

Light and Airy



Scottish Country Dancers of Winnipeg

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A Word from the Chair....

Welcome friends to another year of wonderful Scottish Country dancing. Autumn in all its glory is now upon us, and in this season, as we give thanks for the harvest and for family and friends and for all the good things around us that enrich our lives, I would hope you might include the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and our Winnipeg Branch in that list of good things.

We are indeed fortunate to be able to have our own Branch here in Winnipeg. Sometimes we may take that fact for granted, but if you think about it, we are very fortunate indeed that the joy and challenge of this unique form of dancing is so readily available to us. Throughout the year we are encouraged by our skillful and knowledgeable teachers who lead us through the rich variety of dances old and new, we are thrilled by the gift of live music when our band Scotch Measure plays, and we are certainly blessed by the company and friendship and good humour of our fellow dancers. Thanks to all of you, Scottish Country dancing is truly a delightful and enjoyable experience.

Our dance season is now well underway. In addition to our regular classes I encourage you to take note of (and attend, of course) the Pumpkin Social on October 25th, the Guy Fawkes Ceilidh on November 7th, the John Drewry dance evening on November 21st and our St Andrew's Social on November 25th.

Finally I wish to extend a warm welcome to our new dancers in the Basic class, as well as a welcome back to those who were in the Basic class last year. We are delighted that you have decided to try Scottish Country dancing, and speaking from my own experience, this style of dancing, with its music, history, grace and intricate form, is certainly worth the investing of your time and energy. I wish you well as you discover for yourself the joy of Scottish Country dancing.

Don Johnson

2014/15 Dance Season

Thursday, September 4	Welcome Dance/Open House – No charge 8:00 pm **St. Paul's 830 North Drive
Week of September 8	Fall Term Regular classes begin
Thursday, September 11	Fall Term Basic classes begin
Friday, November 7	Guy Fawkes Ceilidh, 7 pm, \$5. at the door, Silver Heights
Friday, November 21	John Drewry Social
Tuesday, November 25	St. Andrew's Social (hosted by the Technique Class)**At St. Paul's Church 830 North Drive
Week of December 8	Last Regular classes of Fall Term
Sunday, December 28	Betwixt & Between Social – Afternoon Tea Dance
Week of January 12, 2015	Winter Term Regular classes begin
Saturday January 24	Burns Dinner and Dance
Monday, March 2	Spring Social (hosted by the Fort Garry Class)
Wednesday, April 1	Wind-Up Social (hosted by the COM and Teachers)
Week of April 13	Last Regular classes of Winter Term
Friday-Sunday May 1-3	Workshop Weekend

Please note: All dates are subject to change – please check the calendar each month. Socials are at **Silver Heights United Church - 199 Garrioch**, at 8:00 pm, with admission of \$10.00, unless otherwise noted.

From the Editor...

I would love to say that I hope you're sitting and enjoying reading the latest Light & Airy. However, with the wonderful weather we've been having, I hope you get to spend a lot of time outdoors! Now if we could only find a way to make this last for another month or so!

It's good to get back into the weekly classes and catch up with everyone. There sure have been a lot of travelers in the branch. I hope everyone had a wonderful time wherever they went.

Just a reminder that I need a Light & Airy rep from each class. I don't have a report from any of the classes.

As for the Tuesday class, our numbers have been small with all of the people bitten by the travel bug. We have been averaging 5 to 7 couples. Maureen has been taking us through the new book. There are some very interesting dances in that book. I particularly enjoyed learning Rye Twist, a 5 couple dance. I'm looking forward to learning more and of course the social in November.

Happy dancing!

Sheila Careless

❖ Branch News

Fall Class Schedule – Registration forms can be found on our website

Mondays – Fort Garry Social Class

Term 1: Christine Wallace & David Kroeker

Term 2: Joyce Cormack

Tuesdays – Technique

Term 1: Maureen Burnham

Term 2: Margaret Zadworny

Thursdays – Basic Class

Term 1 & 2: Cheryl Durnin

❖ Upcoming Events

PUMPKIN

CEILIDH



Saturday October 25, 2014

7:30 pm

At St. Paul's Anglican Church Hall

Point Rd. & North Drive

An evening of fun for the whole family

Featuring Scottish Country & Ceilidh Dancing

Old Time Dancing

& Entertainment

Silver Collection at the door

Light refreshments will be served

For information contact

Cheryl Durnin at 204-253-4213

Proceeds from this evening to ALS Brummitt Feasby House

**Winnipeg's Scottish Country
Dancers are having a**

Guy Fawkes Day

Ceilidh!

Join us for an evening of social dancing to lively Celtic music, entertainment and refreshments

Simple dances for everyone to enjoy!

Friday, November 7, 2014 -- doors open at 7:00 p.m.

Silver Heights United Church

199 Garrioch Ave. (Near Ness and Mt. Royal Rd.)

Tickets \$5.00 at the door

More information available at www.rscdswinnipeg.ca

Report of the Demonstration Team

Completed demos

Aug. 23/14 Midwinter Heritage Museum
Multicultural/Centennial Celebrations In East Braintree

Aug. 26/14 Lindenwood Terrace

Sept. 10/14 Boni-Vital

Upcoming demonstrations:

Oct. 29/14 Prime – Deer Lodge St. James

June 20, 2015 Highland Games, Selkirk

❖ *Here and There...*



John Drewry

John was born in England in 1923, trained as a chemist, and after working in northwest England, took an academic appointment at Aberdeen University in 1965. As happened in many academic departments in the 1960s, when the importance of computers was beginning to emerge, the Department decided that they needed a computer specialist, and John drew the assignment. That led eventually to a transfer to the computing centre, where he completed his academic career. He died in June of 2014, just weeks short of his 91st birthday.

He began Scottish dancing in the 1950s. At that time, the RSCDS was mainly interested in dances from old manuscripts, and new choreography was not encouraged. However, the Society had started something that it could not stop. There were members, particularly among the younger dancers, who wanted to bring Scottish country dancing out of the “museum”, and revive it as a living tradition. Encouraged by such pioneers as Hugh Foss, John was part of that movement, and emerged as one of the most imaginative, and (probably) the most prolific, of the composers of new dances.

John liked dances that “flow”, i.e., in which the various figures link smoothly. He also liked dances with lots of movement for everyone, and lots of interaction among the dancers; thus, the regular occurrence of the word “(mean)while” in Drewry dance instructions, as in: “the first couple [in second place] cross, then first woman casts up one place and first man casts off one place, while the second and third couples set, then dance petronella turns to form a line up and down the centre of the dance”. This kind of thing can seem complicated at first, but one almost always finds that the different movements fit together nicely.

We first met John while attending International Scottish Country Dance Schools in Halifax during the 1980s. We were familiar with his name through such already popular dances as Bratach Bana, The Bees of Maggiecknockater, and The Duchess Tree. The chance

of attending classes given by such an accomplished dance composer was one of the things that attracted several Branch members to those summer workshops at that time.

Our acquaintance developed in 1991, when we had the opportunity to attend the St Andrew's Summer School. Lynn spoke to John and reminded him of having met in Halifax. That led to an invitation to his room for after dinner coffee (which he made himself, as he regarded the coffee in the dining hall as undrinkable), and the gift of one of his famous carrot cakes – like what we would call a fruit cake. That was a substantial item, and rather complicated our packing for the return journey, but could not possibly be left behind. Like a fruit cake, it kept well, and we shared it at an evening of Drewry dances after coming home.

We suggested that he be invited to teach at our workshop, and he made his first visit to Winnipeg in March of 1992. He brought with him two new dances, The Golden Boy, which (we think) he named following a tour of Winnipeg given him by Gerry and Bert Mayes, and Whiteshell Park. He met Rena and Adam Laird, and used tunes by Adam for both these dances. During that weekend, he also composed on Saturday night, and premiered on Sunday morning, The Kenora Reel, in honour of the newly active Kenora Scottish country dance group. These dances appeared in the first two Bankhead books. During that visit, he also tried to teach our dog, Meg, to dance the pousette.

A second visit to Winnipeg in 1997 led to more dances with local connections: The Cairn of Sorrow, Coats' Ceilidh Calypso, St Boniface, and The Snow Butterfly all appeared in The (first) Greenburn Book.

The popularity of his dances has generated many invitations for John to teach at workshops and on holiday dance tours; hence, dances, or whole collections of dances, associated with such places as Australia, Japan, Turkey, and the Galapagos Islands.

He was fond of word play: his strathspey Ysobel, dedicated to one of the co-founders, Mrs Stewart, was submitted for consideration as one of the RSCDS Golden Jubilee dances. The committee wanted a reel, modified the dance and published it as Mrs Stewart of Fasnacloch. Subsequently, John published the original, and hoped that dancers would like to know Mrs Stewart as she was before being "interfered with by the committee". The dedications and notes attached to his dances contain many other examples.

He liked little jokes, e.g., the introduction of the "pas de chien" in the dance The Dumfries Doglet, dedicated to the dog of a fellow teacher.

He always had an eye for interesting place names, e.g., Maggieknockater (already mentioned) and Baldyquash. He was very fond of the Scottish countryside, and the beauties of nature generally. For example, his two Deeside books celebrate various features of the course of the river Dee, and a later dance, The Harvest Moon, got its title after he watched the rise of a full moon over the Spey valley on a clear late summer evening.

His fondness for landscape was complemented by his skill as a photographer, and we have a couple of lovely prints of his work. Similarly, his skill as a dance composer was complemented by interest in, and a wide knowledge of, Scottish dance music, both traditional and contemporary. He even brought these two interests together, by creating a video tape in which a series of his scenic photographs was accompanied by a musical track, in which the music was chosen for an association with the scenes in the pictures. This was years before digital cameras with "movie" features, and DVDs. Another interest was the growing of orchids, and when he discovered that Lynn was also interested, he made her a gift of a fine specimen during one of his visits.

Many people know of him only through his dances. Some are complex, and take a lot of concentration, not to mention good dancing skills, to master. People who like things simple, or those who disapprove of new choreography, seem to think of him only in connection with his more difficult dances, which they sometimes refer to as "dreary Drewrys". That is quite unfair, as many of his dances involve only the most basic movements; for example, both the Golden Boy and Baldyquash. One of his innovations is the rondel, probably the simplest of the modern strathspey progressions. It was introduced in his dance The Silver Tassie, now a standard on Burns supper programmes. In our experience, John made dances not to please himself, but to please others, and he was at his happiest when seeing others enjoying his dances. He also had the greatest respect for the good traditional dances; we've heard him say that The Montgomeries' Rant was one of his favourites.

A rather quiet and retiring person, John would sometimes surprise you with a wry remark or comment regarding some of the traditions, the long held views, and personalities within the RSCDS

community. Always good company, he enjoyed a bit of gossip, especially if it had a funny side to it – another facet of his fondness for word play and little jokes. We last saw him at the International School in Halifax in 2004, where he taught a special class featuring his recent dances. He was a kind and generous friend, and he is missed.

Peter & Lynn McClure

Note from Headquarters:

Headquarters has decided to postpone the vote regarding the re-structure until November 2014.

Scottish Country Dance Ghillies and pumps

www.avriel.com

Your one stop shoe shop for all your dancing needs. H11's and H splits are on sale now.

Scottish Screen archive of the Nat'l Library of Scotland

<http://ssa.nls.uk/film> (Note that there is no "www" in the url.)

A huge archive of historical videos on all things Scottish. Some, but not all, can be viewed on your screen.

To see a particular film, you add a number to the url above. For a general film about Scottish dancing, add /2224 to the above; I think this is something some of us have seen before.

To see Rakes of Glasgow, add /0313.

To see The River Cree, add /0850.

And for a short look at The Duke of Perth, add /3270.

This also shows a really nice view of a formal ball "back in the day". Note the speed of the music!

There may be other SCD clips as well, but it will take some searching to find them. There are also SCD references, e.g., Mrs MacLeod, for which the video is apparently not available on screen.

❖ **Out of Town Events**

Medicine Hat, Alberta – 39th Annual Workshop, Banquet & Ball

October 24 to 26, 2014

RSCDS Medicine Hat Branch

Medicine Hat Lodge, Medicine Hat AB

Teachers: Fred DeMarse from Alameda, CA & Alan

Thwigg from Mountain View, CA

Music: Ron Krug, Ken Natrass, Dennis Orr from

Seven Persons, AB

Contact: rscdsmh@gmail.com

Kingston, ON – 48th Annual Weekend Workshop & Ball

Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 2014

RSCDS Kingston

Frontenac Secondary School, Kingston ON

Teachers; Elaine Brunken (Laurel MD), Holly Boyd

(Montreal QU), Tony Szeto (Toronto ON)

Music: Scotch Mist

Contact: Barbara Kisilevsky. 613-547-4931.

registrar@rscdskingston.org

Annual Aloha Winter Weekend

February 13-15, 2015

RSCDS Hawaii

Teacher: Linda Henderson

Music: Humuhumunukunukuapua'a & *Strathspey*

Society Band

www.rscdsHawaii.org

❖ **Important Dates**

COM meetings: COM meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month from October to May.

Next L&A: Deadline for the November issue will be **November 8, 2014.**

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

Please send submissions for the *Light and Airy* to Sheila Careless at careless@mymts.net

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

