

An article caught my eye recently. It tells the story of the kilt pin.

Before the reign of Queen Victoria, the Scottish kilt was worn without the kilt pin now used to secure the fold-over on the right side.

As a result, there were many embarrassing moments, especially if you wore the kilt in a high wind. The truth was that nothing in the nature of undergarments was worn with the kilt in bygone days.

One day, Queen Victoria arrived on a visit to Balmoral Castle and reviewed the Gordon Highlanders. A stiff wind was blowing and one young soldier, at rigid attention, was unable to control the flapping of his kilt and avoid exposure on this important occasion.

The Queen noticed his embarrassment and walked over to him. She removed a pin from her own dress, and leaning over, pinned the over-lap of his kilt.

That.... believe it or not....is the origin of the kilt pin!  
(Author unknown.)

If anyone has any news they would like to share with the group, or would like to borrow or sell anything, call Brenda and she'll put it in the newsletter. To start this trend, Sue Scott has a piano for sale. It is a full-size upright piano - Steinway. Fully reconditioned (insides and outsides) by A.L. Collis 10 years ago. In excellent condition. If you are interested please call Sue at 738-3355.

**Missing video tapes:** Would everyone please check their VCR tapes. The Branch's copies of the Red Thistle tape and the RSCDS tape have been missing for about a year. Thank-you.

### Caring & Sharing

We were sorry to hear that Stewart Gillies' father died recently. Our condolences go to Stewart and Penny and to their family.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

8th Dec. 1997	Last day of classes
29th Dec. 1997	Hogmanay, Red Cross Centre - 10-11:30 a.m.
5th Jan. 1998	Start of classes
10th Jan. 1998	Twelfth Night Social - Vanier School - 8 p.m.
21st March 1998	Social - Vanier School - 8 p.m.
4th April 1998	Family night social - Vanier School
2nd May 1998	Social - Vanier School - 8 p.m.
11th May 1998	Last day of classes - Mon.



## St. John's (Newfoundland) Branch Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

### NEWSLETTER

November 1997

Once again we have had a very successful workshop. Marianne Taylor taught the basic class on Friday night and the more advanced dancers on Saturday. She was a terrific teacher and made everyone feel very relaxed, having a good sense of humour.

This was her first trip to Newfoundland and she was very impressed with the hospitality. Her actual quote was "warm and friendly" when referring to the group. She was quite overwhelmed and especially appreciative of the branch sweatshirt given to her. At the Saturday night social she made particular note as to how the more experienced dancers gathered in the beginners. This is one of the things she stresses in her teaching and she was happy to see our group automatically doing it. All the teachers we have had at our workshops have commented on the warmth and friendliness of the group. Are we unique in this? It makes one wonder.

A special thank you goes to Noreen who hosted Marianne and who took her to Cape Spear and on the 'tourist route' after the Sunday brunch. Thanks also to Penny and Stewart for a great Friday night party, to Michael, Ingrid and Frankie for cooking pancakes on Sunday, and another thank you to Ingrid for a job well done in organizing the whole workshop.

Thank you Corryvreckan who, once again, played for the social. We really appreciate the work that goes into this and consider ourselves lucky to have our own band. Thanks also to Noel Lilly for arranging the use of Vanier school.

There are a few events to be marked on your calendars:

**Hogmanay** at the Red Cross Centre, Wicklow Street, is Monday, 29th December from 10 - 11:30 a.m. It is for all our dancers, basic class included, and is lots of fun. We dance fairly easy dances and sometimes the staff may join in. Refreshments are served, including haggis. Please be there in time to start dancing at 10 a.m.

The St. Andrew's Society of St. John's will hold their **Burns' Supper** at The Legion, Pleasantville, on Saturday 24th January. The demonstration team have been asked to dance and Corryvreckan will be playing. Tickets are \$30 each and can be obtained from Ian Gall, Noreen MacLennan, or Robert MacIsaac.

**Twelfth Night social** is Saturday 10th January at Vanier School, starting at 8 p.m.

The **T.A.C. Summer School** will be held in Vancouver in 1998, starting Sunday 16th August. There are dance classes at all levels as well as teacher candidate classes. Details can be obtained from any of our teachers.

At the last meeting of the Committee of Management, a number of people reported they'd heard very favourable comments about Penny as a new teacher. We are delighted to pass this information on.

The wearing of name tags was also brought up. Some people don't like wearing them. However, it does help new members and if you don't want to wear them, it was suggested that you make a point of introducing yourself to new people. Thanks.

We have been getting a little slack in our warm-up starting time on Monday nights. We would like to start the warm-ups at 7.45 p.m., enabling us to start dancing at 8 p.m. Could everyone please make an effort to be ready for warm-ups at 7.45 p.m. If you are late and the warm-ups have started, please join the circle at the far end from the teacher.

**Demonstration dancers.** If anyone is interested in demonstrating, please speak to Bill Scott. The following gives an idea as to what is expected of a demonstration dancer:

Good presentation. Dancers should have good stage presence, which includes good carriage, good posture, and the ability to look relaxed, and to appear to enjoy the dancing.

Good technique. Dancers should have reasonably good technique, so that their dancing contributes to the overall appearance of the set without drawing attention to themselves.

Dancers should be familiar with all the basic footwork and figures, and the commonly known dances should only require a talk-through. This would generally imply about 2-3 years' experience. The Thursday night techniques class aims in this direction and it would be helpful to you to attend this class. However, discuss it with Bill.

There will be a workshop for 'talkers' in January. If anyone would like to learn how to talk through dances, please give your name to Martin or Kathy. We're always looking for people to talk through dances in the second half of Monday night classes.

Noreen recently attended the T.A.C. Annual General Meeting and workshop. Her report follows:

Every year the Teachers' Association of Canada (T.A.C.) holds an AGM in conjunction with a teachers' workshop. For many years, this weekend was offered in southern Ontario where the association had its beginnings. As years passed, membership expanded throughout North America, and also to other parts of the globe, uniting teachers of Scottish Country Dancing. To increase accessibility, a decision was made to move the weekend every second year to other parts of the continent, giving branches the option to host the function. This year's event was organized by the Los Angeles Branch and their choice of venue was the Queen Mary, a luxurious ocean liner, built in Scotland in 1936, and now an hotel in Long Beach, California.

The ship is now as it was in its heyday. Georgina Finlay and I checked in at the Purser's office and were assigned our cabin (or was it a stateroom?) located on the Main Deck. On our way to classes, we passed "The Royal Suite" and "The Windsor Suite," reminding us of the

famous footsteps that had trod these same passageways in years gone by. A museum depicting the wartime role of the ship, and various pictorial displays prominently placed, imparted a sense of grandeur and history of the years of maritime service.

From Friday evening until noon on Sunday, one hundred and twenty teachers met old friends, made new ones, attended classes and the AGM, not to mention the socials and parties. Ian Hall, the guest teacher from Britain, began with gentle stretches, moved on to novel ways to present step practice before introducing us to some interesting dances.

My morning began early, at 7.30 a.m., when I attended the area representatives' meeting where I presented the report Sue Scott had prepared on our activities in Newfoundland. This was followed by the two morning classes, with the AGM taking place in the afternoon.

The highlight on Saturday was the banquet and ball at night, which took place in the Britannia Room. Cocktails on the afterdeck preceded this event and with everyone in evening dress, the scene was certainly reminiscent of a bygone era. The after-dinner speeches gave thanks to the Los Angeles Branch for their wonderful organization of the weekend. Bill Clement, president of the RSCDS addressed the group, bringing greetings from Scotland and giving recognition to T.A.C. for their contribution to Scottish Country Dancing. The band tuned up and we were off to an evening of wonderful dancing. Afterwards, a room had been provided to continue the party into the "wee sma' hoors o'the mornin'" and there were some who did just that.

Sunday morning classes were well attended and Ian Hall took into consideration our energy level as he presented another excellent class.

There was still one momentous event to take place. Simon Scott, well-known teacher from Vancouver, had been contemplating the mega bungee jump (21 stories high) which loomed above the Queen Mary on the dock alongside. A few "I dare yous" was all he needed to agree to make the jump IN HIS KILT! Suggesting this could be a fund-raiser for the scholarship fund, resulted in a significant contribution to this worthy cause. All our group and many other onlookers assembled to watch and cheer this daredevil feat. So now they know what a Scotsman wears under his kilt, or do they?

Many of the group decided to take an optional afternoon cruise of the harbour. Drifting along the waterways with the sun shining and soft breezes blowing was wonderfully relaxing after the hectic pace of the weekend. But finally all good-byes were said and we speculated on where next the T.A.C. weekend would be held.

The following people who have taught or attended workshops in St. John's send their greetings to the group: June Shore, Ruth Jappy, Bob Blackie, Georgina Finley and Maurice Whitby.

Thank you, Noreen. You certainly had a fantastic time.