

RSCSD St. John's Branch Fall 2013 Newsletter



Message from the Chair

Time to start dancing again! That is if you didn't come out to St. David's on Monday evenings this past summer - most weeks we had a good number. But now it's time to get reacquainted with friends we haven't seen in a while and hopefully meet some new folk. We are hoping to get a Family Class started this fall. Not only might this generate some new young dancers in the coming years but adults in their family might like to try our Beginners Class. Fingers crossed!

Over the summer our dancers put in an appearance at the Canada Day festivities on Bell Island in July and Kathy gave the crowd at St. John's Folk Fest a taste of what our group is all about through a short workshop.

Mark October 26th down on your calendars - we will be having a Workshop. Bill and Sue Scott have offered their services and we gratefully accepted. It will be a fun, busy, social event. So don't miss it!

See everyone on the 9th.

Denise

Fall Term Dance Classes

Classes for fall term will begin on the 9th of September at Wesley United Church. Both social dance and beginners classes will be offered and will run from 7:45pm to 10:00pm. Fall term classes will be \$70 for the term plus \$10 registration. So go round up some friends and bring them with you!

We hope to have a family class for children 5 and older from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Children are encouraged to bring an adult guest to class with them. The cost would be \$50 for the term or \$5 per class with a \$10 registration. There will be an open house evening on the 9th of September with the family class continuing if there is sufficient interest. So rustle up your nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and/or the kid down the street. Hopefully we can addict some new dancers young!

Technique class will start up again on the 12th of September at St. David's Presbyterian. Classes run from 8:00pm and 10:00pm and each dancer pays a \$7 drop in fee. All dancers with at least one year of experience are welcome.

Important Dates

Workshop with Bill and Sue Scott	Saturday October 26 th during the day
Fall Social	Evening of Saturday October 26 th
St. Andrew's Day Ceilidh	Saturday November 30 th , 2013
Burn's Supper	Saturday January 25 th , 2014

Travelling Near and Far

St. Andrew's Summer School by Kathy Simenson

November 2013 marks the 90th anniversary of the RSCDS. For 82 of those 90 years some sort of summer school has taken place at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. At present Summer School runs for four weeks from mid-July to mid-August. Once upon a time – when more Scottish country dancers were younger or crazier – most people did two weeks. Nowadays, it is common for dancers to attend for a single week, and the lesson plans for the instructors reflect this (I'll explain below), although the programmes for the evening socials are still based on the idea that people may be around for more than one week (and this is true, of course, for many of the staff).

So why did I go off for two weeks of Summer School? Well, the short answer is that Summer School is actually quite addictive. The last two times I attended I was doing the candidates' classes, which last for two weeks. A single week seemed too short. And a friend of mine was planning to undergo the Unit 5 candidates' class this year, so I had an excuse to keep her company. And I am glad that I did.

Classes for regular dancers are in the morning. There are two classes with a coffee break each day Monday through Saturday. There is one instructor and one musician (yes, bliss, a real, living and breathing musician) for the two classes; instructors and musicians switch mid-way through, so dancers have two different instructors and musicians each week. So over my two weeks I had four different instructors and three musicians; I started and ended with the pianist Robert Mackay (who also played for my candidates' class in 2011). Because there is a new book this year, Book 47, the main goal for the instructors was to work through the new dances. I don't know if every level of class did all the dances (and clearly the beginners' class didn't), but my class did. And so, I did them twice. Not the disadvantage you might think as some of them only made sense the second time through!

In the afternoons there are a variety of optional activities, such as walk-throughs for the evening dances, ladies' step dancing, highland dancing and so on. Or you can simply rest or shop or go off and see the sights – and there are many lovely attractions around Fife. Or, if you were so inclined, I'm sure that you could play golf.

The evening dances vary considerably. Most nights there is dancing at University Hall with music provided by musicians who are on staff. These can be quite crowded. The best nights are those when the dancing is at the Younger Hall on North Street. Younger Hall has a fabulous floor and was built as a concert venue, so the acoustics are excellent. On these evenings there is a full band brought in from somewhere in Scotland and the music is usually fantastic.

Is a trip to Summer School for you? Summer School isn't just or even mainly about the candidates' classes. Any level of dancer can attend. There is a basic class – this year some of those dancers had never danced before at all (their husbands were off playing golf), an intermediate class, and several different types of “advanced” classes from a “low-impact” class for dancers with injuries to a class for the “fully certificated”. There is a level for you somewhere. The music is always amazing and you shouldn't miss the opportunity to meet dancers from all over the world. The tuition isn't cheap, about \$900 for the week, but it does cover everything so once you are there it is a worry-free holiday. And the food isn't that bad either.

The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo by Kendra Beliveau

Did you know that military drummers in the 17th century used to walk the streets drumming “doe den ta toe” meaning “turn off the taps” to summon British soldiers back to barracks. Over the years the phrase was shortened to tattoo.

Sheer awe and amazement describes what it is like to watch the performance of the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo at the Halifax Metro Centre (www.nstatattoo.ca). This extraordinary Canadian and International event has been going on since its inception in 1979 for the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother to Canada. Like a Highland Fair, the original performance featured Highland dancers and pipe bands. The Tattoos gained Royal status in 2006 and has grown to include: acrobats, marching bands, and military competitions.

Traveling in Europe by Angela Carter-McAuslan

One of the wonderful things about Scottish Country dancing is the number of places that it is danced throughout the world. A quick google search will often turn up these groups. While in Vienna this spring I was able to sneak away for a few hours on Wednesday evening to dance with the Vienna branch of the RSCDS. Upon walking in to the community centre where the Vienna branch holds their classes familiar music was playing and it was a balm to a slightly homesick soul. The instructor of the social class at the Vienna Branch is named Anne. Her first question on hearing my voice was to ask if I was Canadian. It turned out that she was from Cape Breton and knew our own Martin Mulligan.

Although the class was taught in English and all the dancers spoke the language reasonably well it was still an interesting experience dancing in a group who were mostly more comfortable in a language I don't understand.

A week (and trains, ferry and cars) later found me dancing with the Brighton branch in the small community of Saltdean just east of the city of Brighton in Southern England. I found a welcoming group of dancers who were very willing for me to join in for an evening. There was a small group out, only one set with a few extra bodies. The exposure to different branches and different dance is a broadening experience.

If you are planning to travel I highly recommend looking to see if there are any RSCDS in the areas where you will be travelling. Its a wonderful experience. In the future I plan to carry a copy of Up the Pond so that I can share a taste of Newfoundland flavour.

TAC Summer School in Sackville, New Brunswic by Angela Carter-McAuslan

The TAC-RSCDS Summer School this summer was held in Sackville, New Brunswick on the beautiful campus of Mount Alison University. Unlike the summer school in St. Andrew's the TAC Summer School only runs for a single week and its location changes each year. This year the school was well attended with 180 Canadian dancers and 50 dancers from a combination the United States, Switzerland, Norway, England, Scotland, and France.

There were five different class levels that could be chosen from: basic, intermediate, advanced social, focus on technique, and high energy. There was also a week long tutors course for those wishing to learn to tutor perspective dance teachers. There were six instructors and six muscians. One of the instructors and muscians worked with the tutor class and all the others rotated through the other five classes. As such each day we had a different different teacher except the last day for which we had the first teacher as the first day. I found the exposure to different teaching styles very helpful. The levelled classes took place from 9-11:45 each morning.

Every afternoon there were three time slots with a variety of different classes including: Regency quadrille, ladies step, highland steps in SCD, focus on figures and ball practice. One of the nice features of the afternoons was opportunities to attend a few lecture based classes including: music appreciation, foot care for dancers, and a class on programming. The other afternoon activity I particularly enjoyed was singing in a choir. We learnt two songs "For a Just a Little While" and "Highland Cathedral" which we performed twice. It was a lot of fun and a much appreciated break from dancing.

Each evening there was some kind of social event. On the Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings there was an evening social. The programs for the socials had been posted well in advance and I felt much more prepared for having asked to dance some of the dances I didn't know during Monday night summer dancing. On the Wednesday night we had a concert by the six muscians playing at the school. It was a wonderful opportunity to truly enjoy their talents while having an opportunity to rest our feet. On the Friday night we had a ceilidh/talent show where dancer's shared a number of different talents including: a recorder solo, a beautiful sign language dance of "The Wind Beneath My Wings", a demonstration of "Honour the Piper a Scottish Country dance which uses highland steps for setting, and a demonstration of a couple soft shoe Irish Step D ances. It was a lovely evening with lots of laughs and general fun had by all. Our final evening was a formal dinner and ball. It caped off the entire week quite well.

If you aren't up to going all the way to Scotland to attended the St. Andrew's Summer School I would highly recommend considering the TAC summer school which being shorter and a little closer to home fits better into many peoples budgets and schedules.

Dancing Around Town

Do you feel like you just aren't dancing enough? Here are some of the other kinds of dance being done in St. John's this fall.

English Country Dancing

English country dancing is an excellent opportunity to dance while being gentle on the knees. The English Country dance group in St. John's was begun by Noreen, Jo and Bruce Shawyer; familiar names to the Scottish Country dance community. Classes are taught by Noreen and our own Martin Mulligan. Each class includes live music given by Benison. Classes take place on Tuesday nights at St. James United Church on Elizabeth Ave.

Argentine Tango

There are lots of places to learn Argentine Tango in St. John's. There are two practicas (practice sessions) per week on Sundays (7pm) and Thursdays (8:30pm) at the Arts and Culture Center with Tango on the Edge. Teri Slade (teriteaches.com) offers classes on Monday and the MUN Ballroom and Latin Dance Club offers classes on Wednesdays. For fun social events which you can attend with or without tango experience try Milonga Brava on Saturday. More information on the Milonga Brava is available at www.facebook.com/tangowithteri.

Ballroom and Latin Dance

The MUN Ballroom and Latin Dance Club teaches classes in a number of styles, including: ballroom, latin dance, and Argentine tango. This is a student run group but is open to members of the general public. They have classes as well as opportunities to strut your stuff at socials. Registration for fall classes is taking place on Wednesday Sept. 11th at 7pm in the Landing at the University Center (UC3018)

Highland Dance

The MUN Highland Dance Collective is a new group which aims to provide a welcoming space for dancers who wish to practice and learn highland dance. The group has space booked in the Mezzanine Dance Studio at the Arts and Culture Center in St. John's from 6:00pm to 8:00pm on Tuesdays starting on the 10th of September. This group provides a venue of collaborative learning and is open to those who have never tried Highland dancing before. From 7:00pm to 8:00pm the group focuses on beginner work but beginners are welcome to come for the first hour as well. For more information address emails of inquiry to highland.dance.collective@mun.ca or find the group on Facebook.

Burn's Supper 2013

The annual St. Andrew's Society Burns Supper took place on Saturday January 19th at the Legion in Pleasantville. The evening began with a rousing toast to the haggis given by Micheal (Mike) Barry. Attendees dined on a traditional meal of scotch broth, roast beef, neeps, tatties, and haggis. Dinner was followed by a performance from the St. John's City Pipe Band, readings of Burns by the members of Freethought Productions (Mike Barry, Leslie Dove Smith, and Jana Gillis), and beautiful singing by Leslie Dove Smith accompanied by Jane Oglivie on the harp. By request of a few of the attendees with longer memories a sing-song was reintroduced to the program. With the audience joining Leslie Dove Smith in the singing of Loch Lomond, and Scots Were Ha'e. Look for this feature at future St. Andrew's Society events.

Scottish country and highland dance demonstrations were performed. The Scottish Country dancers performed . The highland dance demonstrations included a variation of the Strathspey and Highland Reel and the Highland Laddie performed by members of the MUN Highland Dance Collective (Jana Gillis, Lauren Fogarty and Angela Carter-McAuslan). Following the formal program the floor was cleared for Ceilidh dancing with music provided by Corryvreckan was enjoyed by a large number of attendees.

In 2014 Burns Day falls on a Saturday and as such Burns Supper will occur on Saturday the 25th of January, 2014. Tickets will go on sale late this year and will be available from Robert MacIssac or Angela Carter-McAuslan.

Socials Past and Future

During the winter of 2013 there the branch held two successful socials. The first to celebrate Twelfth Night at the end of the Christmas season and the second was festively decked in green in honour of St. Patrick's day. Both socials were well attended. As we have come to expect but never take for granted excellent live music was provided by Corryvreckan to the delight of all attending.

The next social will take place on the 26th of October culminating a day of workshops (more details below). All are invited even if you are unable to attend the workshops during the day. As usual the social will be held at Vanier Elementary School and begin at 8pm. Bring sweet or savory treats for all to enjoy at the end of the evening.

Book Mark this!

Just a reminder that the website for the RSCDS St. John's Branch can be found at <http://www.rscdstjohns.ca>

Saturday, October 26th Workshop

This fall Sue and Bill Scott, formerly teachers at the St. John's branch now residing in Barry, Ontario, have graciously agreed to run a one day workshop with classes for both beginners and intermediate level dancers on the 26th of October. There will be a morning session with beginners and intermediate classes. Afternoon classes will focus on technique. A social in the evening to round out the day. The cost will be \$30 for the morning, \$10 for the afternnon, and \$10 for the social or \$30 for the whole day. Lunch will be provided.

Committee of Management for 2013-2014 elected at the Annual General Meeting in April, 2013

Denise Sharpe	Chair
Kathy Simonsen	Secretary
Ken Galbraith	Treasurer
Bridgette Hamilton	Member at Large
Anne Gillis	Member at Large
Kendra Belliveau	Member at Large

Contributing to RSCDS St. John's Newsletter

Thanks to Denish Sharp, Kendra Belliveau, Kathy Simonsen, Martha Taylor (San Fransisco Branch), Teri (Argentine Tango teacher), Gail Bartholomew, and Ken Galbraith for their contributions to this newsletter.

If you have anything that you feel may be of interest to other dancers it would be greatly appreciated for future newsletters or if you have pictures taken at local (and non-local) events at which you have participated or attended please email Angela at acartermcauslan@mun.ca.