

The Reel Thing

Scottish Country Dancing in America's Finest City



Jeanne teaching the beginners at our Poway class, Summer 2011

Chairman's Corner

By Jeanne Moody, Branch Chair, San Diego

Hello fellow dancers! Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours. The holiday season is gearing up; I hope that everyone has a season full of good cheer and good dancing. Classes are in full swing at Poway on Tuesdays and Balboa Park on Fridays. For those interested in more in-depth instruction Ward is offering a technique portion of his class: 7:15-8:15 pm. This is followed by the regularly-scheduled programming. Hope to see you in class.

Keep in mind upcoming events in the Southern California area: Orange County will host a Christmas Ball on December 10 with Hood, Wink and Swagger providing live music. You can enjoy their prodigious talents while anticipating their return to San Diego for our Spring Workshop, Tea, and Ball on March 31, 2012. We are very excited to welcome Ron Wallace (teacher extraordinaire, head of Hood, Wink and Swagger) to teach a workshop session during the day. This will be followed by tea, and then a ball in the evening. Mark your calendars! If anyone is interested in volunteering to help make this event happen, please contact me or Barbara Schwartz.

Want to celebrate some Scottish heritage with haggis – who doesn't? There will be a Burns Supper and Ball with live music at Ports-O-Call Restaurant in San Pedro on January 21, 2012. Keep an eye on the L.A. branch website for further information. And don't worry, the haggis is optional.

Finally, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to new dancers that started dancing with us in July. We look forward to sharing our love of Scottish social dancing and music at classes, dance events and social gatherings. To our current members: I look forward to seeing you on the dance floor.

Cheers!

Below: Tuesday night dancers enjoying a summer party sponsored by Jill and Jesse



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Summer Beginner class

The summer beginners' class was very successful, gaining the branch many new dancers who are enthusiastic about joining our group for the long term. Teacher Jeanne Moody made the class lots of fun and introduced the new group to some of the history and tradition of Scottish Country Dancing, as well as the usual steps and figures. Some experienced dancers joined in the fun and helped the new-comers along.

Brenda and Ric Matthews, new dancers, heard about the class in a Scripps' Ranch newsletter. Ric said, "We found that everyone was warm, welcoming and patient as we learned. It has remained interesting and cordial each week. Learning something new while making new friends is a good thing."

Another new dancer, Lynda Levine said, "We're so glad we came. This experience has been fun (we laugh a lot), and you don't need a partner. Learning the steps definitely makes you think. It's great exercise, and we've met the nicest people. What's better than that? I would definitely recommend the class to anyone looking for a few hours to relax and have a good time."

Thanks to Jeanne and all who helped make the summer class so successful.



Above and below: new and continuing members relaxing at the annual branch picnic, in the new venue, Pioneer Park in Mission Hills.



Left: Barb Schwartz (and Jill Evans) provided trivia games.



Left and below: New and continuing Tuesday night dancers



Recent Events

The Reel Thing

Interbranch Dance

Ten San Diego dancers enjoyed the annual Interbranch Dance on September 24, hosted by the Orange County Branch. Pete Fire Flame Plus, with the addition of a bass player, sent the dancers reeling and strathspeying throughout the evening.

Finger food and drinks helped keep up the energy of the dancers, and an added attraction this year was the Scottish Attire Exchange and Sale. Anthea MacDonald organized an array of donated dresses, hats, shoes, sporrans, and kilts, to the delight of the crowd, whether they purchased or just browsed.

Right: Amy flying through a dance at the Interbranch Dance

Below: Jill and Jesse, Jeanne and Cloyd, and Renee and Eric dancing Bees of Maggieknockater at the Interbranch Dance

Attending from San Diego were Gillian and Jesse Evans, Amy Hoffman, Jeanne Moody, Eric and Renee McLeod, Scott and Jeannette Paton, Cloyd Duncan, and Izzy Bristow, a friend of Gillian from England.



Asilomar 2011

By Jeanne Moody

In early November I drove up to West Hollywood, met up with SGV teacher, dancer, and friend, Pat Grivetti, and together we headed off to the San Francisco Branch Asilomar Weekend Workshop. This annual event takes place in Pacific Grove just steps away from the ocean. It had been a few years since I'd made it to this weekend, and I was whole-heartedly looking forward to it.

Upon arrival, we navigated around some minor construction of the grounds, had dinner and then warmed up for the weekend with the Friday night Welcome Dance and Social. The music was just great: Catherine Fraser on fiddle and Duncan Smith on piano. If you're ever in Australia or have a chance to hear them play when they're in the US, I highly recommend it.

There were several dancers from Southern California, including Ward and Cynthia Fleri. The five teachers for the workshop were an international set. From Canada were Pat Coyle of Niagra Falls, and Mary Murray of Vancouver.

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Asilomar 2011, cont.

David Queen came from the Southport branch in England, Duncan Smith, mentioned above, from Melbourne, Australia, and locally from San Francisco, Tim Wilson. I had Pat Coyle for my first class on Saturday. I appreciate her dry wit and insightful dance instruction. Duncan Smith taught one of the most intense strathspey step lessons that I've had for a while, and I enjoyed learning some uncommon figures from Tim Wilson. I really enjoy the opportunity to have live music for the dance classes. I'm afraid I've misplaced my information packet that listed all the musicians, but as always, it was inspiring to dance to.

The formal Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball was Saturday night. The music was enthusiastically provided by Reel of Seven, led by Andy Imbrie. I believe it was more like "Reel of Nine," as there were a couple of guest musicians rounding out the ensemble. They recorded the music, so keep an eye out for the recording.

Finally Sunday morning brought the combined general class where the guest teachers show us one or two dances each. After all the dancing over the course of the weekend it never ceases to amaze me how my feet will somehow manage to keep going. But when the music starts, and the hall full of people get going, how can you stay seated?

Secretarial Notes

By Betty Ribble, Honorary Secretary

Here we are again. A new season of Branch dancing and social activities. Our summer beginner series was successful and a new group of dancers have stayed on and we welcome their participation. Our fall Beginner Series was to start in October. The Branch Committee put on an all-out advertising blitz to bring community awareness of Scottish Country Dancing. This project was ably headed up by Amy Hoffman. She put our face in community papers, coffee shops, libraries, and on the internet. We netted almost 90 fans on Facebook, but the most successful source for new dancers turned out to be the newspaper calendar sections. Unfortunately, however, none of those new dancers continued to come to our class. We will have another class starting in the spring following the IDA festival and a potential beginner

From our Members

dance that is in the works. One of the best ways to recruit, though is your invitation to come and join the fun. So we hope you will spread the word.

I would like to bring to your attention an important source of Branch communication: Gillian Evans, our Sunshine Chairman. She extends on our behalf notes and cards expressing our congratulations, support and comfort where needed. We hope you will let her know when a Branch member should be offered our attention. You can email Jill at jevansbiz7@gmail.com. I know she will send our greetings right away.

Peter MacNeil has been in his counting house counting our memberships and our dues. He will shortly be sending you your personalized membership booklet. They will be handed out at Friday and Tuesday classes and mailed to those not present.

As mentioned in our last issue the Society Headquarters is looking for ways to communicate with Branches through out the world. To this end they have appointed contacts from the Society for each Branch. In the last issue I mentioned Mr. Malcom Brown would be our person. He has been invited to participate in our Branch newsletter you will find his article elsewhere in this issue. His perspective on the Society's activities should be most interesting.

This is all for now and until next issue.....
Cum dannsa (keep dancing)

Teacher's Tips

By Ward Fleri

In August 1986 I returned to the RSCDS Summer School at St. Andrews, Scotland to take the course of study for my Full Certificate teaching credential. I had the pleasure of having Bill Ireland as my instructor. Bill had been prominently involved in the Society for many years and had been one of Miss Milligan's "P.E." boys. He was a well-known teacher and examiner, and thus had a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. In addition to our daily class sessions, Bill would assign homework to us since our exam had a written portion as well as a dancing and teaching component. Our first homework assignment was simple, yet very instructive. He asked us to list, in order of importance, the following concepts as they relate to SCD – team work, handing, rhythm, technique, phrasing, sociability, and posture/carriage. We also needed to provide a justification for our order. As it turned out, Bill was primarily interested in what we placed as first and second on our list. To his thinking, the first item should be rhythm, for the fundamental reason that without music

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Teacher's Tips, cont.

and its rhythm, we don't have dancing, only movement. As I stated at the time, the music is the foundation of SCD. The music and its rhythm motivate us to want to move our legs, arms, and body in a complementary and harmonious manner. The second item was phrasing, that is being at the right place at the right time. Good phrasing enables a dancer to coordinate his/her motions with the music. Even if one cannot dance with good technique, a dancer can still enjoy the music and the dance by exercising proper phrasing. Proper phrasing is also key to one's ability to dance with a partner and others in a set (team work), and to sociability as one covers and acknowledges other dancers.

So the next time you are on the dance floor, be sure to both listen to the music and "feel" it as the music drives the dance. And remember that being at the right place at the right time (phrasing) will enhance not only your own enjoyment of the dance but also that of your fellow dancers.

Happy dancing.

A Thank You

From Jim Fenningham

I want to thank everyone for the cards and best wishes you sent me during my recent illness. Your kind thoughts helped me get through a long summer. By the time you read this, I'll be back on the dance floor enjoying your company once again.

Local Champions

As many of our members will recall, Pamela Ashworth's daughter, Alison, has performed with and for our group several times. She performed at the Del Mar Fair demonstration this summer while our members took a break, and she showed the Friday night class a dance she choreographed for a competition. This summer, both Alison and her sister, Megan, attended the 2011 Highland Dance National Championship held in Spokane Washington from July 22-24.

On Friday Megan and Alison competed in the Sailors Hornpipe Challenge in a group of 28 American and Canadian competitors Alison WON her age group!

Megan, who competed in the adult 18+ group in a group of 25 and placed 4th in her Hornpipe!

Saturday USIR (United States Interregional Championships) Alison placed 3rd out of the top 18 dancers from across the USA in the 16/17 age group.

Sunday Alison placed 3 runner up in the Lilac City Championship. She was the top American to place in a group of 33 aged 16-18 years. Megan placed 7th overall in the 19-21 years.

They had a fabulous time in Washington state, and we are lucky to have them share their talents with us!



Champion Highland Dancers, Alison and Megan Ashworth



The Reel Thing

From the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Headquarters: Scotland

Management Board and Committee News

(Excerpted from a message from Malcolm Brown)

The structure of the Society has been a recent topic of Management Board Meetings. Will we be a "Company Limited by Guarantee" or move to a new legal form for Scottish Charities, a "SCIO"? Both of these would provide better financial protection for the members of the Board, who are the Trustees of the Society.

In financial news, a net income of over £50,000 was reported for the year ending in March 2011. The full report can be seen on the Society's website in the July mailing section. A balanced Budget has been put forward for the current year, and it is not proposed to ask for an increase to subscriptions at this year's AGM.

£100,000 has been put aside into a Development Fund to pay for development projects outside of the normal work, and guidelines have now been devised to enable this to move forward.

David Cunningham has been appointed as the Society's Music and Media Development Officer, initially for a three month period, to manage the Society's media resources, both audio and video, and to arrange for future production projects. He will be paid out of the Development Fund.

A small working group has been set up to develop better methods of communicating with the branches and their members, looking at ways of making use of the Internet and the website. Another group is working on how to involve more people in Scottish Dancing by emphasizing the health benefits, and posters will soon be available. A review and update of the Manual is currently underway, involving people from all over the world, with the aim of making it available both in a printed version and on the website.

From our Members

Publicity Information

By Amy Hoffman

We have a new Facebook page! We are using this to recruit new dancers and to advertise our classes and events in 21st-century social media. Please "like" us (which means, be a fan!) at www.facebook.com/DanceScottishSanDiego

Our dancing season now in full swing in Southern California, and all of us know how much fun it is to attend our classes and events. However, we have not had very good luck in recruiting lately. Our beginner series planned for October was not as much of a success as we had hoped. We had six dancers come try us out, but they didn't continue to dance with us. Betty mentioned in her Secretarial Notes that we put a lot of effort into advertising. Unfortunately, it has not panned out for us very well. We will try again in the spring, and will continue to use the Facebook page. We are also exploring the idea of holding a beginner/recruiting dance at a Navy Base in the new year. Our long-term visitor, Jeff Forsyth has proposed a venue and date, so look for more information in the near future. If you have ideas for recruiting, please tell me or any board member!

Another recent disappointment has been that we had to cancel our annual Julian retreat this year. Although we had the spacious and beautiful Blum Lodge reserved, we didn't fill enough spaces before the second payment was due. In the past we have had more than enough to fill Bishop's Lodge and have a waiting list. So what happened? We're not sure. But if you have suggestions for the board about the time of year for the retreat, the activities we do there, or any thing else that might make the weekend more attractive, please let us know! We have had a wonderful time in the past and still hope to be able to hold the weekend next year, and to continue the tradition.

I am pleased to see that even though we don't have many beginners starting with us this fall, we have many dancers who started with us in the summer coming back, learning a lot, and having lots of fun! Also, we have been having a good response and turn out for Ward's technique lessons prior to our regular social dance class on Friday nights. That will continue for the foreseeable future, so be sure to come out to Balboa Park on Fridays!

Lastly, thank you for our patience regarding this late Reel Thing issue, and thank you for your contributions, which have filled it in nicely! Remember, you can always send me things for the next issue—there's a link on our website and in the Editors' Notes on the next page. Just be sure to mark it as "for the Reel Thing" so I won't think it's spam!

See you on the dance floor.

Upcoming Events

Tuesdays: **Mixed level/social dancing:** 7:30

No Classes in December.

Regular classes start again **January 3.**

Watch email lists for a **VENUE CHANGE!**

Fridays: **Technique session:** 7:15, followed by mixed level **Social dancing.** Casa del Prado room 203.

Only one class session in December, on **December 9.**

Regular classes start again **January 6.**

December 10, 2011: **Orange County Christmas Ball** Tustin Senior Center. 7:00 PM. Visit our website for a link to the flyer.

March 31, 2012: **Spring Fling workshop, High Tea, and Tea Dance.** Featuring guest teacher Ron Wallace and live music by Hood, Wink & Swagger. Balboa Park War Memorial Building.

Editors' Note

As always, your contributions are welcome! If you would like to write an article about a recent event, please do! Sandy and Amy are aiming to get the Reel Thing published several times per year. The next issues hopefully will be in February, and May, work and travel schedules permitting. Submission deadlines are set for about a week beforehand. You can easily send us items by visiting the website (link from any reference in this .pdf file), or by emailing me at ReelThingEditor@RSCDS-SanDiego.org (put "Reel Thing" in the subject line so I know it's not spam!). If you don't have internet access, call me or talk to either of us in class and we can arrange something!

Also, please send along information about newsworthy items, particularly notices for upcoming events (dancing or otherwise of Scottish interest), recent travel notes, milestone announcements, etc.

Did you know? All references to websites and email addresses in this online .pdf document are "live." You can click on them to bring up your browser or email program at the referenced site/address directly.

Thank you for your support!

--Amy Hoffman and Sandy Drew

The Reel Thing

2011-2012 Board Members

Committee Members

Chairman: Jeanne Moody

Vice-Chairman: Jesse Evans

Honorary Secretary: Betty Ribble

Treasurer + Membership Chair: Peter MacNeil

Dance Director: Ward Fleri

Program Director: Barbara Schwartz

Publicity Director: Amy Hoffman

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Member-at-large: Eric McLeod

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