

SCOTCH CIRCLE

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August 2009

RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Incorporated
GPO Box 1795, CANBERRA ACT 2601

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Chair's Message

I greet you all once again - this time with the third Scotch Circle of the 2009 dancing year. This issue contains important information about the Branch AGM. Please note that all positions on the executive (office bearers and committee members) become vacant. If you think you might be able to commit some time to help run the affairs of the Branch, please consider the possibility of nominating for a position, in whatever capacity you may wish. Talk to a current committee member if you are interested or have any questions.

You will also find reports of some recent SCD events, as well as details of a number of functions that are on the horizon. In particular, the deadline for tickets to the Canberra Ball will pass in a matter of days, with a limited number of tickets still available. (Contact details for tickets are inside.) We await 29 August with great anticipation.

We also report in this issue that the Society's Management Board has concluded its deliberations on the New Zealand Branch proposal that the Society should allow membership of a Branch by persons who are not members of the Society. The MB has decided that it will not be moving for any change to the *status quo* (which is, that to be a member of a Branch, a person must also be a member of the Society). It remains to be seen whether this is the end of the matter.

Finally, you can read the second instalment of "*The Twists and Turns of My Life*" by David Currie. David has been a Scottish country dancer for many years, possibly more years than he cares to remember. In 2005 he was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in recognition of the SCD entertainment he organised over a period of many years, principally for the residents of retirement villages and nursing homes. In the first instalment, David related how his military service during World War II took him to Scotland, where he met and married his wife Agnes; and where he eventually discovered Scottish country dancing. This instalment continues and concludes the story.

Jack Arthur

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 16 September 2009 at St Andrew's Church Hall starting at 7.30 pm. The early start will, firstly, provide an opportunity for you as members to ask questions about the Branch's general and financial health and to raise any matters that may be of concern. At the same time, it will leave plenty of time at the conclusion of the meeting for a class of social dancing followed by supper. You are all urged to attend the AGM and are cordially invited to stay on afterwards.

A quorum for the meeting is one quarter of the annual fee paying members who are financial or twenty five members, whichever is the lesser number.

The Treasurer, Mary Gellatly, will be pleased to accept membership fees for the 2009/10 financial year from any members who have not already renewed.

All executive positions become vacant. A form for nomination of office bearers and committee members and for proxy voting is at the back of this issue of Scotch Circle.

**THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY
CANBERRA AND DISTRICT BRANCH INC.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2009, 7.30 P M
ST ANDREWS CHURCH HALL FORREST**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2008
3. Business arising
4. Annual Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Election of office bearers and committee
7. Appointment of auditor
8. Any other business

RECENT EVENTS

DANCERS TAKE POT LUCK ON JULY 4 AND HAVE REEL TEA PARTY

A group of around forty people gathered for a Branch function at St Andrews Church Hall on American Independence Day. As well as bringing their dancing shoes, they came with food to share on a pot luck basis. Some of the dances featured in an entertaining program were *The Shenandoah River Reel*, *The Gopher's Reel* and *Trip to Gatlinburg*. After the dancing, which took place between 3pm and 5.30pm; the food was heated and shared at "tea time", in a friendly, indeed, party atmosphere - a reel tea party.

KIAMA: GREAT SCHOOL; GREAT HOLIDAY.

Participants in the 34th RSCDS Australian Winter School, held in this delightful seaside town situated on the New South Wales south coast, were able to choose from a right royal menu of events. There was the formal schooling at dance classes in the mornings, followed by optional afternoon activities, including special classes, talks and sightseeing. At nights, social dancing was on offer, sometimes at two different sites on the same night. Convivial gatherings were frequent occurrences! All in all, it was great to have the benefits of being at school and on holiday at the same time. The Kiama week certainly was a big success. And this can be attributed to a number of factors, including: very good organisation; availability of lots of help; excellent teaching; very fine musicianship; and a happy, friendly group of dancers. Congratulations go to the Sydney Branch, particularly the organising committee and all the volunteer helpers. Thanks are also due to the teachers and musicians and, finally, the dancers can pat themselves on the back, too.

DANCERS HAVE A BALL IN MELBOURNE

On 25 July, dancers gathered to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the RSCDS Melbourne and District Branch. The occasion was a Ball held at LaTrobe University, Bundoora; it was attended by some 180 people, including several of the inaugural members and office bearers, as well as a small contingent of dancers from Canberra. Participants enjoyed an excellent program of dances accompanied by the superb music of David Cunningham and His Scottish Dance Band. Everyone had a ball.

LYNEHAM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TRY SCOTTISH

Recently, Branch members, at short notice, were able to assist school teachers provide some tuition in SCD for groups of girls and boys in years 7 and 9 at Lyneham High School. A physical education teacher from the school, a young Scot with an interest in SCD, approached the Branch for some guidance. As a result, he attended the Branch Beginners' class for two weeks where he was taught a selection of simple dances and the Branch teacher, Elizabeth Low, followed this up by providing him with written instructions and recorded music for those dances.

Then, for a week, Branch teachers and dancers attended the High School daily to work with the school teachers. The teaching method which evolved as the week progressed was that the school teachers took responsibility for arranging the 80+ children in each class into sets and maintaining order. The Branch teachers taught the dances, firstly to one set by way of demonstration to the other sets in the room, and then to these other sets. Thanks go to Ann and David Parkinson, Hisako Ewing and Elaine Arthur for their efforts at the High School, and to Elizabeth for her contribution. The children did enjoy the experience of SCD, responding well to the teaching and the music.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, 29 AUGUST 2009

The Canberra Ball

A special occasion to mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns

In The Great Hall of University House, Australian National University

with music by Stringfiddle

TIME AND TICKETS (\$40) ARE RUNNING OUT

Drinks 7.00pm, Grand March 7.30pm

Joie de Vivre; Riggs of Corn; The Silver Tassie; The Wild Geese; Frae A' The Airts; The Homecoming Dance; The Lea Rig; The Montgomeries' Rant; Ayrshire Lassies; Twa Rogueish Een;

Burns Anniversary Ceremony and Supper 9.15pm

Duncan Gray; A Man's a Man For A' That; Cutty Sark; Round Reel of Eight; Burns Night; The Minister on the Loch; The Kelloholm Jig; Mairi's Wedding.

Auld Lang Syne

Visitors are especially welcome; for further information contact:

Elaine Arthur (02) 6254 7879 elaine.arthur@apex.net.au

Bruce Clark (02) 6288 2487 jbclark@webone.com.au

Clare Hughes (02) 6248 9090 friendly@homemail.com.au

Elizabeth Low (02) 6288 8177 cnorton@pcug.org.

Saturday 5 September

Southern Highlands SCD Annual Social

7.30pm, St John's Anglican Church Hall, Browley St, Mossvale, \$10 including Supper

Music by Stringfiddle

Maxwell's Rant; Highland Fair; Kilkenny Castle; Bees of Maggie Knockater; St Andrew's Platinum Reel; Southern Highlands Anniversary Strathspey; The Homecoming Dance; Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder; Seann Truibhas Willichan; Angus MacLeod; Hooper's Jig; Belle of Bon Accord; Royal Deeside Railway; McDonald of the Isles; The Barmkin; The Silver Tassie; Pelorus Jack; Trip to Bavaria.

Saturday 19 September

Marengo SCD Social

7.30pm, at The Hall, Murringo, \$10; contacts are Maurice Harcombe (6384 6222) and Jean Williams (6382 7918)

Happy Returns; Napier's Index; The Minister on the Loch; The Sailor; Hooper's Jig; Drumelzier; The Irish Rover; Cauld Kail; Marengo Blue; The Black Swans of Narrabeen; Catch the Wind; Adieu Mon Ami; Muirland Willie; Red House; The Duchess Tree; Shiftin' Bobbins; The Byron Strathspey; Mairi's Wedding.

9, 10, 11 October

Far South Coast Group of SCD – Bermagui Weekend

Here is a reminder that this group of dancers will be holding their 10th annual social weekend at Bermagui. Music will be provided by Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt, firstly in concert on the Friday evening and then for dancing on the Saturday evening. Full details, including the program will be in the September issue of the Branch email Newsletter.

Wednesday 25 November

Branch End-of-year Social (note change of date)

Please note the change of date for this function, which will take the form of social dancing at the regular Branch Class venue, St Andrew's Church Hall, from 7.30pm - 10pm, followed by a light supper. A Program will be circulated closer to the occasion.

Saturday, 29 November

Bateman's Bay Caledonian Society Annual Supper Dance

Venue: Bateman's Bay Community Centre, Museum Place

Time: 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm: Drinks and Nibbles

Music: Strathmannan

Cost: \$25

Billets: Available on request

Enquiries: Moira Blades 02 4472 3696 or Kay Livingstone 02 4472 6789

The Homecoming Dance (R); Hooper's Jig (J); The Montgomeries' Rant (R); Culla Bay (S); The Luckenbooth Brooch (J); The Duchess Tree (S); The Irish Rover (R); The Lea Rig (S); EH3 7AF (J); Miss Catherine Allen (S); Corn Rigs (R); Pelorus Jack (J); Sandy O'er the Lea (S); Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder (J); From the Broomielaw (S); A Trip to the Netherlands (R); Postie's Jig (J); Extras (time permitting): The Clachan (J); Miss Johnstone of Ardrrossan (R).

Calendar for Remainder of 2009

29 Aug	The Canberra Ball
5 Sept	Southern Highlands SCD Annual Social
11 Sept	Belconnen advanced social class
16 Sept	Branch AGM
19 Sept	Marengo SCD Social
9-11 Oct	Far South Coast SCD Group, Bermagui Weekend
23 Oct	Belconnen advanced social class. Final for year
21 Nov	Burns SCD Group St Andrew's Night Celebration
25 Nov	Branch end-of-year Social
29 Nov	Bateman's Bay Caledonian Society Supper Dance
4 Dec	Branch "Gentle Dancing for Gentle Dancers" class Annual Picnic
5 Dec	Combined Belconnen SCD and SCDCC Christmas Social

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY
Consultation by Society's Management Board
On Amendment to the New Zealand Branch Motion at AGM 2008

Consultation Process and Outcome

The following is an extract from a report on this consultation which was posted on the Society's website on 5 June 2009:

“A consultation document was sent to Branch Chairmen to share with their committees and then feed back, providing the Management Board with an overview of opinions from around the world. As it was not designed for input by individual members it is now being published on the website so that members can share the consultation response and be informed about the resulting Management Board plans.

107 Branches responded out of a possible 170 (63%), of which 72% supported as their first choice the status quo regarding the current RSCDS membership structure. As a consequence of this outcome, the Management Board does not propose to put forward to the 2009 AGM any motions proposing changes to the Society's Constitution or structure.”

Background

The Society's AGM in November 2008 discussed proposals concerning the current, longstanding requirement that members of a Branch must also be members of the Society. The NZ Branch had submitted a Notice of Motion, seconded by the Boston Branch, to amend the Society Rule which states that members of a Branch “MUST also be members of the Society” to “MAY also be members of the Society”. Branch rights to vote at a Society AGM would be based on the number of Branch members who are also members of the Society, and Branch Office Bearers would be required to also be members of the Society. The justification for the proposal is that there is a significant group of dancers who are interested in joining a Branch but who are not interested in joining the parent organisation. Therefore, removing the requirement for members of a Branch to be a member of the RSCDS would increase membership of Branches.

The Society's Management Board submitted a Notice of Amendment to the NZ Branch proposal to the effect that the NZ Branch proposal be referred to the Management Board to bring forward a paper by June 2009, fully reviewing the constitutional and financial implications of such a change. The Board argued that the change proposed by the NZ Branch requires more extensive study and discussion of the potential consequences, so that should members and delegates feel that it should be passed, they do so in the full knowledge of its impact on the Society.

The Management Board amendment was carried, which committed it to undertaking a consultation process and preparing a report no later than 5 June 2009. This has now been done.

Further Information:

Further information about this matter can be found on the Society's website, or feel free to contact Jack Arthur (phone: 6254 7879 or email: jarthur@apex.net.au).

THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF MY LIFE (Part 2), by David Currie.

This is the final of two instalments of this account of the author's life and his involvement in Scottish Country Dancing. The first part was published in the May 2009 issue of Scotch Circle

A sad event happened in our household early in 1954. Agnes' mother died rather suddenly. We were in Scotland because of Agnes' wish to be with her mother and now she wasn't with us anymore. It was stupid thinking about going back to Australia because our lives were settled where we were and Agnes would never agree to it anyway. However, after a few weeks had elapsed I brought up the subject with Agnes: how would you like to go back to Australia? To my great surprise she was in full agreement.

The next question was where to get the money? I have always remembered what our boat tickets cost in 1948 – 110 pounds each – and they were bound to cost more now and this time we had two children as well.

A few days later I started to wonder if they would take us as migrants with me and Bob being Australian born. I decided to send a letter to Australia House in London with the all-important question. All we got in reply was a form with no answer to my question. While they didn't say yes we'll take you they didn't say no either. So I filled in the form and sent it back to London.

After a few weeks, we received a letter from Australia House requesting that we go to Dundee to be interviewed. All four of us made the trip to Dundee, some 20 miles away. Still feeling all this was not for real, I straight away told the interviewer I was an Australian. With a slight pause while he looked at our papers, he said "you've been here more than five years". They must have been the nicest words anyone ever said to me. I wondered at the time how many more Australians might have been living in the UK for more than five years and unaware that they could return home for 10 pounds as migrants.

As I said earlier, everything was going pretty well in Scotland and I made many nice friends in Perth and could have stayed there for the rest of my life, but I was in no doubt Australia was the best country for our two young children, now aged 8 and 6.

We left Tilbury in March 1955 and landed in Melbourne on Anzac Day. One of the most pleasing sights of my life was to see my father on the shore waiting to welcome us home. The Government Printing Office in Canberra was advertising for printers in Canberra, offering a house with the job. I applied for and got one of the positions. I travelled alone by train to Canberra leaving Agnes and the children at the migrant hostel in Melbourne. As soon as I got the keys to the house they flew up to join me.

With plenty to do and think about in our new town, it would be two years before I started to wonder if there was any SCD in town. I met a workmate called David Ross who was a dancer. David, who died a few years ago, was once teacher of the Burns SCD class. I went along to a class he put me on to in a hall at the rear of the Royal Canberra Hospital car park. It was there that I met David's wife Ella for the first time.

As a shift worker, it was difficult to attend a regular class. The next class I remember attending was in a Riverside hut in Barton. The teacher was Stewart McKenzie who had to find tracks on gramophone records for his music. I got off shift work and was free to attend a class taught by Les Cumming in the early 60s in Hughes Community Centre and, when Les closed this class, I had another break from SCD. I am scratching my head to get the sequence correct but the next class I attended was at Lyons taught again by Stewart McKenzie. The next one must have been the class at Royal Canberra Hospital where the teacher was Jean Conway with music from Hugh McKenna. I feel sure I was attending two weekly classes about that time, the other being the Burns class at Forrest.

The year 1987 was an eventful year for me. Early that year the Burns SCD class teacher's job became vacant and I was nominated for the job. In September that same year, my wife Agnes was badly injured in a car accident which brought on a long illness including dementia. I was informed later that she also had osteoporosis. I also retired in 1987 from my day job.

Although I had now given up working for a living I was now to be fully involved with Scottish Country dancing. Not only did I have a weekly class with the Burns Group, I was involved with a class in Queanbeyan. I was asked to teach a SCD class in Wagga Wagga. This involved 15 classes on Friday evenings spread over three years in 1988. I also became secretary of the Branch which lasted for three years. So much for retirement. I had plenty to keep my mind occupied.

In the early 90s the Burns Group were fortunate to have as their president the late Arnold Arthur. At the time they only had the White Heather Ball outside of weekly classes. I have been unable to find when we actually took over the running of the St Andrew's Night after the Hospital class folded. But Arnold thought we should have more social activity throughout the year. The "Spring Hop" was introduced and was usually held in late August.

Arnold suggested we have a social evening to celebrate the life of Robert Burns. January 25 was not a good time to be celebrating in a hot hall with only fans to try to keep us cool in the middle of an Australian summer. Arnold himself addressed the Haggis and George Laburn took over latterly. But we celebrated with dancing, haggis, neeps and tatties – and apple juice (no whisky allowed).

Hugh McKenna and Mike Heaney provided most of the music for these events.

One of the most pleasing activities of my life has been arranging entertainment for the residents of Nursing Homes, and Retirement Villages etc. Since 1991 we have chalked up over 550 performances in Canberra, Queanbeyan, Young and (two at) Boorowa. I have to thank all the dancers who have supported me over the years. Illness has slowed me down in the past year, however we managed to squeeze in eight more in 2008 when I kept out of hospital. I must thank Jim Lowe who assisted me when I was overseas and at other times when I was unavailable. Jean Clark enjoyed very much going with me every week to watch in the latter three years of her life. It has always been nice to see the smiles on the faces of the residents and [to hear the] words of appreciation at the end of the shows. One of the nicest was after our most recent dancing at the new Ainslie Goodwin Village in November 08. I was busy packing up when a little old lady came up to me and told me that she enjoyed the dancing and seemed a little reluctant to admit there was a tear in her eye.

The greatest thrill of all for me was the awarding of the Order of Australia Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2005. The award was for all the entertainment I arranged in Canberra and district over the 14 years as at that time. One of the nicest congratulatory words I received was from a friend who said: "a lot of people get these awards for simply doing their high-salaried daily jobs".

If I had never discovered Scottish Country dancing, I would have missed something really great in my life. As you will see if you have read this story from start to finish, I nearly did miss out.

In the early part of this story, I said my wife Agnes was involved in a bad car accident. I am pleased to say that after a long illness she is very stable at the moment. She is very happy and contented, which might seem a strange thing to say when she can't move her arms or legs and can't talk to me. To me she is very lovely and I just want to be with her as much as I can.

**Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Canberra and District Branch Inc
Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members
NOMINATION**

We, being persons qualified to vote at an election of the above Branch, NOMINATE:

.....
(Name in **BLOCK LETTERS**)

Who is a member of the above Branch, for election to office as (circle one below):

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

TREASURER

COMMITTEE MEMBER

.....
(Name in **BLOCK LETTERS** of person making the nomination)

.....
(Signature of person making the nomination and date of nomination)

0-0-0

I,CONSENT to this nomination
(Name of person nominated **BLOCK LETTERS**)

.....
(Signature of person nominated and date)

**Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Canberra and District Branch Inc
FORM OF APPOINTMENT AS PROXY**

I,.....
(Name)

Of.....
(Address)
being a member of the above Branch, hereby APPOINT

.....
(Name of proxy)

.....
(Address of proxy)
being a member of the above Branch, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the Annual General meeting of the above Branch to be held on Wednesday 16 September 2009, and at any adjournment of these meetings.

.....
(Signature of member appointing proxy and date)

Scotch Circle is published by RSCDS (Canberra & District) and the Committee reserves rights of editorial control
Closing date for next Scotch Circle – Friday, 30 October 2009
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