

SCOTCH CIRCLE

Vol 35 No 3 August 2015

RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Incorporated
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings

This issue is devoted mainly to the upcoming Annual General Meeting. It also contains an article on James and Cynthia Coward written by Jenny Wanless and a report of the recent Brisbane Winter School prepared by Kira Dowling. Information about forthcoming SCD events will appear in the next Branch Newsletter due out on 30 August.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Branch AGM will be held on Wednesday, 14 October at St Andrews Church Hall, State Circle, Forrest, commencing at 7:30 pm. Any member who is unable to attend the AGM and wishes to appoint a proxy must notify the Secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting. A proxy holder may not act for more than five absent members.

This year's AGM will be particularly important. The continued operation and future management of the Branch depends on the election of a viable and motivated committee for 2015-16.

During the past six years your current committee has provided stable and sound management reflected in membership growth, increasing class attendance and a very healthy balance sheet. However, continued effective management of the Branch will require new committee members:

- At the Special General Meeting held on 22 April members were advised that Mary and I (Treasurer and Chairman respectively) will not be re-nominating for any position on the committee.
- Alan has served as Secretary for seven years, and feels it is time someone else had an opportunity to fill this role.
- **The Branch cannot function without a Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman.**

Since the April SGM no Branch member has indicated they are considering nominating for any of these positions. Our Constitution requires us to fill them. We also have legal obligations under the *Associations Incorporation Act* to properly manage our affairs. **Please consider nominating for one of these positions and speak to Alan, Mary or me at the earliest opportunity about what would be involved. We would be willing to mentor any new incumbent for a period if and as required.** Effective future administration of the Branch will depend on the willingness of members to stand for election to the committee. The unpalatable alternative may be to wind up. The Agenda for the meeting, a Nomination Form for the committee, and a Form to nominate a proxy are included in this issue.

Jack Arthur

**RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Inc
Annual General Meeting
St Andrews Church Hall, Forrest
Wednesday 14 October 2015, 7:30 pm**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting 15 October 2014
3. Minutes of Special General Meeting of 22 April 2015
4. Business Arising from AGM and SGM
5. Annual Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Election of Committee
8. Action Required if Insufficient Nominations for Committee
9. Website Manager and Editor Scotch Circle and Newsletter
10. Any Other Business

RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Inc

Election of Committee 2015-16

NOMINATION FORM

I, being a person qualified to vote at an election of the above Branch,

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

.....
(Signature of person **MAKING** the nomination and date of nomination)

Hereby **NOMINATE**

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

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

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

TREASURER

COMMITTEE MEMBER

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

.....
(Signature of person **NOMINATED** and date)

**RSCDS Canberra & District Branch Inc
Annual General Meeting 14 October 2015**

FORM FOR APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

I,.....
(Name in BLOCK LETTERS)

Being a member of the above Branch, hereby **APPOINT**

.....
(Name of proxy in BLOCK LETTERS)

Who is 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 14 October 2015, and at any adjournment of this meeting.

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

Remembering James and Cynthia Coward

“That’s probably the first time you’ve danced with a man with a wooden leg” said my partner as I thanked him for the dance just ended. That is my recollection of the first time I met James Coward.



James was tall and handsome with a distinctive RAF moustache. He had been one of the Few, of whom Winston Churchill said “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few” when their bravery had saved the country during the Battle of Britain in the early days of World War II. His plane had been hit, and as James floated down (luckily into rural England) he realised one of his legs was missing from the knee down, so he tied a tourniquet on the stump, thus saving his own life.

James never let his missing leg stop him from doing anything. In fact he had a wardrobe of feet for different purposes, so he had a foot for dancing and a different one for walking and yet another for swimming. James and his wife Cynthia soon proved to be keen Scottish Country dancers, attending classes, socials and balls. James also was a regular performer with the group which David Currie organised to perform nearly every week at nursing homes and retirement villages, over a number of years, mainly in the 1980s.

The program at these performances usually consisted of two brackets of three dances, a reel, a strathspey and a jig. Between the two brackets the dancers had a rest, and David organised something to fill the break. That something was very often a story told by James – as he said his middle name was Baird, a variant of Bard. James did not play an instrument, or sing, but he had a fund of stories which he delighted in telling, so we learnt quite a lot about his life. One story was about being on a small boat in Norway, and somehow falling overboard. When he climbed back on board he casually took off his artificial leg and emptied the water out of it to the horrified amazement of his hosts.



James died in July 2012 at the age of 97. At his funeral I found myself sitting next to a man in full air force uniform who turned out to be the Air Adviser from the British High Commission. He commented to me that the picture of James on the order of service looked very like one of the British film actors (David Niven I think) who had starred in a film about the Battle of Britain.

I should add that James’ wife Cynthia was as feisty as James himself. Cynthia died in May this year – Margaret Lowe and I represented Canberra’s Scottish Country Dance community at her funeral. It was in the same church, St Clement’s Anglican in Yass where James’ funeral had been held three years before, so brought back many memories.

Jenny Wanless

Winter School Report

Recently a group of five Canberra dancers packed up their dancing shoes and flew up to warm, sunny Brisbane for the RSCDS' 40th Australian Winter School.

The days were packed full with dancing fun – in the mornings we attended classes with local or international teachers and danced to wonderful live music. We caught up with friends, old and new; worked on our technique (“*keep those legs straight!*” and “*step close step together!*”); and learnt many new formations, such as the reverse allemande (left hand up, an initial step to the left, and then a curve to the right!).



In the afternoons we participated in extra classes offered by the winter school teachers, but also took the opportunity to go and explore the city. The weather was beautiful and we all got to stroll around Southbank in the sunshine, enjoying wearing t-shirts in the middle of winter and giving our legs a stretch to keep sore muscles at bay!

In the evenings we danced at socials held in a lovely wooden hall not 100 metres from our rooms. The musicians played, dancers danced and our very own Elaine Arthur represented the ACT and recapped two dances for us at the Monday social! The ball on Thursday was a fantastic night – we danced through a lively programme and realised, completely from recaps and with great style, some tricky dances *cough cough* *The Brisbane River Reel!*

On Wednesday we enjoyed a Christmas in July celebration. We ate Christmas dinner before playing Christmas trivia games, and then staging the largest game of musical chairs that I'd ever seen... which was hilarious to watch, let me tell you! Tim Wilson (the very man who ran a special class here in Canberra on Monday 13th July) taught us some really fun Israeli folk dances, and we finished the night off by dancing *Mairi's Wedding* to Christmas carols!!

The formal dinner on Friday night concluded the formal festivities of the School. The gigantic birthday cake was cut and the buck was ceremoniously passed to the Sydney branch. They will be holding the school next year in Kiama, from the 3rd to the 10th July.

We all had a fantastic week of learning, dancing, laughing, and smiling; a week that I will remember many years into the future. Thanks to my lovely friends for all the dances and fun times and see you on the dance floor again soon!

Written by Kira (on behalf of Elaine, Susanne, Cathy & Jenny).