekly classes covering Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Levels are offered, so one could dance four days per week and twice on Tuesdays. Some members dance three times per week in various levels, but I dance in only the Intermediate class. Our teacher hails from Glasgow.

There are at least eleven branches in the region, serving Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, and northern Washington State. Because they all offer socials, one could attend socials almost every weekend if willing to travel a bit. Our branch had three socials during the fall, including a Christmas social, which 60 people attended. The age range was approximately 70 years, as there were young dancers from the University of Victoria Scottish Country Dance Group, as well as a woman of 90! The ratio of men to women is usually roughly equal and, when I once out of habit asked another woman to dance, she replied, "Wouldn't you rather dance with a man?" After dancing with one gentleman in his 80s several times, I ascertained that he had been my junior high school gym teacher in the 1960s!

On December 31, the other Victoria branch hosted "New Year Across the Country", which my husband and I attended. Although Derek does not dance, he enjoyed the potluck dinner, music, and games that we played between sets. Derek and I were about to have a private toast to bring in the Newfoundland New Year at 7:30 PM, when the Mistress of Ceremonies asked everyone to raise glasses and toast "Happy New Year" in Newfoundland. And so it continued, toasting each time zone across the country for the remainder of the night. I felt right at home when the first dance of the evening was none other than Martin Mulligan's "Up the Pond", one of the first dances I learned in Penny Gillies' beginner class. We then proceeded to dance 12 more dances, one for each province and territory moving in a westward fashion.

I have enjoyed my first months dancing here. When everything seemed rather foreign for the first while after moving, dancing provided some much-needed continuity in my life. Everyone here was just as welcoming to me as the St. John's Branch dancers had been when I first started dancing a few years ago.

I send you best wishes from afar.

Margaret (Dohan)



Who is this lady who watches over our Monday classes? She gives us some much needed encouragement to roll up our sleeves and tackle particularly challenging dances and figures. The tournee comes to mind...

She is sometimes mistakenly identified as Rosie the Riveter, but her real identity is Geraldine Hoff Doyle. She died in December 2010 at the age of 86.

In 1942, when she was 17, Geraldine Hoff took a job as a metal presser at a factory near her home in Inkster, Michigan to aid the war effort. One day, a United Press photographer came in to shoot images of working women. She quit the factory job after about two weeks because she learned that another woman had damaged her hands while using the metal presser, and she feared that such an injury would prevent her from playing the cello, her daughter said.

The resulting poster, designed by the graphic artist J. Howard Miller, was used in a Westinghouse Company campaign to deter strikes and absenteeism. It was not widely seen until the early 1980s, when it was embraced by feminists.

Kandahar Reel:

In keeping with traditions of military inspired dances, such as the reel of the 51st division - a new dance booklet has been published by the RSCDS. *The Kandahar Reel* is a new dance devised by Capt A H Colquhoun and Lt R J Colquhoun, two serving army officers of The Black Watch, as a tribute to their fallen comrades. It was devised in September 2009 while on active service in the Kandahar Region of Afghanistan.

Elements of the dance include the "hands across" which symbolize both the Chinook Helicopter and the single blades of a Black Hawk. These figures are normally done once round in four bars. As soldiers are constantly exhorted to give 150% these figures are done one and a half times in the same number of bars! Other elements include figures representing team work and offering a helping hand as they board the helicopter.

You may recall reading an article about the dance in *Scottish Country Dancer* #10. A demonstration of *The Kandahar Reel* by a team of Aberdeen Branch dancers may be seen on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BChEesiaLKO>

Bookmark This!

A reminder that Branch activities and important dates may be easily found on our website: www.infonet.st-johns.nf.ca/providers/rscds * Also, RSCDS members should keep an eye on your inbox to catch a copy of the new e-zine from the RSCDS.

[* New website address <http://www.rscdsstjohns.ca>]

Helping keep those New Year's Resolutions: Dancers reel their way to fitness

Research at the University of Strathclyde has given proof to what we all know: Scottish country dancing has many measurable fitness benefits. A study has found that dancers aged from 60 to 85 years who perform strathspeys, jigs and reels are more agile, have stronger legs and can walk more briskly than people of the same age who take part in other forms of exercise.

The comparison between two groups who were active in different types of exercise suggested that country dancing had particular value in keeping people fit.

Dr Paul Dougall, a Senior Lecturer and expert in dance and drama at Strathclyde, led the research. He said: "We chose to study this particular type of dancing partly because it is very popular with older people in Scotland but also because it has steps which have to be followed precisely. This calls for a particular level of physical fitness and mental alertness. The dancers who took part in the study were experienced- they have all been dancing for at least five years, some for 30 years and more.

"Not only is country dancing enjoyable and sociable but there also appears to be clear evidence that it's an effective recreational exercise for particular types of fitness later in life."

The study focused on older women, reflecting their greater susceptibility to conditions such as osteoporosis. It had 70 participants- 35 women aged between 60 and 85 years who practised Scottish country dancing and another 35 in the same age range who took part in other forms of exercise such as swimming, walking, golf and keep-fit classes.

The women were all invited to take part fitness assessment sessions to monitor their strength, stamina, flexibility and balance. They were then compared with average fitness levels for women of their age- all 70 compared favourably with the averages but those who danced had better levels of fitness in some or all of the areas assessed than those who did not. The target group of dancers was put together with the assistance of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. (University of Strathclyde 2010)

Lady Aberdeen Scottish Country Dance Club Dissolves, 1938-2010 Vancouver BC

This past year, the last classes of the Lady Aberdeen Scottish Country Dance Club were held, formally dissolving the oldest surviving Scottish country dance club in Canada. The club started in 1938 thanks to the energy and drive of Ella Bingham, a recent immigrant to Vancouver from Scotland. A copy of a dance program from the club's 1942 Tea Dance shows some familiar dances including: Rory O'More, Eightsome Reel, Dashing White Sergeant, Blue Bonnets and Waltz Country Dance.