

# Reel Time

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

Fall 2007

## 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.

*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.mysticsscottishdancers.com](http://www.mysticsscottishdancers.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.

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

**Peter Price's Class** Second Thursday of the month, 8:00 pm, New Haven Friends Meeting House, 225 East Grand Ave., New Haven. **Winter dates:** Jan. 10, Feb. 14, Mar. 13, Apr. 10, May 8. This class welcomes everyone with an interest in Scottish country dancing.

## Upcoming Events

**Pinewoods Benefit Ball** Saturday, Dec. 8, 2007.  
Bolles Hall, Salem, MA. Contact Mary Ellen Scannell, [scannell@gis.net](mailto:scannell@gis.net) for more information.

**New Haven Christmas Party** Sunday, Dec. 9, 2007, 3:00 pm. New Haven Medical Society, 364 Whitney Ave., New Haven, CT. Contact George Thomson 203-230-8553 for more information.

**Middletown Holiday Party** Saturday, Dec. 29, 2007, 7:30 - 10 pm. \$10. Music by Norb Spencer and friends. First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court Street, Middletown CT. Contact Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278 for more information.

**Annual New Year's Day Party** Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2008. Northampton, MA. Karen Lavallee, 413-527-3407.

**Mystic Burns Night**, Saturday, Feb. 9, 2008. 5 pm to midnight. Groton Inn and Suites. \$45. Deadline for reservations, Jan. 25, 2008. For more information, call Marge Wills, dinner reservations chair, 860-536-1981 or Ruth Walsh, 860-536-6265.

**New Haven Branch Highland Ball** Saturday, March 1, 2008. West Hartford Town Hall, 50 So. Main St., West Hartford. \$55 or \$60 after Feb. 4. 5:00 pm to midnight. Music by *Thistle House*: Dave Wiesler, David Knight, Dan Emery, Susie Petrov. **Sunday Brunch**, March 2, New Haven Medical Society, 11:00 am.

**Ball Workshop**: Sunday, Jan. 20, 2:00-5:00 pm. \$10. New Haven Medical Society, New Haven.

**Ball Workshop**: Saturday, Feb. 16, 2008. 2:30-5:30 pm. \$10. First Church of Christ Congregational, Middletown. Teacher, Ken Way.

For more contact Barbra Link, [blink6325@yahoo.com](mailto:blink6325@yahoo.com) or Jane Leibert, [janeleibert@yahoo.com](mailto:janeleibert@yahoo.com).

**Kilts & Ghillies Ball** Saturday, April 26, 2008. Save the date.

Check [www.intercityscot.org](http://www.intercityscot.org) for similar events.

## Goshen Scottish Festival

The 24th Annual Scottish Festival sponsored by the Saint Andrew's Society of Connecticut was held in Goshen, CT on October 6th. The sunny day with temperatures in the 80's was a complete reversal of the usual chilly air in the Litchfield Hills at this time of year. Twenty clans and societies took part along with pipe bands, Scottish food and interesting merchandise. Clan Munro, the honored clan, led the parade of clans for the Opening Ceremonies. Representing Clan Munro were Everett Munro (New London), Stephen Monroe (Groton) and Gerald Munro (Salem) who declared the Festival open.

One popular event was the Scottish Country Dancing demonstration with audience participation taught by Joyce Chase. There were children's games, the Bonnie Knees contest, athletic events, dance exhibitions, piping competition and trophies awarded. The entertainment tent featured the very popular Ru-Ra, an exciting new presence in the Celtic/World music scene. The Hunting McLeod, hailed as "the most energetic Celtic band around," with traditional bagpipes and fiddle transformed into a new evolution of Celtic sound and power-

house rock mixed with electric guitar, bass and bass drums playing traditional as well as original tunes. Also performing was Charlie Zahm, a popular soloist at Celtic music festivals. Charlie's baritone voice weaves magical moments of Scottish and Irish history for the listener. There were performances by the Stirling Highland Dancers, Kasha Breau and the Wild Notes, and our very own Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dancers. The Dog Ring contained a Scottish Dog Exhibit and a lively shepherding demonstration. Also attending were the New England Border Collie Rescue volunteers and the Connecticut Society of Genealogists. When the festivities ended at 4:30 pm, Ev Munro, representing Clan Munro, officially closed the games.

If you have never attended a Highland Games event, try to do so in 2008! It is an opportunity to don your Scottish attire, meet very friendly people and experience our great Scottish heritage. You won't be disappointed.

*Ev Munro*

### **Mystic Fall Ceilidh**

The Mystic class hosted a Fall Ceilidh on Friday, October 19 at the Groton Inn and Suites. We opened the Ceilidh with a bit of "Scottish Education," describing the night's essential elements – singing, music, eating, dancing, music, poetry, socializing, topped off by a wee dram of whiskey, so essential in the life of the Highlands and the Islands. Traditionally our ceilidhs provide rhythms that "set your feet a-dancing, your pulse a-thumping and leave you fully aware that you have danced the night away."

Bob Scent served as Master of Ceremonies inviting all to join in ... sing a song, tell a joke, dance a dance, or just enjoy! We were treated to energetic Highland dances performed by four students of the Stirling Highland Dance Company, including Cassie Fagan, daughter of Mystic dancer Sarah Fagan. Our class members performed *De'il Amang The Tailors* and *MacDonald of the Isles* and then drew people onto the floor for social dancing. Peter Leibert played the concertina, then accompanied people in more social dancing. He makes playing look so easy!

Becky and Rick Corbett played their fifes for us. They play with a fife and drum corps in Rhode Island. Pipers and drummers treated us to some fine Scottish tunes including *Itchy Fingers* and *The Flower of Scotland*. Bob Cole led us in some wonderful Scottish songs. He has a magnificent voice and we hope to get him to sing a solo next year! Ellie Toy held us spellbound as she told the story of *The Fairy Flag* that can be seen at Dunvegan Castle on the shores of Loch Dunvegan. Tradition holds that a fairy gave the magic flag to William the 4th. Part of its magic was to charm herring into the loch when it was unfurled. But it should only be flown in emergencies – when the MacLeods faced defeat, when the life of the sole heir was in danger or when the clan was threatened with extinction. Twice the flag was flown in battle and twice the MacLeods won. I

remember seeing that now fragile looking flag at the Castle in a sturdy frame. Such a great story! Peter Leibert followed with the fairy tale *Prinderella and the Cince* that starts off, "Twonce upon a wime ther lived a ciness named Prinderella. She lived with her sticked wepmother and her sugly isters .." and ended with the fact that the "three sugly isters and the sticked wepmother slied on the tripper, but it fidn't dit." We all laughed and ate and danced off some of the calories. Then it was time to sing *Auld Lang Syne* and bid everyone goodnight. A bonny time was had by all!

Plans are on for the 2008 Fall Ceilidh at the Groton Inn and Suites on the 17th of October. Mark that date on your new calendar!!

*Ruth Holland Walsh*

### **Dancing in Scotland**

Eighteen members of the New Haven Branch of the RSCDS spent eight days in August driving around western Scotland from our lodgings on Loch Lomond. We danced with groups in Ayr, Oban and Glasgow. We also danced in parking lots and a rest stop with the name "Rest and Be Thankful," and on the paddle steamship Waverley as it traveled through the Firth of Clyde. We got the accordion player who was traveling on the boat to play *Mairi's Wedding* for us to dance. As he played ceilidh tunes, other passengers joined in for dancing and singing while we cruised back to Helensburgh with a spectacular sunset coloring the clouds and a rising half moon. Many of our dances were associated with the places where we danced, starting of course with *Rest and Be Thankful*. Others were *Good Hearted Glasgow* and *Salute to Glasgow*, most appropriate. *Sands of Morar* which we saw from the Jacobite train. *Flower of Dunbeg* and *Autumn in Appin*, both towns north of Oban. And the tune for *Autumn* is *Hills of Lorne* which are also in the area. *Highland Welcome* and *McDonald of the Isles* were also suitable as we were in the Highlands of the McDonalds and visited many isles. We danced *Culla Bay* with all three Scottish groups, but any connection would be a stretch as it is on the west coast of Benbecula of the Outer Hebrides. Perhaps our next trip?

The dance in Ayr was actually held in Troon, attended by 200 dancers, and the church hall was not even crowded. It seems that Ayr has a reputation for being the place to dance in the summer, with music by the Roy Hendrie Band, and people travel a hundred miles and more each week to attend. They publish their program ahead of time, alternating the same groups of dances over the summer, week by week. It's heartening to see Scottish country dancing can draw such crowds.

One of the highlights of the trip was a day spent on the Jacobite steam train, traveling from Fort William to Mallaig and back. This is the train used in the Harry Potter movies, although we never caught a glimpse of Hogwarts. We also climbed up to the hill fort of Dunadd, saw the 5000-year-old burial cairns at Kilmartin, spent a day in Glasgow where the bus tour of the city happened

to include a group of people dressed as fruits and vegetables. We were unable to find out why.



Dancing at Rest and Be Thankful

Some of our group visited Hill House, the museum of work by Charles Rennie MacKintosh, the famous Scottish designer who has been compared to Frank Lloyd Wright. Others had lunch at the Willow Tea Room in Glasgow which he designed and built. We toured Culzean Castle, saw the Robbie Burns homestead in Alloway, and the Brig o'Doon, the bridge made famous in his poem *Tam O'Shanter*. Our trip ended with an afternoon at the Cowal Highland Games where we watched massed pipe bands fill the main field until 150 bands, with 3000 pipers and drummers, played for us.



In George Square, Glasgow

Catriona MacAuslan has our gratitude for planning and executing the trip. Although one member had an accident and ended the week on crutches, the overall experience was a great success. Scotland never looked so good.

*Lucile Blanchard*

### Nutmeg Workshop

The second one-day workshop held by the New Haven Branch took place on Saturday, September 8th in Ivoryton, CT. Forty-five dancers came to the Incarnation Center, an Episcopal Church retreat, and followed the winding driveway through the woods until they found the hall on the shore of Bushy Hill Lake. The afternoon classes were taught by Kent Smith and Robert McOwen. In spite of the late summer heat, dancers threw themselves into the spirit of the occasion, starting off with

Kent Smith's *Rambling Jig*. This was followed by *Miss Catherine Ann*, a strathspey with a mirror set & link figure. *Bobby Graham's Coach* rounded out Kent's class, a reel devised by him that conveyed the feeling of traveling the narrow roads in Scotland.

Robert started his class with *The Fyket*, a jig with some tricky phrasing including a 4-bar progression he called "the shuffle." *Linnea's Strathspey*, a lovely dance, had an interesting promenade chain progression in its center. And even though everyone was hot and tired, the class clearly enjoyed *The Westminster Reel* at the end.

Skip Chase did a masterful job of grilling meat for the buffet supper, accompanied by the usual tasty assortment of potluck dishes. The new stairway leading from the hall downhill to the lake provided a wonderful setting for people to sit and eat. Catriona MacAuslan, one of the organizers of the workshop, used the occasion to celebrate her mother Peggy's 92nd birthday, presenting her with a large cake with lighted candles as everyone sang *Happy Birthday*.



Norb Spencer and Susie Petrov, who make up *Local Hero*, played for the afternoon classes and again for the social dance in the evening. By then, they had kicked off their shoes to play barefoot. Everyone enjoyed the evening program devised by Joyce Chase, particularly *The Falls of Rogie*, and the evening ended with *The Duke of Perth*.

The workshop committee was pleased with the successful day and hopes to hold another workshop next fall. If you missed it this year, try to come in 2008.

*Lucile Blanchard*

### Branch Award Certificate

The Board of the New Haven Branch recommended Dick and Ena Baxter receive the RSCDS Branch Award Certificate for four years of unstinting service for the Branch. RSCDS headquarters in Edinburgh issued the Certificate and Ken Way, the current Branch president, presented it to the Baxters on September 8, 2007 at the Nutmeg Workshop in Ivoryton.

### From the Baxters:

Ena and I would like to express our appreciation on being presented with the Branch Award Certificate. We recognize that this is not an every day happening and that



Dick Baxter, Ken Way, Ena Baxter

the New Haven Board spent time contacting and getting approval from the RSCDS Headquarters in Edinburgh, Scotland. We have served several years on the New Haven Branch Board and enjoyed all of them. While serving as President and Secretary, we were always well supported in activities and new ventures. Everything we have done for the Branch has been from our love of Scottish Country Dancing. We also hope we have in some way helped preserve the Branch for future generations to experience the joy of Scottish dancing. This is an award we will forever cherish and wish to say one more time – Thank you for your kind thoughts.

*Richard (Dick) Baxter  
Ena Baxter*

### New Hampshire Highlands

The late summer workshop, Hillsboro Highlands, was reincarnated this year as the New Hampshire Highlands in Contoocook, held August 24-26. Since it conflicted with the Scotland trip, only a few of our dancers made it this year, but they reported very favorably on the new facilities and the overall spirit.



Jim McNab, Elizabeth Muir, Ann Penfield in New Hampshire

### Visitors from England

The Middletown class welcomed Tony and Judith Dewdney in September, who were here on a visit from England. Tony had been here from 1996 to 1999 working with Amtrak on the new Accela train. Since returning

to England, he has become the New Haven Branch representative to the RSCDS AGM in Edinburgh.



Judith and Tony Dewdney

Meeting with the Board, he explained just what he does as our AGM rep and pointed out that a group our size can have two representatives. The Board then appointed Judith as our second. They will oversee our interests in Scotland. And meanwhile it was wonderful to have them dancing with us again.

*Lucile Blanchard*

### NOMAD 2007

The **NOR**theast Music, Art and Dance Festival of Traditional Music and Dance was held at the Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven, CT on November 2–4. The New Haven Branch had their annual food booth selling coffee, tea, cider, scones, shortbread and various other tasty treats. It was a successful fund raiser event for the Branch, earning approximately \$1500 after expenses. The cafeteria was abuzz Friday night as the vendors set up their booths while the Contra Dance featuring the Festival Callers with the NOMAD Festival Orchestra took place in the gym. Lucile Blanchard, Steve Rice and Ev Munro got the food booth ready, with help from George Thomson and Kate Mahoney for the Saturday morning opening.

On Saturday our dedicated volunteers arrived at 7 am to start the coffee perking and set out the donated food. After attacking and dispatching a few electrical gremlins we were good to go as caffeine-deprived festival goers lined up. RSCDS volunteers and freshly baked food came from all over the state with everyone pitching in to keep the beverages flowing and the food dispatched. By afternoon many helpers had left for other events, but four of our more experienced dancers stayed to help. This was VERY MUCH APPRECIATED as it turned out to be the busiest time. On Sunday another fine group of volunteers worked from 11 am to 5 pm.

Leftover food was taken to St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen in Middletown or to Barbara Austin's freezer to be used for Branch events. Ev Munro has an inventory of

paper goods available for the classes to use at their events. For those that were unable to be there for one reason or another (off to New Orleans or the Jeannie Carmichael Ball), we hope you can join the NOMAD team next year. It's a great opportunity to meet people from other branches and take part in the festival.

A sincere thank you to all thirty plus volunteers that gave of their time and who baked the wonderful treats, especially those pies that sold out so quickly. And also to those who donated money. Special thanks to Steve Rice for mentoring us in the art of making good coffee and Susan Leff for preparing the oatmeal breakfast on Sunday morning. The best part of the weekend was when volunteers who had not signed up came to help or deliver the food that kept arriving. The organizing committee, Lucile Blanchard, Catriona MacAuslan and Ev Munro, thank one and all for your participation. We will welcome your ideas for NOMAD 2008.

*Ev Munro*  
*Bonnieladdie63@aol.com*

### Halloween in Middletown

This year Halloween fell on Wednesday, the night of the Middletown class. One of the class members had said she would come in costume. To everyone's surprise, just



about all the dancers turned up in some kind of fancy dress, if only an orange scarf around the waist or a blinking pin on the label or an elegant feathered mask. There were witches, a medieval lady, a Morris dancer, a green-vested Irishman, a masked man in black, a black cat and more.



The surprise of the evening was when Ken Way, our teacher, made his entrance dressed as a Viking complete with sword and shield. His holiday-based program included *De'il Amang the Tailors*, *Devil's Elbow* and *Devil's Delight*, *The Black Dance* and *The Black Cat*, and, of course, *Old Nick's Lumber Room*. Barbra Link provided a spiderweb tablecloth and delicious treats, all orange and black, or at least very dark brown chocolate which we know is good for us.

*Lucile Blanchard*  
*photos by Roslyn Carrier-Brault*

### Kilts & Ghillies Ball Program

April 26, 2008

Ciamar A Tha	32J3
John McAlpin	32S3
Trip to Bavaria	32H4
Well Done Jack	32J3
Balmoral Strathspey	32S4
Australian Ladies	32R3
Tribute to the Borders	32J3
Margaret Parker's Strathspey	32S3
Irish Rover	32R3
Aldabaran	32J3
The Silver City	32S3
The Piper & the Penguin	88R4 sq set
A Trip to the Drakensberg	40J3
Linnea's Strathspey	32S2
Currie Mountain	32R3
Saw Ye My Wee Thing	32J2
Miss Milligan's Strathspey	32S3
De'il Among the Tailors	32R3

### 30 November - St. Andrew's Day

Saint Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland and St. Andrew's Day is celebrated by Scots around the world on the 30th of November. The flag of Scotland is the Cross of St. Andrew, a widely displayed symbol of national identity. The "Order of Saint Andrew" or the "Most Ancient Order of the Thistle" is an order of knighthood which is restricted to the King or Queen and sixteen others. It was established by James VII of Scotland in 1687. Very little is really known about St. Andrew himself. He was thought to have been a fisherman in Galilee, along with his elder brother Simon Peter. Both became followers of Jesus Christ, founder of the Christian religion. St. Andrew helped spread the tenets of the Christian religion though Asia Minor and Greece. Tradition suggests that St. Andrew was put to death by the Romans in Patras, Southern Greece by being pinned to a cross. This is said to be the basis for the Cross of St. Andrew which appears on the Scottish Flag.

*submitted by Ev Munro*

## A Good Reason to Dance

A five-year study of more than 2000 middle-aged people has found a possible link between weight and brain function. Research published in *Neurology*, the journal of the American Academy of Neurology, found people with a higher Body Mass Index (BMI) scored lower on average in cognitive tests within a sample. The research into the impact of weight upon intelligence studied 2223 healthy people, aged 32 to 62. Results from a word memory test showed that people with a BMI of 20, considered to be a healthy level, remembered an average of nine out of 16 words. But people with a BMI of 30, inside the obese range, remembered an average of just seven out of 16 words. The apparent phenomenon has already been dubbed the "Homer Simpson effect" by some media in North America. BMI is calculated by setting a person's weight against their height to produce a single figure.

from the Herald Tribune  
*submitted by Sandy Taylor*

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### RSCDS New Haven Branch Officers:

President	Ken Way (860) 653-5258
Vice President	Catriona MacAuslan (203) 421-4060
Secretary	Barbra Link (860) 345-8925
Treasurer	Richard Ives (203) 393-3713

Branch Class	Leslie Kearney (203) 281-6591
Teacher Comm.	Barbara Austen (203) 630-9749
Intergroup	Don Wills (860) 536-1981
At Large	Mary Byrnie (860) 635-4056
	Bob Byrnie (860) 635-4056
	Joyce Chase (203) 238-0694
	Ev Munro (860) 442-7283
	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 **February 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.

The internet address for the New Haven Branch web site is: [www.rscdsnewhaven.org](http://www.rscdsnewhaven.org)

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