

Reel Time

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

Winter 2008

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.

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. **Spring dates:** Mar. 13, Apr. 10, May 8. This class welcomes everyone with an interest in Scottish country dancing.

Upcoming Events

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. For more contact Barbra Link, blink6325@yahoo.com or Jane Leibert, janeleibert@yahoo.com.

Challenge Class I Monday, April 7, 2008
Green Street Arts Center, 51 Green St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm, \$8. Teacher, Peter Price. For more information, Barbara Austen at beausten@att.net.

Kilts & Ghillies Ball Saturday, April 26, 2008.
South Britain Congregational Church, Southbury, 6:00-11:00 pm. Music by the *Tartan Wanderers*, Alice Backer, Barbara McOwen, Jim Stevenson-Mathews. Contact Donna Ives, revdonnaives@sbcglobal.net

Seventh Annual Tea Party Middletown Class
Wednesday, March 26, 2008. First Church of Christ, 190 Court St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm, no fee. Social dance night with Scottish tea.

Rerr Terr Saturday, April 4, 2008 Church of the Atonement, Tenafly, NJ, 5:30-11 pm, \$35, Music: Highland Whiskey. Contact Beatrice Huppert, 201-664-4370.

Boston Highland Ball Weekend May 2-4, 2008. 5:30-11 pm, Nevins Hall, Framingham, MA. \$70. Music: *Boston Hospitality*. **Friday Welcome Dance**, May 2, Springstep, Medford, MA, 8 pm, tickets at door. Music: Tom Pixton, Debbie Billmer. For more information, www.RSCDSBOSTON.org

Challenge Class II Monday, May 12, 2008
Green Street Arts Center, 51 Green St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm, \$8. Teacher, Chris Ronald. For more information, Barbara Austen at beausten@att.net.

Pawling Weekend May 16-18, 2008. Circle Lodge, Hopewell Junction, NY. \$225 or \$295. Teachers: Jean Martin, Muriel Johnstone, Bill Zobel. Music: Bobby Brown's Scottish Accent. Contact Sheila Wilson, 212-849-8282.

Rhode Island Scottish Highland Festival Saturday, May 17, 2008, 9 am to 5 pm. Washington County Fairgrounds, Rt. 112 South, Richmond, RI (Exit 3 off Rt. 95 North). For more information, www.riscot.org

Westchester Ball Saturday, June 7, 2008.

Challenge Class III Monday, June 9, 2008
Green Street Arts Center, 51 Green St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm, \$8. Teacher, Leslie Kearney. For more information, Barbara Austen at beausten@att.net.

Nutmeg Workshop Saturday, Sept. 27, 2008.
Save the date.

Check www.intercityscot.org for similar events.

Challenge Classes

People ask what is special about the Challenge Classes the New Haven Branch has been holding the last few years. They're not sure they should try them, thinking they're for experienced dancers only. Barbara Austen, the teacher in charge of scheduling them this year, says: "The teachers' challenge is to teach figures not normally encountered in dances, or particularly challenging dances." So if you've thought about coming, be bold. The Green Street dance classroom has a good floor and you will be dancing with people you know.

Kilts & Ghillies Ball Program

April 26, 2008

How Are You (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
Aldebaran	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

On a Personal Note

When Don Wills had cardiac catheterization, the doctors ran into a serious problem which resulted in five hours on the operating table. But Don recovered very quickly and is already back playing with the Mystic Pipe Band.

The Gathering 2009

On July 25 and 26, 2009, the Gathering in Edinburgh will be one of the largest clan gatherings ever witnessed. Primarily a celebration of the contribution the clans have made to the culture and history of Scotland, the highlight will be the Clan Parade up the Royal Mile along with a historic pageant of the Clans in the arena of the Castle Esplanade. There will be clan tents, Highland games, and it will host the 2009 World Highland Games Heavy Athletic Championships. The price is £299 per person. For more information, see www.clangathering.org

Middletown Holiday Party

On the Saturday after Christmas, we gathered at First Church for a holiday dance with Norb Spencer and

his friends providing their great music. The Parish Hall was made more festive with the addition of a large backdrop of Edinburgh that Bob Byrnie had made and used for New Year's Eve parties for several years. He says he keeps adding to it and it certainly was spectacular with all the white lights in the painted trees, and the fireworks in the sky blooming on and off. The program devised by Ken Way had several New Haven Ball dances as well as some simpler ones for the less experienced. The Middletown class provided a table full of treats which were enjoyed during break. With so many sets dancing, it was a fine holiday treat.

Dancing into Adventure

Born in 1915, Margaret Macauslan, better known as Peggy, never questioned what she wanted to do with her life. "I loved dancing and wanted to be a dancer," Peggy says. "I just always was interested in it." Her family had other plans for her. "My mom wanted me to go to college and I didn't want to," she says. "She wanted me to be a secretary." Undeterred, Peggy moved to New York City after graduating from high school where she studied with a Russian dancer and performed in the historic Hippodrome Theatre. As her skills improved, she traveled to different countries to dance professionally. "We went to Havana. After Cuba I went to Mexico and was there about three months." In Mexico, Peggy danced with the Mexican actor and dancer Cantinflas, star of the 1960 movie *Pepe*.

From Mexico, she decided to hitchhike home to Connecticut with another girl. Traveling in Texas, the local sheriff took them to a place where they could spend the night for free. It turned out to be a brothel. "The lady that ran it let us out in the middle of the night. She said, 'This is no place for you girls!'" Knowing that her mother would not approve of such adventures, she completed the trip by train. Peggy lived in Paris for two years and performed at the famous Parisian cabaret, the Lido. On a more recent trip, she and her daughter Catriona re-visited the Lido to find a group of women decked out in scanty, feathered costumes leaving the building. "It wasn't like that!" she insists. Peggy left Paris just before the German invasion, leaving her apartment to CBS journalist Eric Severeid who would broadcast the WWII takeover of Paris. On the trip back to the States, her boat almost capsized from an enormous wave. She also witnessed the rescue of a group of English soldiers who were stranded from a submarine attack. "There was a lifeboat with some English boys in it, so we picked them up and brought them along to New York."

Peggy's travels continued throughout her life. During a trip to Scotland, she met her husband Alistair. They lived in Scotland for three years before moving to Connecticut in 1952. Together, they opened a shop in Old Saybrook to sell imported Scottish wool. While living in Clinton, Peggy worked for six years at the Sterling Memorial Library in New Haven. There, she met the aviator Charles Lindbergh. "He used to come in

frequently," she says.



Catriona and Peggy MacAuslan

Despite her age, Peggy still travels as much as she is able. Just last spring, she visited Scotland with her daughter, and earlier she went to Iceland only three weeks after hip surgery. "We traveled a lot as a family," she says, an understatement of her adventures that include Yugoslavia, Egypt, the Great Wall of China, an African safari, whitewater rafting in New Zealand, swimming at Easter Island, an archeological dig in Israel, and more. Many of these excursions were done solo carrying only a tiny backpack with hopes of finding space in a hostel for the night.

Today, the former professional ballerina and world traveler lives with her daughter in Madison, where she enjoys gardening, listening to opera and classical music, and keeping up on current events. She can often be found at the Strong House Adult Day Center where a trio of collages attests to her adventurous life. "I seem to be always busy," she says. Looking back, she admits to a degree of impetuosity, but it served her well. Random adventures ranged from housing members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in her Paris apartment to applying for a position at the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the CIA. "I just always did what I wanted," she says.

submitted by Catriona MacAuslan
excerpts from an article by Jen Matteis in
The Source 2/7/2008

Kilt Etiquette

- **Walk, do not run**, for departing trains, supermarket specials, or the last call at the pub. If your sporan is up around your neck, you are walking much too quickly.
 - **Do not go up stairs**, especially in a double-decker bus, or a lighthouse or monument with a winding staircase.
 - **Do not stoop, crouch or squat** to pick up anything from the floor.
 - **Do not stand at the edge of reflective pools.**
 - **Dance nothing more boisterous than a slow waltz.**
- Limbo dancing in a kilt at any time breeches kilt etiquette.

- **Do not sit with one leg crossed over the other.**

This position requires you to uncross them later. A tricky maneuver.

- **Be sure of the context of the conversation before** making comments about global warming, air conditioning or the ozone layer. None of these topics pertain to the creature comforts of a kiltie. And – please note that regardless of their ambiguous titles, films like *The Naked Gun*, *The Untouchables* and *The Full Monty* do not address any issues related to kilt wearing.

Observance of these simple guidelines allows you to wear the kilt with panache and ensures your own confident decorum, while providing your adoring audience with a stirring but not unsettling spectacle.

submitted by Ev Munro from "The Tartan Tattler" St Andrew's Society of Tampa Bay, Florida, Fall, 2001

History of Mystic Burns Night and Scottish Country Dance Group

Margaret and George Fraser started holding Burns Night dinners shortly after they arrived from the county of Fife in Scotland in 1964. Each year as the night of the dinner approached, the family made sure the neeps and haggis were properly prepared and that the tributes to Robbie included the *Immortal Memory* and the *Ode To The Haggis*. A piper added the perfect finishing touch for the evening. One year their son Andrew said that what with all the singing and dancing, their home would fall down if any more guests came. So George and Margaret moved the dinners to a local hotel or the VFW hall. Eventually the dinner was held at the Branford House at Avery Point in Groton.

Margaret, George and their friends established the Mystic Highland Pipe Band Burns Club in 1981. The goal was to present annual Burns Night Celebrations for Scots throughout the area honoring the Bard of Scotland. They also wanted to keep alive the unique art form of Scottish Country Dancing. Margaret Fraser formed a country dance class with interested friends in 1984. Classes were held at the Groton Public School Administration Building and the dance group gave its very first demonstration dance at the Royal Ballroom in Lisbon, the ladies looking elegant in white dresses with tartan sashes. The first dancers were Annabella Chambers, Margaret Bellingham, Dorothy Lohmann, Gail Houston, Alixe Salafia and Marie Beringer, plus two of Margaret Fraser's sisters.

The Mystic Highland Pipe Band Burns Club became two separate groups – the Mystic Highland Pipe Band and the Scottish Cultural Society which focused on country dancing, and later became the Mystic Scottish Country Dancers, now under the umbrella of the New Haven Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.



Mystic Highland Pipe Band

The Mystic Scottish Country Dancers have hosted Burns Night dinners at hotels in Norwich and the Groton area – and for years were proud to feature George Fraser delivering his fabulous recitation of the *Address to the Haggis*. After his death in 1996, his son Andrew continued in this role, now for his 11th year.

The Mystic Highland Pipe Band performs throughout Southeastern New England, taking part in parades such as the Fourth of July parade in Bristol, RI, the Waterford Day Parade, Memorial Day parades in Old Saybrook, Niantic, Charlestown, RI. Many band members are also Scottish country dancers. The two groups join forces to present the annual Burns Night event now in its 25th year. Both Margaret and George would be moved to tears to witness such a grand continuing celebration.

submitted by Ruth Holland Walsh



Mystic Burns Night

The Mystic Scottish Country Dancers hosted a gala Robert Burns Night dinner on February 9th celebrating the 249th anniversary of Robbie's birth and the 25th anniversary year of the Mystic dance group. The original group included two ladies who are still members: Annabella Chambers and Dorothy Lohmann. Another of the original set joined us, Margaret Bellingham, and we heard from a fourth member who now lives in Oregon. The program for the night included presentations by the

Mystic Highland Pipe Band and four Band members performing the Argyll Broadsword dance. Also, the Stirling Highland Dance Company, *Immortal Memory* recited by Dave Lees, Hugh Maxwell MacKenzie's rendition of *To A Mountain Daisy*, our own dance group, and of course a rousing ceremony ending with the *Address to the Haggis* by Andrew Fraser.



Cory Gillette, Eric Hlucan, Robert Bienvenue, Dave Lees

The Club commissioned our dance instructor Joyce Scott Chase to compose a special country dance in honor of this anniversary. The dance was to celebrate our 25th and demonstrate the fun we have had through the years. Our fondest hope is that our classes will help keep this unique art form alive. We named the new dance *Mystic Rejoyces*, a 32-bar reel, and we hope that everyone who saw it performed rejoiced as well.



Joyce Chase after performing in *Mystic Rejoyces*

The social dancing classes held on the three Friday nights before Burns Night resulted in a dance floor filled with dancers performing wonderful classics such as *Gay Gordons* and *Strip the Willow*. For the cocktail hour, music was provided in the foyer by JoAnne Galat Brown and her daughter Sabrina. In the ballroom, *Faire Prospect* presented music from the Celtic Isles. Between courses of the dinner, Fintan Stanley and his *International Ceilidh Band* played and sang, making it a joyous evening all around. Later we sang *Auld Lang Syne* and vowed to return next year for the 250th celebration of Robbie's birth.

With the help of Banquet Manager Brian Langley, we had a delicious Sunday brunch the next morning, followed by more dancing. Rhode Island's own Jordan Cannady and Richmond Cargill, otherwise known as *The Dram Boys*, provided rousing Scottish and Celtic music for this. It was a weekend to remember.

Dave Lees noted that no other poet has "touched a chord in the heart of people everywhere, and so effectively articulated the range of emotions felt by everyone. Using simple everyday things he countered – a mountain daisy, a field mouse turned out of his home, a beautiful river, a poor farmer returning to his family after a day's work – he wrote about love, universal brotherhood, compassion, honesty and the human condition. His writings have something for everyone and because of this, his works survive time."

We have set next year's date for Saturday, February, 14th at the Groton Inn and Suites. Mark your calendars now for an extraordinary Burns Night complete with valentines and one of Robbie's favorite love poems, *A Red, Red Rose*.

Ruth Holland Walsh

"Marching in Scotland, Dancing in New York"

This novel by Margaret Dunlop has a special resonance for those who trace themselves to Scotland or have Scottish connections, and it tells of something that is part of Scotland's heritage. The characters in the book are both Scottish and English, two families thrown together in the search for work and a better life. It is set in the 1920's and 30's up to the outbreak of war. The people are drawn from family stories, many of which are all too real. The book visits different locations in Scotland with Glasgow as the principal locale. The story is richly atmospheric, but with humor never far away.

The heroine seeks a job in New York as a nanny. As a strictly brought-up girl from Scotland, she meets with the glamor and temptations of the big American city. Where else would her boyfriend, a Scot who worked as a miner, seek a job as a singing waiter? The outcome, true to life (the heroine is based on the author's aunt), will appeal to many.

The book (ISBN 978-1-906050-19-1) can be ordered through any good bookshop, from the publishers direct (www.melrosebooks.com), from www.amazon.co.uk or from www.booksfromscotland.com (NOT amazon.com).

Addendum for Membership Directory

The membership directory printed in November 2007 does not give a complete listing of current members of the New Haven Branch. To correct this, here are the names and addresses of additional members for this year:

William and Roslyn Brault
50 Sears Street
Middletown, CT 06457
860-344-9573
rbrault@wesleyan.edu

David Lees
1725 Center Groton Road
Ledyard, CT 06339
860-464-8082
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Mary Ruddlesden
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16 Marla Drive
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860-464-9081
linda_scent@guntherintl.com

Susan Wall
91 Knollwood Road
East Hartford, CT 06118
860-569-8613

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 **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.

The internet address for the New Haven Branch web site is: 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.

