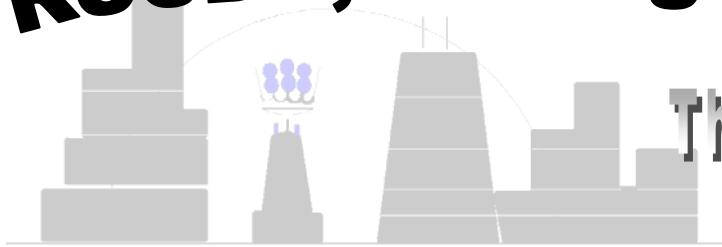


RSCDS, Chicago Branch



The Blethers

Greg Canfield, Chair

April 2007

Sue McKinnell, Editor

<http://rscds-chicago.org>

2007 Annual General Meeting: This is official notice, pursuant to the Constitution and by-laws of the Chicago Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 6. The meeting will be held in the parish hall at St. Josaphat's Church, Belden and Southport, Chicago, Illinois, starting at 6:00 p.m. The main item on the agenda will be the election of a new Committee of Management. You must be a member of the Chicago Branch to vote at the meeting (but others interested in the Branch are invited to attend). If you are interested in serving on the COM, please contact a member of the COM and let them know. There will be dancing after the meeting.

Weekend Workshop 2007: The Branch returns to Beloit College for the annual Weekend Workshop this year June 8-10. Elaine Brunken is the teacher and the musicians are Hanneke Cassel and Cali McKasson. The Branch website contains a registration form, dance programs, and information about Beloit College. You may also email chicagoscd@gmail.com for more information. Crib sheets for the programs will be available on the website soon. The programs for the weekend are:

Friday Night Welcome Dance		
Hello Neighbor	32J3	Chicago 25 th (Jensen)
John of Bon Accord	32R3	33 #5 (Goldring)
Anna Holden's Strathspey	32S3 (6X)	42 #2 (Drewry)
The Laird of Milton's Daughter	32J3	22 #10
The Clansman	32R2	32 #8 (Haynes)
The Sauchie Haugh	32S3	Leaflet #12 (Emmerson)
Lucy's Fancy	32R3	Leaflet (Whitehorne)
Interval		
Whistler's Jig	32J2	Leaflet (Tague)
Delvine Side	32S3	2 #9
Bratach Bana	32R3	Bon Accord (Drewry)
The Happy Meeting	32J2 (6X)	29 #9
Many Happy Returns	32S3	Slip Knot Collection (Briscoe)
Mrs McLeod	32R3	6 #11

Saturday Ball		
Kendall's Hornpipe	32J2	Graded #22
Royal Wedding Strathspey	32S3	5 SCD for 1982 (MacKinnon)
Davy Nick Nack	32H3	Glasgow Assembly (Campbell)
Cranberry Tart	32J3	7 Year Itch (Glasspool)
Gang the Same Gate	32S3	36 #4 (Levy)
Flowers of Edinburgh	32R3	1 #6
Interval		
The Rover's Rant	32J3	12 More Social Dances (Goldring)
Reel to Reel	32R3	Leaflet (McKinnell)
The Braes of Breadalbane	32S3	21 #7
The Chequered Court	32J3	42 #3 (Brown)
The Lammermuir Hills	32S2 (6X)	Leaflet (Goldring)
Lady Susan Stewart's Reel	32R3	5 #9
Interval		
The Jubilee Jig	32J3	Leaflet #19
The Rose of the North	32S3	Leeds Silver (Goldring)
The Last of the Lairds	32J3	22 #5 (Thurston)
John McAlpin	32S3	Galloway (Foss)
Ayr Promenade (variant)	32J3	24 Graded & Social (Goldring)
Highland Rambler	40R3	Leeds Silver (Goldring)

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2007 Highland Games: This year's Highland Games are Friday, June 15th and Saturday, June 16th at the Oakbrook Polo Grounds, 31st and York Streets in Oakbrook, IL. On Saturday the Branch will host a tent for disseminating dance information and the demo team will perform. Volunteers for manning the tent are always needed and welcome!

Letter on Tartan Day: The following letter was sent to our Branch April 6, 2007:

I am proud to congratulate the Scottish community and the Illinois Saint Andrew Society as Scots celebrate Tartan Day - the Day of Scottish Independence.

Independence was affirmed on this day on 1320, establishing Scotland as a nation and the Scots as a people. Scotland was free to make decisions about its future while its people were free to contribute to their country and to the world.

In Chicagoland, the Scottish community is an important part of our history, contributing to our social, cultural and economic life. Our Scottish friends and neighbors make this a better place to live, work and raise our families.

We join Scots in celebrating the Day of Independence of their nation of heritage.

Sincerely,
Maria Pappas
Cook Country Treasurer

2008 New Year's Ball: Next year's New Years Ball includes a rare treat. We will have Laura Risk and Nicholas Williams back as our musicians. Anyone who did not attend the 2006 weekend workshop and missed hearing them play should not miss this opportunity! The Ball is scheduled for January 12, 2008. Reserve the date and watch the website for more information.

Other Midwest Dancing: Other events around the Midwest to catch your interest are:

- Central Iowa Spring Ball, May 12th, Ames, IA
- 10th Annual Highland Mist Ball and Workshop Weekend, June 22-24, St Louis, MO

Wisconsin Teacher Certification courses: The John Muir Branch (Wisconsin) of the RSCDS is organizing a set of courses and examinations for RSCDS Teacher Certificates. The RSCDS revised the certification process in 2004. Under the new certification procedure, Units 2 and 3 for Teaching Certificate part I and Unit 5 for Teaching Certificate part II require attendance at classes and examination by qualified examiners. A branch can host classes and examinations if six or more teacher candidates register and attend. Candidates for both parts of the teaching certificate can attend the same classes and exam sessions. In order to make the process more accessible and affordable, the John Muir Branch would like to host this process in central Wisconsin. Please contact Lynn Litterer for more information: Lynn Litterer, 1313 Crowley Ave. #1, Madison, WI 53704, 608-249-9795, litte001@umn.edu

Why Do You Like to Dance? You may know why you like to dance. You may enjoy the movement, the music, the social aspects, or maybe you just dance to dance! But you may not know how far back your interest in dance really goes... For example, did you know that humans may have been able to dance before we were able to talk or even think in modern terms? This is just one of the premises of David Wilson's new book, *Evolution for Everyone*. According to Wilson, scientists are beginning to believe that our enjoyment of dance "emanated from parts of the brain that existed before our capacity for language even evolved." Wilson states that the feeling of "harmony induced by dancing is so visceral, it must have a genetic basis." This isn't to suggest that if your parents like to dance, you will like dancing. Rather, Wilson suggests that our earliest hominid ancestors may have passed down a "dance enjoyment" gene to us. Do you think your enjoyment of dance could go back that far...?
- Carlyn Bromann

What My Scottish Heritage Means to Me by James Mungall: Since I can remember: I have worn a kilt, attended Highland games, listened to bagpipes, and pined over basket hilted broadswords. I was raised around a culture dedicated to a Scotland I had never seen, but loved all the same. I grew into a secondary culture that was foreign to most of my peers, to whom it had to be explained numerous times, "a kilt is not a skirt." And when they would inevitably ask me, why I did these things, my answer has always been the same, "Because I'm Scottish."

When I was seven years old, I became involved in the Scottish Country Dance group sponsored by the Caledonian Society of Baton Rouge. For about the next three and a half years, I was active in public and private dance demonstrations at such events as: Robert Burns suppers, Celtic Nations festivals, International Heritage

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festivals, and Highland games, among others. Soon after that time however, I had left the Scottish dance group and even ceased to attend Scottish and Celtic functions. I fell into a state of what I consider now, to be a rebellion against my heritage. I no longer owned any kilt that fit me, and even said that I would not wear one again. I wanted to be like my peers, I wanted to be a cookie-cutter product of American pop culture. That product did not include room for being actively Scottish. It was no longer cool to wear a kilt. Thus, for a time, I fell out of the habit of attending Scottish events, dancing Scottish dances, attempting Scottish games, and enjoying Scottish music.

Over time, however, the acquired apprehension slowly began to subside. During my first year of college, my father asked me to come to a Burns Night Supper, and, for some reason, I desperately wanted to go, but I refused to go without a kilt. So for Christmas, my grandmother took in one of my father's kilts and it was gifted to me. It felt right to have a kilt on again. It felt as though something fell into place that had long been removed. I attended the Burns Supper, and slowly, my journey back into the fold of the American-Scottish culture had begun.

There were intermediate steps back into the culture that was so familiar in my youth: I began learning Scottish and Celtic instruments such as the Bodhran and penny whistle, attending Scottish Highland games, but none was so great a step to me as returning to the Scottish Country Dance group. As active membership in that during my youth was the peak of my involvement in the Scottish culture, I feel as though I am slowly gaining back what I had foolishly thought to forsake. It surprised me, how quickly I remembered every dance step, and could execute it as I could when I was younger. But it frustrated me how I'd forgotten all of the dances. That's the way it feels entering back into the culture of my fathers. Much of it comes so natural, as if it'd be imbedded in me forever, but I've forgotten so much else that I have to relearn. But I am relearning the dances, remembering how to properly put on flashes and remembering to wear a kilt pin at all. I recall even forgetting to wear a sporran all together, and when, after being reminded to wear one, my frustration with the proper position that it should be worn.

Now it's fun to tell my peers that I own a kilt, one that I actually wear. I still get the reactions I got in grade school sometimes: giggles, laughter, raised eyebrows. But I understand something now that I didn't before. My heritage is a part of who I am, whether I choose to acknowledge it or not. The kilt is a tradition of my heritage, the dancing is a tradition of my heritage, the pipes, the tartans, the stories, the games, they're all traditions of my heritage. Each culture has its own traditions, and some people know how their traditions got started, and others do not. It is, however, inherent in them-traditions, that one finds his or her own identity. I have found mine, in part, in kilts, dances, bagpipes, basket hilts, and the Saint Andrew's cross. My Scottish heritage, to me, is identity. It is part of being of a people who are like me, who share something with me that others don't. It is about being something different and special, but being something different and special together.

Scotland is a land I've never seen, but one to which I owe an allegiance, one that I love. Scotland may always be a far away place, although one day, I hope to see it. However, Scotland is always present in the traditions: the kilt, the tartan, and the pipes. Scotland is also more present in the people of Scotland, her descendants, of which I am one.

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Act of Union 1707: The Union of the Parliaments of England and Scotland took effect on 1st May, 1707, completing the union of the two kingdoms. Despite the dire domestic situation in the late 17th century, there was still time for dancing, and comings and goings between London and Edinburgh - lots of the Scottish titled high heid yins had abodes in London and Scotland, due to Kings not wanting to return to visit the colder parts of North Britain. The travellers probably brought Playfords dancing manual back with them to Edinburgh in their pockets. Here's a potted version of the history of the Union:

* There were a number of poor harvests in Scotland in the 1690s and Scotland's economic position was then drastically worsened by the ill-fated Darien Scheme to create a Scottish colony in Panama. Scotland lost 25% of its liquid assets. The Act of Union undertook to pay 400,000 pounds in compensation to those who had incurred these losses. This was of course blatant bribery as the people who were to benefit from this compensation were amongst those who voted in favour of the Union.

* Scotland relied on 50% of its exports going to England. In an act of blackmail in 1705, the English Parliament closed their market to Scottish cattle, coal and linen and declared that all Scots would be treated as aliens. It showed the vulnerability of Scotland to a trade war. In addition, Scotland was excluded from England's colonial territories - indeed early moves towards a union of the parliaments stumbled in England as they were reluctant to allow open access. But the Act of Union in 1707 created the greatest free trade area in the world at that time.

A commission representing the two bodies met and thrashed out the details. The Scots lost the argument for a federal arrangement but did manage to secure the continuation of the Scottish legal system, education and church. These were important elements in allowing the country to continue to regard itself as a separate entity.

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The privileges of the Scottish royal burghs were also to be maintained. Debates in the Scottish Parliament were heated and lengthy while the crowds in the streets burnt copies of the treaty and threw stones at the Parliament windows. A mob held the city of Glasgow for a month. But on January 16, 1707, the Treaty of Union was passed by 110 votes to 67 (with more than a suspicion that some of the poorer Members of Parliament had been bribed - though this was nothing new for those days). The Treaty was passed in Westminster without opposition and the Scottish Parliament met for the last time on 25 March 1707. - Fiona Grant from the Strathspey mailing list

Interesting dance "diversions": When the dance "New Scotland Strathspey" was popular (late 70's I think) I saw a very funny Ceilidh act at Pinewoods Week. In the intimate wood building near the lake eight young dancers came out to dance the "Nude Scotland Strathspey". They were all attired in a white towel and performed the dance beautifully. On the final chord all the lights in the place went out leaving everyone in total darkness. When, after a moment, the lights came on again, there were only eight white towels left on the floor.
- Simon Scott of Vancouver

Hugh Thurston's passing: Hugh Thurston, teacher, dance deviser, dance historian, mathematician, and historian of astronomy, died in Surrey, British Columbia, on October 29, 2006, just six weeks after Nina, his wife of many years. After graduating from Cambridge University, he lived in Bristol and in Boston before moving to Vancouver in the late 1950s. Hugh Thurston was the deviser of Schiehallion reels. He called them reels of eight; however, they took on the name "Schiehallion" from the dance that he wrote them for of the same name. The name Schiehallion has stuck with them rather than reel of eight.

Jackie Johnstone's passing: Jackie Johnstone died February 25, 2007. One of his dances was Miss Gibson's Reel. He was born in Lochmaben 84 years ago in January. [He liked to say that he and the RSCDS were born in the same year.] He started dancing at a very young age, and only recently had to give it up due to a knee injury. He was a Life Member of the RSCDS, a long-term member and supporter of the Dumfries Branch, an ex-member of the International Demonstration Team and a champion Highland Dancer. He, along with John Drewry, taught for many years at the Morland Scottish Country Dance Week and he was a frequent guest teacher at Manchester, Woburn Abbey, California, and Germany. He also regularly ran summer dances at Steel Avenue, and his annual December dance; the profits from both were donated to local charities. The item below came about when John Drewry and Jackie Johnstone were both in the year of their 80th birthdays.

A Star is Born from the Glasgow RSCDS Bulletin-issue 81:

Readers may be interested to learn that a previously unnamed star in the Gemini Constellation has now been officially named "Jackie Johnstone and John Drewry". This came about thanks to Colin and Betsy Maxwell from Eaglesfield, Lockerbie, who, as members of the Dumfries Branch, wished to "honour" Jackie Johnstone and John Drewry for having taught the Morland Scottish Country Dance Week for the past fifteen years. They discovered, through the internet website, "Star Foundation, California, USA", that you could name an unnamed star, which is known to exist, but has no name. As both Jackie and John are named, it is very appropriate that an unnamed star within the Gemini Constellation should have been chosen. In order to celebrate the event, regular attendees, Dulcie and Paul Bond, devised a Strathspey called "The Double Eighty" and Chris Stewart composed the music.

- Sue Petyt from the Strathspey mailing list

Dance animations available on-line: Jim Smith, a member of Gleneagles SCDC in North Vancouver, BC, has been working to develop SCD animations since shortly after starting to learn SCD a few years ago as a logical improvement on printed dance directions in the computer age. Sample animations may be downloaded from <http://members.shaw.ca/dancimation/scd.html>

The Reel on-line: Issues of the newsletter of the London Branch are available on-line at <http://www.rscdslondon.org.uk/html/archive.html> There are some issues from the archives as far back as 1951!

David Niven meets Scottish Country Dancing: The next night was the Caledonian Ball held at Grosvenor House and another splendid spectacle awaited us. Scots from all over the world were present in full regalia and the *pièce de résistance* was always the set reels. The huge ballroom was cleared, and in the middle the Duke of Atholl's private sixteensome took up position, then around it were placed the eightsomes of the six Highland regiments: the Black Watch, ourselves, the Gordons, the Camerons, the Seaforths, and the Argylls.

Trubshawe and I with, luckily, two very special friends, Keith Swettenham and Michael Bell, were the four subalterns selected by Teller-Smollett to represent the Highland Light Infantry. The four girls we were to partner wore the sashes of their clans and had been carefully selected by the Ball Committee for their territorial

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connections with the regiment and not, we noticed, with some alarm, for their good looks. However, we had just arrived from a riotous dinner in a private room at the Mayfair Hotel, which Brian Franks had arranged, so we were not too unnerved when introduced to these horse-faced partners from faraway glens. Also, the dinner party was there to cheer us on, headed by Margie MacDougall, Celia Tower, David Kelburn, Anthony Pleydell-Bouverie and Brian Franks.

"Clachie" Chisholm, the pipe major, had been polishing up our dancing for days before the big night, so, all in all, we were quietly confident of holding up the good name of the regiment in front of hundreds of pairs of critical eyes.

Now, in an eightsome reel, it doesn't matter how well the individuals dance the steps if the whole eightsome fails to stay in its allotted position.

The unknown girls were expert dancers, and it was the dawning look of horror on their faces that alerted me to a very nasty situation: Somehow our entire eightsome, performing perhaps with too much verve and abandon, had started to creep slowly down the ballroom floor toward the Gordons. A crash was imminent. The Gordons turned rather nasty, and hissed oaths came our way. In a body we recoiled and began traveling inexorably in the direction of the Camerons, who tried to avoid us and got into a really horrible mix-up with the Seaforths. Having started the rot and cleared a large portion of the floor for our own use, our eightsome settled down beautifully and never moved again. The other eightsoles were left cannoning into each other and generally behaving like goods trains at Clapham Junction gone mad, ricocheting off the Duke of Atholl's sixteensome in the center. Trubshawe observed the Argylls trying to ignore a couple from the Black Watch, who were now dancing dazedly in their midst, and summed up things: "Bit of a f—k-up at the other end of the room, old man."

- from *The Moon's a Balloon*

A Rare Breed of Holiday: Worried that your sprightly spaniel or lively labrador will be bored rigid in kennels while you're away on holiday? Well, there is an alternative. Dog-Days Activity Holidays, based in Fife, Scotland, offers "activity holidays specially tailored for you and the dog in your life" and promises that both dog and owner will be "happily exhausted" by the end of their week.

Dogs on these holidays have the chance to try their paws at canoeing, forest cycling, obstacle courses and dancing. Scottish dancing is usually considered less precarious [than canoeing] and is a uniform hit with both owners and their prancing pooches. Dogs learn to spin, skip figures of eight, and weave between their owners' legs. Line dancing is the simpler alternative for less coordinated canines - or owners.

- from the *Sunday Telegraph*, March 30, 2003

Dance and the Brain: The unseen partner in any dance performance is the viewer's brain, according to Ivazr Hagendoorn, a choreographer who studies the cognitive and mathematical foundations of dance.

"The appreciation of dance has something to do with the interplay of expectations and their fulfillment," he writes. "Studies suggest that when the eye sees a moving object, the brain predicts where it will go next. If the brain fails to predict correctly the unfolding of a movement, we are taken by surprise. That surprise can be enjoyable, like the surprises we find pleasing in music and humor."

"This may also explain why music and dance mix so well; a buildup of expectation on an auditory level can find its realization on a visual level. This way of analyzing dance also allows us to explain why certain dance performances are boring - for example, because they do not hold our attention by varying from our expectations."

"There is evidence that watching someone move activates motor areas in the observer's brain. If that is so," Mr. Hagendoorn writes, "then we could say that when watching dance, the brain dances."

- from the *Daily Report from the Chronicle of Higher Education*, Toronto

What makes people happy? A late 1990s BBC documentary exploring the question of 'what makes people happy' concluded that the activity generating the greatest degree of happiness in its participants was Scottish country dancing. The aerobic demands of this type of dancing are considerable, and enthusiasts of all ages tend to be physically fit. So here is a hobby that is officially more fun than sex and also better exercise. What's more, you are not only allowed to change partners - it would be impolite not to.

The Luckenbooth Brooch: So called because of its sale from 'locked booths' in the Royal Mile, adjacent to St. Giles Cathedral, the Luckenbooth brooch was traditionally gifted by a young man to his betrothed and was subsequently pinned to the shawl of the first baby to protect it from 'evil spirits' and thus they have passed down through generations of Scottish families. The heart shape design is significant of its purpose and a surmounting crown symbolic of Mary Queen of Scots.

- from the *RSCDS Detroit Branch Newsletter*

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Mairi's Wedding

Step we gaily on we go,
Heel for heel and toe for toe,
Arm in arm and row on row,
All for Mairi's wedding.

Over hillways up and down,
Myrtle green and bracken brown,
Past the shielings, thru the town,
All for sake of Mairi.

Red her cheeks as rowans are,
Bright her eye as any star,
Fairest o' then a' by far,
Is our darling Mairi.

Plenty herring, plenty meal,
Plenty peat to fill her creel,
Plenty bonnie bairns as weel,
That's our toast for Mairi.

Step we gaily on we go,
Heel for heel and toe for toe,
Arm in arm and row on row,
All for Mairi's wedding.

The White Cockade

My love was born in Aberdeen,
The bonniest lad that e'er was seen;
But now he makes our hearts fu' sad -
He takes the field wi' the White Cockade!

I'll sell my rock, my reel, my tow,
My guid gray mare and hawkit cow,
To buy mysel' a tartan plaid,
To follow the boy wi' the White Cockade!

O, he's a ranting, roving lad!
He is a brisk an' a bonnie lad!
Betide what may, I will be wed,
And follow the boy wi' the White Cockade!

Dancing and Dementia: A recent study by the Albert Einstein Center in Bronx, N.Y., found dancing to be the only regular physical activity associated with a significant drop in the incidence of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. In the research, reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, subjects who danced three or four times a week showed a 76 percent lower incidence of dementia than those who only danced once a week or not at all. - from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, December 4, 2003

Scot Fined for Having a Sgian-Dhu: When Andrew McKinnie, 29, was pulled over by traffic officers on the Isle of Wight in England, they noticed a dagger in the door of the car. He told police the sgian-dhu was a family heirloom and that he had recently worn it as part of his traditional outfit at a family wedding. But despite his protests, he was arrested and charged with possession of an offensive weapon in a public place. At the hearing, McKinnie's solicitor successfully opposed the prosecution's application to have the dagger confiscated and destroyed, but the Scottish electrician was still ordered to pay £75 in court costs and to keep his knife under lock and key. - *Scottish Life*, Autumn 2003

The Irish Rover

In the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and six
We set sail from the fair Cobh of Cork.
We were sailin' away with a cargo of bricks
For the grand city hall of New York.
She's an elegant craft, she was rigged fore-and-aft
And oh, how the trade winds drove her.
She had twenty-three masts and withstood several blasts
And we called her the Irish Rover.

There was Barney McGee from the banks of the Lee,
There was Hogan from County Tyrone.
There was Johnny McGurk who was scared stiff of work
And a chap from West Meade called Mellone.
There was Slugger O'Toole who was drunk as a rule
And fighting Bill Casey from Dover.
And your man Mick McCann from the banks of the Bann
Was the skipper on the Irish Rover.

We had one million bags of the best Sligo rags,
We had two million barrels of stones.
We had three million bales of old billy goats' tails,
We had four million barrels of bones.
We had five million hogs, and six million dogs,
And seven million barrels of porter.
We had eight million sides of the blind horses' hides
In the hold of the Irish Rover.

We had sailed seven years when the measles broke out
And the ship lost her way in a fog.
And the whole of the crew was reduced unto two,
'Twas myself and the captain's old dog.
Then the ship struck a rock. Lord what a shock.
She nearly tumbled over,
Turned nine times around, and the poor dog was drowned—
I'm the last of the Irish Rover.

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