

# Reel Time

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

Summer 2004

## Class Schedules

*Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Class*  
Grace Episcopal Church on the Green, Windsor CT.  
Tuesday 7 to 9:45 PM. Contact Barbara Austen 203-630-9749 or Karen Pestana 860-298-8311.  
<mailto:beausten@att.net> **Classes begin Sept. 21.**

*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. **Classes begin Sept. 15.**

*New Canaan Kilts & Ghillies Scottish Country Dancers* Millennium School of Irish Dance, 12 Old Mill Road, Georgetown, CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 9:30 PM. Contact Angela Montague 203-762-9892 or Peter Price 203-675-9587.

*New Haven Branch Scottish Country Dance Class*  
New Haven Medical Society, 364 Whitney Ave., New Haven CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 10 PM. Contact Dick Platt 203-878-6094 or George Thomson 203-230-8553. **Classes begin Sept. 14.**

*Newtown Scottish Country Dancers*  
St. James Episcopal Church, 25 West St., Danbury, CT. Monday 7:30 to 9:00 PM. Contact Ernie Harrington 203-938-2881 or  
<mailto:ech105@snet.net> **Classes begin Sept. 27.**

*Bethany-Woodbridge Scottish Country Dancers*  
First Church of Christ Congregational Parish House, Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge CT. Friday 7 to 9 PM. Contact Doreen Johnstone 203-393-3189 or Donna Ives 203-393-3713.

## Upcoming Events

**Maine Highland Games** August 21, 2004. Thomas Point Beach, Brunswick, ME. Sponsored by the St. Andrews' Society of Maine. For more information, contact Susan Mack <mailto:macrodel@aol.com>.

**Hillsboro Highlands** Friday-Sunday, August 27-29, 2004. Hillsboro Camp, Hillsboro, NH. Teachers are Susan Eisley, Charlie Inglis and Howard Lasnik.

Musicians are Terry Traub, Ken Allen and David Knight. For more information, contact Susan Haines 603-435-8643 or <mailto:sdhaines@earthlink.net>.

**Quechee Scottish Festival** Saturday, August 28, 2004. Quechee Polo Field, Quechee, VT. Sponsored by the St. Andrews' Society of Vermont. A kilted mile will be held, among other things.

**New York Pre-Season Dance** Thursday, Sept. 9, 2004. Holy Cross School, 332 W. 43rd St, NYC. 7:30 PM. Sponsored by RSCDS New York Branch. Semi-formal attire; tea and cakes. \$7. Contact Sheila Wilson 212-849-8282.

**Pearls of the Northwest** Friday-Sunday, Sept. 10-12, 2004. RSCDS Seattle Branch 30th annual weekend workshop at Fort Worden State Park, Port Townsend, WA. Teachers Vicki Goodloe, Sara Gratiot, John Middleton and Ron Wallace. Music by Muriel Johnstone, Keith Smith, Ralph Gordon and Calum MacKinnon. For more information, see: <http://www.rscds-seattle.org>.

**Darlington (MD) Scottish Weekend at Camp Ramblewood** Friday-Sunday, Sept. 24-26, 2004. Teachers are Stella Fogg, Vicky Goodloe and Ron Wallace. Music teacher is Calum MacKinnon. Music by Calum MacKinnon, Liz Donaldson, Dan Emery, Earl Gaddis, Ralph Gordon, Becky Ross, Jim Stevenson, Marty Taylor and Dave Wiesler. Contact Betty Evans 410-296-5537 or Fred Eustis 410-922-6369 or web site: [www.ScottishWeekend.org](http://www.ScottishWeekend.org).

**New Hampshire Highland Games** Friday-Sunday, Sept. 24-26, 2004. Hopkinton Fair Grounds, Hopkinton, NH. Celtic culture celebrated with music and dance performances, competitions in golf, Highland dance, Scottish fiddle, piping and drumming, athletics, sheep dog trials and the kilted milerace. Check [www.nhscot.org](http://www.nhscot.org) for more information.

**St. Andrews Scottish Festival at Goshen** Saturday, Oct. 2, 2004. Goshen Fairgrounds, Goshen, CT. Piping, drumming, Highland dance competitions, SCD demonstration, vendors. Call 203-366-0777 for more information.

**Scotland's Highland Festival** Sunday, Oct. 10, 2004. Scotland CT. Call 860-684-6584 for more information.

**Middletown Fall Party** Saturday, Oct. 23, 2004, 7:30-10:00 PM. \$8.00 First Church, 190 Court Street, Middletown. Music by Norb Spencer and his crew. Call Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278 or Joyce Chase 203-238-0694 for more information.

**Mystic Scottish Country Dancers Fall Ceilidh** Friday, Oct. 29, 2004. 7:00-11:00 PM, Groton Motor Inn, Groton, CT. \$15.00. Featuring country and Highland dancing. Contact Mary Ruddlesden, 860-442-3731 or Ruth Walsh, RHWDVB@aol.com or the web at <http://www.pageupconsulting.com/MSCD>.

**NOMAD** Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 6-7, 2004. New location again! Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven, CT. Participatory dance sessions, folk music, singalongs, dance performances, storytelling. See their website [www.geocities.com/nomadfest](http://www.geocities.com/nomadfest).

**Jeannie Carmichael Ball** Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 13-14, 2004. Thayer Hotel, U. S. Military Academy, West Point, NY. Ball \$70; Brunch \$25. Sponsored by the RSCDS New York Branch. Music by Barbara McOwen, Andy Imbrie, Alice Hooper. Contact Sheila Wilson 212-849-8282 or <mailto:info@rscdsnewyork.org>.

**Middletown Holiday Party** Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2004, 7:30-10:00 PM. \$8.00. First Church, 190 Court Street, Middletown. Music by Norb Spencer and friends. Call Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278 or Joyce Chase 203-238-0694 for more information.

**New Haven Branch New Year's Eve Party** Friday, Dec. 31, 2004. New Haven Medical Society, 364 Whitney Ave., New Haven, CT. Potluck dinner at 7 pm. Dancing after with music by CD. Contact Barbara Austen 203-630-9749 or <mailto:beausten@att.net>.

**Robert Burns Dinner and Dance** Saturday, Feb. 12, 2005. 5:30 PM - midnight, Groton Motor Inn. Sponsored by the Mystic Scottish country dancers. More information to come.

### **New Board Members**

At the AGM in June, Brian Haeckler resigned as treasurer and Richard Ives was named to this important position. Joyce Chase was named an additional member-at-large. All other board members retained their posts. These changes were voted on officially at the following RSCDS Board meeting on August 5.

Brian Haeckler has been a fixture on the Board for decades. He started dancing in New Haven in 1980, served one year as a member-at-large, two years as branch class coordinator, and then was treasurer for 21 years. He became a class teacher in 1987. We wish Brian well in his new job and are pleased that he will continue to teach and dance in

New Haven.

Richard Ives and his wife Donna started dancing in Woodbridge in 1995. He is a salesman for A. H. Harris and Sons, a concrete construction supply company. He comes to the Board with much experience, having been the treasurer for a Congregational church for 31 years. Welcome, Richard.

### **Membership Due**

This issue of *Reel Time* includes a membership application for the 2004-2005 dance season. Please take a moment to fill in the application and mail it with your check to the Membership Chairman, Ed Davis. The address is on the application. All applications should be returned before the end of October.

**Teachers:** please photocopy the form for new members and ask them to submit their application before November 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications will, of course, be accepted at any time during the year. This year, however, we will publish the Membership Directory on the first of November so it can be of use sooner in the year. Only those who have paid their current membership will be included. The *Reel Time* mailing list will also be revised on that date based on that membership list. Having the application process complete by the end of October will facilitate the timely distribution of books, membership cards and Directories, completing the process in one step. The branch name badges can be made sooner in the year.

The cost of membership has increased this year, partly due to rising costs, mostly due to the rising exchange rate. We pay the RSCDS in pounds for memberships and the pound has gained while the dollar has shrunk. The New Haven Branch has subsidized this increase but cannot afford to continue.

### **Challenge Classes**

For the coming year, Ken Way has arranged an exciting series of challenge classes for experienced Scottish country dancers. They are:

October 7:	Peter Price
November 18:	Leslie Kearney
March 17:	Kent Smith
April 21:	Jim "Fergie" Ferguson

All classes will be held at First Church in Middletown, 190 Court Street. For further information, call Lucile Blanchard, 860-347-0278, or Joyce Chase, 203-238-0694.

For these workshops you should be able to do a straightforward dance from a talk-through, demonstrate teamwork in your dancing, and have good phrasing and covering. You are expected to be able to dance these figures without instruction: Allemande, Double Triangles, Figure of Eight, Grand Chain, Hello Goodbye Setting, Knot, Ladies' Chain, Pous-sette (quick time), Poussette Right Round (Strath-spey), Promenade, Reels of Three & of Four, Rondel. Challenge classes are for dancers interested in trying more unusual dances than they get in regular

classes.

### **Mystic's Fall Ceilidh**

The Mystic Scottish Country Dancers are planning a Fall Ceilidh for Friday, October 29, 2004. This event will take the place of the Fall Festive Dance that the group has put on the last couple of years. It will be held at the Groton Motor Inn right off of Route 95 in Groton. The Groton Motor Inn will also be the new location for annual Burn's Night put on by the Mystic Scottish Country Dancers which will be held on Saturday, February 12, 2005. This event has been a great evening attended by up to 400 people, but with the cost of holding it at the Marriott climbing every year, it was decided to go back to the Groton Motor Inn.

*Don Wills*

### **New Haven Sunday Socials**

Keep a watch for flyers announcing a series of Sunday Socials in New Haven. These family friendly dances will be held from 2:00-5:00 PM. The first tentative dates are Sept. 26, Oct. 31, and Jan. 30, 2005.

### **On a Personal Note**

When Dick Baxter saw his doctor about having a stent inserted, the doctor informed him that he needed a triple bypass instead. This all happened when the Baxters had sold their house but hadn't yet moved into the new one and were staying with their daughter who just adopted a second child from South Korea. Happily the operation was a success and Dick is already active again although he can't dance or lift heavy objects. He and Ena expect to travel to Scotland next month with Catriona's group. They just moved into their new home in Bristol.

Speaking of grandchildren, Ed Davis now has twin grandchildren born in Austin, Texas.

Joyce Chase is at TAC Summer School going for her Prelim Pass. Karen Lavallee Tente, who got her Prelim as a member of the New Haven Branch, is going for her Full Certificate in teaching.

### **A Big Thank You ...**

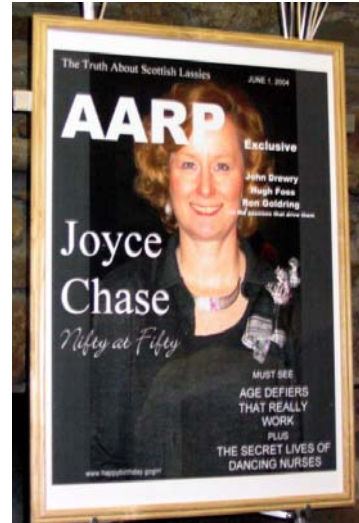
... to Mardene Hof and Karen Lavallee Tente for making cross-stitch pieces for the designer ghillie bags that were sold at the Kilts & Ghillies Ball. Originally the bags were planned for the New Haven Ball, but with my father's illness, it didn't happen. The bags we did make sold very well and I am taking limited orders for additional Thistle bags. There are still quite a few Scottish Country Dancer bags available for \$15. Contact me for information.

*Barbara Austen*

### **Joyce Chase's Birthday Party**

Some people go into mourning when they turn fifty. Joyce Chase's friends didn't want that to happen so they threw her a surprise party. Catriona

Macauslan arranged it all – found a campground hall near her home with a wonderful wood floor, got sixty of us to arrive early and hide our cars down various roads among the cabins, then turn out the hall lights when she drove up with Joyce to show her a space that "might be good for dancing." Surprise! Bob Byrnie had created a wonderful poster of Joyce as if on the cover of the *AARP Magazine* with "Nifty at Fifty" under her picture and articles listed such as "The Secret Life of Dancing Nurses." A cloud of white balloons floated above it to dispel any gloom. And then we danced for two hours in a great program briefed by Ken Way.



Dinner was at Catriona's house with Skip Chase manning the barbecue on the deck while rain dripped down. We all managed to fit indoors along with Catriona and Don's three friendly dogs. Catriona's mother Peggy, an active 88-year-old, was also part of the crowd. People brought a delicious variety of dishes to accompany the hot dogs, hamburgers and chicken. Then dessert arrive in the shape of three, count 'em, sheet cakes of different flavors, plus more potluck contributions. People lingered, unwilling to leave the happy gathering. We all hope this out-pouring of friendship helps Joyce manage this decade change with some tranquility. It was such fun, Louis Perez said, she should turn 50 next year so we can do it all again.

### **Bristol 4th of July Parade**

The Mystic Highland Pipe Band took part in two Fourth of July parades, Groton on Sunday and Bristol, RI's 217th annual salute on Monday. In past years band members have been hard hit by the July heat so this year's cloudy weather was welcome. The Bristol three-mile parade had many floats, including a replica of the new World War II Memorial, military units from every service, bands from all over the United States, veterans groups, Clydesdale horses, at least four pipe bands, mummers, clowns, civic groups

and those of us with our dog mascots including my West Highland terrier Bonny.

It began to sprinkle as we marched down streets with center stripes painted red, white and blue. The sprinkle turned into serious rain. Spectators in rain-coats held a variety of umbrellas, tarps, wee tents, just about anything to cover them. Porches were crammed with people, waving, clapping, singing along with the bands. Our outfits were wet. So were the doggies in their patriotic decor. When we turned onto a main street, the heavens opened up, soaking us from head to toe. We realized we couldn't get any wetter and just laughed heartily and marched on. Those of us with glasses could have used windshield wipers and defrosters to help us see. Our band never missed a beat marching through puddles and streams. Drummers turned their drums over to empty out the water. Pipers worried their drones would get out of tune from the wet. The music was as stirring as ever and we marched proudly while the crowds waved and thanked us. It was a ball.

Usually a Dell's lemonade truck waits at the end of the parade route to refresh us with their famous lemonade. The truck was there, but we ran past it to the bus to go back to the mustering area. I stopped on the way home at Wendy's for a cup of hot coffee. I must have looked like three drowned rats! Ah, the blessed relief of a hot shower! And Bonny couldn't have been happier when I dried her off and made her coat all fluffy and white again.

*Ruth Holland Walsh*

### **A Pinewoods Class**

This year I opted to attend ESS, the English Scottish Session, at Pinewoods. I probably didn't get as much out of it as I could have as the weather was incredibly humid and warm, promoting fatigue and a need for afternoon naps. Items hung out to dry on the line at the end of each day were invariably wetter 24 hours later. Normally a dedicated Scottish Session person, I found differences in the structure which didn't seem as optimum as they might have been. For example, first period offered Ladies' Step, Rapper, or a choice of Beginner Scottish or Advanced English. Rapper involves a fair amount of stamping, probably tough on the feet, so I chose English country dancing. Considering that I've only done that a half-dozen times, I didn't feel qualified for an expert class, but finally went by default. The expert class, taught by Bruce Hamilton, turned out to encompass all levels including rank beginner, so it wasn't an issue.

The second period offered Advanced Scottish, Beginner English, Morris and Scottish Band. I had intended to do English dancing, but it was easier to stay in the same pavilion and do the Scottish with Geoffrey Selling. The class was a little smaller than first period, probably the result of humidity sapping the enthusiasm of some of the marginally-inclined

dancers. Aside from trying one English music class with Jaqueline Schwab, wherein I was totally lost, I took no afternoon classes (a first for me). Offered were Crossover English, Crossover Scottish, Colonial, Highland, Waltz and Mummer's Play (Longsword). I never did determine what was meant by the term "crossover." Meals, as usual at Pinewoods, were excellent and the kitchen staff got a strong ovation at the end of the session. The evening dances combined English and Scottish dances and were musically and generally excellent. A show-and-tell session on the final day had each class show an item they had done during the week. It was here that one realized which classes one should have taken.

A feature of ESS which might appeal to younger dancers is that children are able to participate. Probably for this reason parties are more subdued than during the Scottish Sessions. Then again it could have been the weather. A small downside of ESS is that with fewer attendees compared to Scottish Week, there are more required work details in some cases. Pinewoods Camp is a great place to play at being rustic while having most of the comforts of home within easy reach except air conditioning, which we could have used.

*Ken Way*

### **Pinewoods Scholarship Available**

The Dick Morrison Pinewoods Scholarship is available now for a session at Pinewoods in the summer of 2005. The former restrictions have been lifted so there are no requirements for age, sex or experience. The only requirement is needing help with the cost of attending. Teachers, please let any promising dancers in your class know. The deadline is next March and an application form will be attached to the next issue.

### **Summerdance at the United Nations**

New York City was cheerful on this June Saturday as we lined up at the entrance to the United Nations for the security check. It was great to see men in kilts and women in white with tartan sashes waiting there. More than 40 dancers took part, most from New York classes, but a good half dozen of us from the New Haven Branch. We gathered in the main lobby with its marble floor, window walls giving a view of the U.N. gardens, the Hudson River and New Jersey beyond. With Jim "Fergie" Ferguson and his assistants making all the arrangements, we were soon in five sets dancing a great program that started with *Maxwell's Rant* and ended with the *Irish Rover*. Tourists wandered past, many stopping to watch, and there were rumors that Nicole Kidman was in the U.N. complex filming scenes for her next movie. Three hours later we helped gather everything up and walked three blocks to O'Neal's on Third Avenue. There they gave us the second floor where we settled at tables to eat, helped along with

private bar service. A separate space roofed in glass was kept empty for dancing. Fergie enticed those of us who could still move to join him to try out some new dances. Only when night took over did people think of leaving. In addition to a fine day of dancing and socializing, UNICEF got a check for \$1,200.00.

*Lucile Blanchard*

### **Mystic Highland Pipe Band Trip to Bermuda**

Members of the Mystic Highland Pipe Band, family members, Scottish country dancers and friends boarded the Celebrity Cruise Line *Zenith* on May 22, 2004, for a weeklong cruise to Bermuda. The bagpipes played as we left the pier and passed Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, heading for the Atlantic. We all had a fine time on the cruise, lounging in deck chairs, swimming in various pools, eating when the spirit moved and generally being laid back. For formal occasions, we wore evening dress, kilts for the men. When in port, we toured at a leisurely pace, wishing we had more days to experience everything. We arrived in Hamilton early on the 24th of May, Bermuda Day, and what a day it was! This has been a public holiday in the Islands since 1900, the traditional beginning of summer marked with barbecues, water activities, a Marathon Derby, the Sinclair Packwood Memorial Cycle Race and the Bermuda Day Parade. This year's theme was *Bermuda Roots: Who We Are – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, a celebration of the diversity here.

African dancers mixed with the Philippine Association dancers while a carnival troupe was accompanied by unicyclists, clowns and twirlers. Bob Scent, Pipe Master of the Mystic Band, had written to Adrian Cook, Drum Sergeant and Event Coordinator of the Bermuda Islands Pipe Band, to say we would be there for Bermuda Day, asking if we could join the Parade. The BIPB welcomed pipers, drummers, Scottish country dancers and friends into their midst. Onlookers started gathering Sunday night and by Monday morning there were tremendous crowds along the route. The parade itself was a sea of color with floats made with Bermuda's beautiful flora. Bermuda Gombey troupes would "tail" throughout the parade with their brilliant costumes, music and dance. Each troupe had its own small band of drummers. The Gombeys wore masks topped with bright crowns carrying peacock feathers, capes with colorful tassels, beads and mirrors, and embroidered pants. There were politicians, a group of motorcyclists, school bands, children's groups and church groups including "Saints Ablaze" which wore red, yellow and orange outfits to represent tongues of fire. We were so pleased to take part in the Island's very special celebration.

The morning was clear and warm when the Bermuda Regimental Band took its place at the head of the parade. We admired the precision and excellence of the Band, elegant in their red and white

uniforms. There were several horse-drawn carriages carrying dignitaries and the lovely Miss Bermuda. The combined Mystic Highland and Bermuda Island Pipe Band with 30 musicians were joined by tartan-clad Scottish country dancers and family members. Marge and Don Wills, Alwyn Thorpe, Linda and Bob Scent and I marched with enthusiasm down Front Street right past our ship, *Zenith*. Enthusiastic spectators clapped and waved. The two-plus mile parade route took us to King Street, then uphill to Bernard Park. As Adrian Cook stated, "...we had a two mile uphill march in the sun and humidity, but we never stopped marching or playing until we reached the National Sports Center, where our sole casualty collapsed from dehydration once the order to dismiss was given." We were all perspiring by the time we marched a final lap on the oval at the park and never did a drink of water taste so delicious! Our casualty quickly recovered once he cooled down and was given liquids. We were delighted to be a part of "A Spectacular Bermuda Day." When our ship departed from the dock, a lone piper played farewell to Bermuda: its pink sand, turquoise water, pastel houses, beautiful flowers and friendly people. We will return again soon!

*Ruth Holland Walsh*

### **I.S.C.D.S. 2004**

The 2004 International Scottish Country Dance School in Halifax, Nova Scotia, was held from Wednesday, July 28 to Sunday, Aug. 1 on the campus of Dalhousie University and the University of King's College. Approximately 250 people from all over the world attended. There were dancers from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Europe, the U.K., Guernsey, all over Canada and many states in the U.S. We stayed in the lovely old stone Shirref Hall Dormitory. Our room was on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor – the elevators only went as far as 3. Being stalwart Scottish dancers we lugged our bags up the final flight. After a wine and cheese reception, then dinner in the dining hall, we proceeded to the Welcome Social Dance, which began promptly at 8:00 pm.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings all began with classes – 2 sessions before lunch. We were divided into different groups: 25 people in the Basic class, 50 in Intermediate, 80 in Experienced Social and 100 in Advanced. (Experienced and Advanced classes were split into two groups since they were so large.) The teachers moved from class to class so that everyone got the benefit of great teachers, each with different teaching styles. The caliber of teachers was excellent. They included Ellie and Mel Briscoe, Elaine Brunken, Margan Dawson, John Drewry, Duncan and Maggie Keppie, Colleen Putt, Jane Smarzik and Ron Wallace. They gave us tips on covering, proper use of hands, proper placement of feet, how to get where you need to be, as well as teaching us some new dances. Most days

ended with a dance, followed by an after party.

The Tall Ships Festival was taking place that weekend, so on Thursday afternoon we took a cruise around Halifax Harbor to see the ships. Unfortunately, only about 10 of them had arrived (out of the 45 expected). But it was sunny, a good day to be out on the water. That evening's dance featured the children's class presenting a demonstration of *The Kingston Flyer*, performed with considerable enthusiasm. The ten children ranged in age from 5 to 14.



#### Thursday Evening's Social Dance

On Friday and Saturday afternoons we had special classes, including Highland Step, an afternoon of Drewry dances taught by John Drewry, Dances with a Twist, Ceilidh/Old Time Dances, Ladies Step Dancing, Challenging Dances, Music Class – for those whom the music doesn't tell what to do, Ball Prep and Cape Breton Step. All of the classes looked very interesting, but we could only take two. The specialty classes were very low key



and everyone had lots of fun trying something new.

#### Ron's Ladies Step Dancing Class

Instead of a Friday night dance, they held a Ceilidh with something for everyone, from great music to hilarious comedy acts. Scottish dancers all seem to be multi-talented! Saturday night's ball was preceded by a Grand March complete with piper. It was a beautiful evening, and the sight of 250 people in kilts and gowns all marching around the campus was something to behold. Many of the party dances were familiar from our recent party programs or from

having danced them in class in Connecticut. We did receive the program ahead of time to familiarize ourselves with unknown dances.

Light and lively music for the Wednesday and Saturday night dances was provided by the Macadians. Muriel Johnstone and Keith Smith played for the Thursday evening dance, and put on a concert for us on Saturday afternoon. Muriel's performance of her soulful adaptation of *The Lea Rig* left me in tears. The musicians also played for each class and some played at the after parties. What a treat!

Lydia Hedge, the Coordinator of the I.S.C.D.S., and all of the volunteers who helped out, are to be commended for having put together a terrific program. Lydia must have spent 24 hours a day at her computer for months. She answered every inquiry promptly and even went so far as to send cribs of all of the dances I was unable to find on my own! Thank you, Lydia!

As a new workshop attendee I was asked to say something to other novices. So, I put together some tips which might be of interest to those attending a workshop for the first time:

1. Bring an alarm clock.
2. Since bath/shower facilities are often shared, be sure your PJs are OK for roaming the halls (or the woods, depending how rustic the setting).
3. Bring snacks/drink to share with others at the after parties.
4. Dress for classes is usually very casual. Since few rooms are air-conditioned the emphasis is on comfort. Bring lots of clothes in case it's really hot and you have to change often.
5. You will usually receive a list of dances for the parties ahead of time, so you'll have time to study them if need be.
6. So far, talk-throughs have been done for all of the dances at the parties. You are expected to have studied the dances ahead of time, so the talk-through may be very brief. Walk-throughs are only done for a particularly complicated dance.
7. Food seems to be plentiful and good, although special diets may prove problematic.
8. If you have a Ceilidh act to bring, great! If not, don't worry. Be an enthusiastic member of the audience.
9. If you don't know how things are done, ask someone. They'll be happy to help you out.
10. If you see a workshop that you think you might like – **GO!** Chances are you'll have a great time, meet lots of new people from all over and make new friends; friends whom you'll likely meet up with again when you go to the next workshop. And, there will be a next, and then another, and then another....

*Barbra Link*

#### War Dance

The short, active service life of Lieutenant J. E.

M. "Jimmy" Atkinson of the 7th Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders came to an abrupt end at 3 pm on June 5, 1940. Surrounded by enemy soldiers near the French town of Saigneville on the River Somme with a life expectancy measured in minutes, the 26-year-old scrambled to his feet, hands in the air and surrendered to five years of captivity as a prisoner of war in Germany. Mr Atkinson, who died in 1997, would always remember the exact time of his capture – it was just after his Army issue wristwatch was shot off. Had the German marksman been fractionally more accurate, the world would have been deprived of one of the most popular Scottish country dances ever devised.

The robust but graceful *Reel of the 51st Highland Division*, worked out in the grim confines of German POW camps, is still danced around the world wherever half a dozen itchy-footed Scots gather. For Mr. Atkinson of Alloa, Clackmannanshire and his contemporaries in pre-war Scotland, country dancing was part of everyday life. Later, as he and thousands of his fellow Highlanders were being marched 1,000 miles through Holland and into Germany that June, his thoughts often strayed back to the dances he had attended. The tramp of the marching feet took on the rhythms of the Strathspeys, reels and jigs to which he had whirled his fiancée around the floor. Years later he was to remember: "I started thinking about dance tunes to keep my mind clear of grizzly thoughts, and I began to get this idea for a dance." At the core of the dance was the cross of St Andrew and the flash of the Highland division to which his regiment belonged.

At Oflag V11C, Laufen castle near Salzburg, he joined a reel club formed by Lieutenant A. P. J. "Peter" Oliver of the 4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. The two men discussed the dance forming in Mr. Atkinson's mind, and, with the help of Lt. Col. Tom Harris Hunter of the Royal Army Service Corps, a former chairman of the Perth branch of the Scottish Country Dance Society, they worked out the dance that is essentially the same reel we dance today.

On Halloween 1941, in Oflag V11B at Warburg, Westphalia, Major General (later Sir) Victor Fortune, officer commanding the 51st, approved the name The 51st Country Dance (Laufen Reel). The Germans had paid little attention to the whistling, stomping Scots POWs until Col. Harris Hunter mailed the dance instructions to his wife in Scotland. To the uninitiated guards, the written steps – "Cast off three places, five to eight lead to top corners nine to twelve" – looked suspiciously like code. An NCO was given a demonstration. Mr Atkinson noted: "I think they thought we were completely mad, but the steps got through to Harris Hunter's wife in Scotland."

The reel became an immediate success in wartime Britain. The then Queen, now Queen Mother, persuaded the Scottish (later Royal) Country

Dance Society to include it in its book of dances, even though it did not conform to its standards. Later in peacetime, Mr. Atkinson married Heather Young, went back to his prewar work in an Alloa paper mill, and raised four children. A charming man with a twinkling sense of humour, he was always mildly amused and bemused by the worldwide success of the dance. "I just hope I brought a little happiness to people," he said.

*contributed by Dick Platt*

### **Class Flyers**

With the start of a new Scottish Country Dance year coming up, it's time for new Class Flyers. These Flyers can be one of the best ways to attract new people to try Scottish Country Dancing. Posting them in libraries, supermarkets, Post Offices, etc. is a good way to get the word out to potential new dancers in the area. The Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Group Demonstration Team also distributes them through a Flyer Board at public demonstrations such as at the St. Andrews Scottish Festival in Goshen, CT. Each class is requested to send Don Wills about two dozen of their flyers as soon as they are available. He will forward some to the other CT classes and will distribute the rest through the Demonstration Team Flyer Board. It is important to have them available before the Goshen Festival (October 2nd this year) as this is the largest Scottish affair of the year in Connecticut.

*Don Wills*

### **Volunteers for Demo Dances**

The New Haven Branch wants to gather a list of possible volunteer dancers who would be willing to take part in demonstrations of Scottish country dancing during the year. This is different from the Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Group Demonstration Team which practices regularly and performs at specific events. Every now and then a demo group is needed for a one-time occasion and a list of dancers would make organizing this much simpler. Class teachers will be asking for names. Signing up does not mean a commitment. Please consider it.



RSCDS New Haven Branch Officers:

President	Dick Baxter (203) 735-5079
Secretary	Ena Baxter (203) 735-5079
Treasurer	Richard Ives (203) 393-3713
Branch Class	George Thomson (203) 230-8551
Teacher Comm.	Ken Way (860) 653-5258
Intergroup	Don Wills (860) 434-0415
At Large	Mary Byrnie (860) 635-4056 Bob Byrnie (860) 635-4056 Joyce Chase (203) 238-0694 Catriona MacAuslan (203) 421-4060
Membership	Ed Davis (203) 264-087
Newsletter	Lucile Blanchard (860) 347-0278 lblanchard@wesleyan.edu

**Editor's Note**

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Deadline for the next newsletter is **November 15** for publication by the end of the month. I will welcome all of your stories or reports, and particularly all calendar listings. My home address is 1061 Millbrook Road, Middletown, CT 06457 and my e-mail is lblanchard@wesleyan.edu.

Note to Readers: If you would rather receive Reel Time by e-mail, please send an e-mail message to me at <mailto:lblanchard@wesleyan.edu> so that I will have your preferred address.