

Light and Airy



Scottish Country Dancers of Winnipeg

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Volume 44, Number 5

February 2013

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From the Chair....

I hope you noticed that the January issue of the Light & Airy was headlined with our 50th Anniversary Logo, which was designed by Glen Colquhoun. Thank you, Glen, for all your time and effort in designing this logo. It looks great. We shall be using this throughout the Anniversary year.

Classes have resumed, and we had our first event of this our 50th Anniversary year, the Robert Burns Dinner and Dance. We were delighted to have Adam and Rena Laird join us, as well as former Branch members and families, and the SCD group from Kenora. You will read, elsewhere in this issue, a description of that evening but I would like to add my personal thanks to all the major participants and to all those, including the 50th Anniversary Advance Planning Committee, who planned this successful event, topped off by "Scotch Measure" who provided great music for the dances!

The CD and Book project continues to progress. The CD is ready for mastering, and the dances are being prepared for printing. The brochure for the Workshop is now on our website, and can be downloaded from there.

On February 1st, the “Advanced” class taught by Margaret Zadworny met. There were nine dancers in attendance, and all seemed to enjoy the class. The next class will take place on Friday, March 1st.

The next Class Social will be held on Tuesday, March 5, and hosted by the Technique class.

In the meantime - “Happy Dancing!”

*Sincerely,
Christine Wallace*

2012/13 Dance Season

Thursday January 10, 2013	Open House, 8:00 pm, Free
Week of January 14	Winter Term classes begin (Regular and Introductory)
Friday January 25	Burns Walk-Through, Silver Heights United Church Hall, 7:30 pm, \$2
Saturday January 26	Burns Dinner and Dance, Silver Heights United Church Hall
Friday March 1	Advanced Class
Tuesday March 5	Class Social (hosted by the Technique Class)
Saturday March 16	Ceilidh, Transcona Seniors Centre, 328 Whittier Ave. E, 7:30 pm, \$5
Thursday March 21	Last Introductory class of Winter Term
Saturday April 13	Wind-up Social (hosted by the COM and Teachers)
Week of April 22	Last Regular classes of Winter Term
Friday-Sunday May 17-19	50 th Anniversary Workshop, Dinner and Ball, and Tea Dance
Wednesday May 22	AGM

Please note: All dates are subject to change – please check the calendar each month. Socials are at St. Paul’s Church Hall, North Drive and Point Road, at 8:00 pm, with admission of \$10.00, unless otherwise noted.

From the Editor

February has provided many opportunities for various levels and kinds of dancing. In addition to the regular Social and Technique classes, there were Introductory classes on Thursday nights (which any Branch member can attend), the Advanced Class on February 1 (for those looking for a challenge), the Transcona Seniors classes on Thursday afternoons, and the opportunity for “old time” dancing at the St. Valentine’s Family Dance in Lorette on February 8. What a nice way to spend the winter months!

This issue includes information on more upcoming dancing events, such as the Technique Class Social (March 5) and the Ceilidh (March 16), as well as reports and pictures of recent events (Burns Dinner and Dance and the Family Dance in Lorette). For the history buffs, there is information on the RSCDS Archives online catalogue, events commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Kildonan Clearances, and the historical significance of Robert Burns (the text from Don Johnson’s Toast to the Immortal Memory).

Happy Dancing!

Heather Ferguson

Branch News

Library

The Branch Library has acquired a copy of the DVD of the Pageant and Ceilidh celebrating the Bicentennial of the Arrival of the Selkirk Settlers. The event was hosted by the Winnipeg Branch at Lower Fort Garry on September 7, 2012.

The DVD can be borrowed from the Branch Library. Contact Reg Curle for more information.

RSCDS Archives Online Catalogue

The online catalogue of the RSCDS Archives can now be accessed by all members. The Archives include over 2,000 items, including books of dances and music, books and articles relating to the history of Scottish Country Dancing, recorded music (on record, cassette and CD), videos and DVDs.

Access to the catalogue is as follows:

<http://www.rscds.org/about-us/the-rscds-archive-and-catalogue.html>.

Upcoming Events

Advanced Class

March 1, 2013

The Advanced Class meets on the first Friday of each month, at St. Paul's Church Hall, from 8:00- 10:00 pm. The next class is on March 1, 2013. The fee is \$5.00 per class. The teacher is Margaret Zadworny.

Dancers interested in this class should contact Margaret (204-667-0599 or mzad1@mymts.net) or Maureen Burnham (204-786-7767 or maureenburnham@shaw.ca).

Technique Class Social

March 5, 2013

The Technique Class will be hosting the next Class Social on Tuesday, March 5, at St. Pauls' Church Hall. Dancing will start at 8:00 pm. Admission is \$10.00.

The Dance Program for the Social is as follows:

**Technique Class Social
Dance Program**

The Dashing White Sergeant	32R3	Book 3 - 2
Burns Night	32J2	Boston Branch
The Bridge of Nairn	32S3	Book 13 – 11
Mary Brannigan Nixon	32R3	M. Nixon Mem.
Kendall's Hornpipe	32J2	Graded Bk 22
Orwell Lodge Strathspey	32S3	D. Jubilee Bk 5
Catch the Wind	32R3	Book 45 - 5
Scottish Reform	32J2	Book 3 – 1
St. John River	32S4	NB Book
The De'il Among the Tailors	32R3	Book 14 - 7

Crib notes for the dances are available on the Branch website.

Ceilidh

March 16, 2013

The Winnipeg Branch will be hosting a Ceilidh on Saturday, March 16, at the Transcona Retired Citizens Organization, located at 328 Whittier Avenue West in Transcona. Doors will open at 7:00 pm and dancing will start at 7:30. Admission is \$5.00.

Join us for an evening of social dancing to lively Celtic music, entertainment and refreshments. There will be simple dances for everyone to enjoy. For more information, contact Joyce Cormack at 204-224-2291.

**RSCDS Winnipeg Branch
50th Anniversary Workshop and Ball**

May 17-19, 2013

The brochure and application form for the 50th Anniversary Workshop and Ball are now available on the Winnipeg Branch website. The deadline for applications is May 3, 2013.

The teachers for the workshop will be Robin Lynch (Quadra Island, BC) and Simon Scott (Vancouver). The Workshop Musicians will be Ken Nattrass (accordion) and Ron Krug (piano). The band for the weekend will be our own Scotch Measure.

The schedule of events is as follows:

Friday	Ceilidh (7:30 pm)
Saturday	Classes – two levels (9:00 am) Lunch (12:00 Noon) Combined Class (12:45 pm) Dinner and Ball (5:30 pm)
Sunday	Brunch (11:30 am) Tea Dance (1:00 pm) Cake and Social Time (3:00 pm)

The Ceilidh and most of the classes will be held at Silver Heights United Church. The Dinner and Ball and Sunday activities will be at the 17 Wing Air Force Base.

The Committee is looking for donations for the Silent Auction and door prizes. Pictures of past Branch events are also needed for a PowerPoint presentation that will run continuously throughout the Saturday evening and Sunday events.

For further information, contact Jane Natrass (204-667-0814) or check the Branch website.

Event Reports

Robert Burns Dinner and Dance

January 26, 2013

The Robert Burns Dinner and Dance, one of the highlights of the New Year, was held at Silver Heights United Church on January 26, with almost eighty people attending. This was one of the first events planned for our 50th Anniversary. The grace was given by Heather Ferguson. Our Branch piper, Kirby McRae, piped in the haggis, which was carried by Ken Natrass. The *Address to A Haggis* was given by Rena Laird.

Quinton McNaught recited some Burns' poetry in his inimitable Ayrshire accent. This helped to unscramble a Burns' poem that was at each table, courtesy of our social convenor, Anne Morrison. Don Johnson proposed the "Immortal Memory", giving insight into the historical and social issues of the Burns era. Scotch Measure provided great spirited music for the dance program, which was briefed by Joyce Cormack and Christine Wallace. The event was attended by many former Branch members, family and friends plus our dancing friends from Kenora, Ontario. What a fantastic way to close out January!

Reg Curle



Rena Laird reciting the Address to A Haggis

Dancing in Lorette

February 8, 2013

On Friday, February 8th, a number of Branch members (Betty and Bob Poole, Donna Robinson, Heather Ferguson, and Paula Ferreira), three ladies from my senior's class as well as myself attended a family dance in Lorette, put on by the Reimer6.

We had no idea what to expect but, what we experienced was something quite unbelievable.

First of all, there were more children and teens than adults (perhaps 2/3 versus 1/3) and these young people were most enthusiastic about the dancing. Denise Reimer led us in various set dances which included (to name only a few) the *Virginia Reel* (a variation from the one that we know) as well as the *Circassian Circle* and *Riverside*, which she had learned at our ceilidh last November. We also did the *Schottische*, the *Heel Toe Polka* and the *Seven Step* (which I had learned at an old time dance many years ago and which has become one of my personal favourites). There were also polkas and waltzes, all danced to the lively and beautiful music of Reimer6.

It was quite a sight to see parents with babes in their arms, young children, teens and adults waltzing round the room. Just to see the different generations enjoying a night of dancing together was a joy in itself!

Joyce Cormack



Dancers of all ages at the Lorette Family Dance

Class Reports

Fort Garry Social Class

Your roving reporter has returned from warmer climes, refreshed and renewed, for another term of dancing. Thanks to my classmate, Barbara LeBow, for capably carrying my duties for the month of January.

Thanks to Peter McClure and his RSCDS Tokyo contacts, our class has the opportunity to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Tokyo Branch with dances and music devised in honour of that occasion.

Of special interest was the *Hana Strathspey*, roughly translated as “blossoms along the river”. It includes a new form of progression called the helix. Both the dance and the music were very refreshing, sort of Scottish Country Dance filtered through a Japanese cultural lens. Hopefully, we will see this one on a future social program. Also, we worked on a jig entitled *Bill Clement MBE*, written by John Wilkinson on the occasion of his award of the title in 2008. It is great to be challenged by dances new to RSCDS Winnipeg.

After our glorious cruise experience, the Giesbrechts are embarking on some home renovations. We are having two by fours installed in front of all our bathroom doors, so we can continue to stumble into the bathroom, like we did on the ship. The electrician will re-jig the wiring on all our light switches, so we will no longer know what switches turn on which lights. Moreover, we are having an industrial-strength vacuum attached to our toilets to get that gushing noise every time we flush.

My wife suggested we order deck chairs and a heavy duty fan for our Solarium, for those moments when we crave those sea breezes. Personally, I want that little Filipino chef to create those little sandwiches and dainties for my afternoon high tea. Our neighbours think we are still high on too many Bahama Mamas, but then, they never had that cruise experience!

John Giesbrecht

Technique Class

It's hard to believe we're already into February but one thing that helps in the cold weather is looking forward to the Tuesday night classes. For the first two weeks, we had exactly 24 dancers which worked out nicely for three sets. The last couple of weeks it's been 22 or 23, so pretty consistent numbers.

Peter taught the first class in January due to Christine not being well. It must have been a cold night, and maybe Peter had "C" (for cold) on his mind, as the three dances he taught us all started with C: *Collie Law* (which is a hill south of Edinburgh), *Cabrach* (a rural area which means "antler place") and *Collicher*. Nice dances to help us get back into the dancing frame of mind.

When Christine returned, we learned a few interesting dances. *Up and Down Ben Nevis* is a beautiful three-couple strathspey (do I sense a new favourite coming?) and *Whistling Wind* is a fun reel that has a Winnipeg connection. We also tried to dance *Flights of Fancy*. I don't know about the other sets but in the one I was in there was lots of flight, not much fancy but we had fun trying to get through it! We've been ending the evenings with well known fun dances such as the *Piper and the Penguin* and *Wild Geese Jig*.

For some reason, some of the members of our Tuesday night class felt the need to escape our winter here in Winnipeg. Don't understand that at all. Minus 45 with the wind chill isn't so bad, is it??? Ken and Jane are in Hawaii, Ron has left us for some time in Arizona and, at the time this was written, Scott should be in San Diego. Those poor souls don't know what they've been missing. As the month continues on, we look forward to our class social on Tuesday, March 5th. Hope to see you all there.

Sheila Careless

Introductory Class

Introduction to Scottish Country Dancing classes are held every Thursday at St. Paul's Church, from 8:00–10:00 pm. Branch members are welcome to attend and assist the new dancers - just remember to wear your name tag. Contact Maureen Burnham or visit the Branch website for more information.

Demonstration Team

Upcoming Demonstration Team performances:

March 7	Betel Home, Selkirk
April 6	Tartan Day at the Forks

Agnes Brydon

Here and There

Kildonan Clearances Bicentenary

The Timespan Museum and the community of Helmsdale in Scotland will be commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Kildonan Clearances with a full program of events throughout 2013, culminating in the Translocation Festival in August.

Many of the tenant farmers who were removed from their homes in the Kildonan Clearances made their way to the Red River area to start a new life of farming. Some of the earliest founders of the City of Winnipeg came from the Strath of Kildonan.

More information on these events can be found on the Timespan website (www.timespan.org.uk) or by contacting Jacquie Aitken, Project Manager of the Timespan Museum and Arts Centre (archive@timespan.org.uk).

Toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honoured and humbled to have been invited to propose the toast to the Immortal Memory of Scotland's great poet, Robert Burns. Perhaps I should add the word "intimidated" as well, for I speak as an amateur in the midst of experts, as a foolish tourist trying to describe and explain their homeland to a group of residents. So, with that disclaimer firmly in mind, and trusting in your forgiveness for any misspeaking I may do, let us turn our attention to the reason we have assembled here this evening.

There is no debating that Robert Burns is Scotland's national poet. In his comparatively brief span of life, 37 years in all, Burns produced an incredible volume of poems and songs that recorded, celebrated, and criticized the culture, experiences, religious practices and beliefs, and the rural life of his beloved homeland. He might have thought the title "national poet" a bit too august for himself, though he did wish to be called a Scotch bard, as he says in his poem "The Answer":

*E'en then, a wish (I mind its pow'r),
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast,
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake
Some usefu' plan, or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.*

By 1786, when he was 27, Burns did have a good sense that he was certainly on the way to fulfilling that wish, as he says in a letter to a friend: "I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas a Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birthday inserted among the wonderful events, in the Poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks.... and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth Worthy, and the eighth Wise Man, of the world."

If only he had known how extensively his birthday would come to be inserted in the calendars of Scots the world over. And I wonder if he would have been surprised, pleased even, at how precisely the rituals of observing his birth date would evolve, our celebration this evening being but one example, and a good example at that.

If he could observe the multitude of Burns nights around the world, and hear the variety of approaches taken by those proposing the toast to his memory, what would he think - indeed would he even recognize himself in some of them?

Since I tend to understand things historically, and when I am in the other end of this building, theologically, I thought that perhaps we might think a bit of Robert Burns in his historical context.

Burns was born in 1759, into a farming family, and he never lost his passion for the land, or his sympathy for those who make their living off of the land. He was sensitive to the vulnerability of the tenant farmers, who were subject to the whims of the landowner or local laird, and he saw a true nobility in the hardworking person. As he says in *A Man's a Man for A' That*, his great song of freedom:

*The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.*

Or in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, he paints a happy, domestic, rural life - a life of simple farm folk:

*From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"*

As one commentator says: "Never has the existence of the poor been invested with so much dignity." The lowly farm worker is depicted as the ideal Scot.

But he was also born at a time when society in Scotland, and indeed all of Europe, was undergoing a transition. His call for freedom and the emancipation of the downtrodden was echoed in many places in Scotland and beyond.

To put him into context, he was alive when the French Revolution broke out, alive at a time when Scotland was considered a great centre of the Enlightenment and of social progress. He was also alive when much of Scotland's life and culture were undergoing the pressures of being united with England. And that is significant for understanding his place as Scotland's greatest poet.

When Queen Elizabeth of England died in 1603, the English crown passed to King James VI of Scotland. He moved his court from Edinburgh to London and is remembered primarily as King James I of England, and the person behind the creation of the King James Bible. In 1707, the two kingdoms were united, the two parliaments were combined with, of course, the centre of power being in London. With that came pressure for the English language to be **the** language in Scotland, and for English culture to find its way into Scottish life.

As many in the elite circles of society, of government, and of religion moved closer to what might be called an English norm, the concept of "think in English, feel in Scots" became a widespread practice.

But Robert Burns stands directly in the way of that trend, that Anglicizing of Scottish culture and language. By writing in the Auld language, Burns provided and provides a rock, a foundation on which Scottish culture could stand, a foundation upon which the Scottish identity could build.

To put it simply, Burns was a complex man who, on the one hand, embraced the time-honoured values of hard work, fair play, caring for the land, and passion, we can't forget passion when we speak of Burns, yet he also was a product of the Enlightenment, of the changing of society, or the challenging of class and the rejection of oppression.

To put Burns once more into an historical context: he was born 5 years after the Rev. Robert Walker, the skating parson who was the subject of the famous painting by the same name, and the inspiration of one of our favourite strathspeys, the *Minister on the Loch*. To remind you of the painting, we have a dignified cleric, complete with top hat, skating gracefully on Duddingston Loch. He was a Church of Scotland minister, we call them Presbyterians, and I should add that we are meeting this evening in a church which is the successor to the Presbyterians in Canada - the same church that Burns was known to take the occasional swipe at.

At any rate, a poem was written about the subject of that painting and I want to share a few verses with you because it does reflect, I believe, the society in which Burns lived and which he in various ways reflected. A word of explanation first. The poet, Fred Pratt Green, an English Methodist, uses the term Episcopalian Sassenach - basically an English Anglican and he admits that at first, without research, he assumed that that was what the Rev. Walker was. He soon discovered that he had a Scots Presbyterian minister in the picture. The picture was in a Christmas Card, but that is by the way.

The middle verses are as follows:

*His elegance misled me.
White cravat, knee-breeches, fashionable hat -
Surely an Episcopalian Sassenach
Skating alone on Duddingston's wee loch
(Raeburn exalted it). Research and reverie
Have proved he wasn't that!
He skates on solid ice and I on thin.*

*I had forgotten, bless my English soul,
Auld Reekie's grand Athenian hour,
When the arts flourished and the Kirk unfroze,
And Robert Walker, Don and Minister,
Jumped his three hats without a fall
And ended up with a perfect "Dutchman's Roll."
He skates on solid ice and I on thin.*

*Had they no cares in that Athenian Age?
I juggle with familiar dates
And catch my breath. In spite of Robespierres,
And endless, tough Napoleonic wars.
Spectators gather on the braes. The ice is firm.
The men put on their skates.
They skate on solid ice and we on thin.*

We owe a great debt of gratitude for the life and wisdom and joy of Robert Burns, who in his own way chronicled a changing society and mobilized the Scots language for a new vision of how life could truly be. So the last word goes to him.

*That Man to Man the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.*

Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask you to be upstanding and raise your glasses to "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns."

The Rev. Don Johnson

This Toast to the Immortal Memory was given by the Rev. Don Johnson at the RSCDS Winnipeg Branch Burns Dinner on January 26, 2013.



*The Rev. Don Johnson delivering the Toast
to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns*

Out of Town Events

Halifax, NS

April 13-14, 2013

RSCDS Nova Scotia Branch

Halifax Spring Workshop

Teachers: Alicia Manson (Oakville, ON) and Maggie Keppie (Kentville, NS)

Contact: Lydia Hedge (902-827-2033 or lydiahedge@accesswave.ca)

Vancouver, WA

May 3-5, 2013

RSCDS Southwest Washington State Branch

Youth Weekend

Ceilidh, classes, dinner and dance

Teachers: Linda Mae Dennis and Jim Maiolo

Music: Lisa Scott, Leslie Hirsch, Linda Danielson

Contact: Kathleen Mintz (kzmintz@yahoo.com) or Susan Shaw (bcjs.susanshaw@gmail.com).

Plymouth, MA

July 12-20, 2013

RSCDS Boston Branch

Pinewoods Camp

Dance and music classes, evening dances

Session I: July 12-15 Session II: July 15-20

Contact: Kendra Eshleman (617-987-0198 or scdPinewoods2013@gmail.com)

Sackville, NB

July 28-August 4, 2013

TAC Summer School

Teachers: Elaine Brunken, Linda Henderson, Jimmie Hill, Antoine Rousseau, Bill Zobel

Musicians: Muriel Johnstone (Director), Jim Lindsay, Keith Smith, Ian Robertson, Judi Nicholson, Angela Young

Contact: www.tac-rscds.org

Prague, Czech Republic

August 23 – September 1, 2013

Dance Scottish Week in Prague

Teacher: Ron Wallace

Music: Muriel Johnstone

Dance classes and sightseeing in Prague

Contact: dvorana@dvorana.cz or www.dvorana.cz

Be sure to check the Inter-City Scot website for more information on dancing events in other cities (there is a link on the Winnipeg Branch website).

Important Dates

COM meetings: COM meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month from October to May. Exceptions are Tuesday, November 6, 2012 and Thursday, January 10, 2013.

Next L&A: Deadline for the March 2013 issue is **March 8, 2013**.

Members are encouraged to submit articles, pictures or information of interest to Branch members.

This and the past 11 issues of the *Light and Airy* are posted on the Branch website (rscdswinnipeg.ca).