

# Light and Airy



**Scottish Country Dancers of Winnipeg**  
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**June - July 2010**

## **Committee of Management 2010/11**

<b>Chair:</b>	Wendy Land	774 5877
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	Pat Clubb	774 2796
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jean Highmoor	832 8117
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Joan Curle	254 6697
<b>Light and Airy Editor:</b>	Barbara LeBow / Heather Ferguson	452 2898 / 795 2337
<b>Social Secretary:</b>	Donna Robinson / assisted by Sharon Plaitin	253 2519 / 661 1257
<b>Assistant Social Secretary:</b>	Betty Poole	888 3173
<b>Membership:</b>	Debra Forrest	284 4667
<b>Publicity:</b>	Scott MacRae / Reg Curle	885 7111 / 254 6697
<b>Demonstration:</b>	Agnes Brydon	837 7346
<b>Library:</b>	Reg Curle / Scott MacRae	254 6697 / 885 7111
<b>Teacher's Rep.:</b>	Christine Wallace	478 1026

## **From the Chair....**

Yesterday's summer solstice marked a welcome beginning to the summer season. I hope when this issue reaches you the rain and mosquitoes have diminished! Highlights of the spring season included a well attended AGM and two fun evenings of spring dancing. Many thanks to Joyce and Elizabeth, mentored by Christine, for guiding us through the programs and to Donna and Betty for the refreshments.

Your Committee of Management (COM) has marked the beginning of a new mandate with its first meeting. My thanks to Shirley Tinsley and last year's COM for their dedication and commitment, and to those who agreed to serve the membership for another year. Thank you also to Pat Clubb, Heather Ferguson and Debra Forrest who are new to this year's COM.

The COM has set three goals to frame our planning for the year and discussion has begun about actions to implement those goals. I welcome your feedback through the branch's email at [info@rscdswinnipeg.ca](mailto:info@rscdswinnipeg.ca).

The first goal, **to maintain last year's membership and increase it by 5 new members**, reflects an on-going concern of the Branch. Plans already in place include September's Welcome Dance, participation in the Scottish Pavilion during Folklorama, and the Demonstration Team's participation in Canada Day Celebrations at Lower Fort Garry. A video currently in production is expected to enhance these and other efforts to promote Scottish Country Dancing and attract new dancers. Discussion about possible new initiatives included reference to participation in an International WaterAid Ceilidh in October, an event to mark Headquarter's international Dance Scottish Week in September, and a series of ceilidhs to attract new dancers that could be held in venues located in different parts of the city.

The second goal, **to provide ongoing support for teachers and teacher candidates**, reflects the COM'S ongoing effort to maintain and build a pool of qualified teachers. Plans already in place include a Teachers' Workshop in May 2011 which will incorporate present teacher candidates and, possibly, potential new candidates. On-going support for teacher candidates includes opportunities to practice their skills during branch classes and other special events.

The third goal, **to increase attendance at Branch socials**, reflects concern about dwindling participation in these events. Further discussion of how to implement these goals will continue through our summer meetings and will be highlighted in a later edition of the **Light and Airy**.

The COM has begun the challenging task of hammering out a budget and setting the fee schedule. Further information will be available in the August edition. As well, the registration form and information about class structure will be included in that edition.

Folklorama runs from August 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> this year and will be here before we can blink! As usual, we are looking for help from the membership at large and urge you to contact Reg and Scott if you have time available. The opportunity to do ceilidh dancing in the new venue will be further developed this year. Your participation will be fun and will boost our promotion of the joy of Scottish Country Dancing!

Finally and sadly, June has been marked by the passing of Don Brydon whose contributions to the Branch and love of Scottish Country Dancing have long been evident to his friends in the dancing community. Our sympathy has been expressed to Agnes and her family.

Regards,

Wendy Land

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### **2010/11 Dance Season**

**Saturday September 11**

Welcome Dance, St Paul's, 7:30 PM

**Week of September 13**

Fall Term classes begin

Further information to follow in the next edition of the **Light and Airy**.

Please note: All dates are subject to change – please check the calendar each month. All socials are at St Paul's Church Hall at 8:00 pm unless otherwise noted. For class socials, the admission charge is \$5; others are as noted.

## From the Editors

This editorial explores Scottish dance tradition over the centuries. During the eighteenth century Londoners considered the Scots to be savages. James Boswell, friend and biographer of Dr. Johnson, was mocked for his Scottish accent. When he danced a reel of three on top of Dun Caan on Raasay, while journeying with Johnson through the Highlands, he was pilloried in a cartoon that depicted him dancing wildly and uncouthly. Major Topham, a late-eighteenth century visitor to Edinburgh, writes that Scots ladies, when they hear their native reel music, jump up and dance, never bothering to look at their partner - they could just as easily be setting to a corner cupboard.

Scotland in the late eighteenth century was also North Britain with the upper classes learning a disciplined dance style and pointed toes from dancing masters that would govern the teaching of Highland and step dancing. Boswell also danced a reel in the drawing room of Raasay House accompanied by a harpsichord. These examples highlight the tensions that run through the history of Scottish dance: Highland vs. Lowland, spontaneity vs. discipline, abandon vs. control.

Views of Scotland and its dancing were transformed by the Romantic Movement, when folk traditions of music and dance were embraced by high culture. Scottish reels were no longer seen as barbarous but as free and natural. In 1805, dancing master Francis Peacock of Aberdeen wrote that the reel "admits of so great a variety of natural and brilliant steps as never fail to please." English country dances were set to fashionable Scottish tunes, creating a supply of allegedly traditional material for Miss Milligan to draw on.

Topham remained anti-Scottish, writing that "we in England are said to walk the minuet; this [the strathspey] is galloping a minuet...every idea of grace seems inverted," concluding that Scottish dancing has nothing but enthusiasm and activity to recommend it. At the same time, the poet John Keats remains neutral in describing country dancing near the Scottish border: "They kickit & jumpit with mettle extraordinary, & whiskit, & fleckit, & toe'd it, & twirl'd it, & wheel'd it, & stampt it, & sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad. The difference between our country dances & these Scotch figures is about the same as leisurely stirring a cup of tea & beating up a batter pudding."

On the other hand, Elizabeth Grant favors Scottish dancing: "I so far forgot the orthodox English style of evenly goosestepping the scotch reel, as in our happy excitement [for]...strathspey...springing through in time to the music."

Whatever their bias, these three writers say similar things about Scottish dancing. It is energetic and rhythmic, with the strathspey step being vigorous. An anonymous writer in 1818 wrote: "The strathspey steps are not in disuse...being the only sort of dancing we have, strictly national and peculiar to Scotland" (underlining in the original).

In the early nineteenth century, everyone in England was dancing reels, traditional Scottish music was the rage, and the Gows and their band came down in triumph to the assembly rooms of London. The "Highlandizing" of the image of Scotland began in 1822 when Sir Walter Scott staged George IV's visit to Edinburgh, dressing the King in a kilt to watch reels danced at the "Caledonian Hunt Ball." Queen Victoria swathed Balmoral Castle in tartan and engaged Joseph Lowe to teach reels to her and her children.

The Victorians started the tradition that persists today - the belief that Scottish dancing and reels belong only to the Highlands. In reality, reels were danced throughout the country, and step dances, called "hornpipes", were taught by dancing masters as far south as the Borders - the earliest surviving step dances are in the McGill manuscript of about 1750. The Highland tradition was based on improvisation, a tradition that survives in Cape Breton step dancing.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Scottish dancing became tied to Scottish national pride and books were written on the national dancing. Being Scottish came to mean being strong and hardy in body and mind - having the qualities that made the Highland regiments famous and were put on display at Highland Games. Grahamsley Atkinson writes: "All who know Scottish National Dances will admit they bear the impress, or are the exponents of a manly, vigorous and healthy people - sound and healthy both in body and in mind."

The "Eightsome Reel" is a prime example of invented tradition, a modern dance developed in the 1880s as a fusion of the quadrille with the threesome reel, taking on the aura of an ancient

traditional dance, being danced ceremonially at the beginning of Highland balls with the pipes playing. It became an expression of Scottish, and British, patriotism - people spontaneously danced the "Eightsome" on the streets of Edinburgh at the end of both world wars.

The founders of the Scottish Country Dance Society found it important to preserve tradition. Mrs. Stewart and Lord James Stewart Murray had links to the Scout and Guide movement with its stress on the countryside, patriotism, and Christian values. James Stewart Murray saw country dancing as a way of restoring another traditional element in Scottish society - all classes dancing together. Miss Milligan had links with the Beltane Society which aimed to revive traditional customs and with the international physical education movement which sought the harmonious development of mind and body. Miss Milligan saw dancing as a "friendly social spirit," "communion between ears and feet," "the physical expression of character." She argued that country dancing is not folk dancing but belongs to the ballroom, inventing the tradition that the origin of Scottish Country Dancing was French ballet via Mary Queen of Scots.

The style and character of Scottish dancing seem distinctive: emphasis on rhythm and footwork, with the rhythmic quality of the music being emphasized by the dancer through the feet and the snapping of fingers; energy and vivacity; dancing masters teaching generation after generation, implying that dancing is discipline that needs to be taught to everyone not just the upper classes; and improvisation, but with the last hundred years being wedded to the written text.

(Based on the article, *Genuine and Invented Traditions in Scottish Dance*, by Rosemary Coupe, RSCDS Vancouver Branch, printed in **TACTalk** December 2009 and March 2010.)

The editors wish members of the Branch a joyful summer.

## **In Memoriam**

In the last month, the Winnipeg Branch lost two long-time members – Don Brydon and Joyce McCombe Flemming. The following are remembrances of their contributions to the Branch and Scottish Country Dancing.

## **Don Remembered**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Don Brydon on June 14, 2010. Don had been an integral part of the Winnipeg Branch for many years. He served on the Committee of Management as Librarian and also as Editor of the **Light and Airy** for a number of years. When the Branch ran "Mug Pub", (the British Pavilion at Folklorama), Don and his wife Agnes were responsible for Staffing. Don also served as Mayor of "Mug Pub".

I really came to know Don through his participation in the Demonstration Class, and later when he was no longer able to dance, he would continue to attend class and Demonstrations, where he was in charge of lining up the dancers prior to going on stage. He came to each event dressed in full Highland attire. He reminded me of a "Chief" in charge of his Clan! When the dancers introduced themselves to the audience, describing what tartan they were wearing, we of course included Don. I can still hear him say quietly, and with great pride, that he was wearing the tartan of the "Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada" and, more often than not, this brought forth a round of applause.

Don had, as many of us knew, a great sense of humour combined with a wealth of stories, some repeatable, some not! We had to be on our mettle, for we never knew what amusing but pertinent comment would come forth from him next, accompanied by that ever present twinkle in his eye and a glimmer of a smile.

Recently, when observing a dance during a demonstration with one of the dancers, Don commented to her that she was not dancing that particular dance. She replied, "No, and it's one of my favourites!" After a moment's thought he replied, "Well--we'll have to see about that!"

Don was very proud of his Scottish heritage and was associated with other Scottish Groups in the city, including the United Scottish. I happened to meet one of the members recently, who recalled the year that Don was Mayor of Mug Pub, and how Don unobtrusively allowed this person in without paying. A gesture that this person has never forgotten.

I know that there are many stories and recollections of Don of which I have barely scratched the surface. It was amazing that he was with us as long as he was, for over 23 years ago

Don and Agnes were in a car accident that he was not expected to recover from. The fact that he did was in no small part due to the love and support of Agnes and his family.

Don was truly a gentleman, who was always thinking of others and willing to help in any way that he could. He was extremely proud of his children and grandchildren and all their accomplishments.

To Agnes and the family we extend our heartfelt condolences. Don will be greatly missed.

Christine M. Wallace

### **Joyce McCombe Flemming**

We were saddened this month to learn of the death of Joyce McCombe Flemming, a life member of the Winnipeg Branch, on July 5, 2010.

I first met Joyce in the 1970's, through Scottish Country Dancing, when she was attending both regular and demonstration classes. At that time, I remember being struck by her tremendous "joie de vivre" and interest in people.

Joyce had a great love for Scotland, its history, music and dance, which has been perpetuated through her children and grandchildren through the playing of the bagpipes and Highland dancing. She also owned and operated Glengarry Scottish Imports for many years, of which she ran a booth during the years of "Mug Pub" (the British Pavilion at Folklorama).

Joyce also enjoyed classical music and singing, and was a member of the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir and her Church choir.

On a lighter note, Joyce was a member of the *Bunch of Grapes* which performed and sang at Mug Pub. In the following paragraph, Ron Krug, the Musical Director of the *Bunch of Grapes* shares his memories of Joyce.

"For many years, Joyce was an integral part of the *Bunch of Grapes*. Her enthusiasm, charm and team spirit greatly enhanced every performance of which she was a part. Joyce had a very special talent to focus directly on her audience, giving them her full attention. This appeal, along with her natural charm, always attracted accolades. Of course, her poise and beauty enhanced the gowns

and costumes specifically designed for the Grapes. No one could help but direct their eye to Joyce when she was on stage. We will all miss her sparkling eyes and captivating smile."

Yes, we will miss Joyce, and extend to her family our heartfelt condolences.

Christine M. Wallace  
Ron Krug

### **Robert Burns Memorial Service**

*Legislative Grounds - East lawn (Kennedy Street)  
Sunday, July 25, 2010 at 2:00 pm*

The Winnipeg Robert Burns Club will hold their Annual Memorial Service and Celebration of the life and works of Robert Burns on Sunday, July 25, 2010 (the Sunday closest to July 21st which is the actual date of the 214th anniversary of his passing).

The service will consist of the laying of a wreath, eulogy, prayer and the playing of the lament by the Club Piper, Kirby McRae. This will be followed by readings from Burns' works, the singing of his songs and Scottish Country Dancing. All this in the old Scottish tradition. What better way to commemorate the life of Scotland's greatest poet - Robert Burns.

The washrooms and cafeteria in the Legislative Building are open until 4:00 pm. There is ample parking on the grounds, but limited on the street. Bring a lawn chair, mosquito spray, sunscreen, and an umbrella, and be prepared to enjoy the day. Bottled water will be made available, courtesy of the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club. You, our friends, are most heartily welcome to join us and take part in this celebration of Scotland's Bard. Also, feel free to bring your family and friends.

For more details, see the Winnipeg Burns Club web site at: [www.winnipegrobertburns.org](http://www.winnipegrobertburns.org) and/or contact:

Lawrence Cormack, President - 224-2291  
email: [rljcormack@shaw.ca](mailto:rljcormack@shaw.ca)

Colin Harris, Secretary - 269-0300  
email: [winpeg@winnipegrobertburns.org](mailto:winpeg@winnipegrobertburns.org)

## Folklorama

This year the Pavilion of Scotland will be open during Week Two of Folklorama – August 8-14. The Pavilion will again be located at Glenwood Community Centre, which is located at 27 Overton Street in St. Vital.

Volunteers will be needed for the RSCDS booth, which will be located in the quieter, air-conditioned gymnasium. The Scottish Country Dancers will also be leading participation dances each evening in the gym. Members are encouraged to join in the dances and illustrate the fun of Scottish Country Dancing.

If you are interested in volunteering at the booth, please contact Scott MacRae (885-7111) or Reg Curle (254-6697). Reg or Christine Wallace (478-1026) can be contacted regarding the participation dances.

## Heritage Days – Lower Fort Garry May 25-28, 2010

Through our relationship with Lower Fort Garry, this is the third year that we were invited to participate in this event. The first year was a 2 day event and last year we were there for 3 days. This year was to have been for 4 days but, unfortunately, thunderstorms on May 28 forced the school division to cancel their tour of the Fort.

Various school divisions bring out Grade 5 students to experience life at the Fort as it might have been in 1851. Attendance ranged from 200 to 400 students each of the 3 days we were there that week. Each student was given a passport which was stamped as they visited each of 25 stations located around the Fort.

This year we were located in the men's residence and we told the children that most of the settlers came from Scotland (many of them from the Orkneys). They were told how the people worked hard for long hours each day, and how tough life was as there were no modern conveniences as we have today. The settlers may have brought instruments, such as fiddles, mouth organs, whistles, concertinas, and maybe even bagpipes, with them when they left Scotland. At the end of a long hard week of work, they would love nothing better than to get together and make their own entertainment which would consist of singing and dancing to their much loved music of Scotland.

In the space of approximately 10 to 15 minutes, we then taught them a dance which they were all able to complete - many of them most enthusiastically!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people who made Heritage Days such a success:

Instructor:	Joyce Cormack	3 days
Music:	Christine Wallace	2 days
Dancers/Helpers:	Bob Poole	3 days
	Betty Poole	2 days
	Scott MacRae	2 days
	Wendy Land	1 day
	Janet Woodford	1 day
	Agnes Brydon	3 days

Unfortunately, thunderstorms on May 28 forced the school division to cancel their tour of the Fort.

On May 25, we attended to 197 children; on May 26, there were 266 went through our post and on May 27 there were 147, for a total of 610 Grade 5s.

The dance Joyce chose to entice the children was *The Virginia Reel* which proved to be a good one as the children seemed to know the tunes and appeared to enjoy the rhythm of it.

As the children are getting ready to get back on the buses and head for home, they are asked what they enjoyed the most. The surprising answer seemed to be – “the Scottish dancing” – from both boys and girls. What a great feeling to know that they really enjoyed themselves.

Again, many thanks to Joyce for your patience and handling of these groups. You got lots of praise from parents, chaperones, etc.

The Fort personnel thanked each and every one of us for our participation in this event.

Next year, we hope that more dancers will participate with us.

Agnes Brydon

## Dancing Holiday?

Ever think of including dancing in your holiday? Be sure to check the Inter-city Scot website for information on dancing events in other cities. The website can be accessed through a link on the Branch website under “Members”.

## **Out of Town Events:**

### **Waterloo, ON**

8-15 August, 2010

TAC Summer School

More details and forms at [www.tac-rscds.org](http://www.tac-rscds.org)

### **Washington State**

10 –12 September 2010

Fort Worden Workshop

Details and forms at

[www.rscds-seattle.org](http://www.rscds-seattle.org)

### **Kenosee, SK**

1-3 October 2010

Saskatchewan Branch annual workshop and ball

Details and forms at

[www.rscdssaskatchewan.org/](http://www.rscdssaskatchewan.org/)

### **Ottawa, ON**

1-3 October 2010

Ottawa Valley Dance Scottish Weekend

Details and forms at

[www.ottawadancescottish.org](http://www.ottawadancescottish.org)

### **Calgary AB**

15-16 October 2010

St Giles SCD Group

Ceilidh, Workshop and Ball

Teachers: Sharon Barker (Calgary), Fred DeMarse

(San Francisco, CA), Ferne Katzberg (Yorkton)

Music: Ron Krug and Ken Nattrass (Winnipeg)

See brochure on St Paul's notice board

## **Important Dates:**

**COM meetings:** August 28 and the first Wednesday of the month from October 2010 to May 2011.

**Next L&A:** Deadline for the August – September 2010 issue is **August 20, subject to change**. Starting in October, L&A deadlines will be the Friday following the monthly COM meeting.

Contributors are requested to send their submissions either in Word (.doc) or .pdf format, or typed directly into an email message. Other formats cause us difficulty.

**Please note** that on the advice of our web master, we are no longer including members' personal email addresses; if not included, phone numbers are available from the membership list.