

SCOTCH CIRCLE

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RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Incorporated
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Kick up Your Heels

Well, we have finally been able to start rolling out the publicity for our Centenary Scottish dancing event at the Albert Hall on 10 August. The theme - 'Kick up Your Heels in "*The Australian Ladies*" and other favourite Scottish dances' - arose from the fact that the event is required to be representative of Scottish dancing as it was in Canberra during the 1970s, and from our knowledge that "*The Australian Ladies*" was danced frequently at the Albert Hall during this period. You will find lots of information about the event in the latest Branch Newsletter (26 May) and on the Branch website. www.rscds-canberra.org

If you dance in Canberra, you *will* be able to purchase tickets in the normal way at your regular SCD class. However, since this event is being promoted to the general public, as well as many Scottish dance groups outside Canberra, we *do* hope to attract a substantially greater number of attendees than normal. It therefore might be prudent to buy your tickets sooner rather than later.

See inside for the event programme and for a very brief history of Scottish country dancing and the dancing scene as it was in Canberra during the 1970s.

Winter School 2014

As reported in the 28 April Newsletter, planning for next year's Winter School in Canberra is now in full swing. We have secured accommodation for residents at the Ibis Styles Canberra (formerly the Hotel Heritage) at Narrabundah, and the main dance venue will once again be at nearby St Edmund's College. We'll keep you posted on further developments.

Website: New Management and Site Re-design

You all know that Brian Gunning will soon be stepping down as website manager (and editor of the newsletter). We have accepted the kind offer of David Hunter to help us redesign the website to, among other things, make it easier to maintain and enhance. A small group under David's guidance is working on this project to a deadline of September.

Possible Merger of Scotch Circle and Newsletter

We have raised in previous issues the perception of some of the membership that there is much duplication in the content of these two publications. In addition we currently do not have a permanent editor for Scotch Circle and Brian will soon be stepping down as editor of the Newsletter. Given all this, one option under consideration is a merger of the two publications. Again, we shall keep you posted.

Happy dancing

Jack Arthur

MONARO CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

TARTAN BALL 2013

Diamond Jubilee

Saturday, 1 June, 2013, 6.00 for 6.30 pm

St Paul's Anglican Church, Commissioner Street, Cooma

Music by Strathmannan

Tickets \$42 – BYO drinks

PROGRAMME

Clutha Sq R; Diamond Anniversary 3J; Macdonald of the Isles 3S; Irish Rover; Reel of the 51st Division 3R; Bonnie Lass of Bon Accord Sq S; Polharrow Burn 5R; White heather Jig 4J; Silver Tassie 3S; Royal Deeside Railway 3R; Mairi's Wedding 3R; Seton's Ceilidh Band 4J; Minister on the Loch 3S; Petronella 2R; Follow me Home 3J; Shiftin' Bobbins 3R

BELCONNEN SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCERS

BIRTHDAY SOCIAL

SATURDAY 29 JUNE 2013

Assembly Hall, Macquarie Primary School, Bennelong Crescent, Macquarie

Commencing 7.30 pm

MUSIC BY STRATHMANNAN

Admission \$15

A small contribution towards supper would be appreciated

PROGRAMME

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------|--|
| 1. | It's nae Bother | (J8x32) 2C (4C set) | RSCDS Second Graded Bk |
| 2. | Festival Fling | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Bk 44 |
| 3. | Balmoral Strathspey | (S4x32) 4C set | RSCDS Bk 22 |
| 4. | The Castle of Mey | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Diamond Jubilee 2012 |
| 5. | Canberra's Shores | (S8x32) 3C (4C set) | T. Northey, Canberra Book of SCD |
| 6. | The Clachan | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | H. Foss, Kendoon Dances |
| 7. | The Dancing Years | (R88) Sq. Set | R. Goldring, Auld Friends Meet |
| 8. | Mist o'er the Loch | (S8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Diamond Jubilee 2012 |
| 9. | Links with St Petersburg | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Bk 46 |
| 10. | The Inimitable Derek | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS 3/2006 |
| 11. | Sharing and Caring | (S2x40) 4C set | SCD by L. Cumming, RSCDS Canberra |
| 12. | Airie Bennan | (J5x32) 5C set | H. Foss, Glendarroch Sheets |
| 13. | The Australian Ladies | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | R. Campbell, Glasgow Assembly |
| 14. | City of Belfast | (S3x32) 3C set | L. Mulholland, Belfast Diamond Jubilee |
| 15. | A Capital Jig | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS 5/2009 |
| 16. | The Reel of the 51 st Division | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Bk 13 |

For recaps visit www.rscds-canberra.org

**KICK UP YOUR HEELS IN
"THE AUSTRALIAN LADIES"
AND OTHER FAVOURITE SCOTTISH DANCES**

SATURDAY 10 AUGUST 2013
ALBERT HALL, COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

PROGRAMME

GRAND MARCH

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. THE BARMKIN | (R88) Sq. Set | R Goldring, 24 Graded and Social Dances |
| 2. FESTIVAL INTERCELTIQUE | (R5x40) Sq. Set | I Brockbank, RSCDS Four Dances 2008 |
| 3. THE FRISKY | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | R Bremner, RSCDS Bk 26 |
| 4. CANBERRA'S SHORES | (S8x32) 3C (4C set) | T Northey, Canberra Book of SCD |
| 5. THE DASHING WHITE SERGEANT | (R5x32) Round the Room 3 facing 3 | RSCDS Bk 3 |
| 6. POSTIE'S JIG | (J4x32) 4C set | R Clowes, Ormskirk 5 |

DISPLAY: CAMPBELL OF DUNTROON

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 7. THE LAIRD OF MILTON'S DAUGHTER | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | Craigmyle, RSCDS Bk 22 |
| 8. BALMORAL STRATHSPEY | (S4x32) 4C set | R Charles, RSCDS Bk 22 |
| 9. THE AUSTRALIAN LADIES | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | R Campbell, Glasgow Assembly |

SUPPER

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10. THE WILD GEESE | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Bk 24 |
| 11. THE SILVER TASSIE | (S8x32) 3C (4C set) | J Drewry, RSCDS Leaflet |
| 12. THE EIGHTSOME REEL | (R40+8x48+40) Sq. Set | RSCDS Bk 2 |
| 13. THE CANBERRA RANT | (S80) Sq. Set | D Currie, Canberra Book of SCD |
| 14. THE CLACHAN | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | H Foss, Kendoon Dances |
| 15. FLOWERS OF EDINBURGH | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Bk 1 |
| 16. LADY LUCY RAMSAY | (S8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Miscellany |
| 17. THE JUBILEE JIG | (J8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Leaflet |
| 18. THE DEIL AMANG THE TAILORS | (R8x32) 3C (4C set) | RSCDS Bk 14 |

AULD LANG SYNE

For further information visit www.rscds-org.org

**FAR SOUTH COAST SCD GROUP
BERMAGUI WEEKEND
29 August – 1 September 2013**

Put this event in your diaries. Details will be available soon.

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING: ORIGINS, EXPANSION, DECLINE AND REVIVAL; AND AS IT WAS IN CANBERRA DURING THE 1970S

FOREWORD

Scottish country dancing will feature in the celebration of the Centenary of the foundation of Canberra when, on 10 August, 2013 we will kick up our heels in “The Australian Ladies” and other favourite Scottish dances. It seems appropriate, therefore, to very briefly revisit the history of this dance form and to remind ourselves of the popularity of the genre here during the 1970s – the decade of the 20th century allocated to it by the organisers of the Centenary kuyh dance programme.

ORIGINS

The origins of the “Scottish country dance” date back to the “country dance” which had its roots in England and which was well established there by the mid-17th Century. In 1651, John Playford published in London his first edition of *The English Dancing Master*, the first publication in Great Britain to provide detailed descriptions of country dances.

EXPANSION

During the 18th Century the country dance gained enthusiastic acceptance in Scotland, as it did in continental Europe. Although essentially part of an international repertoire of country dancing, the country dances danced in Scotland during the 18th Century began to develop their own characteristics, principally identified at first by their accompanying tunes which had Scottish titles. Later, distinctly Scottish formations – some taken from “The Reels”, another type of dancing prevalent in Scotland at the time – were incorporated into the “Scottish country dance”. In addition, a French influence became apparent with the adoption of more balletic feet positions, also reflected in Highland Dancing. The “Scottish country dance” also incorporated a dance form called a strathspey. This is similar to but slower than a reel, the name being derived from Strath Spey, a district of Scotland (also famous for producing malt whisky).

The 19th Century saw the Scottish country dance adapt to such influences as the European waltz and quadrille, and dances in square formations began to appear in Scottish country dance programmes, “The Eightsome Reel” becoming amongst the best known.

DECLINE AND REVIVAL

Scottish country dancing, having absorbed the influences of waltz and quadrille, had remained popular in Scotland during the 1900s, recognised – along with reels - as an indigenous dance form. However, by the 1910s ragtime and early jazz-style dancing from the USA were supplanting country dancing in Scottish towns and cities; and by 1918 this trend had spread to the countryside. Scottish country dancing was in severe decline. One leading authority, George Emmerson, summed up the situation thus:

“Improved communications, twentieth-century city dwelling, and changes of manners and values, along with a catastrophic, if victorious, war, destroyed the environment from which the native dance forms and their music drew their sustenance. They sickened and nearly died. Social dancing became cosmopolitan, and sports and athletics became healthier outlets for physical exercise and recreation, for women as well as men. Scottish traditional dancing, like forms of life facing extinction, had to find a new way of survival.”

The new way of survival came via two extraordinary women, Jean Milligan and Ysobel Stewart who together founded in 1923, ninety years ago, what is now The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

At first, the Society aimed to practise and preserve country dancing as danced in Scotland, to collect old books, manuscripts and pictures illustrative of Scottish dancing, and to publish descriptions of country dances. For years, the co-founders worked tirelessly to promote the Society’s aims; the decline was arrested and the genre re-gained its popularity during the ensuing thirty years or so.

Then, from the early 1950s onwards, a new surge of interest in SCD occurred, at first in the UK. A crucial part of this development was the appearance of a generation of individuals who started composing new or modern country dances. These dances contained novel formations and arrangements but retained the overall structure and style of the “traditional” country dance. Secondly, this renewed interest spread to other parts of the world, including

Australia, by way of the post-World War 2 migration of Scots. On arrival in their new country, many of these Scots sought to maintain, even re-learn, their cultural heritage. Some wanted to learn country dancing.

In Canberra during the 1950s, a dedicated few enthusiasts came together to dance; they formed clubs such as the Scottish Country Dance Club of Canberra (1954) and the Burns Scottish Country Dance Group. At first they taught themselves from books published by the Society; it was slow going but gradually the level of expertise increased as did the number of dancers.

CANBERRA DURING THE 1970s

By the end of the 1960s, Scottish country dancing as we know it today, a mixture of traditional and modern dances, had gained a firm foothold in Canberra, and the 1970s saw another surge of activity which further cemented the popularity of the genre in the nation's capital.

- The Australian Ladies, a modern Scottish country dance, was all the rage in Canberra, including at Scottish balls held in the Albert Hall. It was destined to become one of the most popular Scottish dances around the world. Composed by Canadian dancer Bob Campbell, the dance was inspired by a photograph of a winning competition team at a New Year's Day Highland Games in Sydney during the 1960s. Jean Conway, one of the four Australian ladies in the winning team, moved to Canberra in 1975. Jean founded the "Hospital Class" which met at the nurses' quarters of the old Canberra Hospital on Acton Peninsula. She would go on to make many contributions to the development of Scottish country dancing in Canberra.
- Another modern country dance, "Campbell of Duntroon", was composed in the early 70s by visiting dancer Peter McBryde. It commemorates the 19th Century pioneering Scot, Robert Campbell, who settled locally and whose home, Duntroon Homestead, is now the Officers' Mess at the Royal Military College, Duntroon.
- In 1975, another country dance club was formed, the Belconnen Scottish Country Dancers; and 1979 saw the 25th anniversary of the original club, the SCDC.
- 1973 was the Golden Jubilee of the RSCDS. For co-founder, Jean Milligan, her focus in 1923 had been on the survival of SCD in Scotland. Now in her 80s, she was still touring the world promoting the aims of the Society and in 1974 she visited Canberra where she conducted classes, examined dancers and awarded teacher certificates. She also urged Canberra dancers to form a Branch of the Society.
- Following Miss Milligan's visit, the impetus to form a Branch gained momentum and, with the support of the local dancers and clubs, the RSCDS Canberra & District Branch came into existence in 1978. Local clubs continued to run their own classes. The initial role of the Branch was: to conduct classes for new dancers; to provide classes for improving dance technique; to perform displays of country dancing and to provide teacher training. Importantly, the existence of the Branch gave dancers in Canberra a voice in the running of the affairs of the Society.
- There was also increasing interest in country dancing from dancers of non-Scottish background, who were attracted by its sociability, the music, and the mental stimulation of the variety of formations to be found in this dance form.

All in all, by the end of the 1970s, Scottish country dancing in Canberra was in a very healthy state. And in 2013 it still is. So, on 10 August let us all celebrate by kicking up our heels.

Sources and Selected Further Reading:

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society: *The Manual of Scottish Country Dancing*

Emmerson, George S: *A Social History of Scottish Dance* (quote in the text is on page 148 of the book)

Hood, Evelyn M: *The Darling Diversion: The Story of Scottish Country Dancing*

Middlemiss, T: *Roots* www.rscds-canberra.org

Scotch Circle is published by RSCDS (Canberra & District) and the Committee reserves rights of editorial control

Closing date for next Scotch Circle – Friday, 26 July 2013

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