

# Reel Time

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

Fall 2009

## Class Schedules

*Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Class*  
Grace Episcopal Church on the Green, 311 Broad St., 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 Peter Price 203-675-9587.

*Mystic Scottish Country Dancers* St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 310 Fort Hill Road, Groton CT. Friday 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Beginners, 7-8 pm; Intermediates, 8:15-9:30 pm. No charge for classes. Contact Ruth Walsh 860-536-6265 or [www.mysticsscottishdancers.com](http://www.mysticsscottishdancers.com).

*New Haven Branch Scottish Country Dance Class*  
591 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 Monday of the month, 8:00 pm, New Haven Friends Meeting House, 225 East Grand Ave., New Haven. Winter dates: Dec. 14, Jan. 11, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, Apr. 12, May 10

## Upcoming Events

**Windsor Christmas Party** "Make Room for More Pie!" Tues., Dec. 1, 2009, 7:30 pm, \$10. Norb and friends will play. Grace Episcopal Church, Windsor. See pg. 5. Karen Pestana for more information, 860-298-8311.

**New Haven Christmas Party** Sat., Dec. 19, 2009 Friends Meeting House, New Haven, CT. Leslie Kearney for more information, 203-281-6591.

**Middletown Christmas Party** Wed. Dec. 30, 2009. 7:30-10:00 pm, \$10. Norb and friends will provide the music. First Church, Middletown. Lucile Blanchard for more information, 860-347-0278.

**Northampton New Years Day Party** Friday, Jan. 1, 2010. Potluck, \$1 plus dish (5:30 pm) and dance, \$10 (7:30 pm). First Churches, Lyman Hall, 129 Main St., Northampton, MA. Enter on Center Street across from Iron Horse Music Hall. Karen Lavallee, 413-527-3407.

**Mystic Burns Night Supper** Saturday, Feb. 13, 2010. Brunch on Sun. Feb. 14. Groton Inn & Suites, Groton, CT. For more, check [www.mysticsscottishdancers.com](http://www.mysticsscottishdancers.com) or Ruth Walsh, 860-536-6265.

**New Haven Branch Highland Ball** Saturday, Mar. 6, 2010, 5:00 pm to midnight. West Hartford Town Hall, 50 South Main St, West Hartford, CT. \$60 or \$65. Music by Music Makars: Etienne Ozorak, Fred Mamula, Jack Lindberg, Nicholas Ozorak, Elizabeth Weiss Ozorak.

**Sunday Brunch**: March 7, High Lane Club, North Haven, CT. 11:00 am, dancing at 12:30 pm.

**Ball Workshop**: Sunday, Jan. 24, 2010, 2:30-5:00 pm. \$10. Whitney Arts Center, 591 Whitney Av, New Haven

**Ball Workshop**: Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010. 2:30-5:00 pm. \$10. First Church of Christ Congregational, Middletown Teacher: Ken Way

For more, contact Ellie Toy, [eltoy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eltoy@sbcglobal.net) or Lucile Blanchard, [lblanchard@wesleyan.edu](mailto:lblanchard@wesleyan.edu)

**Rerr Terr** April 10, 2010 Save the date!

**Kilts and Ghillies** April 17, 2010 Save the date!

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

## Message from Branch President

[with deepest apologies from the editor who left this out of the last issue]

## Thoughts from the Board

It is now time to welcome back all our dancers from their various summer projects, and look ahead to a year of great classes and exciting events – Nutmeg Workshop/our Ball/Brunch, etc. On that note, as we all know, to have great classes and events – we need dancers!!! It is only successful if enough folks participate and share their enthusiasm. We are facing a situation of dwindling class participation, which means fewer sets for classes, and less revenue for our budget.

There is no specific reason for this – lack of time, family responsibilities, injuries, etc. On class night, remember that your teacher has spent hours preparing the lesson, and not showing up makes all that work meaningless. Remember how much we love this exciting and rewarding art form for its exercise, music and fellowship.

We also want to make sure we offer a welcoming atmosphere for "newbies," those precious folk who come to watch and whom we hope will dare to try it out. This means giving them a positive experience, enough encouragement to make them want to come back. We want them to feel welcomed, not intimidated. Hopefully they will then tell others. Word of mouth is the most valuable resource we have.

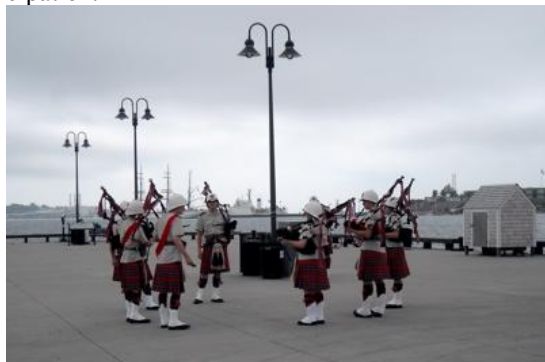
Our goal for the coming year is to encourage more new dancers and also to rekindle the enthusiasm of our current members. We are a wonderful community of dedicated dancers and teachers who couldn't be more committed. Any suggestions to the Board are most welcome, on any subject. We are YOUR board. Let's make good use of all of us!!

Let's Dance!

*Catriona Macauslan*

## Celts and Currachs

On Sunday, August 23, New London held their fourth annual Celts and Currachs festival on the City Pier. Ev Munro was the Scottish Country Dancers' liaison with the organizers and Joyce Chase arranged the program of demonstration dances and audience participation.



The harbor was full of boats including the Coast Guard's 3-masted training schooner Eagle and regular ferries to Block Island. There were hurricane warnings out but even though clouds gathered, no rain fell and later the sun returned. For the opening march, we lined up to follow the piper with the Mystic Pipe Band playing behind us.



The parade went along the sea wall to the Pier where there was a small viewing stand. There the Band

played while we set up for the dance on a platform under a canopy tent.

After Joyce spoke to the gathering crowd about Scottish Country dancing, we demonstrated seven dances including *The Drunken Sailor*, *Enchanted Garden* and *Flowers of Edinburgh*. We were lucky enough to have Hanneke Cassel come play for *Lea Rig* which was a real treat. She is such a great fiddler. For audience participation, we corralled willing men and women and coached them through a dance Joyce had tossed together and called *The New London Reel*. The heat from the blazing sun began to work on us so there was only one more dance with audience members before people went off to find shade and water. There are always people to watch our dancing, but we find it's much harder to get them to try it.

## Dance Scottish Week

In response to Edinburgh's request to celebrate Dance Scottish Week, on Sunday, Sept. 13, twenty or so of our dancers showed up at Green Street Arts Center in Middletown for a combined beginners' workshop and open dance with audience participation. This was part of the fall Open House that Green Street held to attract people to their classes.



Ken Way taught an introductory class in Scottish country dancing and while there was an audience, only three of the watchers dared to take part. His very simple walking dance, *Middletown Welcome*, is such a great way to introduce some figures. After that he taught a standard dance using the same figures which went well. Barbara Austen then had our dancers perform *The Isle* and *Minister on the Loch* to show the difference between a jig and a strathspey. Ken carried on with *A Reel for Alice*. At the same time, salsa music filtered in from another room while people wandered through the building, getting a taste of the various events. The night before, a West Hartford Demo Team had gone to a contre dance in Wethersfield and performed during their break with mixed success. So we keep trying to attract new dancers in any way we can.

## Loon Mountain

Some of you may have gone skiing on Loon Mountain in New Hampshire. Off season, the ski resort is used for other purposes like the New Hampshire Highland Games. On September 17, sixteen Connecticut dancers drove to Woodstock where they shared three condos in Deer Park, thanks to arrangements made by Ruth Walsh. Marge Wills was responsible for a joint supper of several tasty lasagnas, ending with a birthday cake for Ruth. The next morning, everyone got in their cars to drive to Loon Mountain where the 34th Annual Games were being held over the weekend.



The ski resort buildings had been enhanced with some large tents to hold all the events. In addition to contests for pipe bands, Highland dancers, fiddlers, Celtic harpists, there were all the usual Scottish games – sheep dog trials on the ski lift slope, Highland tests of skill including the tossing of large stones, living history displays, crafts and of course every kind of Scottish food. The largest tent held a series of concerts by Celtic musical groups including the McLeod Fiddlers, the singer Isla St. Clair and our favorite fiddler, Hanneke Cassel. The Red Hot Chilli Pipers made their mark with their high energy – when they played, you could hear them from one end of the grounds to the other.



*photo by Alison Gouette*

The 1st Battalion Scots Guards, formed in the 17th century, were the guest band this year and were magnificent to watch as they marched and played. There was a Clan Parade with 63 Highland clans represented and the clan village held rows of tents, each one featuring a clan with representatives eager to sign up anyone who had a clan in their ancestry. Among the special events, a seminar on *Bagpipes in the Movies* given by a documentary film maker was especially interesting.



Gathering of the clans

Friday passed with us wandering the grounds and taking in what we could from the great variety of events. A steady schedule of shuttle buses made travel from Deer Park to the Games and back very easy. That evening, we gathered at the Common Man, a local restaurant which lived up fully to its reputation. Then some went off to the Alasdair Frazier concert while others were content to watch television back at the condos. On Saturday, it was quite amazing to see endless crowds pour onto the grounds. Quite a few people used the occasion to wear a wild variety of Scottish garments. We saw not just men in kilts, but men and women in ancient Celtic dress, or wrapped in large tartan shawls which were particularly handy against the cold winds blowing in over the mountain.



*photo by Alison Gouette*

Some of our group paid to ride the ski lift up the mountain to the top where there were a restaurant and some tremendous views. Others went to a practice session for the evening dance, which was led by Dale Birdsall. He helped familiarize us with the more complex dances.

Back to the condo for a pickup supper of leftovers, doing our best to clear out the refrigerators of lasagna and salads. The evening dance, "Loon Mountain Assembly," given by the Boston Branch, was held in the Governor's Lodge with music by Hanneke Cassel and Beth Murray. Starting with *The Kelloholm Jig* and ending with *The Royal Deeside Railway*, it was a lively and cheerful program. It was a weekend to remember.

*Lucile Blanchard*



## Nutmeg Workshop

The 4th annual Nutmeg Workshop was held at the Incarnation Center in Ivoryton on Saturday, Oct. 17th. The weather had looked problematic but luckily the rain held off for the day. Forty-some dancers gathered in the early afternoon as the musicians – Susie Petrov and Calum Pasqua – set up their equipment. Chris Ronald and Elaine Brunken, the workshop teachers, made ready for their classes. The Basic class was held downhill in Tumble Inn on the shore of Bushy Hill Lake. The Experienced class took over All Saints Hall and the fun began.



Both teachers had interesting and novel ways to teach us the fine points of Scottish country dancing and the afternoon flew past. By five o'clock, drinks and snacks came out as people gathered in clumps to talk. We seem to be a talkative group, especially after the imposed silence of working on the dance. We are also great cooks, as we found out when dish after dish of delicious food was brought in from the kitchen for the potluck supper. There was so much to taste and enjoy, we ate more than we planned to.



Many of the men wore kilts all day and others changed for the evening dance when women dressed in colorful skirts and tops. The program, devised by Ken Way and Barbra Link, started with Chris Ronald's *Golden Apple Jig*, a 40-bar jig that got us off to a fast start with its corner-partner figure and diagonal reels of four. And the evening ended with Elaine Brunken's *Four's a Score*, a lovely flowing reel with corner-pass-and-turn. She spent time with her classes on the figures so even the less experienced dancers could take part.

This year we decided to try having a door prize, selling tickets and holding the drawing at the break in the

evening program. There were half a dozen donated items to choose from and the final prize was half the money the raffle collected. It seemed very fitting for Calum to hold that winning ticket after he had played his heart out for the classes and the dance, along with Susie.

The New Haven Branch hopes to continue holding this workshop. The Nutmeg committee has sent out a questionnaire to help them plan for next year and improve on what so many of our dancers enjoy.

*Lucile Blanchard*

## Middletown Class Fall Party

After some shifting around of dates and places, the Middletown class held their annual Fall Party on Wednesday, Oct. 28th. This close to Halloween, many of the dancers came in costume, with the teacher, Ken Way, dressed in a Roman toga. Norb Spencer brought along his musician friends, making a fine orchestra to play for us.



There were two witches complete with broad-brimmed hats and Ellie Toy carried in a giant black spider puppet that waggled its claws. The biggest surprise was when Tim and Marge Hawley walked in with their teenage daughter. They were the force that started this class up with Ken Way teaching, back in February 1992. They left the class when Marge was pregnant and their daughter, two years old at the time, came to class with them and would run through the set. It was a real pleasure to have them dancing again. The refreshments were devoured at break by the dancers and musicians. All in all a nice celebration of autumn.



## Dancing Duds Needed

Once again we plan to hold a sale of gently used dance clothes at the Brunch next March. If you have some things you would like to contribute, get in touch with Catriona MacAuslan to make arrangements to get them to her before the Ball weekend. Or bring them to the High Lane Club that Sunday morning. Catriona can be reached at [catriona@newhaventravel.com](mailto:catriona@newhaventravel.com),

## Jeannie Carmichael Ball

The weekend of November 7th and 8th was fair and mild, wonderful weather to spend on the banks of the Hudson River in New York State at West Point. This was the 50th annual Jeannie Carmichael Ball and the New York Branch was celebrating in a big way. The Colin Dewar Quartet was brought over from Scotland to play, etched wine glasses were given to all the guests and it was a grand festive event. A few Connecticut dancers managed to attend and it was well worth their time and effort. After the sherry party, dinner and Grand March, we danced from *St. Andrew's Fair* all the way through to *The Reel of the 51st Division*, pausing only for a break when a table full of luscious desserts was arranged in the dining room.



The afterparty took place in another room which held a talkative crowd having drinks and snacks and then was set up for some jazz dancing. The following morning started with a tasty brunch and then more dancing. The air on the patio outside the ballroom was so mild that people drifted outside in their dancing clothes for the break. It's too bad more of our dancers don't come to enjoy this wonderful event. Next year, think about it!

*Lucile Blanchard*

**Greater Hartford Group** invites everyone to a . . .

Take the Turkey Off Dance Party

When: Tuesday, December 1, 2009

Where: Grace Church on the Green  
311 Broad Street  
Windsor, Conn.

Time: 7:00 pm

Admission: \$10.00

Music by Norb Spencer and . . .

### Program

The Hollin Buss	32J2	Book 24:8
Back to the Fireside	32R3	Book 38:4
Grant's Reel	32S2	Book 14:2
Mrs. Stewart's Jig	32J3	Book 35:1
Braes of Tulliemet	32S3	Book 7:12
Winter Wonder	32R3	Lataille
Joie de Vivre	32J 3	Book 39:2
Catch the Wind	32R3	Book 45:5
Lord Elgin's Reel	32S3	Book 26:5
Berwick Johnnie	32J3	Graded:14
The Ninety-Second	24S3	Book 4:6
The River Cree	32R3	Book 8:5

### Scottish Dancers in Connecticut now have a Blog!

Please join Joyce Chase, Jeff Rossman and myself in this experiment. Please take a look at what we have done so far - the URL is: <http://kiltsandghillies.blogspot.com>. There is also a direct link to the blog on the Branch website thanks to David Keller.

I started this hoping that it would become, as Joyce said so well in a recent email - "... a great medium for teachers, musicians and dancers to communicate and solve problems and share experiences."

Anybody can write comments to posts made by 'authors'. And anybody can be an 'Author'. I have sent out 25 invitations and 23 of them are still open. If you want in, accept the invitation you have received or email either Joyce or me (better me than Joyce - she is very busy) and we will correct the omission.

*Peter Price*

### Alas

We have been able to photocopy *Reel Time* free for some years now, but the free ride has stopped. I am pricing out various commercial options, but it would help enormously if as many as possible could receive their issues via e-mail. Please do consider. We know that some of you don't have computers or your computer doesn't read strange files easily. But if you can receive and open a Microsoft Word document or PDF file, then send me your preferred e-mail address at [lblanchard@wesleyan.edu](mailto:lblanchard@wesleyan.edu)

And thanks for helping the Branch budget.

**Minutes of the New Haven Branch Board** meetings are available to all Branch members. If you want a copy, let Barbara Garton know (barbaragarton@earthlink.com).

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RSCDS New Haven Branch Officers:

President           Catriona MacAuslan (203) 421-4060  
Vice President    Peter Leibert (860) 887-9184  
Secretary         Barbara Garton (860) 871-0321  
Treasurer         Richard Ives (203) 393-3713  
Branch Class     Leslie Kearney (203) 281-6591  
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                  Steve Rice (203) 630-9749  
                  Catherine Mahoney (203) 879-6000  
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                  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.

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