



THE INTERNATIONAL BRANCH
of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

Newsletter No. 61 – March 2020

From the Editors



Welcome to Issue No 61.

These are challenging times, and we haven't experienced anything like them before.

We hope that the photos and reading the articles about the international events that have happened since the last newsletter will help lift your spirits.

As the next newsletter is unlikely to have new events for you to read about, why not think back to your most memorable dance event in another country. What made it so special/memorable? Or, you might have another dance or music related anecdote you'd like to share. We will all be missing our Scottish Dancing for a while but let's hope we can get back to dancing before too long.

In the meantime, and in good faith, we are running the "adverts" as usual – none of the events presented in Members' Announcements have been cancelled at the time of publication

Look after yourselves, and we hope you all enjoy the issue.

Harry Andrews (editor)

Jan Jones (assistant editor)

*The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is Saturday 20th June 2020, and publication will be on or about Tuesday 30th June 2020. We welcome articles and photos in most formats but would prefer articles to be in .doc or .docx format (500 words maximum, please! – and also, **please include the dates** of your event), photos in .jpg format, and "adverts" in .pdf format. Please send your submissions to newsletter@rscds-ib.org.*

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Message from the Chair

Dear IB members, welcome to the latest edition of the Newsletter. Any notes that I had written some months ago for this edition of the Newsletter are obviously no longer valid as the world faces its first Pandemic since that of Spanish Flu of 1918/1919. The consequences are dominating and will continue to dominate the headlines for many months to come. Governments have imposed severe restrictions on travel all over the world and the adoption of social distancing does not lend itself to the activity of Scottish Country Dancing.

In this edition, there are a number of pre-Coronavirus articles reporting on various events but there will be a penury of articles in the forthcoming months. Jan and I travelled to Italy twice in February to research a venue for the IB Event in 2022 and to Madrid in March for the Iberian weekend returning to the UK just in time before travel restrictions started.

The IB committee is dedicated to ensuring that the International Branch meets the challenge of these difficult times and will continue to provide its members with information about SCD and the SMF will continue with its work. The Newsletter will continue to appear quarterly, but the content must change as event after event in 2020 is cancelled. This matter is addressed by the Editors in this issue.

The Pandemic will pass and Scottish Country Dancing will continue but the next 12 months will not be easy. Social media will keep us in touch with each other and we will all get more familiar with the various messaging and video Apps. The spirit of Scottish Country Dancing will prevail. It is a human tradition and culture that has survived for hundreds of years and will show its true value in these demanding times.

Wishing you all the very best health.

Michael Plumley

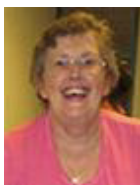
Chair IB

Your Committee

Here are the email addresses of the officers of the International Branch. Please don't hesitate to contact any of us for any matter or query.



Chairman: Michael Plumley
chairman@rscds-ib.org



Secretary: Margaret Lambourne
secretary@rscds-ib.org



Treasurer: Jan Jones
treasurer@rscds-ib.org



Membership Secretary: Joan Nesbitt
membership@rscds-ib.org

Buenos Aires 2020 – an update

As this horrible virus situation started to unfold, the IB committee wrote to The Buenos Aires 2020 participants about delaying the deadline for their 2nd payment. Following discussions with the hotel to delay the 40% payment due to the NH 9 July Hotel on March 31st, the hotel has agreed to extend that date to 15th April. We will jointly re-assess the situation at that time and will almost certainly be requesting further extensions.

If we fail to secure an extension until the virus and travel conditions improve, we do not plan to pay out more money. This means we may have to default on the hotel contract and forfeit the 20% deposit we have already paid. We hope that they will need our custom as much as we do not want to lose our deposit.

If it looks like the event can go ahead as planned in September and if we have lost the NH 9 July Hotel booking, we think that we should be able to substitute it with another in the same locality. (Jan and Michael stayed in several of them during the recce visit!)

We are monitoring the situation worldwide, as we're sure you all are. We will continue to make our best assessment as negotiations and the situation develop.

Stay safe, stay well and we'll be in touch again.

New Zealand Summer School 28th December 2019 - 5th January 2020

The annual Summer School launched at Cambridge, New Zealand, in the Waikato district of the North Island. It had recently been voted the country's Most Beautiful Large Town. St. Peter's, an independent coed International Baccalaureate school, provided excellent facilities for a 200+ SCD community, gathered from December 28th-Jan 5th. Antanas Procuta, and his well-coordinated committee, looked after the many details.

We were assigned to the advanced-low impact class, held in the Cambridge Primary School (1879), which shared two fine teachers: Christine Freeman of Australia and Mervyn Short of England for the six days of classes. Musical accompaniment was superbly provided by accordionist Ian Muir of Glasgow and Iain McKenzie of Australia. We were also able to be stooges, on one of those days, for the five Level 5 candidates.

Afternoon entertainments included 4 bus trips to local sights and natural landscapes in neighbouring Hamilton, as well as locally, followed by Happy Hours, which brought many of us together to enjoy some fine New Zealand wines and beers. "Swiss Chris" hosted, along with other members, an IB Info Cocktail party, inviting the interest of Summer School participants to join the Branch.

We escaped prosecution by the Mock Court, held one afternoon to address, with lots of laughs, some "indiscretions" by anyone present that week.

Sadly, we learned that guest pianist James Gray, who had travelled from Oslo with his wife Jamie Berg, Summer School teacher of the high impact class, and their 3-year-old son Finn, lost his mother Cate in Edinburgh, early in the session. Cate, wife of Alex Gray, former RSCDS Chair, was well known to New Zealanders, as the couple had attended two Summer Schools during his term. James was supported in his grieving by the performance of a dance, devised in Auckland, called Cate's Conundrum, and by the many gathered to share their memories of Cate in the chapel.

Evening events provided 5 dance programs including a theme night of Razzamatazz - 19/20s in tune with the decade turner, Hogmanay, complete with a haggis ceremony, and a unique way of welcoming the New Year with a First Foot presentation. We danced 20 dances until 1 a.m. and enjoyed a President's Ball until midnight: There was also a Ceilidh with local citizens invited to participate in a fun range of dances, as well as an excellent Talent Presentation on another night. Most dances appeared on more than one program, so we became more proficient with dances both familiar and new to us. There were many talented musicians involved, including those who had been part of a Musicians' Course.

Christchurch in the South Island will host Summer School this coming December. With a theme of "Rise Up and Dance", it reflects their hope and spirit reborn after the devastation of the earthquakes a decade ago. It would be well worth considering in your travel plans.

Christy and Bill Barber, Toronto



Christy and Bill with Ian Muir and Mervyn Short



IB members at New Zealand Summer School

San Francisco Branch Valentine's Ball

8th February 2020

After the Asilomar dance weekend, the Valentine's Ball is our second major event of the year. This annual event takes place in the lovely Scottish Rite Center on the shores of Lake Merritt in Oakland, just across the bay from San Francisco. This iconic building was built in 1927 and remains a centerpiece of Bay Area architecture. The ball room is elegant and with all the dancers dressed in their finery it really is a sight to behold. We danced a 16 dance program to the music of East Coast musicians Dave Wiesler, David Knight, and Dan Emery.

This group is well known throughout the United States and Canada. They are all seasoned musicians; Dan playing his bagpipes for a few of the dances was an amazing addition to their already excellent music. If you ever have an opportunity to attend a dance where they are playing, I would highly recommend making the trip to dance to their music!

The evening started off with a wine soiree followed by the Grand March and ended with a buffet.

Donna Weidenfeller



IB members pictured at the Valentine's Ball

The 35th Newcastle Festival was awesome! They were at capacity with 52 entries taking part between 9.20 and 18.45. The standard was so high and so compelling to watch, it was difficult to fit in a comfort break never mind lunch! The festival has become so significant in the dance festival calendar that now half the entries come from outside the UK, including France, Germany and Russia.

The Edinburgh and East Scotland Dancers won most sections this year and were winners of the overall competition taking home the Maurice Cooper Trophy. They even won the display team section with their Mary Poppins themed display.

The only winning overseas teams were the under 16s section won by the young German team and the under 12s was won by the Méaudre Reel Club.

This was Méaudre Reel's first attendance at the festival with mostly very young dancers. Méaudre is a small village in the French Alps. Primary School teacher Sophie Marchand started teaching the children Scottish Dancing in January 2006, when the snow didn't arrive, and they couldn't have their usual skiing lessons.

The youngsters thrived on her teaching and having put on an end of year display for the parents they asked if they could go on dancing the following year. As they would have been moving from Sophie's class, she used the village Sports Hall to teach a lunchtime class. One of the grandmothers even made skirts for the girls and kilts for the boys!

Membership continued to increase so the Méaudre Reel Club was set up in 2008 and now has a class for children and one for teenagers with a class for adults added in 2011. Having seen Sophie Marchand interacting with the children and her enthusiasm, I can see why it has been so successful.

The day was rounded off beautifully with a dance for over 300 people dancing to Luke Brady and his band and the energy and joy in the room was palpable!

Jan Jones



Photo of the winning team, Edinburgh and East Scotland Dancers being presented with the Maurice Cooper Trophy by RSCDS Chair, Andrew Kellett. Photo credit: Michael Nolan.

Michelle Fisher has sent us this photo of members of the International Branch who attended this event 14 - 16 February 2020. Teachers were Ruth Jappy, Mary Murray (pictured), and Antoine Rousseau (also in the photo). Michelle says: "all the classes I personally attended were absolutely excellent, and the musicians Judy Nicholson, Ian Muir, Kathy Fraser Collins, Fred Collins and Mary Ross were superb".





The IB at Winter School

February 2020 saw 130+ participants (including a good number of IB members from around the globe) attending the RSCDS 21st Winter School in Pitlochry.

Under the excellent directorship of William Williamson (ably supported by wife Linda) and his team of teachers (Angela Young, Janet Johnston and Andrew Nolan) and musicians (Roger McAndrew, Shona MacFadyen, David Oswald and Ian Robertson) we celebrated the event. The highlight of the celebrations being a 21st Birthday traditional ceilidh, when along with dancing and individual acts, we were treated to jelly and ice cream and helium balloons! A fun night to remember!

In addition to the excellent classes and evening social dances. William arranged a number of optional non-dancing activities that comprised of talks by RSCDS archivist Alan Macpherson and a representative of the John Muir Trust; a guided trip to the Crannog Centre; a walking tour of Pitlochry and a whisky tasting (my favourite!) with Ian Robertson demonstrating his skills playing matching tunes on 3 instruments (not all at the same time).

The event culminated with the traditional Ball at Blair Castle (with IB members photograph) which began with the traditional grand march. We danced our final night away, guided by clear recaps from our teachers and superb music from the course musicians.

Well done to William, Linda and the team! William will also be co-ordinator in 2021, so put the dates in your dancing diary now (21st to 26th February 2021).

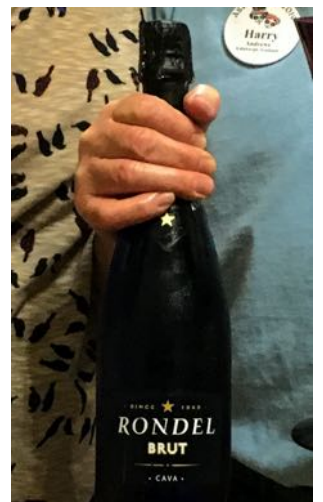
Brian Rose



IB members at the Thursday class

The Editor's first wedding anniversary was on 27th February, so he and Mrs Editor took some cava along to the San Francisco Thursday night class, and people brought cake. It was only when we were enjoying our feast that someone pointed out that the name of the cava was very appropriate for a group of dancers!

HTA





The Schiehallion Group hosted the 26th Iberian Gathering at the Melia Barajas Hotel near Madrid Airport. The Hotel had installed hand sanitisers at the entrance/exit of all the communal rooms and we were encouraged to use them often. Although a handful had cancelled, more than 120 dancers attended. The Craigellachie Band played some great tunes to keep us dancing until midnight each evening and most of us managed to get to Antoine Rousseau's energetic classes each morning. The Ball on Saturday started with a Grand March led by local piper Iñaki Montes. All the Hotel meals were buffet style and plentiful – as was the wine that was included!

Jan Jones and Michael Plumley

Fiona Grant writes: "This was a very friendly and energetic group of dancers, very enthusiastic and a pleasure to teach. Lovely to meet up with some other Canadian friends that I had not seen for a few years.

"You could title the photo – the teacher and her star pupil at the Belleville workshop! Bright sunshine and spring seemed to be in the air over the weekend, with the snow melting fast, and the lake thawing.

"Dancers came from Ottawa, Peterborough, Kingston and Toronto, and enjoyed tackling some challenging dances as well as having fun doing a Shetland reel. Laird Brown and his band played for the ball with great gusto and aplomb: exhilarating for the dancers who seemed to have unbounded energy."



Fiona and Kay Munn at the Belleville Ball

When both Marjorie McLaughlin and Jodi McEdward commented at the Fort Worden dance weekend last September that my sapphire blue ball gown would be perfect for their upcoming 45th anniversary sapphire ball; well, that settled it; Harry and I would attend. The weekend would almost coincide with our first wedding anniversary; what could be more fun than dancing, visiting friends, and touring San Diego; a new city for both of us!

Our weekend started off with a great treat; we were greeted at our hotel room by an anniversary card and roses delivered by the San Diego Branch!!!

Then it was off to dinner at the historical Balboa Park and dance class followed where we were taught some of the dances off the ball program by Ward Fleri.

Saturday was a day of touring around San Diego and then preparing for the ball.

Alongside the celebration of their 45th anniversary there were several surprises. Starting with a letter of congratulations from our RSCDS patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. The branch chair, Jean Moody, presented the branch award to Ward for his long-time dedication to the branch. Fred DeMarse of the San Francisco Branch wrote a dance in his honor appropriately entitled "A -Ward Winning Reel". The music for this dance was composed by Andy Imbrie whose "Reel of Seven" were the musicians for the ball. Dancers from the San Diego branch performed this dance during the interval. Unknown to Ward this dance had been published in a new dance book by the branch entitled, "Salute to San Diego". Somehow they managed to keep this booklet from Ward prior to his award! At the ball the new branch banner designed by Ken Farinsky was displayed as the backdrop to the band. A hired professional photographer took pictures of the IB members in front of a surfboard/beach scene which is so perfect for San Diego. There was an archive display enjoyed by the current dancers as well as Alumni of the branch. And then of course was the dance itself; 17 dances that were dances that everyone could enjoy dancing. The music was by the "Reel of Seven" which was fabulous!! Thank you, Marjorie, for choosing them as the musicians.

Soon the dancing part of the evening ended and many of us took our tired feet to the home of Marjorie and Richard McLaughlin who graciously offered their perfect party home for the after party. Who knows what time the party ended; too bad it was our daylight spring ahead weekend where we lost an hour of precious sleep.

For those who could wake up in time for a 10am brunch at the Admiral Baker Clubhouse and Grill; we were in for a fantastic buffet complete with mimosas. The view onto the golf course was lovely. Thank you, Jodi and Ray, for organizing.

All too soon we were saying goodbye to old friends and new. Harry and I continued to tour San Diego for a few more days before returning to San Francisco.

Donna Weidenfeller



A cheer-you-up message from Michael Darby!

How do you know you're a Scottish country dancer?

You know you're a Scottish country dancer when...

- 🌀 *You look around a room and wonder how many sets it will fit.*
- 🌀 *You stand waiting for the bus in first position.*
- 🌀 *You look at a 2.25l bottle of gin and think "that's two days of Winter School. What about the rest?"*

Some illustrations on how NOT to wear the kilt!



Members' Announcements



SAVE THE DATE!

Brussels Dance Scottish, the Thistle Club in Eindhoven, the Luxembourg Scottish Country Dance Club, and other clubs in Benelux invite you to
a truly Scottish



BENELUX WEEKEND

15 to 17 May 2020

Corsendonk De Linde vacation centre,
Retie (near Antwerp), Belgium

Teachers: Sue Porter and Eric Finley

Musicians: Susan MacFadyen,
Shona MacFadyen and Màrtainn Skene

-oOo-

Friday and Saturday evening dances

Dance classes

Musicians' course

Dancers and musicians: single room	€320
Dancers and musicians sharing a double room	€260
Dancers and musicians sharing a duplex for 3-5 people	€230
Non-dancers sharing a double room	€180

For further information and to add your name to the mailing list, see

<https://bricksite.com/scdbrussels/benelux-scd-weekend-2020>



**In N America for Spring Fling? Why not stay for a vacation and more dancing?
NY State, May 22-24 2020 .**



**Teachers: David Hall, Martin Mulligan, Jen Schoonover. Music: Terpsichore
More information - rscdsnewyork.org/pawling**

Midwest Scottish Weekend



June 12-14, 2020

Wayland Academy in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, USA

Teachers: Sharon Barker of Calgary and Alan Twigg of San Francisco

Musicians: Canadians Laura Risk and Nicholas Williams and Baltimorean Ralph Gordon

Hosted by

Chicago, Madison, and Milwaukee Scottish Country Dance Groups

Greetings International members:

The eleventh annual Midwest Scottish Weekend will be held for the fourth year at Wayland Academy in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, located 45 miles northeast of Madison. We would love to have you join us for a delightful residential weekend with an amazing surprise ball!

The weekend begins on Friday with a light supper followed by a welcome dance. Classes and dance events starting Saturday morning are held in air-conditioned gym, dance studio, and lounges, all an easy walk on the compact campus. The inviting swimming pool is open Saturday afternoon for those who wish to cool down a bit while others attend the ball walkthrough or other activity.

A reception, followed by a superb banquet, begins the Saturday evening events. Food we have come to expect from Wayland's talented chef and kitchen staff is always outstanding. After dinner a stroll behind the piper across the leafy campus prepares the dancers for a grand march and ball.

Our ball this year will consist of dances of subtlety and distinction created by one of the greatest of Scottish country dance devisors. Have you guessed? It's an innovative Drewry themed ball, perfect for international dancers. Our teacher is the Drewry archivist, what could be better? A post-ball ceilidh includes presentations of great variety; members display every facet of entertainment from farce to fantastic flair. Bring your song, poem, musical, comedic or other talent and join us. The party food and ceilidh fun is worth losing sleep over.

Our outstanding teachers are Sharon Barker and Alan Twigg. Sharon has over 40 years of dancing experience, tutors at all levels of the dance, and is archiving all Drewry dances. Alan instructs at weekend workshops across North America, tutors candidates, and participates in SCD performances, chiefly with the Red Thistle Dancers.

Our terrific musicians are Laura Risk, Nicholas Williams and Ralph Gordon. Laura's fiddling has been described by filmmaker Ken Burns as "a revelation and achingly beautiful" and Living Tradition hails her "powerful, percussive style... bursting with energy and passion." She plays for Scottish country dancing primarily with Nicholas Williams and their band Les Joueurs de Bon Accord. In addition to playing with Laura for over 15 years, Nicholas is also an accomplished accordion player who tours internationally. Ralph is a distinctively versatile musician with more than 45 years of musical experience on bass and cello. As a free-lance musician he played Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Blues Alley, Strathmore Hall, and he also performed with the New Jersey Symphony and with Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians.

Join us for a unique experience; we would love to see you there! Check the website for further information.
<https://midwestscottishweekend.org>



Scottish Country Dancing with The Red Thistle Dancers

Experience all the joy and energy of Scottish Country Dance! From beginner to advanced steps and figures, Red Thistle instructional DVDs offer easy to understand, detailed instructions.

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