

RSCDS WELLINGTON REGION NEWSLETTER



Volume 24 No. 3
September 2021

President's Column

From Ann Oliver, President



Up until a few weeks ago, the dancing year was going very well and it was lovely to see a good number of dancers enjoying dancing at club, classes, and social nights. Of particular note, Upper Hutt held its 50th Anniversary Dance in July, and the extra effort

put into the programme, music, decorations and archival material ensured that the occasion was a great success.

Despite the latest Covid lockdown and restrictions, most of the region classes scheduled for the period have been able to proceed. The second block of Basics Classes has seen good attendance both by those who attended the first block of classes and some newer dancers. The Intermediate and Advanced classes were also able to proceed and were enjoyed by those who attended. My thanks to all the teachers, musicians and other helpers who ensured these classes ran smoothly.

Unfortunately the current restrictions have meant that a number of clubs have had to cancel or postpone their annual dances, and for some this is the second year in a row. I recognise the frustrations and disappointment that these clubs must be feeling but I am optimistic that if we stick to the Government's

plan, next year, all planned events will be able to go ahead.

Region 60th Anniversary

In early August, I was delighted to welcome many of you to the Dinner and Dance held at the Lower Hutt Town Hall to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Wellington Region. What an amazing achievement, and a milestone made possible only by the efforts of a large number of volunteers who, over the years, have contributed to the enjoyment of us all. It was lovely that many of these people were able to attend the evening and through videos, photos and reminiscing, were also able to remember those who were unable to be with us. The fun and lifetime friendships made through dancing were very clear in the smiles and laughter throughout the evening.

The Book of Dances to mark the Region's 60th year is now with the printers and we hope to launch this at the New Dancers' Celebration. You can read more about this later in the newsletter.

Further archival information is being put up on the Region website regularly, so do remember to go on line and see what is new.

New Dancers' Celebration

Looking forward to October, it is unclear at this stage whether the New Dancers' Celebration will be able to go ahead. While we are optimistic that a timely return to Covid Level 1 will mean that it can, there is of course no certainty. I encourage you all to

continue to prepare for the event however, and confirm that the preparation classes will go ahead on Tuesday 28 September and 5 October (details on the Region Website). I know the Carterton Club is hoping that we will be able to join them for a great night in the Wairapapa.

Hogmanay

Unfortunately, as no one has volunteered to organise this event, this is unlikely to go ahead.

Region AGM

The Region's Annual General Meeting is on Tuesday, 2 November, at 7.30 pm, in the Trust Room of the Johnsonville Community Centre. Everyone is welcome to attend, and as always, we would love to have more volunteers to help the Committee support and encourage a vibrant dancing community in the Wellington Region. This year, we are particularly looking for nominations for a Secretary, as well as for standard committee members.

Have your say

This year, we have trialled some additional classes, so we would love to hear your thoughts regarding the type, format and approach taken for all classes run this year. Please look out for the Survey that we will shortly be emailing out.

60th Anniversary Book of Dances

From Elaine Lethbridge, Project Coordinator

As part of the Wellington Region's 60th Anniversary celebrations, we have put together a book of dances, to be titled "*The Wellington 60th Anniversary Collection*".

Known local devisers, who had either published their own dance books, or had dances published in a Branch or RSCDS book, or in a Club book, were invited to submit up to three unpublished dances, of which one would be chosen for the book.

In order to ensure that each dance was chosen on its own merit, rather than on the reputation of its deviser, all the submitted dances were numbered and information about the origin of any dance removed. All the dances were trialled, either on a special trial day or by selected clubs, and dancers evaluated each dance. Neither the tutors who took part in the trials, nor the members of the subcommittee who made the final selection, were aware of who the devisers were.

The subcommittee discussed each dance, taking into account comments from dancers and club evaluation sheets. Where an either/or situation arose, the subcommittee re-trialled those dances before choosing one. The aim of the selection was to have a good balance for each level, and a variety of jigs, reels, and strathspeys.

My thanks go to all the dancers and tutors who took part in the trial days, and to the clubs and their tutors who willingly spent their precious club time trying out some of the dances and evaluating them. Thank you also to the devisers for submitting their dances for the book.

And special thanks go to the fabulous subcommittee for all the time and effort they put into this project.

I hope everyone will enjoy – and many will purchase! – the new Region book of dances, which will be launched at the New Dancers' Celebration, all being well, Covid permitting.

Dance Scottish Wellington 60th Anniversary Ball: A fine celebration with dining and dancing

From Loralee Hyde

A throng of 120 dancers in their finery gathered at Lower Hutt Town Hall on Saturday 7 August, looking forward to a fabulous evening of dining and dancing at the Dance Scottish Wellington 60th Anniversary Ball.

The night commemorated 60 years of the Wellington District Branch of the New Zealand Scottish Country Dance Society, which had its inaugural meeting on 21 November 1961.

We were welcomed at the door with a complimentary glass of bubbly or orange juice and provided with a special name badge, along with a dance card to note our partners for the evening and provide a memento of the event.

Prior to dinner, we had the chance to mingle and catch up with dancers from around the Region and further afield, from Waikato and Napier in the north, to Lawrence and Dunedin in the south. We stepped into the beautifully lit Town Hall and took our places at circular tables in anticipation of the celebratory festivities.

Above the stage, a large screen projected photos of dancers and events in the Region from the past 60 years. In the foyer, videos of dancers in Region demonstrations and other activities drew viewers

during breaks between the dances and at supper time.

A brace of unicorns on the stage invoked some astonishment! How are unicorns connected to Scottish Country Dancing? The unicorn is Scotland's national animal and represents Scotland in the British Coat of Arms. So the unicorns at the 60th Anniversary provided a link to the Scottish heritage of our organisation.

After a lovely buffet dinner, followed by speeches of welcome from Region President Ann Oliver and New Zealand Branch President Linda Glavin, we honoured and remembered the contribution of past and present Region presidents, committee members (26 attended), tutors (19 were present) and all who have willingly given their time, energy and talents to Scottish Country Dancing in the Region over the decades.



Past and present Region tutors

Five Region Past Presidents at the Anniversary Ball—Philippa Pointon, Roy South, Elaine Laidlaw, Chris Kelly and Melva Waite—joined Ann to cut the 60th Anniversary cake.



Cutting the 60th Anniversary cake – Philippa Pointon, Roy South, Elaine Laidlaw, Ann Oliver, Chris Kelly and Melva Waite

Thoughts turned to dancing, starting off with a Grand March led by Piper Nicole Trewavas and directed by Edith Campbell. Dancers then took to the floor, dancing throughout the evening to wonderful music from

Wild Heather, with Mary McDonald and Ann Goodbehere on fiddles, Sharlene Penman on keyboard, Lynne Scott on octave fiddle and James Scott providing technical expertise.



The Grand March in progress

Considerable work is needed to make sure a large event like this is a success. Thanks so much to Region President Ann Oliver and the Ball Subcommittee of Duncan McDonald, Edith Campbell and Margaret Cantwell for organising the evening, and MC Elaine Laidlaw, who stepped in for Damon Collin (caught in a Covid lockdown in New South Wales). We also acknowledge the many others in the Region for their much appreciated contributions that helped make this celebration so memorable.

The 60th Anniversary was a fine night of dining and dancing, full of fun and friendship! We can look forward to more great events in the Wellington Region in the coming decade.

To see more of Loralee's photos visit <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmWnST4V>

Where's Sir Walter?

From the Spurtle-wielder

Thousands, indeed probably millions, of people around the world finish off sociable evenings with a rendition of *Auld Lang Syne*. Hopefully among them are some Scots to enlighten the singers as to where the song originated, mentioning the name of Robert Burns, of course. Sadly, Disney may well get the credit for the tales of *Treasure Island* and *Peter Pan* instead of Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir James Barrie.

Probably even less known is the name of Sir Walter Scott, whose 250th Birthday was celebrated on 15 August – alas, with much less publicity than expected, with that pesky Greek letter delta hogging the news.

Said to have been paid a penny per word, his writings tend to be heavily descriptive, but the tales are

excellent and lively. His poems inspired song cycles by Schumann and others; his novels are the subject of operas such as Donizetti's *Lucia de Lammermoor*; part of the tale of his *Heart of Midlothian's* leading character is told in the Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn's opera *Jeanie Deans* (1894); and his adventurous romantic stories have attracted film makers.

Born and schooled in Edinburgh (his father was a Writer to the Signet), with a law degree from its University, Scott – coping with health problems – spent some of his youth with family in Border towns. He got to know the rich history of his ancestors and the area's colourful people – gypsies and similar folk firing his imagination to evolve characters such as *Meg Merrilees* and *Madge Wildfire*. Despite a limp (an early attack of polio), not only did he walk the Border hills, but he also travelled in the Highlands. He loved all the history. His day job was as a judge, Clerk of Session and Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire (he built his beloved house Abbotsford near there), but in the literary field he is described as a 'seminal figure' in the establishment of the genre of the historical novel, whilst also very active in other areas of writing.

Queen Victoria, an avid fan, became familiar with the beauties of Scotland (seeded the idea to acquire Balmoral Castle?), as did a great many others, so Scott basically started the country's tourist industry. To add enchantment to it all, he discovered the Crown Jewels long hidden in a dusty chest in Edinburgh Castle, and then with a masterstroke, persuaded King George IV to visit the capital, where he appeared in a rather short kilt, modestly wearing a pair of pink pantaloons – which inspired not a few cartoons!

Scott's parade of interesting characters naturally caught the attention of the city's dancers and several dances were devised – some currently in our books, e.g. *The Laird of Dumbiedykes's Favourite*, etc. To celebrate this 250th milestone, the RSCDS are to publish a collection from an 1840 book. This has again brought up the puzzle of interpreting the 'old' descriptions to make sense for today's dancers. Conventions well known to the dancers of the time are not spelled-out; the dancing teachers who produced the books did not want to give away too much information – they liked people to seek tuition to learn the details!

Those of you who have received the RSCDS magazine from HQ no doubt recognised the picture of the imposing Scott Memorial in Princes Street Gardens on the cover, but did you notice Sir Walter is in fact

missing? The photograph was taken from the east side of the edifice – one of those 'trick' ones. David Livingstone appears to be in the space, when actually his statue is several yards away from the Memorial, so the beautiful white marble statue of Sir Walter with his dog Maida is not visible! (I see the publication's Graphic Designer is in Grantown-on-Spey, the printers in Glasgow, the picture from Shutterstock Photos!) The sculptor was Sir John Steell, who also created the bronze statue of Robert Burns in Dunedin's Octagon.

Waverley Railway Station, named after Scott's *Waverley Novels*, is close by; it inspired the popular dance *Waverley* (alternative title *Fergus Mclvor*, another character): not surprisingly, trains figure prominently in it. Yet another character has given rise to a name – the dog, the *Dandie Dinmont*, a breed which Sir Walter helped to create – a delightful terrier with a longish coat and fluffy topknot. Sadly now rather rare, the dogs feature in several paintings of Queen Victoria and her family.

So let's dance a toast to Sir Walter with a merry reel and graceful strathspey! His promotion, and so preservation, of Scottish traditions, no doubt contributed to the availability of our dancing today!

Lower Hutt Club Theme Night

From Elizabeth Ferguson

On 5 July, Lower Hutt Club celebrated midwinter with a Christmas green and red theme. Amazing live music was provided by Lynne Scott and Sharlene Penman. We went all out and decorated the hall with red and green balloons, crepe paper streamers, and fairy lights.



Supper included mulled wine which disappeared very quickly (note to Janice to make double the recipe next time!), Christmas mince pies and a decorated Christmas cake made by our Treasurer Alastair McCarthy.

Planning for an end of year *Celebration of Members* at Johnsonville club

From Kristin Downey

Once again, this year, Johnsonville has had a very Covid-influenced dancing calendar.

It all started in February, before the club year had even begun! One of our beginners' classes was Covid-cancelled at Level 2, so our first club night was pushed on a week, to give beginners their full four-week course.

Fortunately, there were no problems with our [first tartan night of the year](#) in April (our first ever in Khandallah Town Hall), or our [Midwinter Christmas dinner and dance in May](#). But then things got a bit sticky.

July Tartan Night

Our Tartan Night on 28 June fell victim to Wellington City Council's Alert Level 2 policies, but we were very fortunate to be able to reschedule to 12 July. We had a great night's dancing, despite a very cold winter's night.



A birds-eye view of dancers and the band at Johnsonville's July Tartan Night (photo: John Patterson)

Thanks to musicians Lynne Scott, Mary McDonald, Jason Morris and Richard Hardie for making themselves available for the new date, to our MC Rod, and to visitors from other clubs who joined us for a night of warming winter dances.

The feature dance of the night was *Stargazers*, devised by Rod for Johnsonville life members [Aline and John Homes](#). Despite being gifted the dance in 2007, this was only the second time they had danced it together.

Listen to fine music from the band, view the lovely interior of Khandallah Town Hall, and see **Aline and John** dancing *Stargazers* in Pat Reesby's video at

<https://www.johnsonvillescd.org.nz/2021/07/15/tartan-night-july-2021/>



Aline and John Homes (on the right) dancing *Stargazers* at Jville's July Tartan Night (photo: Robert Vale)

Johnsonville-Capital City shared annual dance

Disappointingly, for the second year running, our annual dance was once again cancelled due to Covid. Unlike in 2020, we had decided in advance that we would not reschedule this time round, so that was that.

However, we have come up with a plan to give us an end-of-year event to look forward to.

Johnsonville Final and Tartan night – Celebrating our members

Johnsonville members have experienced very fragmented dancing years in both 2020 and 2021, but they've hung in there with enthusiasm.

To celebrate that, we've planned a special Saturday night dance for our 2021 final night. There will be live music and a full-length programme of 18 dances on **Saturday 27 November, 7.30pm at Ngaio Town Hall**.

It will be extra special for the club, as it celebrates our members through the dances chosen. Eight of the eighteen dances on the programme will be dances dedicated to members, and the others are old Wellington favourites – the aim is to make the programme accessible to all.

We would love to welcome lots of other dancers to this end-of-year dancing. Please do join us, the programme is elsewhere in this newsletter.

Download programme and links to dance instructions at <https://www.johnsonvillescd.org.nz/event/johnsonville-final-night-2021/>

Masquerade

From Brenda Vale

It was a comment by Heather (who enthused us about Scottish Country Dancing in the first place) that her club was dancing at Seatoun on Friday evening, but they had to wear masks, that set me thinking.

Wearing masks when dancing has a long history. The masked ball dates to the 15th century and was famous in Venice, where people would don masks and elaborate costumes to disguise their identity. Masks with eye holes came in various types including the *bauta*, which was white and covered the face ending at the end of the nose, the *columbina*, which covered the upper part of the nose, and the *volto*, which covered the whole face including the mouth, being made of waxed cloth. Perhaps the most famous mask of the Venetian balls is that of *Dottore Peste* (see below).



To treat the bubonic plague, the doctor would wear enveloping clothing, with gloves and a mask with the beak filled with herbs and spices to ward of the miasma that was supposed to be the source of the infection. At least that is the story, but the evidence to fully support it is still lacking.

Maybe the choice of the *Dottore Peste* at a ball was to ensure you really could not be identified, especially if accompanied by the full costume. Dancing must have been a warm affair, and you could easily poke someone's eye out in a tight turn!

The masks we wear today have a more modern origin. In 1897, Carl Friedrich Flügge published the fact that tuberculosis was spread by droplets in the air. Subsequently it was suggested that operations should be performed by surgeons wearing a mouth bandage, although wearing surgical masks to stop the spread of infection only became more common in Germany and the USA in the 1920s, and then was still resisted by some surgeons. By the 1940s, masks that could be washed and sterilised were available and gained international acceptance.

We are all now becoming as used to wearing masks as operating theatre staff but, Seatoun Scottish Country Dancing Club apart, we have yet to see a return to the masked dance. Perhaps we should revive the tradition in a future masked ball night? Fifty Euros will buy you a full papier maché *Dottore Peste* mask on-line ...

To dance or not to dance at Delta Level 2

From Désirée Patterson, Editor

Again, the dreaded Corona virus has put a spanner in the works of our Scottish country dancing year, plans and events. We have had the disappointment of cancelled annual dances and the suspension of club nights. All of us are keen to resume dancing, of course, but is it safe, and is it OK under the **Delta Level 2** restrictions?

It kind of hinges on the interpretation of the Level 2 rules. Some would consider SCD a "team sport", which would relax the 2m distancing and mask wearing requirements, but according to the rules, spectators should observe social distancing. Others would consider SCD as "indoor recreation" which requires 2m distancing and mask wearing where possible.

I have done some further digging into the rules, and on the official [Covid website](#), I found a link to specific activities, one of which [relates to dance](#), and seems the most applicable to our situation. It features a set of recommendations, last updated on 7 September 2021, for community dance facilities, which are well worth reading. They advocate wearing masks and physical distancing – not very practical for SCD. The relevant pages are pp. 7-9.

The Executive Summary of this document states:

‘this framework contains recommendations that **exceed** many Government Alert level 2 guidelines, as those guidelines are **generic**, and this framework is **specifically for use within dance and exercise settings**’.

Of course, some dancers and teachers may not agree with the recommendations in the above document.

In Wellington, some groups have started dancing again, or are about to. However, the Delta variant is a much nastier beastie than what we had last year, so we cannot assume it is OK to dance at Level 2, as we did last year. This is **Delta** Level 2, i.e. Level 2 with extra safety measures.

Ultimately, it is up to each of us as individuals to decide whether we choose to dance at clubs or in classes, or whether we will wait until Level 1. Whether you are partly or fully vaccinated will also have a bearing on your decision.

In the meantime, we all have the responsibility to protect ourselves and each other, by getting vaccinated, staying home if unwell, and obeying the rules to scan, sanitise, wear a face-mask, and practice social distancing in public.

Caught in the Web

Have you looked at the [Wellington Region website](#) recently? There is a wealth of information there about clubs and classes; about the [Region committee](#) and its meetings; a calendar with social events (or, sadly, cancellations), and details about [Harbour City](#)

[Happenings](#) – including back copies going back to March 2019.

There is archival material . A tab called [“Celebrating 60”](#) directs one to [“Event Stories”](#) and [“People Stories”](#) – extracts from early issues of Harbour City Happenings.

There are articles about some of the Region’s activities and events, and more are being added regularly. These are this year’s articles:

Ann Oliver: A report on the [60th Anniversary Ball](#), with photos taken by Lorelee Hyde, and videos taken by Pat Reesby.

Edith Campbell: [“Creativity at Celebrations”](#). A look back at the decorations created for special events, going back to 1973.

Kristin Downey: [“Wellington Region: The Early Years”](#). A browse through old NZ Dancer magazines, to find articles relating to the Wellington Region.

Robert Vale: [“2021 Summer Dancing”](#). About dancing on the grass, and about the Old Government Buildings.

Lorelee Hyde: [“2014 Wellington Region 1920s Ball”](#). Lorelee looks back at this ball – with photos and a video.

Lorelee Hyde: [“Cheering in the New Year: 2020 Hogmanay”](#). NZ dancers were lucky enough to be able to celebrate Hogmanay, when so many others around the world couldn’t because of Covid 19 restrictions. With photos by Lorelee Hyde, and videos by Pat Reesby and Aline Homes.

Playing for Scottish Country Dancing
Hone your musical skills in supportive, friendly practice sessions

You're a dancer – or perhaps you share a life with one. Here's your chance to get involved at the other end of the floor.

Regular monthly practice sessions with an experienced tutor will teach you the skills needed for playing for SCD, help you find like-minded musicians and assist with introductions to supportive SCD clubs. A unique opportunity!

Traditional instruments are fiddle, piano and accordion, but any non-transposing instrument is welcome.

Sessions are on the **SECOND** Friday of each month (except January) 7.30 – 9.30pm
At Lynne's Music Studio, 11 Edwin Street, Belmont Domain, Lower Hutt
Questions? Contact Lynne Scott – RSCDS NZ Branch Music Adviser
lynne@scott.gen.nz
ph 04 5650164 or 021 846596



PLEASE NOTE
The dances listed below will only go ahead if we are at Covid Alert Level 1

Victoria University of Wellington Scottish Interest Group

Meets on the 28th day of the month Feb-Nov, 7.30pm* at VUW Law School, Old Government Buildings, Lambton Quay (Bunny St entrance); near Railway and Bus stations; parking on grounds.

Tues 28 Sept – *The legendary Deans Family of Canterbury*

Thursday 28 Oct – *Glamis Castle: mystery, murder and a monster!* with writer Julia Millen, plus a brief review of 2021 and look forward to 2022

Sun 28 Nov 2.30pm* – *What weight did Atlas carry on his shoulders?* June meeting rescheduled.

Visitors welcome; no charge, no university connection needed. For a brochure, phone 388-8069/ 567-0557, or visit the website www.wellyscots.wordpress.com



Lower Hutt Scottish Country Dance Club Annual Dance 2021



Knox Church Hall, 574 High Street Lower Hutt Saturday 16th October – 7.30pm

Music : Aileen Logie, Hilary Ferral, Jason Morris and Terry Bradshaw

RSCDS Members \$13	Non RSCDS \$15	Non Dancer / Student \$5
Hooper's Jig	J	MMM
The Pawling Porch	R	Moments in Time
Paisley Weavers	S	Graded 3
Pelorus Jack *	J	Book 41
The Wind Dragon	R	Boyd
Flowers of Glasgow	S	Book 46
The Laird of Milton's Daughter	J	Book 22
Scott Meikle *	R	Book 46
Fair Donald	S	Book 29
Beach Dancer *	R	West

St Bernards Waltz / Supper

Seton's Ceilidh Band *	J	Fordyce
The Captain's House	R	Graded 3
The Flowering Heather	S	Collin
The Aviator **	J	Book 52
The First Rain of Spring **	J	Book 49
Water of Leith **	S	Edinburgh 90th Anniversary
The De'l Among the Tailors	R	Book 14

* Find a Good Partner ** Only dance this one if you know it well.



RSCDS New Zealand Branch Inc.
Wellington Region

NEW DANCERS' CELEBRATION

7.30 pm Saturday 9 October, 2021
Wairarapa College Hall, 55 Renall Street, Masterton
Music by the Saltire Band

New Dancers: \$10 (with invitation)
RSCDS: \$12 Dancers: \$15 Non-Dancer/Junior: \$5

Programme

Jig	Andrew & Gordon's Jig
Reel	The Old Man of Storr
Strathspey	Fair Donald
Jig	Jubilee Jig
Reel	Reel On
Strathspey	The Marklands
Jig	The Den o' Mains
Reel	The Lass of Richmond Hill
Strathspey	Shores of Solway
Jig	Ecclefechan Feline
Reel	The Pawling Porch
Strathspey	The Paisley Weavers
Jig	Granville Market
Reel	Morrison Measure
Strathspey	The Silver Grey
Reel	The Barmkin

Supper



Johnsonville Tartan & Final Night Celebrating our Members

Ngaio Town Hall, Ottawa Road, Ngaio
7.30pm, Saturday 27 November 2021

Music by Lynne Scott, Mary McDonald, Glenice Saunders

◆Allison Kay	(J)	R Downey - Golden Bear
◆The Dorian Rant	(R)	R Downey - Golden Bear
Midsummer Common	(S)	49/3
The Frisky	(J)	26/10
◆John Markham's Rant*	(R)	R Downey - Golden Bear
Monymusk	(S)	11/2
The Den O' Mains	(J)	Douglas Henderson Coll
The Kissing Bridge	(R)	R Butterfield - 47/9
City of Wisteria**	(S)	P Marshall - leaflet
The Reel of the 51st	(R)	13/10

Supper

The Hollin' Bus	(J)	24/8
◆Jeanette's Hornpipe	(H)	R Downey - Cane Toad Coll
◆Desirée Patterson*	(S)	R Downey - J'ville Coll
◆The Kitchen Faerie	(J)	R Downey - J'ville Coll
◆At the End of the Rainbow*(R)	I	Boyd - The Crowded Hall
Rachel's Strathspey	(S)	A Dix - Reel Friends 3
◆My Golden Bear**	(J)	R Downey - Golden Bear
Mairi's Wedding	(R)	J Cosh - 22 SCDs

This is a celebration for Johnsonville Club after two years of cancelled annual dances. *Dances are written for club members.

- Adult \$12, RSCDS \$10, Juniors/Spectators \$5
- Most dances walked, newer dancers welcome
- * This dance is a wee bit tricky, find a clever partner
- ** Please only dance this if you know it
- Join us for a fun and interesting night

