

# Reel Time

Newsletter of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, New Haven Branch

Winter-Spring 2002

## Class Schedules

*Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Class*  
Grace Episcopal Church on the Green, Windsor CT.  
Tuesday 7 to 9:45 PM. Contact Lucille Miller (860) 283-5402.

*Middletown Scottish Country Dancers*  
First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court Street, Middletown CT. Wednesday 7 to 9:30 PM. Contact Joyce Chase (203) 238-0694 or Lucile Blanchard (860) 347-0278.

*New Canaan Kilts & Ghillies Scottish Country Dancers*  
Comstock Community Center, School Road, Wilton CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 9:30 PM. Contact Angela Montague (203) 762-9892.

*New Haven Branch Scottish Country Dance Class*  
New Haven Medical Society, 364 Whitney Ave., New Haven CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 10 PM. Contact Brian Haeckler (203) 732-1017 or Dick Platt (203) 878-6094.

*Newtown Scottish Country Dancers*  
Hawley Middle School, Newtown. Monday 7 to 9:30 PM. Contact Ernie Harrington (203) 938-2881 or ech105@snet.net.

*Bethany-Woodbridge Scottish Country Dancers*  
First Church of Christ, Congregational Parish House, Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge CT. Friday 7 to 9 PM. Leslie Kearney will be teaching. Contact Jack & Doreen Johnstone (203) 393-3189.

## Upcoming Events

**A Capital Weekend.** Friday-Sunday, April 5-7, 2002. On the Grounds of the National Cathedral School, Washington, DC. Welcome Dance, classes, Ball, Sunday Brunch. Teachers Sinclair Barbour and Elinor Vandegrift. Cost for entire weekend, \$55.00. Contact Jenise Williamson, 301-441-1331 or c.jenise@moose-mail.com.

**Tartan Day.** Saturday, April 6, 2002. Wear something tartan!

**Tunes of Glory.** Saturday, April 6, 2002. New York City. Join a massive parade of 500 pipe bands and individual players as they march down Fifth Avenue to Central Park. The event raises funds for cancer care and research

**New Jersey Branch Rerr Terr Dance.** Saturday, April 6, 2002. Music by Highland Whiskey. Contact Margie Larkin, 201-797-1036 or [billlarkin@worldnet.att.net](mailto:billlarkin@worldnet.att.net).

**Salem SCD, Wee Bluets at Sea!** Saturday, April 6, 2002. First Universalist Church, 211 Bridge St., Salem, Mass. Gourmet potluck 6:00 pm. Dancing 8:00 pm. Music by Tom Pixton and Friends. Cost \$8.00.

**Island Fling.** Saturday, April 13, 2002. Mineola Irish-American Center, 297 Willis Ave., Mineola, NY. Sherry 7:00 pm. Dancing 7:30 pm. Music by Liz Donaldson, Terry Traub and Hanneke Cassel. Cost \$30.00. Contact Ann Smith, 631-271-5740.

**\*Greater Hartford Spring Party.** Tuesday, April 16, 2002. Grace Episcopal Church on the Green, Windsor CT. 7:30 pm. Music by Norb Spencer (and friends?). Contact Lucille Miller, 860-283-5402.

**NEFFA.** Natick High School, Natick, MA. April 19-21, 2002.

**Pearl Homberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians.** April 19-21, 2002. Scottish Cultural Centre, Vancouver, British Columbia. Instructors, Lesley Martin (dance) and Calum MacKinnon (Fiddle), Andy Imbrie (Keyboards) and Ralph Gordon (Bass/Cello). Workshop fee \$80.00. Hotel rooms available at the Coast Vancouver Airport Hotel at \$79.00 (Cdn). Contact Angela Gauld, 604-270-4241 or [angelag@shaw.ca](mailto:angelag@shaw.ca).

**\*Experienced Class.** Thursday, April 25, 2002. First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court Street, Middletown CT. 7:00-9:30 pm. Teacher, Christopher Anagnostakis. Contact Ken Way.

**\*Kilts and Ghillies Spring Ball.** Saturday, April 27, 2002. Wilton Congregational Church, 70 Ridgefield Road, Wilton, CT. Hors d'oeuvre 6:00 pm. Dinner 6:30 pm. Dancing 7:30-11:00 pm. Music by Norb

Spencer and Susie Petrov. Cost \$28.00. Contact Angela Montague, 203-762-9892.

**Boston Branch Highland Ball Weekend**, Friday-Sunday, May 3-5, 2002. Saturday's dinner and ball at Nevins Hall, Framingham, MA. Music by Highland Whiskey with Hanneke Cassel. Cost \$60.00. Information at [www.rscdsboston.org](http://www.rscdsboston.org). Contact Gregor Williamson, 617-625-9593.

**39<sup>th</sup> Annual New York Branch Pawling Weekend**. Friday-Sunday, May 17-19, 2002. Holiday Hills, Pawling, NY. Teachers Ann Dix (England), Keith Bark (Canada) and Bill Zobel (Scotland). Music by Bobby Brown & the Scottish Accent and Jim Stevenson. Cost \$210.00 includes tuition, room, board and gratuities. Contact Sheila Wilson 212-744-1470.

**\*Experienced Class**. Thursday, May 23, 2002. First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court Street, Middletown CT. 7:00-9:30 pm. Teacher, Kent Smith. Contact Ken Way.

**Penobscot Bay SCD Weekend**. Saturday-Sunday, May 25-26, 2002. American Legion Hall, Belfast, ME. Contact Dave Thompson, 207-469-3293.

**Colorado 2002 Workshop** to be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, May 31-June 2, 2002, Teachers Bill Zobel, Ruth Jappy and "Fergie" Ferguson. Music by Muriel Johnstone, Alex Jappy and John Taylor. For information check their website <http://home.attbi.com/~scdcolorado/> or <http://members.home.net/scdcolorado/Index.htm>.

**Montreal Branch Weekend Workshop**. Saturday-Sunday, June 7-9, 2002. Teacher Sheila Keller, Andrew Smith, John Middleton. Music by Bobby Brown & the Scottish Accent. Contact Sara Lawson, 514-457-3924 or [skgl@aol.com](mailto:skgl@aol.com).

**Down East Fling**. Saturday, June 8, 2002. Kennebunk Town Hall, Kennebunk, ME. Contact Morven Troost, 207-967-3813.

**Northampton End-of-Year Party**. June 22, 2002. Contact Virginia Van Scoy, 413-586-5478.

**\*Experienced Class**. Thursday, June 27, 2002. First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court Street, Middletown CT. 7:00-9:30 pm. Teacher to be announced, but it may be Howard Lasnik from the Boston Branch. Contact Ken Way.

## On a Personal Note

Our sympathy to George Thomson and his family on the death of his mother during the Ball weekend. We don't know how you carried on, George.

Bob Gregg has been seen dancing at both English and Scottish classes. Guess the knee must be better. Bob sends this rumination:

### Thoughts on Progression

In Kent Smith's delightful *Talcott Mountain Strathspey* I was fascinated by the name of the progression "The Engrenage". It tempts me to devise a new progression, just so I can name it.

Of names that come to mind "Dispersage", or "Aldage," pronounced - all dodge. And from the old Norse "Rune," "Runendage," pronounced (you have already guessed it). Which I now proceed to do.

Jane Lataille writes from New Mexico:

Hello to all: 2/6/02

It was great to get the last Reel Time and see that gorgeous quilt (thanks, Barbara). And it was great to get my Bulletin and membership list (thanks, Ed). Looking through the membership list reminded me of everyone I want to say hello to.

Los Alamos certainly has its differences from Windsor, but I am adjusting. I'm looking forward to a lovely spring and summer.

The job at the Los Alamos National Lab is going well and I'm finding it interesting. My commute is just 2 miles, so that's nice.

Dancing has been lots of fun. I dance with Los Alamos on Monday nights -another 2-mile drive. I teach in Santa Fe on Friday nights. That's an hour away. I'd much prefer dancing on Tues. and Wed. nights than Mon. and Fri., but that's how it goes! At least the longer of the two drives is on Friday.

Best wishes for the upcoming ball and the branch 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I think of you all often.

Congratulations to Jeanetta McColl of the Boston Branch who received a scroll citation at the 2001 RSCDS AGM. The citation reads: "A Branch member since 1961, Jeanetta has been extensively involved in Branch activities. She chaired the Annual Ball, Summer School at Pinewoods, and Teaching Committees. She also served on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, producing a book of new dances and CD. She has taught demonstration teams and teacher candidate classes. Jeanetta has

accumulated an invaluable amount of knowledge concerning not only SCD but also about the Branch and its rich past. Above all, she willingly accepts any roles that need to be fulfilled and gives selflessly of herself and her time."

"She is the consummate SCD teacher, with a boundless source of information and skill. To attend a workshop she is teaching is an enlightening experience. Jeanetta always adds a sense of newness to even the most routine of technique classes and can make the most complex formations understandable. She treats everyone with the maximum of respect and in return is greatly respected by everyone in the Branch." Few Americans receive such an honor.

### **Middletown Celebrates with Tea**

The Middletown class and all its participants, along with generous contributions from other classes, prepared a traditional Scottish Afternoon Tea on Wednesday January 16. Sparkling silver, delicate china teacups and fabulous home baking were part of the festivities as Middletown celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Ken Way was presented with a certificate for his dedicated tutelage for those ten years and in return he rewarded the class with several dances from "the old days," and at least one "silly dance." The evening was a tremendous success, and we even had a "Queen Mum" complete with hat and apron to pour!

Thanks go out to all those who baked, polished and cleaned up, as well as those who provided teapots, and the other necessities for a "proper tea". Thanks to Joyce Chase for coming up with the idea and we are already thinking it might become a tradition. Again, thanks to Ken Way for his patience and perseverance these last 10 years. May there be many more to come!

*Catriona MacAuslan*

### **Try All Three**

An energetic group of new and experienced dancers moved through English, Scottish and Contra Dance figures to live music at an event organized by Brian Haeckler at Sage Hall, Prospect Street, New Haven on Sunday, January 27. This chance to experience three different types of dancing may encourage new people to join one or more groups, swelling our attendance. Congratulations to Brian on a terrific dance event.

### **Demonstration Team, Anyone?**

Mardene Hof manages and teaches a Scottish Country Dance demonstration team that has been doing demos all over the state of Connecticut for about 12 years. Members come from all over the state of Connecticut and represent most of the classes that meet in the state. We usually dance to recorded music and there are about 30 dances in our repertoire. So far this year, we have danced for the St. Andrews Fair in Goshen and the Hartford Marathon. We will also dance at NOMAD and First Night. We dance for retirement homes as well as special events.

#### **1. Commitment**

The demo team practices twice a month in Glastonbury for two hours early Sunday evening. Sometimes this is the first and second Sunday, but not always. The team does two demonstrations a month from September through May. Sometimes we do three in a month, but that is rare. Sometimes we do only one a month. **Each member must be willing to make a commitment.**

#### **2. Willing to work on your dancing**

The 'teaching' portion of the rehearsal is minimal. Dancers work to dance as a team and to dance with good phrasing and covering. **Each member must be willing to take critique concerning their dancing.**

#### **3. Willing to acquire and wear the costume**

Ladies wear flesh toned pantyhose, ballet slippers or ghillies (red and/or black), white dresses (or skirt and blouse) skirt length just below the knee, and a dance sash over the left shoulder.

Men wear kilts, sporran, white shirt (long or short sleeve according to the season) with white tee-shirt (so the shirt looks white), ghillies (black), solid tie (color that coordinates with kilt), and off-white kilt hose. **Each member must be willing to wear the costume.**

If you are interested in becoming part of this group, please contact Mardene at 860-233-3210

### **Genesis of *The Nutmeg Collection***

On June 18th, 1997, Dick Morrison, then President of the RSCDS, New Haven Branch Inc., wrote me a letter requesting that I chair a committee responsible for the publication of a book of dances to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the branch, and republication of the earlier New Haven 12 Dances book. The other designated

committee members were Jane Lataille, Joyce Chase, Kent Smith and Peter Price. I agreed, and put together an outline of what I thought the job would entail.

Between July and September of 1998, a tentative schedule was set, with a completion date of January, 2001. Ground rules were roughed out concerning eligibility, target number of dances, initial screening, selection trials, final selection and publication considerations. A call for dances was issued, with a July 31st 1999 cut-off. Evaluations were to be completed by July 2000.

At first, the response was very sluggish, and fearing that we might not receive enough submittals, we reached out to former branch members who were known to have devised dances. This touched off an influx of dances that reached a grand total of fifty. Several months were spent in reviewing these dances with their devisors to work out any obvious difficulties and correct possible misunderstandings. Each dance was then set in a standard format, using consistent terminology. The dances were coded by number so the identity of the devisors would not be known to the committee or to the evaluating dancers. This was done to assure that dances would be evaluated on their merits, and personalities would not become an issue. Of course, someone has to coordinate with the devisors, so I held the master key. By early February of 2000, we were ready to start the evaluation process.

The first order of business was to determine if the field, which had by then far exceeded our expectations, could be pared to a more reasonable number. Each of the committee members was given a complete set of instructions for all of the dances, and the assignment to rate each one on a one to five scale for quality (higher = better) and a one to three scale for difficulty (higher = more difficult), over the following month. At our next meeting, the ratings were compiled and averaged for each dance. Generally, for most dances, there was good agreement across the board, and only a few showed any large variation in ratings. These results led to a fairly natural cut-off at a quality rating of 2.2. Eight dances fell at or below that level, and the next lowest dance was rated significantly higher at 2.6. This left a total of 42 dances to be physically tested. All of the dances displaying wide variation fell above the cut-off, and were to be tested.

It was decided that the field trials should require two tests for each dance, by two different dance groups. Each dance group in the Branch would receive a package of fourteen dances to test. The dances were arranged in a rather complicated order, which I

dubbed the "stream order" to assure that each group got a mix of dances in proportion to the total. The packages were then massaged so that generally no teacher would be presenting one of his/her own dances for trial. Evaluation sheets were devised and printed for dancers and teachers. The dancer sheets provided five-level evaluations of enjoyment--worth of learning, and inclination to do the dance again--while the teacher sheets addressed quality of the dance and clarity of the instructions in three levels. Buy-in of the process by the various dance groups was generally favorable, but time was limited, and at the end of the season, we were still well short of our goal. Testing continued into the fall.

At this point, we decided to get a handle on when the 25th anniversary actually would occur. A search of the archives by Ingrid Davis disclosed that the official confirmation of our status as a Branch had been received on March 3rd, 1977, so the anniversary wasn't due until 2002! This was welcome news, and gave us time to finish testing the remaining dances. Two special sessions were held in lieu of the scheduled May and June Experienced classes, to complete the second tests on each of sixteen dances.

The results were tabulated each week with a running account of current ranks. A tabulation was also made of all of the teachers' and dancers' comments for each dance, in case they became necessary for a tie-breaker. (They didn't). Reviewing the dancers' comments proved to be very interesting. There were a few cases in which all the dancers in a group had written the same set of words, as if echoing a teacher's influence. The rankings, however, showed little variation between groups.

With the final rankings in, we addressed the number of dances to be included. The original thoughts were to include four of each type, and only one dance by a particular devisor, but rankings reflected some strong unbalances that needed to be addressed. The Strathspeys were generally ranked significantly higher than the other dances, and the reels a cut above the jigs. Good devisors had a tendency to consistently devise good dances. Should we then throw out a significant quantity of our highest rated dances to maintain a one per devisor rule?

We decided to allow up to two dances per devisor, increase the total number of dances to eighteen, and select numbers of each type in proportion to the numbers submitted. This approach actually increased the number of devisors, while maintaining a fairly uniform numerical quality cut-off for each type of dance. In the end, the selection criterion was, quite simply, the dancers' ratings from the trials, except when a devisor had more than two highly ranked

dances. For these cases, the dances selected were the highest ranked pair by that devisor.

In the fall of 2001, we held three sessions in Middletown to review the final dance instructions for each selected dance and to make any final word or content changes. Then, with the hard part under our belts, we got Barbara Morrissey to produce the art work for the cover, which we blended with parts of Bob Byrne's logo. Then we assembled all of the selected dances into a single document, and with the help of Catriona MacAuslan, beat the bushes for a printer, got quotes, put together a master and went to press. In parallel, the New Haven 12 book dances were also retyped, mastered and printed.

I want to thank the Committee, the Board, the devisors of the fifty candidate dances, Barbara, Bob and Catriona, and all of the dancers and teachers who took part in the field evaluations for their time and effort and helpful inputs, and particularly Ingrid, who found us the extra year. It's been a long haul since Dick got this started, and I wish he'd been able to be here to see the books.

Ken Way

Note: *The Nutmeg Collection of Scottish Country Dances* is available at \$6.00 each. *R.S.C.D.S. New Haven 12 Dances* is available at \$5.00 each. Or purchase both for \$10.00.

## For Experienced Dancers

The Teaching Committee has scheduled three classes for experienced dancers; e.g. those who know the standard figures, and can dance from a briefing. They will be held in Middletown, at the First Church of Christ, Congregational, 190 Court Street on Thursday evenings 7:00 to 9:30 pm.

25 April	Christopher Anagnostakis
23 May	Kent Smith
27 June	TBD (under negotiation)

## Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Group Spring Party

April 16, 2002 starting at 7:30 p.m. at the Grace Episcopal Church on the Green, Windsor, CT.  
Music by Norb Spencer.

### PROGRAM

The Frisky	32J3
The De'il Among the Tailors	32R3

Castle Douglas	32S3
Lads of Saltcoats	32R2
Banks of Clyde	32S3
The Sailor	32R3

### Break

It's Not Rocket Science	32J3
Balquidder Strathspey	32S3
Button Boy	32R3
Leith Country Dance	32J2
Delvine Side	32S3
The Reel of the Royal Scots	32R3

## Washington's Capitol Weekend

We're looking forward to a great weekend on April 5-7 and hope that you will encourage members of your branch to attend by mentioning this special event in your newsletter. Thank you so much! We're also on the web and anyone can register through the website <http://rscds-greaterdc.org> by clicking on "Events" or by going directly to [http://www.geocities.com/lillim\\_99/](http://www.geocities.com/lillim_99/).

## Youth-Only SCD Weekend

10 December 2001  
2191 Ware Street  
Abbotsford, BC V2S 3C4  
CANADA

Dear friends!

My name is Jamie Graham. I am twenty years old and have been a Scottish Country Dancer for five years. I have a proposition for the younger members of your group. A friend of mine, Sarah Kell, who dances at the University of Victoria, recently sent me an e-mail lamenting how the upcoming youth-only SCD Weekend in Scotland is remote and difficult for many younger dancers in North America to attend. We got in touch with the RSCDS Youth Director, Fiona Turnbull, who suggested that a youth Scottish Country Dance Weekend could be organized right here in North America!

We are currently soliciting interest in having a youth weekend of dance somewhere in the Pacific Northwest (be it in Vancouver or Victoria, BC or in Seattle, WA) in 2003, preferably during the Victoria Day or Memorial Day weekend. We hope to attract some of the best musicians and teachers from across the continent to teach and play for a weekend geared to young people aged 16 - 30, of varying dance levels and experience. If enough interest in this youth dance weekend is shown, every effort will be made to

secure a suitable venue and affordable transport and lodging as is reasonable. Please feel free to forward this letter to any younger dancers you may know in your area and please do not hesitate to contact one of us if you have any questions on the youth dance weekend:

Jamie (604) 852-0820 [buckjamie@yahoo.com](mailto:buckjamie@yahoo.com)  
Sarah (250) 592-7717 [sarahkell@shaw.ca](mailto:sarahkell@shaw.ca)

Thank you very much and we hope for your support in this endeavour!

Sincerely,  
Jamie Graham

**The Ungourmets** (from *New Haven Advocate*, March 7-13, 2002, vol. 28, issue 10, p. 11.)

In January, hotels in Scotland announced that part of their big "Romantic Scotland" marketing campaign would be "Hot 'n' Horny Devil Haggis" with chili and Cajun spices, as potentially an aphrodisiac. (Haggis is one of the least appetizing foods on the planet, typically being a pudding of sheep organs, suet and oatmeal, boiled in a cow's [sic] stomach.)

**More Haggis in the News** (from the *Calgary Sun*, January 16, 2002.)

CALGARY -- Can Calgary stomach a haggis being launched across the mighty Bow River? We'll find out Saturday when Calgary's Gordon Sinclair of Gordon's Fine Meats tries, for the first time, to shoot a haggis clear across the Bow River using his new patented haggis launcher.

Sinclair makes his haggis from Alberta beef chuck or venison, liver, traditional toasted Scotch oats and special spices stuffed into a beef casing. He's also working on a veggie haggis as well.

"Haggis has come a long way," says Sinclair, who hopes his haggis flies a long way.

Last year, Sinclair merely threw the haggis into the Bow in celebration of Robert Burns Day. This year will be different . . . Sinclair says he has his fingers crossed the haggis will reach the other side . . . the goal is for the dog to retrieve it and bring it back .

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#### RSCDS New Haven Branch Officers:

President	Pat Morrison (203) 387-5343
Secretary	Leslie Kearney (203) 281-6591
Treasurer	Brian Haeckler (203) 732-1017
Branch Class	
Chair	George Thomson (203) 230-8551
Teacher Comm.	Ken Way
Intergroup	Don Wills (860) 434-0415
At Large	Mary Byrnie (860) 635-4056 Catriona MacAuslan (203) 421-4060 Marge Wills (860) 434-0415
Ball Chair	Joyce and Skip Chase (203) 288-0694
Membership	Ed Davis (203) 264-0870
Newsletter	Barbara Austen (203) 630-9749 <a href="mailto:beausten@worldnet.att.net">beausten@worldnet.att.net</a> or <a href="mailto:bausten@cslib.org">bausten@cslib.org</a>

#### Editor's Note

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Deadline for the next newsletter is May 15 for publication at the end of the month. Please get your stories (class and personal tidbits) and calendar listings to me by then. My home address is 70 Pearl St., Meriden, CT 06540, and my email address is [beausten@worldnet.att.net](mailto:beausten@worldnet.att.net) or [bausten@cslib.org](mailto:bausten@cslib.org)

#### This Just In!

**Westchester Ball.** June 8, 2002. St. John's Church, Larchmont, NY. Music by Terry Traub, Liz Donaldson and David Knight. Contact Jacquie Doolittle, 914-725-4360, or Judy Zingher, [juzing@juno.com](mailto:juzing@juno.com).