

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society - St. John's (Newfoundland) Branch  
Fall Newsletter 2011



### Chairman's Message

Welcome back everyone to another year of dancing. A different venue, a different night, but the same good evening of dancing with friends. It's always a sure sign that summer is ending when dance season begins again, but in truth we were dancing all summer. A dedicated group of members turned out each Monday evening for a little exercise, reprise some old favourites and try some new dances. As ever it was fun, though sometimes we almost verged on taking it seriously! We were delighted to have Kendra's parents join us one evening - it's always good to see visitors.

On July 1st, 8 dancers went over to Bell Island to help them celebrate Dominion Day and by all accounts a good time was had by all. Angela also joined in with a little Highland Dancing. Then in August Kathy was off to St. Andrews and returned from successfully completing the last part (Unit 5) of the teacher training programme. Congratulations Kathy.

We're doing things a little differently this year and a separate course is being offered for beginners with Kathy teaching. It's early stages yet, but we hope this proves to be popular. It takes place at St. David's right before the Social Class on Thursday evening.

Here's to a good year.

Denise  
Chairman, RSCDS, St. John's

### Committee of management 2011-2012

Chairman: Denise Sharpe  
Secretary: Kathy Simonsen  
Treasurer: Ken Galbraith  
Members –at-large: Louise Beaton, Brenda Burness, Ingrid Pardoe

## St Andrews Summer School 2011

If you have never been to the RSCDS' Summer School in St. Andrews, you should give a try, at least once. Now in its 81<sup>st</sup> year (big celebrations this summer for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary), Summer School is an RSCDS tradition like no other. But make sure that you have insurance!

I spent two weeks at Summer School this year completing the last part (Unit 5) of the teacher training programme. I count (almost) as an "old-timer" as this was my fifth visit. I have the travel plan down-pat: train from Edinburgh to Leuchars, bus from Leuchars to St. Andrews (buy return tickets, much cheaper) and spend the time wondering who else on the train or bus is also going to Summer School (hint: Japanese or German travellers without golf clubs are a good bet).

The first week of my stay (Week 3 of the Summer School) demonstrated why even dancers need health insurance. At the Tuesday evening social dance one of the dancers had a heart attack on the dance floor – fortunately doctors dance, so he was pounced upon immediately (much to the detriment of his shirt buttons, which were found and rescued by the housekeeping staff), and, I am happy to report, will live to dance another day. By the end of the week the two youngest dancers on the course were on crutches with ankle injuries and our tutor for Unit 5 had become ill, fainted at a party and been taken to hospital. It was said that the Director of Summer School, Margo Priestley, was on a first name basis with the local paramedics.

This trend did not continue in Week 4, although one of the volunteers who came to our course for us to practice upon became quite faint part way through a practice lesson. Our tutor took care of her and all was well. It was then that we were told that if something similar were to happen during our exam, we were to ignore it and just carry on. The tutor would carry the bodies out and find replacements as necessary. This led to a number of black jokes about volunteers perishing during the exam: the rules say that we must get one couple through the dance – they don't say in every set...

There were ten of us taking the Unit 5 course this summer: two Canadians, two Germans, one American, one Japanese, and four from the UK. We all worked very well together. Kate, Emma, Mike and Hiroko had done Units 2 & 3 in the first fortnight of Summer School 2009, while Alice, Judith, Iris, Elizabeth and I had met doing Units 2 & 3 in the second fortnight of 2009. The only newcomer was Pat, the American from California, who had done the earlier portion at TAC. Our course will perhaps become infamous for having gone through three tutors in two weeks. We were supposed to be working with Pat Houghton, but as she was going to be a day late returning from TAC, she had asked Sue Porter to "babysit" us for a day. Pat became ill on the Friday, and there must have been some discussion about who would take us over. Sue came back on the Saturday and Helen Russell took over on the Monday and saw us through our exam on the following Friday.

And the good news is that at least nine of the ten of us passed (we haven't heard from the last one yet). Thank you to Sue, Pat and Helen!

It was an interesting time to be in the UK. The London riots started on the Saturday at the end of Week 3. It was quite a shock to hear about what had been going on while we were dancing so peacefully in the St. Andrews town hall. It rained really hard that evening in Scotland, leaving roads flooded; it is too bad that it didn't rain in London.

Thanks to everyone here for all your support over the last few years as I have been working my way from Unit 1 to Unit 5. I couldn't have done it without you.

Kathy Simonsen

### **Mark your calendars!**

Last class and Christmas party – December 8

Twelfth Night Social – Saturday, January 7, 2012

A reminder that Branch activities and important dates may be easily found on our **new website**: [www.rscdsstjohns.ca](http://www.rscdsstjohns.ca)

### **This and That**

The Newfoundland Quarterly is composing a special issue on the Performing Arts and would like to include a photo essay on dance in Newfoundland and Labrador. Do you have photos, current or archival, of dancers and productions, which you would like to submit for possible inclusion? Please send at highest possible resolution, black and white preferred but not essential, to Joan Sullivan, Managing Editor, NQ, [jsulliva@mun.ca](mailto:jsulliva@mun.ca)

If you are traveling and have room to pack your ghillies, consider these upcoming events further afield:

Windsor, ON – Fall Ball Saturday, October 29, 2011

Edinburgh – RSCDS Weekend Away, January 27-29, 2012

Honolulu, Hawaii - Aloha Winter Weekend, February 17-19 2012

## Happy Feet:

Whether you are a beginner to Scottish Country dancing or your ghillies have seen more than a few strathspeys, jigs and reels, our legs and feet are vulnerable to feeling the effects of a night of dancing. A good warm-up and cool-down is essential and should include stretches of the legs and feet. Our teachers get us off on the right foot with a variety of stretches, but our legs may feel better the next day if we do some stretches on our own after class. Hopefully this will prevent any undue injuries from a fun night of dancing, while helping us keep our flexibility, range of motion and reduce muscle tension. Keep in mind that everyone's flexibility is different.

### Some stretching basics:

- Do not stretch to the point of pain; only a mild tension

- Hold the stretch for about 30 seconds; you may be able to move deeper into the stretch. Do not bounce.

- Make sure to stretch both legs evenly.