

wonderful enjoyment of wide-ranging good company that keeps us literally and figuratively – and creatively – on our toes. It demands that we *do* take time to “*turn at Beauty’s glance, And watch her feet, how they can dance*”, to take every chance to fill our lives with every form of beauty that comes our way!

New Dancers’ Celebration 2022

From Kristin Downey

Each year, it is the turn of one of the Wellington Region’s clubs to organise the New Dancers’ Celebration. This year it was Johnsonville’s turn to host – [the third time since 2003](#). Given the disruptions to dancing over the past three years (last year’s NDC, to be hosted by Carterton, had to be cancelled due to Covid), invitations were extended to all new dancers who started in 2020, 2021 and 2022 (instead of the usual two-year timeframe).

More than 100 people attended, including 25 invited new dancers, and the hall was alive with dancing, music, and bonhomie. It’s hard to beat the buzz and excitement of a full dance floor, a great band, and a programme that everyone can feel relaxed with and enjoy.

For longer-standing dancers, walking into a packed hall brought back fond memories of days gone by when club annual dances regularly attracted those sorts of numbers. For newer dancers, it was a chance to realise how far they’ve come, and to be welcomed into the wider Scottish country dance community.

Everything centred around ‘tartan’ at this year’s New Dancers’ Celebration, as befits such a wonderful celebration of the dances of Scotland. The programme, new dancer invitations and name tags, all featured the RSCDS tartan.

Continuing the tartan theme, [Johnsonville’s tartan bunting](#) looked fantastic high up on the white walls, and the stage frontage was decorated with the Wellington Region’s tartan cloth. An assortment of colourful tartan



Black Tartan - Jason, Aileen and Hilary

rugs and scarves encouraged dancers to enjoy the warm feeling of home and hearth and Scottish hospitality.

The outfits of musicians [Aileen Logie](#), [Hilary Ferral](#) and [Jason Morris](#) (aka *Black Tartan*), brought even more festive tartan to the night, and Aline Homes’ arrangements of greenery and flowers along the stage front made a beautiful setting for them as they made beautiful music for us.

Johnsonville tutor Rod Downey drew up a programme of easy dances to suit everyone, including some by local Wellington devisers. We began with the fun of Noeline O’Connor’s beginners’ dance, *The Kingston Flyer*. Lots of old and new favourites followed, including *Sean Truibhas Willichan*, *Delvine Side*, and *Violynne*. *The Reel of the 51st Division* made for a fine end to the first half, leading into a very welcome supper. It was such a convivial affair that a little bit of encouragement was needed to get people back on the dance floor.

Romaine Butterfield’s lovely dance *Come What May* started the second half, followed by traditional favourites including *Shiftin’ Bobbins*, *Monymusk*, *St Andrew’s Fair* and the night finished with the exuberance of *The De’il Among the Tailors*.

Remembering our patron Queen Elizabeth – In memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II, longstanding patron of the RSCDS, Rod changed the advertised programme to include *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*.



The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh

This dance was written in 1948 to recognise the 1947 marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip, who King George VI subsequently named Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh in honour of their wedding.

Rod particularly chose this dance for its NZ connection. One of the Scottish devisers, Mrs Florence Lesslie, subsequently settled in NZ and was widely recognised as having an enormously beneficial influence on the development of Scottish country dancing here.

Special award – A highlight of the evening was the presentation of a Wellington Region Certificate of Appreciation to Elaine Lethbridge (see further down). It was a wonderful forum to honour Elaine’s contributions to both junior dancers, and the wider dancing community.

Many thanks – Everyone played their part in ensuring a fantastic night for the region’s dancers.

As well as MC’ing, Rod also took the two prep classes leading up to the night. Johnsonville sub-committee members were Maura Beattie, Charles Burden, and John Markham, with Kristin Downey as organiser, Lorelee Hyde on design and photography, and Robert Vale for keeping everyone informed.

More than 20 Johnsonville members lent a hand one way or another on the day, setting up the hall, helping with supper, or packing up at the end. Support also came from the region committee and Elaine and Kevin Lethbridge.

New dancers from the past few years are especially to be admired for managing to become part of the Scottish country dance community, despite all the covid disruptions. They couldn’t have done it without all the tutors and experienced dancers who supported them at club, and joined them on the dance floor on 8 October.

Adapted from [an article originally published on Jville SCD Club website](#), 11 October 2022.

[Lorelee Hyde’s photos of the night can be viewed/downloaded here.](#)

Region Award for Elaine Lethbridge

From Ann Oliver

It gave me great pleasure that one of my last jobs as President of the Region was to present a Wellington Region Appreciation award to Elaine Lethbridge at the New Dancers’ Celebration. This was given in recognition of all the support she has giving to the development of youth dancing in the Wellington Region for over 20 years, and her general willingness to shoulder the load when major events have happened in the Region.

As a parent of two young adults in their 20s who were taught by Elaine, Andrew and I have first-hand knowledge of the efforts that she has put into not only teaching the weekly classes, but organising medal tests and JAM (Junior Associate Members) Camps. JAM Camps are fabulous, bringing together young dancers from around the country, adding excitement and friendship to the dancing journey and helping keep the children keen to dance. Such events can be expensive for families however, so to help with the cost, Elaine once again stepped up and organised many fundraisers over the

years. I am absolutely sure that without all Elaine’s efforts our children and many others would not be dancing today.

I personally would also like to recognise all the support and assistance Elaine’s husband Kevin gives to her endeavours. Kevin is always there to carry the gear, run the music and do whatever is asked of him. For this reason I feel the photograph below is most appropriate to mark this presentation.

Thanks Elaine and Kevin.

You can read the [full citation](#) on the region website (under About/Awards).



Kevin and Elaine Lethbridge (photo: Lorelee Hyde)

Tuesday afternoon dancing in 2022

From Pat Reesby

The year 2022 has been a good one for Tuesday afternoon dancing. Just one of our sessions had to be cancelled, not because of Covid, but because the hall was needed for a funeral last May.

Tuesday afternoon dancing began in late 2018 and the venue is St John’s church hall in Johnsonville, from 12:45 to 2:45 pm. People come from all around the Wellington region, making it an enjoyable way to meet dancers from other clubs.

This year, Catherine McCutcheon again took the general group, which meets on the third Tuesday of each month, and also the fifth Tuesday when there is one. This group