

Reel Time

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

Winter 2012

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.

Wilton Country Dancers Millennium School of Irish
Dance, Top Floor, 9 Ethan Allen Highway [Route 7]
Wilton, Connecticut. Between Keogh's Hardware and
Dunkin' Donuts North of Routes 57 and 107, South of
Route 1102. \$5.00 for adults and \$2.00 for dancers 21
and under. Contact Sandra Bethray 203-322-8341 or
Angela Montague 203-762-9892.

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 Linda Scent 860-
464-9081.

New Haven Branch Scottish Country Dance Class
Whitney Arts Center, 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.

Waterbury Scottish Country Dancers Bunker Hill
Congregational Church, 274 Bunker Hill Ave,
Waterbury CT. Friday 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Parking is on the
street and the hall is on the lower level. Contact Kate
Mahoney 203-879-6000 or Mollie Keller 203-375-2840.

Peter Price's Class Second Monday of the month class,
8:00 pm, New Haven Friends Meeting House, 225 East
Grand Ave., New Haven. From 7:30 to 9:30 pm.
Contact Peter Price 203-675-9587

Upcoming Events

New Haven Branch Highland Ball: Saturday, March 3,
2012, 5:00 pm to midnight. West Hartford Community
Center, 50 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107.
Music by Terpsichore. Visit the New Haven branch site
at <http://rscdsnewhaven.org> for applications and details.

Please send in your reservations as soon as
possible. The fee is \$60 for the ball and brunch if you

register before February 21st.

Sunday Ball Brunch: Sunday, March 4, 11:00 AM at
the High Lane Club, 40 High Lane, North Haven, CT for
brunch and dancing. We will again be holding the
"Dancing Duds" sale at the brunch, so please bring any
gently used clothing to sell as this is a major fund raiser
for the branch.

Tenth Annual Tea Party: Middletown Class
Wednesday, March 28, 2012. First Church of Christ, 190
Court St., Middletown. 7:00-9:30 pm, no fee. Social
dance night with Scottish tea. Call Lucile Blanchard,
860-347-0278, for more information.

Rerr Terr - Save the date. Tenafly, NJ Saturday, April
2, 2012. For more information see www.rscds-nj.org.

Tartan Day - Save the date. April 14, 2012. Plans are
in the works to take a bus to New York as we have done
in the past.

Kilts and Ghillies 2012 Tea Dance – Save the date. 28
April, 2012. South Britain Congregational Church
Parish House, RTE 172 and East Flat Hill Rd,
Southbury, Ct. Party starts at 3 PM and runs to about 7
PM.

Boston Highland Ball Weekend: - May 11-13, 2012.
RSCDS Boston Highland Ball Weekend, Weston, MA.
Music by Highland Whisky and Terpsichore. For more
information see
<http://www.rscdsboston.org/HB2012PrelimFlier.pdf>

Pawling Weekend – Save the date. Hopewell Junction,
NY. Friday, May 18 - May 20, 2012. For more
information see www.rscdsnewyork.org.

Jim Malcolm Tour of Scotland – A ten-day holiday
tour May 15 – 25, 2012. For more information see
www.mysticcottishdancers.com/Links.html

Check <http://www.intercityscot.org> for similar events.

Creating the Harvest Concert/Cabaret

On November 18th, Peter and Damon Leibert sponsored a fund raiser for St James Church in Norwich in memory of Steve Ducharme, a parish member and also a member of the Board at the Norwich Arts Center who died un-expectedly this past summer. The concert/cabaret was held at the Norwich Arts Center which has recently become a [Local Arts Agency](#) under the support of the [CT Commission on Culture and Tourism](#).

Peter and Damon put a lot of thought into the event and promised to make it a "party night" in Steve's memory- Steve had a great sense of humor among other things!!!



Peter and Damon delivered on that promise and kept the audience entertained for hours with jokes, stories and wonderful music. We are all familiar with Peter's musically accomplishments and his stories and jokes. Damon Leibert's unique and energetic style of fiddle has been described as somewhere between the driving dance beat of Cape Breton, and the lyrical music of Ireland. He has a web page at <http://fiddler.net/wordpress/>.

We had enough dancers present to actually take a shot at dancing *Mairi's Wedding*. That was truly a challenge as the space for dancing was very limited with the huge audience in the room. The dance was what you might call somewhat 'compressed'... I was actually able to lift my feet off the floor and still be moved from hand to hand in the reels.

This concert also provided us with a chance to say farewell to Rick and Becky Corbett. As most of you know Becky and Rick Corbett have moved to West Virginia where they will be with Becky's dad - helping him run his large acreage farm.



Here Becky demonstrates how she can tell a joke to Joyce and actually make wine come right out of her nose. Time has finally caught up with us and Rick and Becky have departed. Becky will be back temporarily as she helps orient her replacement with *GTech*.....but ultimately they will become permanent residents of the great State of West Virginia.

Dave Lees

Drewry Night

On December 3, 2011 the RSCDS New York branch held their annual Drewry Night in Brooklyn, New York.



As you can see in this collage photograph, courtesy of Everett Munro, the event was well represented by members of the RSCDS, New Haven. Doing a little research on John Drewry, I found that there are at least 437 dances that he has created. That is 437 dances from just one source! A remarkable accomplishment. Looking at the names of some of the dances John must have a lot of fun in the dance creations. I would really like to hear the story behind the dance *Oompah, Oompah, Shove It Up Your Joompa*.

Dave Lees

NFA Celtic Club – !PIPES! Bells and Whistles

On December 10th the Norwich Free Academy (NFA) Celtic Club put on a remarkable winter concert they called *Bells and Whistles*. The performance was held in the Slater Auditorium on the Norwich Free Academy campus. The club was originally called the

NFA Bagpipe club but since its start the name was changed to Celtic club as more instruments were added to their arsenal in addition to the highland bagpipes and drums.



One familiar face in the performance is Colleen Cournoyer (from the Mystic Scottish Country Dancers), seen here playing the great highland pipes. In addition to Colleen, her younger sister Evelyn Cournoyer is also a member of the club and played the harp. Danny Pislowski (a grade 1 piper) and his brother Peter Pislowski are members and together these four individuals comprise about 50% of the membership in the club.

A couple hundred people enjoyed a rousing two hour program of traditional and modern Celtic-inspired music. Not to be left out Bill Cournoyer was drafted as one of Santa's helpers in the refreshment area.



In addition to the Celtic Club members Danny Pislowski manage to get two North American drumming champions and the Rhode Island Highlanders and even Santa Clause to perform at the concert.



In the second half of the performance alone we were treated to a variety of tunes such as *Once in Royal David's City*, *Ding Dong Merrily on High*, *Deck the Halls*, *Hallelujah*, *Bonnie Lass of Fyvie*, *The Drunken Piper*, and *Mormond Braes*. Most of these tunes were arranged by Danny himself.

The tunes were played with pipes, whistles, guitars, piano, fiddles, congas, harps, snare drums and wood blocks. If there was any object that you can use to accompany a tune, they used it. It was truly a remarkable performance that put everyone into a real holiday spirit.

Dave Lees

Scottish Dance Music Workshop

The RSCS New Haven has been using the New England Carousel Museum in Bristol CT for various events over the last couple of years. This year a Highland Ball practice and a Scottish Dance Music Workshop were held there.



The Scottish music workshop took place Sunday afternoon December 11th. Cate Mahoney, the event organizer was not able to attend due to scheduled surgery but the event went off without a hitch thanks to Cate's planning. Cate, by the way, had knee replacement surgery and is well on the way to recovery and will be back on the dance floor soon.

Suzie Petrov and Calum Pasqua were the instructors for the class. Suzie and Calum made an assessment of the musicians present and adjusted the program accordingly. Musical experience and type of instrument varied widely challenging Susie and Calum to provide a program that met differing needs. Music was

provided to those who preregistered so they would be familiar with the music. The object of the workshop was to play for dancers in the Scottish style, not to struggle with learning a new tune(s). We learned a new tune by ear as a group. This was a challenge for some of us who rely on sheet music as a crutch, it also put everyone on the same level but it was a valuable learning experience. We later separated into two groups, one melody led by Calum and a rhythm section led by Suzie.

Tea was a break at 3:30 and dancing began at 4:00. The whole purpose of the workshop was to play for dancers. Suzie devised a fun program that was beginner friendly. We had some musician/new dancers who tried Scottish dancing for the first time. The dance gave the musicians the opportunity to both try out Scottish dancing and to play for Scottish dancing. This brought home what we learned in the workshop. The importance of strict time and steady rhythm at the same time playing or supporting the melody was emphasized. Dancers got to dance to live music led by Suzie and Calum and at times a mini orchestra.

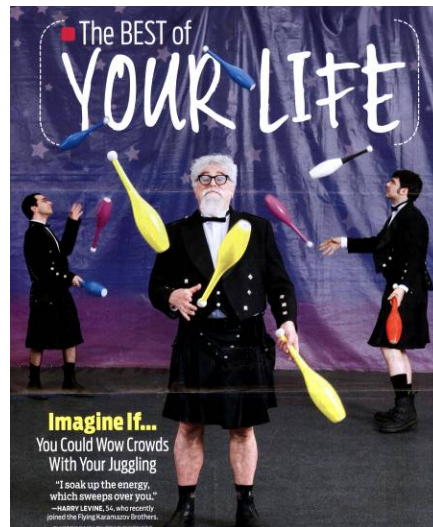
The event was an outstanding success. We appreciate those dancers who came out to support this event. Thanks goes to Suzie and Calum for leading the workshop and everyone who brought an instrument to this event. Musicians are invited to get to gather again January 22nd at 1:30 at the Carousel Museum. This is prior to the ball workshop. If we have enough interest we will try to keep this up on a regular basis as an informal jam session eventually being able to play for dancers.

George Thomson

Reel Time Editor Turns 60

It happened on December 27th 2011. I figured if I just ignored the calendar it would not happen but my kids were home for the holidays and on the 27th of December I heard ‘Wow dad... you are 60 years old.... What was it like when TV was all black and white? And you only had 3 channels??? And I hear you used to have actually write and mail letters to get in touch with friend... OMG!!!’

Yep, that was it... I crossed the line, passed the marker, time to put on my nametag, ‘Sixty-year-old, one owner, needs parts ... Make offer.’ Then it hit me... I don’t have to put up with this nonsense... I have plans, like this one:



So I just held my head high and continued on. After all nothing really changed at all. I still look the same as I did yesterday, I still have all my working parts, and I don’t even look different. So after the holidays I held my head up high and went right back to work. I was walking from the parking garage to my hovel in the bowels of the old lab buildings at Pfizer when I saw several people walking the other way. One of the ladies looked away and the other started laughing. (*What this heck does this mean? Do I really show my age? I looked in the mirror before I left home. What is going on?*)

I figured they were nuts and continued on... I ran into another group of scientists and again I got the strangest look and snickering. (*Maybe turning 60 really does change you... maybe I am marked forever...*). I looked down at my shirt and my shoes thinking I had food on me or something and then it hit me. I had torn the pocket of my jacket the day before. Jody always gives me a couple of oranges to take to work with me and I would put them in my jacket pocket, but I couldn’t do that with a torn pocket. I had put one orange in each of my front pants pockets....

I don’t think I will be coming to work without a bag on my head for some time....

Dave Lees

Rhode Island 49th Annual Robert Burns Supper

The 49th Rhode Island Burns Supper and Dance was held on Saturday, February 4th at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet in Cranston, Rhode Island. Several members of the Mystic Scottish Dancers attended this event.



Seen here are Bob and Linda Scent, Minna DeGaetano and in the background Everett Munro is taking pictures of his family. Also attending were Ruth Walsh and myself.

Music was provided by *The Irish Express* and after Cocktails and a fine Dinner we danced the night away. The ballroom is vintage 1915 and has plenty of space for those who like to turn ‘Strip The Willow’ into an Olympic event.

The dinner and dancing were a big hit with attendees of all ages and following the *Address to the Haggas* and *The Immortal Memory* we were entertained by the Rhode Island Highlanders Pipe Band. The view from the ballroom balcony was great but we noticed that after a while Everett had become obsessed with this view....



He ran off mumbling about water balloons. We knew he had to be kidding... after all.... who could not trust an innocent face like this....



Dave Lees

Burns Night in Winchester, West Virginia

Rich and Becky Corbett, (*former members the Mystic Scottish Country Dancers*), after having moved out to West Virginia have found a pipe band (City of Winchester Pipes & Drums) about an hour away from where they now live. The band sponsors an annual Burns Night as a fundraiser. Rich and Becky attended it so that they could see what a ‘southern’ Burns Night would be like. In a nutshell, Becky’s opinion was it couldn’t hold a candle to the Mystic event. Without going into too many details the event ended at 9:30 and there was NO DANCING...Gasp!!! So it looks like some of us may have to make a road trip to show what a real Burns Supper is like.

Dave Lees

Mystic Scottish Country Dances Burns Supper

The Mystic Scottish Country Dancers hosted its 28th annual Robert Burns Dinner on Saturday, the 11th of February. There was a concern “a-plenty” on Friday night when a sizeable snow-storm was predicted – and we (I) began to wring my hands as to what in the world we would do should we be snowed under! We were admonished “Don’t worry about it! Whatever happens...will happen...and whoever comes...will come.” And so we proceeded and on Saturday, the ballroom at the Groton Inn and Suites was resplendent with All Things Scottish, including Bob Byrnie’s beautiful painting of the Eilean Donan Castle against a background of the St. Andrew’s Cross that reaches through storm clouds into the night sky. We are proud to display the Castle Eilean Donan at our functions.

On this Burns Night, it provided an elegant backdrop for our talented musicians, Susie Petrov and The Parcel of Rogues – who provided such lively and danceable music that our toes were tapping as we were drawn to the dance floor to try our hand at many Scottish social dances.



The 25rd Celebration of Robbie birth began with a presentation by the Mystic Highland Pipe Band – and was followed by the introduction of a Specialty Group of our dancers who performed an Argyle

Broadsword Dance, choreographed and directed by our own Dave Lees. He was joined by Joyce Chase, Bo Gillie and Minna DeGaetano as they performed the intricate steps over their broadswords. The pipe music provided for the dancers was provided by our own Bob Scent.

Later on in the program we were delighted to hear 18 year old Daniel Pisolowski perform. Daniel is a piper “extra-ordinaire” and a senior at Norwich Free Academy. Dan has been playing the bagpipes for more than 10 years and presented a pipe serenade for the audience that was spellbinding. He skillfully played the tunes he will be competing with at the Metro Cup in Newark, NJ. We were proud to note that Dan will compete in the MacGregor Memorial Competition in Oban, Scotland this coming August - and wish him well.



Our Burns Night was a truly a Birthday Celebration – not only of Robbie Burns, but also of Andrew Fraser (our gifted presenter of The Ode to the Haggis) who was celebrating a ‘significant birth date’) a wee laddie who was celebrating his first birthday

Linda Scent, our social dance instructor and second teacher had a birthday as well. The Scottish Country Dancers performed two dances in Andrew’s honor: Andrew Fraser’s Courtship – a jig composed for Andrew by our dance instructor Joyce Chase – and Anna’s Strathspey....to welcome dear little Anna Elizabeth, Andrew and Lauren’s 10 month old wee girl....Such a gala night!

Our master of ceremonies who charmed one and all was Neil Sharpe. He recited “Is there for Honest Poverty” – (A man’s a man for a’that....) and that was followed by Dave Lees’ moving *The Immortal Memory*. He stressed that the legacy of Robert Burns has survived ‘in the heart and minds of those who have read his words, his ideas and feelings’...Dave noted that it was ‘his empathy with the common man’ that helped make Burns so popular. He represented the poor hard-working man not as an object of pity, but instead a source of nobility, honesty and virtue. Burns’ poems dignify and illuminate the struggle faced by the vast majority of the world’s population today” Robbie will be forever

admired for his naturalness, compassion, humor, and his fervent championship of the innate freedom and dignity of humanity. And thus it was that Dave asked that we stand and drink a toast to the Immortal Memory of Robbie Burns....and we did!

Our own Andrew Fraser gave Robbie Burns’ address *Ode to a Haggis*, with the help of Piper Bob Scent, Haggis Bearer Mark Davis, Dirk Bearer Bill Cournoyer and Minna DeGaetano as Posie Nancy.



This big boy (Mark Davis), loves his haggis and it was really good haggis this year!

Andrew performs a superb “interactive” rendition of the Ode, asking the audience to provide rousing sound effects, particularly when the Chieftain “cut you up wi’ ready slight” and again when “The trembling earth resounds his treat!”



And we all joined in with a vigorous, “Gie here a haggis!!”... Robbie would have been mighty proud of us all!!

After a sumptuous dinner and rousing toasts, the social dancing program began with Linda Scent coordinating (and calling) all. Susie and her talented musicians provided the music – and we truly had “a ball” until time for *Auld Lang Syne*.

It was a fantastic evening...and we did indeed rejoice for such a splendid evening AND the fact that there was NO SNOW!!!

Ruth Walsh

