

Reel Time

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

Winter 2006

Class Schedules

Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Class
Grace Episcopal Church on the Green, Windsor CT.
Tuesday 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Contact Barbara Austen 203-630-9749 or Karen Pestana 860-298-8311.

Middletown Scottish Country Dancers First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court Street, Middletown CT. Wednesday 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Contact Joyce Chase 203-238-0694 or Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278.

Kilts & Ghillies Scottish Country Dancers Millennium School of Irish Dance, 12 Old Mill Road, Georgetown, CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 10:00 pm. Contact Angela Montague 203-762-9892 or Peter Price 203-675-9587.

Mystic Scottish Country Dancers St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 310 Fort Hill Road, Groton, CT. Friday 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Contact Ruth Walsh 860-536-6265 or www.mysticscottishdancers.com

New Haven Branch Scottish Country Dance Class
New Haven Medical Society, 364 Whitney Ave., New Haven, CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 10:00 pm. Contact Dick Platt 203-878-6094 or Leslie Kearney 203-281-6591.

Newtown Scottish Country Dancers St. James Episcopal Church, 25 West St., Danbury, CT. Monday 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Contact Ernie Harrington 203-938-2881 or Ed Davis 203-264-0870.

Woodbridge Scottish Country Dancers First Church of Christ Congregational Parish House, 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, CT. Friday 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Contact Donna Ives 203-393-3713 or Mollie Keller 203-375-2840.

In addition, *Peter Price's class* will resume on Thursday nights at the Friends Meeting House, 225 East Grand Avenue, New Haven, starting at 7:30 pm. The class dates are Feb. 9, Mar. 9, April 13 and May 11. Call 203-675-9587 for more information.

Upcoming Events

Ball Workshop: Saturday, February 18, 2006 2:30-5:30 pm, \$8.00. First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court St., Middletown. For those interested in staying on for dinner, there will be a list and map of local restaurants to choose from. Contact Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278.

New Haven Branch Highland Ball Saturday, March 4, 2006, West Hartford Community Center, 5:30 pm to midnight. Music by Tom Pixton, Hanneke Cassel, David Knight, Mike MacNintch. Contact blink6325@yahoo.com.

Sunday Brunch, Sunday, March 5, New Haven Medical Association Building. 11:00 am brunch, 12 noon dancing. For more information, www.RSCDSNewHaven.org

Rerr Terr Saturday, April 1, 2006. First Presbyterian Church, 64 Passaic St., Hackensack, NJ. Music by *Highland Whiskey*. Contact Cindy Carlone at Ccarlone@comcast.net for more information.

Challenge Class Thursday, April 20, 2006. First Church, 190 Court St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm \$8.00. Leslie Kearney, teacher. Call Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278 or Joyce Chase 203-238-0694 for more information.

Fifth Annual Tea Party Middletown Class Wednesday, April 26, 2006. First Church of Christ, 190 Court St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm, no fee. Social dance night with a Scottish tea.

Kilts & Ghillies Ball Saturday, April 29, 2006. South Britain Congregational Church, Southbury, CT. Music by Terry Traub, Alice Backer, Jim Stevenson-Mathews.

Boston Highland Ball Weekend May 5-7, 2006, Nevins Hall, Framingham, MA. Music by *Tullochgorum*. **Friday Welcome Dance**, May 5, \$10.00. Music by Terry Traub, David Knight. **Sunday Brunch**, May 7. For more information, www.RSCDSBoston.org.

Challenge Class Thursday, May 18, 2006. First Church, 190 Court St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm \$8.00. Barbara Austen, teacher. Call Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278 or Joyce Chase 203-238-0694 for more information.

Pawling Spring Weekend May 19-21, 2006. Circle Lodge, Hopewell Junction, NY. Teachers: Robert McOwen, Elinor Vandegrift, Les Lambert. Music Bobby Brown's *Scottish Accent* and Jim Stevenson-Mathews. Contact Sheila Wilson 212-744-1470 or e-mail: info@rscdsnewyork.org.

Rhode Island Scottish Highland Festival Saturday, May 20, 2006, 9 am to 5 pm. Washington County Fairgrounds, Route 112 South, Richmond, RI (Exit 3 off of Route 95 North). Further information, Scottish Heritage Society, P. O. Box 44, Westerly, RI 02891.

Drumkilbo Event at Camp Laurelwood, Madison, CT, Saturday, May 27, 2006. Save the date!

Westchester Ball Saturday, June 3, 2006

Summerdance XVII at the United Nations for UNICEF Saturday, June 24, 2006, 12:30-4:00 pm.

English-Scottish Pinewoods Session July 3-7, 2006 Pinewoods Camp, Plymouth, MA. Teachers: Ron Wallace (Scottish), Gene Morrow (English). Contact Marianne Taylor 603-463-7771.

Scottish Pinewoods Session I July 7-9, 2006
Scottish Pinewoods Session II July 10-15, 2006
More info, mailto:Bob_Littlehale@comcast.net

T.A.C. Summer School for all Scottish country dancers (not just teachers). Aug. 6-13, 2006. Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

For information on similar events, check www.intercityscot.org.

Windsor Holiday Party

Grateful that the predicted snow for Tuesday, Dec. 6th, never showed up, fourteen of us met at Grace Church in Windsor for their holiday party. Later on, four young girls from town came and danced with us in their stocking feet. They enjoyed the music particularly and talked about coming back to learn more. The music was truly wonderful. Norb Spencer and his group play together so well, it's tempting to just stop and listen. Some of the dances – *Rory O'Moore*, *Winstanley House* – were unfamiliar to many but, boosted along by the band, they went very well. The evening ended with a rousing performance of *The Royal Yacht Britannia*. Thanks to Barbara for arranging such a fun program.

Middletown Holiday Party

There were four full sets plus extra dancers for the Middletown Holiday Party on Wednesday, Dec. 28th. Norb Spencer and his group of great musicians played for the program Ken Way devised which started with *Border Meeting*, a round-the-room dance. After *Catch the Wind* and *Chequered Court*, *Black Mountain Reel* was a struggle for many but very satisfying when they were able to dance it through. Everyone enjoyed the refreshments at break. Then the spokesman for the Middletown class announced a special gift for their teacher, Ken Way. (See below.) Six dancers danced *Ken's Way* once through with Norb et al. playing Muriel Johnstone's music. Then the whole crowd

walked the dance and danced it eight times through. The party continued with the *Saltire Strathspey*, another problem dance which went pretty well. *Joie de Vivre* and *Follow Me Home* were delightful and the final dance, *Duke of Perth*, was a total romp. There was an audience for most of the evening, including a homeless man who didn't find the dancing particularly enticing but enjoyed the refreshments.



A Special Gift

In recognition of Ken Way's devotion to the Middletown class for fourteen years, the class paid Muriel Johnstone to create a dance in Ken's name. The result, *Ken's Way*, along with the music she composed to be played with it, was presented to Ken at the Middletown Holiday Dance on December 28th. The dance can be performed as a jig or a strathspey, and Muriel provided music for each version. Norb Spencer and his group played the jig for the 3-couple demonstration, and again when the whole room of dancers joined in.

Reel Time is beginning a new series of articles which will give the background of the men and women who teach Scottish country dancing in Connecticut. To start off, it seemed appropriate to let the readers know how Ken Way turned over a good part of his life to this wonderful art form.

Ken Way – Teacher



Ken Way's 50 years of Scottish dancing began in 1955 while he was an engineering student at Union College and won a junior-year scholarship to the University of St. Andrews. This exciting opportunity had one hitch – Union College wouldn't accept engineering credits from St. Andrews, so Ken's courses were all in the liberal arts – music, history, etc., and an extra year was required. This turned out to be a good thing. That particular year became a life-changing transition. It turned this farm-raised engineer into an all-around scholar and Renaissance man, someone who became avidly interested in everything.

Not surprisingly, for those who know Ken well, "everything" included an eager interest in the young ladies. Shortly after arriving at St. Andrews, Ken began to take Scottish dancing lessons given at the University. His first teacher, Archie Strachan, head of the Physical Education Department, taught dancing once a week in the University Gymnasium. (Archie was still alive, but out of town when Ken was at St. Andrews Summer School last summer and tried to visit his old teacher.) Archie taught the basic steps, starting with Strathspey, and a few simple dances. Ken danced both as a student enrolled at the University and socially, mostly in the old Student Union, where the student "hops" were held, or in the Town Hall. Students learned the dances by following what others were doing, as briefings had not yet been invented. One especially festive occasion was the Celtic Society Ball held in Younger Hall. It was there that he first saw one of the swells wearing the strange dancing shoes called ghillies. Back at Union College, the exchange students who had gone to St. Andrews got together occasionally, and even did some dancing one evening, but that was the start of a long hiatus in Ken's dancing life.

Outlets for the dancing that Ken had learned to love just weren't available until the New Haven Branch founded the Greater Hartford Dance Group in 1976. A rotating group of teachers from New Haven included Peter Day. The first full-time teacher was Bob Goodrich of Newington. Since then Ken has danced continually, except for one year when he dropped out for economic reasons. As he learned more dances, he became interested in taking the teacher exam so that he could pass on what he enjoyed so much to others. He returned to his beloved St. Andrews for a one-week session of the RSCDS Summer School in 1978. Duncan McLeod was his teacher for two days, but after Duncan was made Director of the Summer School (Miss Milligan had just died) a young lady took over the class. (This may have been Mary Murray, but the history is somewhat fuzzy here.) Ken enjoyed the Summer School so much that he returned in 1985, 1987, 1992 and most recently in 2005. He attended T.A.C. Summer School (Teachers' Association (Canada)) in 1994, 1997 and 2000.

There had been a Middletown class even before the Hartford class came into being. However, in 1985 both

Middletown teachers left, and the group dwindled to two couples, disbanding that summer. The Middletown records and phonograph were put into storage. At the Hartford Class Christmas Party in 1991, Marge Hawley mentioned how great it would be to have dancing in Middletown again, and Ken said if she could find a hall, he'd be happy to teach. The Parish Hall at First Church was available, so she retrieved the equipment and the class was reincarnated. On a Wednesday night, January 15, 1992, Ken faced a class full of brand new dancers while an errant photographer wandered up and down the middle of the sets. Some experienced dancers from Hartford and New Haven came to help guide the newcomers through the figures. And it must have been successful because that class continues to be held on Wednesday nights with Ken still teaching.

Ken is a member of the Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dancers Demo Team, attending their many performances around the state. He was in at the beginning, around 1979, when Bob Goodrich started rehearsing a group of experienced dancers after class in West Hartford, moving to a church hall in Newington during the summer months. When they did a paying demo, they even got reimbursed for some of their expenses. These dancers formed the core of the present demo team. Since 2001 Ken has served as teacher representative on the board of the RSCDS New Haven Branch. In this capacity, he sends out a teacher newsletter and plans each year's schedule of challenge classes. Combined with his weekly teaching, this adds up to a very generous part of his time given over to Scottish country dancing.

compiled by Sandy Taylor and Lucile Blanchard

New Haven Holiday Party

The New Haven class hosted a lovely Christmas party on Sunday, Dec. 4th. In spite of conflicting with a Hartford Demo Team performance, battling lousy weather, and missing a number of people due to the early crush of holiday events, we had two sets of dancers, more than in recent years. The food was delectable, the music exhilarating, the company and dancing spirited and joyous. The real catalyst for the day came from Brian Haeckler's seasonal program and the creative way in which he presented it. Instead of simply posting the dances, he turned every dance title into a puzzle with clues. It's remarkable how hilarious simply filling in the blanks became, and how contagious Brian's creativity was. Thank you, Brian; and thanks to our out-of-town guests who braved the weather, to everyone who contributed refreshments, and to everyone who contributed their presence to a wonderful occasion. We hope to see even more of you next year.

Leslie Kearney



Piping in the haggis

Robert Burns Night I

The St. Andrews' Society of Connecticut held its 24th annual Robert Burns Event on Saturday, Jan. 28 at the Cheshire Masonic Lodge. Over 90 people gathered to celebrate the birthday of Scotland's great poet. After a round of toasts, the gathered company received the haggis, which was then served as the appetizer along with tatties and neeps. After the dinner, Johny Miller, the Burns Chair, welcomed everyone. More readings and speeches were followed by the distribution of door prizes. Joyce Chase then presented six Scottish country dancers who performed three dances, chief among them *De'il Amang the Sailors* which is an amalgam of familiar dances. Jeff Miller rounded off the evening with a grand assortment of tunes on his bag-pipes, and the assembled company sang *Auld Lang Syne*. Pam Munro, Peg Limbacher and Bonnie Miller are to be thanked for their successful efforts.

information supplied by Pam Munro



Lucile Blanchard, Ev Munro, Mary & Bob Byrnie, Marge & Don Wills at Cheshire

Burns Night II

As the Mystic Scottish Country Dancers prepared their annual Robert Burns Night for Saturday, Feb. 11th at the Groton Inn and Suites, they figured the weather would continue to be mild. The evening included presentations by the Mystic Highland Pipe Band, the Stirling Highland Dance Company, the Mystic dancers, plus recitations of Robbie's finest

poems. Andrew Fraser came from Sparta, New Jersey to present the *Ode to the Haggis*. Neil Sharpe was the Master of Ceremonies with live music by Fintan Stanley and his International Ceilidh Band. A spectacular evening for anyone with a particle of Scot in him. And then the forecasters predicted a weather "event" for the day! What to do? There was no way to reschedule such a huge undertaking. After consultations with the hotel management, they decided to just go for it. A few cancellations, but others were still calling for reservations, so almost 400 members and guests arrived for a superb night of "all things Scottish." Marge Wills, the reservations chair, ever smiling and gracious, worked hard to seat people with friends. The program went off beautifully with special bonuses such as the Broad Sword Dance performed by Dave Lees, Eric Hluchan and Kevin Laber.



And the guests were most moved by a performance of the *Reel of the 51st*, danced by ten men just as it had been created in a German prisoner of war camp many decades ago. After the delicious meal and traditional toasts, the Ceilidh Band struck up for the *Virginia Reel*, followed by other dances that drew people onto the floor.



Many RSCDS members were there, some arranging to stay overnight at the hotel. Trudi Hamilton and others worked with banquet manager Brian Langley to accommodate some 25 guests for a delicious brunch the next morning, pleased that Rhode Island's own Jordan Cannady and Richmond Cargill, otherwise known as The Dram Boys, could provide their rousing Scottish and Celtic music. Finally, everyone headed home amidst the cold and blowing snow.

Many thanks to everyone who braved the elements to join the Mystic crew for a great addition to the series of memorable Burns Night Dinners. Plan to join us again next year on February 10th at the Groton Inn and Suites when we'll do it again!

Ruth Holland Walsh

*Oh, cruel was the snow that sweeps Glen Coe,
And covers the grave o' Donald,
Oh, cruel was the foe that raped Glen Coe,
And murdered the house of MacDonald*

from The Scottish Banner, FEB 2006

submitted by Everett Munro

New Year's Eve Party, New Haven

Despite threatening weather and rather slick roads, twelve people attended the New Haven Branch New Year's Eve party. It was even more low key than usual with such a small number, but we had a terrific time. We also were very healthy – everyone brought main dishes or salads, not a single dessert among the offerings! I don't think they were missed, however. Bob Byrnie, master decorator, outdid himself this year. He painted a three-dimensional scene with Edinburgh Castle in the background and trees in the foreground, and the trees had little lights in them! It was stunning. He has earned himself a permanent job.

We had one new dancer this year, and everyone helped her through a program of not-too taxing dances. Her husband, who is not a dancer, but came fully decked out in kilt, etc., kindly washed the dishes as we danced. In response to the weather, the group decided to celebrate midnight at 11:00 pm so we could all get home safely. Although the party was shortened, everyone agreed they had an enjoyable evening, and I suppose they will be counting on me again next year.

Barbara Austen

Party Program

Kilts & Ghillies Ball, Saturday, April 29

The Roselath Cross	32J3	Book 41/10
Cape Town Wedding	32S3	Book 39/4
Bea's Delight	32R3	Book 43/7
Betty Burke	32J3	Milton Levy/Tin Woodman
The Garry Strathspey	32S4	Cosh 22 + 2
The Pride of the Murray	32H3	Iain Boyd/The World Around the Corner

Dancing Dolphins	32J3	B. Skelton/Dolphin Book
Invercauld's Reel	32S3	Book 11/10
General Stuart's Reel	32R3	Book 10/3
Hugh's Welcome	32S	Schottische 2 RtR Morison's Bush
Scottish Fiddler o' Crieff	32J3	New Atholl Collection
Monadh Liath	32S3	John Drewry's Bankhead Book 6
Cauld Comfort	40R4	Ron Wallace leaflet
The Dusty Miller	32J3	Border Book/7
Neidpath Castle	32S3	set Book 22/9
The Punch Bowl	32R 3	Book 5/5
Scots Bonnet	32J3	Book 10/9
The Cashcrom	32S2	Milton Levy/Tin Woodman
The Dancing Man	32R3	Roy Goldring/10 Social Dances

Please note: All programs are subject to change.

* * *

Dear Abby: What do you think of men in kilts? I want to buy and try one. My wife is undecided, but trusts your judgment. Your thoughts, please?

GRANDSON OF SCOTLAND

Dear Grandson: As a person of proud Scottish descent, you are entitled to wear a kilt if you wish, but please refrain from doing high kicks on the dance floor.

submitted by Joyce Chase

RSCDS New Haven Branch Officers:

President	Dick Baxter (860) 314-0363
Secretary	Ena Baxter (860) 314-0363
Treasurer	Richard Ives (203) 393-3713
Branch Class	Leslie Kearney (203) 281-6591
Teacher Comm.	Ken Way (860) 653-5258
Intergroup	Don Wills (860) 536-1981
At Large	Mary Byrnie (860) 635-4056 Bob Byrnie (860) 635-4056 Joyce Chase (203) 238-0694 Catriona MacAuslan (203) 421-4060 Nina Stein (203) 757-2539
Membership	Ed Davis (203) 264-087
Newsletter	Lucile Blanchard (860) 347-0278 lblanchard@wesleyan.edu

Editor's Note

Deadline for the next newsletter is **May 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.

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

