



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

NEWSLETTER

September 2007

Welcome back to all our dancers and a particular welcome to those who are new. We are glad you have joined us and hope you enjoy the experience of Scottish country dancing.

Summer seems to have passed very quickly, probably because it started so late but, hopefully, it will continue into October!

Monday night dancing has continued throughout the summer and we have had a very good turnout of our own dancers and a couple of visitors [Paul and Libby from Los Angeles.] Many thanks to Kathy Simonsen who has been leading most of the dancing. Thanks also to Karen Oakley and a couple of others who have talked through dances. Delicious refreshments have been provided by a variety of people.

We have had two great evenings of dancing at Frank & Claudia O'Connor's new (nearly completed) house on Conception Bay. It is wonderful to dance and look out at the lights of ships on the bay and he has a perfect floor for dancing. The second evening concluded with Elizabeth playing the pipes, Frank on the fiddle and his brother, from Ireland, playing the accordion. A great evening and we hope we may be invited again next summer!! Thank you Frank and Claudia.

We look forward to another great year of dancing and if you have any suggestions or concerns, please contact me or any member of the Executive.

Brenda Burness
Chairperson

Thank you from Ainslie

“I would like to thank the group for allowing me to wear my "other hat" as a researcher last winter. As many of you know, I spent the winter term working on a research paper about the St. John's RSCDS Branch. It was an interesting project in which I explored the feeling of community created in an evening of dancing as well as the unique "Newfoundlandishness" of the group. Thank you to all of you who took the time to answer the questionnaire, I really appreciate your effort and support. If anyone is interested in reading the final paper, please contact me (ainsliedurnin@gmail.com) and I can make a copy available to you. Thanks again!

“I will still be here in the fall and look forward to another term of dancing!!!”

Ainslie Durnin

Summer Performance

Once again this year we performed at the Pippy Park Summerfest event on July 29. Thanks to the volunteer dancers: Frank O'Connor, Ken Galbraith, Kathy Simonsen, Mary Bridson, Carolyn Best, Bridgette Hamilton, Elizabeth Green, and Faiza Kaaderali – and to Brenda Burness and Karen Oakley for organising us and our costumes, and standing in at practices. The event went well this year – no rain!

Postie's Jig



From left: Frank, Faiza, Elizabeth, Carolyn, Ken, Mary, Kathy, Bridgette

Dance Scottish Week

The RSCDS has declared 7-14 September Dance Scottish Week in order to raise the profile of SCD and help recruit new dancers. Many events have been planned in Scotland, and other branches around the world are encouraged to do likewise. Happily it coincides with our own Fall Ceilidh on September 15, and the start of a new season.

New Babies!

Catherine Wright and Len Sperry had a 7lb 14½ oz boy, Benjamin Armstrong Wright, on July 20.

Ken and Pat Galbraith welcomed a new grandson, Liam James, 8lb, on July 31.

Congratulations to all, and may they be blessed with an ear for the fiddle, hips for a kilt, and toes for reeling and jigging!

Noreen and the Neophyte Reporters

Earlier this summer, when CBC TV weatherman Karl Wells was retiring, Here and Now ran clips from his earlier days. In one of them he was wearing a bright red kilt and being put through his paces by Noreen MacLennan! I guess he really did try everything.

Noreen was called upon again this September 1 to introduce another reporter to our pastime – Tom Ronan of the Weekend Arts Programme on Radio One. It was very amusing to hear him

practising pas-de-basques and travelling steps over the airwaves, but I don't think he was wearing the kilt.

Thank you, Noreen, you do a great job of raising our profile.

RSCDS Summer School 2008

Summer School in St. Andrew's, Scotland, will be from July 20 - August 17 [four separate weeks]. There are scholarships available from RSCDS, and our own branch, if you are interested in working towards being an instructor. Information and application forms will be available in October, for end of February deadline, at www.rscds.org

The Endangered Sporran

[excerpted from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/6234290.stm]

submitted by Bruce Shawyer

Kilt wearers could face prosecution if they do not have a licence for their sporran under new legislation which has been introduced in Scotland. The laws are designed to protect endangered species like badgers and otters, whose fur used to be favoured by sporran makers. The legislation applies to animals killed after 1994. Applicants must prove that the animal was killed lawfully before they will be able to get a licence.

The conservation regulations were designed to close a number of loopholes and bring Scotland into line with other EU members. They also apply to other vulnerable animals like deer, wildcats, hedgehogs, bats, lynx, moles, seals, whales, dolphins and porpoises.

...The maximum penalties for breaking the law are a fine of £5,000 and six months in prison.

Hamish Husband, spokesman for the Association of Tartan Army Clubs, said the legislation could affect fans who follow their national football team.

"Are the police going to take DNA samples from the sporran of every kilted supporter who walks into Hampden?" he asked. "If that's the case we will need to look into obtaining a licence to cover the entire Tartan Army."

The new rules will also cover fishing flies made from animal hair. [See article below on Durham Ranger.]

"The licence will allow people who possess artefacts made from these species, in circumstances compliant with earlier laws, to keep them," a Scottish Executive spokeswoman said. "This could be family heirlooms of various descriptions. Having a licence for such an artefact, proving it was obtained legally, will ensure they will not be prosecuted or have it taken from them under the new regulations."

[Editor's note: And talking of EU regulations, did you hear the one about kilts being classified as "women's apparel" for purposes of trade in Europe? See the item "Nonsense on Kilts – Nothing Underneath Scottish Scare Story" from the May 2004 Press Watch at http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/press/press_watch/pdf/18.pdf, where it appears it was the UK Office of National Statistics that was responsible!]

The Durham (Duran) Ranger

Last April, Martin taught the Social Class a neat little reel called The Duran Ranger, printed in RSCDS Book 13. It was devised by James Wright, a notable fly maker of Sprouston, near Kelso, on the occasion of a visit of a group of salmon anglers from Durham to the local water, around 1865. The tune and the dance (Duran being a corruption of Durham) were collected in the Borders in the 1930s by Ian Jamieson of Galashiels. Martin mentioned to Lorraine Gall that her husband Ian, an avid fisherman, would recognise the name. Sure enough, Lorraine came in the next week with a framed masterpiece – the Durham Ranger salmon fly tied by Ian over 20 years ago!



The fly was the creation of a Mr. Walton Scruton of Durham, England around 1840. Mr. Scruton was a founding member of the Sprouston Angling Club organized in 1845 near Kelso, Scotland. The nearby River Tweed was, and still is, a premier salmon fishing destination for anglers. The original fly was tied with various pheasant feathers, floss and gold ribbing. Towards the end of the 19th century the composition of the fly changed with the inclusion of exotic feathers from birds such as the jungle cock, Indian crow, blue and yellow macaw, and ostrich. The body material was also changed to yellow floss, orange, fiery brown and black dyed seal's fur. These feathers found their way into other salmon fly patterns as they were easily obtained from the Far East during the height of the British Empire. The practice of using exotic feathers is now banned and substitute dyed feathers from other common birds take their place.

In Newfoundland and Labrador the Durham Ranger fly used today would consist of the same body materials but the wing would in most cases be the easily obtained moose hair. While it is not used much in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Durham Ranger is a very well-known pattern in salmon fishing circles.

Ian tied his fly during a one day class in St. John's by Ron Alcott from Massachusetts. Classical salmon flies are tied more as an art form than as fishing flies. They are used for fishing but the time and materials used in tying them limits their use. A simple salmon fly with a moose or squirrel hair wing is the norm around here.

A well tied classical salmon fly, framed, usually costs over \$100 to buy. Ian says there are several excellent tyers here in St. John's, but claims he does not have sufficient patience, enjoying more success with tying fishing flies. However, he also tied a Jock Scott fly at a weekend class with Ron, which took 54 different pieces, compared to 26 for the Durham Ranger!

The materials used in Ian's Durham Ranger consist of jungle cock, Indian crow, golden pheasant and macaw. As mentioned above, some of these birds are protected today. As the cost of the real feathers went sky high, substitutes came into use very quickly. A man in the US has a licence to breed jungle cock, and makes quite a bit of money from them. A neck from a grade A jungle cock will cost over \$120!

It is interesting to note that the Durham Rangers was a militia company formed in Durham during the Napoleonic Wars.

[Thanks to Martin Mulligan and Ian Gall for providing all this information]

The Duran Ranger (32 Bar Reel for 4 Couples)

- 1 - 8 1C lead down the middle; on bar 5, 1W crosses under her partner's arm to lead up on opposite sides. They finish in 2nd place on opposite sides, 2C having moved up.
- 9 - 16 1C & 2C dance rights and lefts; 1C finish facing 1st corners.
- 17 - 24 1C turn 1st corner RH, partner LH, 2nd corner RH, and giving partner LH in passing, cross to own side of dance in second position.
- 25 - 32 1C & 2C dance four hands round and back.
 Repeat, having passed a couple.

The Sgian Dubh

[From "Did You Know That....?", The Tartan Times, Vol.LV, No.4, Mar/Apr. 2007]

Sgian Dubhs [translated from the Gaelic as "Black Knives"] are worn in the top of the sock and, contrary to their appearance, are not weapons, but utensils used for skinning animals and removing scales from fish. It was allowed to be taken indoors by your host, as during the Middle Ages, and even later, it also served as your eating utensil.

While it is acceptable to be in possession of a *Sgian Dubh* in the House of Commons, bagpipes are refused entry as they are classed as a weapon of war!

The Passing of Two SCD Stars

Roy Goldring, deviser of so many favourite dances, died on 4 September 2007. I don't think we ever dance a social programme without including at least one of his great creations – Inchmickery, EH3 7AF, Highland Rambler, Off to Speyside, The Barmkin, The Piper and the Penguin, and our summer dancing favourite, Reel of the Royal Scots, to name a few. He has certainly enriched the Scottish Country Dancing repertoire.

Sadly on the same day we lost a Canadian stalwart, musician **Stan Hamilton**. Stan headed up the band Stan Hamilton and the Clansmen and later became Stan Hamilton and the Flying Scotsmen in the sixties and seventies. Stan was very well known in Scottish Country Dance circles in Southern Ontario, the United States and around the world. Stan's band regularly played for dances and Balls in the Hamilton, Niagara, Toronto, and London areas. Although Stan had not played for many years his wonderful music lives on in the recordings that he made. Stan received the Scroll of Honour from the RSCDS in 2005 at the Hamilton Weekend.

RSCDS Tartan

Many dancers want to own a kilt or kilted skirt to show off their steps to best advantage, but there are a bewildering number of tartans out there. Some are associated with a clan name, others with a particular region or organization. If you feel you don't fit into any of these categories, there is now an excellent alternative. David Normand-Harris, Convenor of the Education and Training Committee of RSCDS, has designed a new tartan especially for the Society, combining the "Royal" and "Scottish" elements of the name – red and gold from the Scottish Royal Standard, and blue and white from the Saltire.

Exclusive suppliers are at www.tartankilts.com/acatalog/rscds.html