

Thistle News

Nanaimo Scottish Country Dancers

Nanaimo, British Columbia

www.scottishcountrydancing.com

January, 2005

Club Executive

President

Brian McFadden

bjmcfadden@shaw.ca

756-6182

Vice President

Marguerite Bell

mhbells@telus.net

756-9836

Treasurer

Bill Gibson

brgibson@uniserve.com

954-0160

Secretary

David Handley

mtebene@pacificcoast.net

757-7228

Social Convenor

Elsbet Staniforth

estaniforth@shaw.ca

756-4266

Inside this Issue

President's message 1

Brian

Health News 2

Marguerite

Teachers' corner

What's in a Programme 3

June

History of Scottish Country

Dancing 4

Hazel

TAC Summer School update 3

A Message from Marguerite 4

Potpourri 5

Coming events 6

The Editors 6



President's Message

Greetings fellow dancers:

I had hoped to be writing a few words about what a terrific time we all had at our New Year's Ball, but the severe winter weather on Friday and Saturday, made the roads unsafe for driving forcing us to cancel the event. To my knowledge this was the first time we had to abort our annual New Year's dance and I know it was a major disappointment to us all, especially those who worked so hard to prepare for this year's dance. Our Ball Chairman, Allison Shaw and her committee had done an excellent job in the organizing of the event and we all hope she will volunteer to head the next New Year's celebration. Pity to waste all that experience. What say you, Allison? No pressure there!!!

Speaking on happier Christmas and New Year events, we had a great evening in December on the final night of the Intermediate class; good dancing, good food and good socializing made for a very enjoyable evening. On New Year's Eve Anne and Alastair Berry once again opened their home to a lively crowd of Nanaimo Scottish Country Dancers who dined and danced until midnight when hugs and champagne helped to usher out the old year and welcome in 2005. On Vancouver Island, this year promises to be a busy one with workshops slated for Salt Spring Island and Victoria. Comox will be holding their Annual Valentine's Dinner/Dance followed by the St. Patrick's Dinner and Dance in Port Alberni. Later in the year comes the main event with the TAC Annual Summer School at Shawnigan Lake. Check our Bulletin Board for dates of these and other Scottish Country Dance events.

More Good News: Our request for a new editor for the Thistle Bulletin produced several volunteers which was most gratifying. Once again our people step up to the plate when duty calls. Many thanks to those who offered their services. Liz Higgins and John Duffus have agreed to be joint editors. Many thanks to both of you. That's all from me for this edition.

Happy dancing,

Brian McFadden

President



Health News

Prevention of Injuries in Scottish Country Dancing

By Marguerite

Scottish country dancing is a strenuous activity and, sadly, can cause some injuries. However if we warm up well and stretch before dancing some of those injuries can be prevented. The injuries that may happen are: strains, sprains, fractures, cramps, and shin splints.

1. Strain

This affects a muscle or a tendon linking a muscle to a bone. It is caused by a sudden stretch or by repeated overuse

2. Sprain

This affects a ligament joining bone to bone and is caused by a sudden trauma, a fall, or a twisting action.

3. Fracture

This is a break in bone alignment and is caused by a sudden severe trauma or could be caused by repeated stressful activity i.e. a stress fracture. In Scottish country dancing this is usually a fracture of the metatarsals of the foot.

4. Cramps

Leg pain and muscle cramps are common. They can occur while dancing or during the night after an evening of dancing.

5. Shin splints

Shin splints are pain in the front of the lower leg. Their cause is unknown but they tend to develop after activities in which the legs are overused e.g. in dancing.

We can also injure our shoulders and wrists by poor handing techniques.

To read the above one would think that Scottish country dancing is a dangerous activity, but it really isn't. In my years of dancing I have not met anyone who has had a serious injury caused by Scottish country dancing.

The treatment for the majority of injuries is **R.I.C.E.**

R Rest

Stop the activity and use the injured part as little as possible

I Ice

Apply ice or a cold pack as soon as possible. We keep a cold pack in the freezer in Pleasant Valley Hall. When first injured, apply ice for 15 minutes every hour. After 72 hours, ice 3 times a day for 15 to 30 minutes.

C Compress

Apply a tensor bandage firmly, but not tightly, wrapping the injured part to control swelling. We have a first aid kit at each class which contains tensor bandages.

E Elevate

Elevate the injured part above body level to allow gravity to drain the swelling.

As the pain subsides gentle Range of Motion exercises can be started. Those are done within the limits of pain.

This really works well, and if icing is started immediately, you should recover quickly. However if recovery is slow, a physiotherapist should be consulted as physiotherapists use modalities to decrease pain and swelling, and can teach specific exercises for muscles and joints.

REMEMBER, WHEN INJURED USE R.I.C.E.

Marguerite



Teachers' Corner

What's in a programme?

By June

Every week for the Tuesday social class I need to choose at least eight dances. How do you do this one might ask?? During the course of the evening we dance at least 3 Jigs, 3 Reels, and two Strathspeys so the number one job is finding the correct number of each. The second consideration is the level of difficulty. You may have noticed that the dance list on the bulletin board and on the website have the level of difficulty beside each dance. These are graded from one to five with one being the easiest and five the most difficult. While we want to be able to have fun and dance some easy dances each week, we also need to be challenged as well. How often have you struggled to learn a difficult dance, and then felt a definite sense of accomplishment when you realized that you'd finally got it? I use, as my primary resource, the RSCDS books, and other books which I have collected or been given over the years (Scottish Country Dancers are exceedingly generous) and I have also found some really neat dances from the cheat sheets of old Balls and Ceilidhs I have attended. I try to make sure that the selected dances contain a variety of formations so that each dance doesn't end with 6 hands round and back. Yes, yes, alright!! I know that's happened once or twice. I must admit that I am attracted by cute titles also, but carefully scan each dance before deciding if it will be appropriate for the next evening's programme. If there are upcoming events at other SCD clubs I make an effort to incorporate some of those dances into my weekly programmes, also, especially the more difficult ones if members from our group will be attending. Club members suggest old favourites of theirs, or dances they may have learned at a workshop and would like to do again. Other ideas come in Newsletters from local clubs who list the dances they have done at recent socials. From these I can determine what is being taught in our area. And, of course, each year RSCDS submits a list of recommended dances to be taught that year, which always have some unusual or quirky

manoeuvres in them. All these resources provide me with selections so I may fulfil my goal of providing an interesting and fun evening of dancing for my class. As we begin 2005 my aim will be to provide fun, enjoyable dances for all. So, If any of you have an old favourite that we haven't been doing lately that you would like to see on the programme, just write the name of the dance and the source, if you know it, on a piece of paper with your name and either give it to me on a Tuesday night or email me anytime at: bjmcfadden@shaw.ca

Happy Dancing for 2005

June



**T.A.C. Summer School
July 31 – August 7, 2005
Shawnigan Lake School, Shawnigan Lake, BC**

This is a wonderful opportunity for Nanaimo dancers to attend this school, which is normally always held in Ontario. There are 4 levels of classes from Elementary to Advanced 2, as well as evening social dances such as a Ceilidh, a Theme Dance and of course the Ball. The Ball includes a sherry party, dinner and dance and will be a grand affair. The musicians are Muriel Johnstone and Keith Smith who get rave reviews. It should be a very enjoyable evening.

There are discounts available for registration prior to May 1 and it is suggested that anyone interested should register as soon as possible. So far there are 167 registrants and the maximum number who can attend is 200 so this number will be reached soon. Attendance is flexible, from the full seven day school, to weekend only, individual days, or even just the Saturday Reception, Banquet and Ball.

We have fliers and registration forms for the Summer School with additional information on programs and fees for those who are interested. Please talk to Marguerite if you have any questions.

.....more from the Teacher's Corner

The History of Scottish Dancing

By Hazel

Did you know that the Nanaimo Scottish Country Dancing Club is an affiliate member of the Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society (RSCDS)?

Although Scottish Country Dancing (SCD) has been around for hundreds of years there was no formal documentation of the dances, or uniformity about the steps. Country Dancing was popular in England in the 17th Century and certainly popular in Scotland in the 18th Century. Grand Assembly Halls were built to accommodate the gentry, who danced in all of the main cities. In Scotland reels became popular and were danced by all levels of society, in local halls and churches. Scotland also developed its own musical rhythm, the strathspey, in the middle of the 18th Century. Times and fashions changed and other dance forms replaced the Country Dances in England and Europe, however Scotland hung on to the dancing traditions. The Scottish Regiments helped keep the tradition alive by dancing some of the old traditional dances like "Cadgers in the Cannongate" and "The Duchess of Atholl's Slipper".

By the early 1920's two ladies decided to form the RSCDS – Miss Jean Milligan and Mrs. Isobel Stewart. They gathered manuscripts and formalized the formations, which were frequently danced. The RSCDS has grown into a worldwide organization with a much wider scope now than when they started in 1923. Both ladies are now dead but the work they started still carries on and has grown into a resource for all dancers worldwide as well as a source of new dances and music.

You can join the RSCDS as an individual member or join a Branch of the RSCDS – our closest branches are Victoria and Vancouver.

Hazel



A Message from Marguerite

I wish you all a Happy New Year and a year of Happy Dancing.

Sadly our social event of the year, " the Ball" had to be canceled because of the inclement weather. Very disappointing for us all, especially for those who had worked so hard to organize it. However we have lots of good times to look forward to in 2005.

On New Year's Eve I had a phone call from **Joan Paterson**. She told me that she had fractured her arm a year ago and this was the reason that we have not seen her and Bill. Two months ago she had a total hip replacement in Vancouver and she was doing very well. She and Bill are well and they were thinking of us all going to Anne and Alistair's party. She said for me to wish all of you a very Happy New Year from them both.

On the fourth of January I received a card from **Sheila Brewin**. She is well known to the Thursday night class. Her sojourn to Nova Scotia lasted five months and she returned in November with her furniture and car to Vancouver Island and now lives in Victoria. She asks for you all and says she will visit the Thursday night class when she visits her friends in Lantzville.

Potpourri

The Two-sex Scottish Dancer

*An apt ditty, submitted by
Alison Shaw:*

I'm a two sex Scottish Dancer
and may seem rather dim,
But I never spend one
evening as a full time her
or him,
I change my sex from dance
to dance, my corners
always alter
It's really not surprising I
occasionally falter.
The old and simple dances I
can manage very nicely
And I can learn a new dance
and do it most precisely,
But when it comes to next
week I don't know if I
can
For I learnt it as a woman and
dance it as a man.
And so you men who have
the luck to always stay
the same
When female gentlemen go
wrong be sparing with
your blame.
I'll add a postscript to this
tale - one comfort I have
got
When both the women
change their sex it doesn't
show a lot!

Patricia Batt



The Haggis Season

*Our salute to Robbie Burns,
submitted by Hazel MacDonald*

The Haggis Season has
begun!
All over Scotland every gun
Is lifted down with loving
care,
Though some prefer the
haggis snare.
Then, hidden in the Highland
heather,
Great hairy clansmen crouch
together.
Then having laid the haggis
bait,
That's a lifelike haggis on a
plate,
One calls out loudly,
"Look there, the noo!"
That means a haggis is in
view.
It's flying upside down and
low,

The guns all fire, but they're
too slow,

'Cause though it's old and
rather fat,

They're awful hard to shoot
like that.

And as it flies off in the mist

The hairy clansmen shake
their fists

And shout their curses to the
crag

(And stuff their bait back in
their bags.)

So another haggis gets away
To live until next Hogmanay.

And that's the reason it's so
rare –

This strange, traditional
Scottish fare.

Pam Ayres



Comedy Corner

A Scots boy came home from school and told his mother he had been given a part in the school play. "Wonderful," says the mother, "What part is it?" The boy says "I play the part of the Scottish husband!" The mother scowls and says: "Go back and tell your teacher you want a speaking part."

Editorial

A Guid New Year to One and All!!

What a pity our ball had to be cancelled! One of your Editors even bought herself a fabulous new dress especially for the occasion (you can probably guess which one!!!) Hopefully, there will soon be another occasion to wear it! Also, we were expecting a couple of pages of Ball "News and Pictures" to fill out our Thistle content this issue, so we are a little 'thinner' around the edges than we expected. Sincere thanks to all those who submitted articles: Hazel, Marguerite, Alison, June and, of course, our President, Brian.

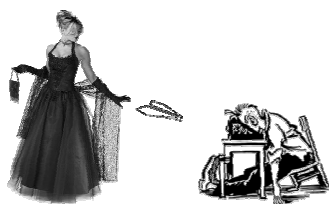
John and I are very happy to take on this worthy job of editing your Thistle and invite everyone to submit any articles you feel may be of interest to our members or offer any suggestions you may have regarding the newsletter. In fact, we insist that you do!

We look forward to bringing you Thistle "news" throughout 2005. Happy Reading & Dancing!

Your Editors:

Liz Higgins – Content

John Duffus - Layout



P.S. I have just realized that your other Editor bought himself a dress too!! A kilt that is! We will look forward to seeing him in it at the next dance!

UPCOMING EVENTS

St Valentine's Dinner/Dance in Courtenay.
Saturday, February 12, 2005

Workshop and Ball, Victoria, BC
March 11 – 13, 2005

St. Patrick's Day Dinner/Dance in Port Alberni.
Saturday, March 12, 2005

Van Isle Workshop, Victoria.
Saturday, March 12, 2005

Delta Borderers Spring Fling, Vancouver.
Saturday, March 19, 2005

**Further information on these events can
be found on our bulletin board**

*or through the links on the Nanaimo website,
www.scottishcountrydancing.com.*

Hope you enjoyed the January Thistle
Our Next Issue: April, 2005
Deadlines for Submissions: March 25, 2005
Liz Higgins 390-9290
e-mail; decases@shaw.ca
or
John Duffus 802-3710
e-mail: jduffus@shaw.ca
