

RSCDS WELLINGTON REGION NEWSLETTER



Volume 25 No. 1

March 2022

President's Column



From Ann Oliver, President

The 2022 year started well in the Region with another fabulous celebration of Hogmanay at Knox Church Hall. On learning that once again Summer School was cancelled, Elaine Laidlaw kindly took up the reins to organise the event. Elaine, along with many helpers from the Region, brought

everything together in a relatively short timeframe. With Damon Collin as MC and Aileen Logie, Jason Morris, Hilary Ferral and Terry Bradshaw providing the music, the evening was a great success. Thanks to all who helped and those who came along to join in the fun.

On return from summer holidays, it was great to come together and catch up with dancers from across the region at the Summer Dancing evenings. These are held on the lawn at the Old Government Buildings and are always lovely relaxed evenings. This year we had more than four sets of dancers on the first night, but unfortunately had to cancel two of the subsequent sessions. The first cancellation was weather related and the second due to protesters over spilling Parliament grounds. This last was especially disappointing as the evening was beautifully warm and calm. The two nights of dancing we managed were splendidly led by

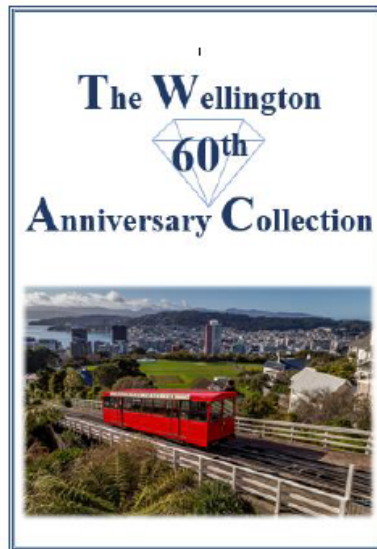
Catherine McCutcheon and Edith Campbell and I thank them for these very enjoyable evenings.

Once again, we move into the year faced with the uncertainties of Covid. While under the current Red 'Traffic Light' setting and Sport NZ recommendations dancing is permitted at club and class level, I am aware that many may choose to limit their social interaction until the Omicron peak has passed. Despite this, the Region Committee has been working hard to organise the normal full range of events for those who wish to take part.

Events for the year

The first event on the calendar is on the afternoon of 19 March when dances from the Wellington 60th Anniversary Collection will be taught by the devisers themselves. This collection was put together last year by Elaine Lethbridge and a small subcommittee. It marks the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the Wellington Region of the NZ Branch of the RSCDS and showcases our many talented devisers. More details are given later in this publication.

We will again offer a full range of classes this year – Basics, Intermediate, Advanced and Advanced Technique. To assist dancers and tutors in the appropriate selection of class, the Region has developed guidelines to choosing the right class. The guidelines are on the website and will be circulated to clubs. We hope that you will find this helpful. Additionally, we will continue to work with club tutors to ensure a good fit of dancers to class.



60th Collection Dance Afternoon

Saturday 19 March 2022

1-4pm, \$5 door charge

St John's Anglican Church

18 Bassett Rd, Johnsonville

Books available to purchase, \$15 per copy

Vaccine pass required for entry, please bring your own drink bottle

We are still working through the details of the tutors for classes but the dates have been set as follows:

- The first Basics course will start on 3 May, 7:30 pm
- Intermediate classes – afternoons of 7 May and 11 June,
- Advanced – afternoons of 8 May and 12 June
- Advanced Technique – afternoon of 10 September

As usual, the paper calendars will be distributed to clubs, and in addition please do keep an eye on the [region website](#) for the latest news and any cancellations.

Whatever the year brings and whether or not you feel like meeting to dance, please do look out for one another. Remember a phone call and a chat is always welcome.

S.C.D. Statistics?

From the Spurtle-wielder

Numbers, figures, statistics – a daily dose has become the norm! Scottish mathematicians have made many significant contributions in their field, amongst them being the Earl of Caithness' son, [Sir John Sinclair](#), 1st Baronet of Ulbster, near Wick (1754–1835), a British politician and a writer on both finance and agriculture. In 1786 he found that Germans were making a kind of political enquiry into matters of state, which they named "statistics", but he "annexed" the term for an inquiry into the state of a country to "ascertain the quantum of

happiness enjoyed by its inhabitants, and the means of its future improvement", hoping a new word might catch the public's attention. So he was the first person to use the word [statistics](#) in the English language, in his vast pioneering work [Statistical Account of Scotland](#) (21 volumes), much of which was based on information from parish ministers. Hopefully the happiness found in Scottish country dancing was included in their submissions!

Sinclair's style of reporting was often more verbal than the usual numerical concept of statistics. Today a 'number' may be referred to as a 'figure', but when applied to our dancing, the terms are not interchangeable. Eight is a prominent element in it. Eight bars of music seem to allow a musical phrase to be expressed with an element of satisfying completeness, although it may end with the equivalent of a comma (a quick breath) before expanding the theme for a second eight, then a third, but the fourth group has more of a resolution to embody completion. A large proportion of our dances require thirty-two bars of music (a few go to forty, or even forty-eight bars) to perform all the figures with the same leading couple.

Invariably the figures follow this pattern: eight bars to complete a sequence of movements – eight hands round and back, rights and lefts, etc. These figures call on geometry, fitting within the space described by the two lines – or a square – formed by the set of couples. Many take the lead couple back to the starting point, others take them to a new position, ready to begin a new figure.

So in a programme of ten dances, dancers perform forty figures, although not forty different ones, as the same figures will certainly appear in more than one dance. Plus of course, in a four-couple set, all dancers perform the figures from four different positions as they progress up or down the set – another number! There are around twenty traditional figures – recorded in the past from memory or interpreted from old manuscripts. Dancing masters devised others, and in the last few decades, new ones have been adopted into the repertoire. Another ‘number’ element is introduced with two different tempi – fast reels and jigs, slow strathspeys. Four is also an important number – most of the steps require the feet to work through four different positions.

This factor of constant repetition might seem boring; rather it is an ideal opportunity for each individual to increase personal pleasure and satisfaction from improving their technique and in so doing, to share these outcomes with fellow dancers. The numeration may suggest regimentation. Far from it! The regularity produces a smooth flow of movement, enhanced by dancers’ endeavours to execute figures and footwork well (i.e. giving regard to technique).

What a marvellous consequence from our lively activity – a joyful expression of beauty and grace. The whole body dances: the upturned hand invites participation; the slight nod of the head and warm glance shows approbation; the quiet word enough to indicate a helpful direction; the all-important general friendly interaction. Our Patron, the Queen, long ago commented on her enjoyment of SCD – “in every dance I get to meet seven other people”!

And underneath all this is the absolutely vital component – wonderful music, which invigorates the body and makes the eyes sparkle. Dance and music uplift the spirit – far beyond what any statistics can measure or notate. Incalculable!

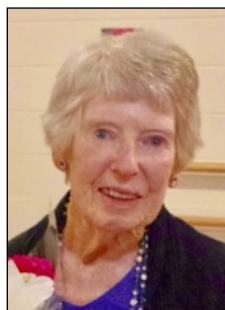
Celebrate Foss’s Day – 8 May

Born in Japan, [Hugh Foss](#) (1902-71) was a key cryptanalyst at Bletchley Park working on the Nazi *Enigma Code*, with a genius breakthrough on 8 May 1940 of the *Japanese Naval Code*. A keen Scottish country dancer, he devised many popular dances, e.g. John McAlpine.

Barbara Kent

From Désirée Patterson

It with sadness that the Region learned of the passing of Barbara Kent on Friday 25 February, in her 89th year.



Barbara started dancing in the 1960s at the Wellington SCD Club. She became a fully certificated SCD teacher – having completed her final examination with Miss Milligan at St Andrews in 1972. Her work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took her to overseas postings (New York, Paris, Moscow, and

Athens), where she danced and taught in local clubs. In between postings, she taught at Lower Hutt, and Johnsonville in the 1980s and 90s, where she also served on the committee.

In the early 2000s, Barbara joined the Tawa Club, where she served as secretary for several years, and on occasion taught the club when tutor Maureen Robson was on holiday. She was awarded a Life Membership of Tawa Club in 2017, after she had to give up dancing because of poor health. She remained keenly interested in the club’s activities, and often replied to the club’s weekly news emails.

Those of us who danced with, or were taught by Barbara will remember her with great affection.

Read more about Barbara’s involvement in Scottish country dancing in Kristin Downey’s [article](#) on the Johnsonville Club website.

Club starting dates

With increasing numbers of positive Covid cases in the region, several Wellington clubs have delayed the start of their dancing year.

The proposed starting dates for the following clubs are:

Eastbourne – Wednesday 30 March

Ngaio – Thursday 7 April

Tawa – Thursday 7 April

Kelburn – Wednesday 20 April

Seatoun - Friday 22 April

Upper Hutt started on Wednesday 2 March. Capital City started on Thursday 3 March. Carterton, Linden, Lower Hutt and Johnsonville started on Monday 7 March.

Wellington Region Celebrates Hogmanay

From Loralee Hyde

On a warm Wellington evening, dancers from around the Region and from further afield welcomed in the New Year at the Wellington Region Hogmanay on 31 December 2021 in Lower Hutt.

Thanks to Elaine and Michael Laidlaw and their team for organising this great social event after another challenging year with dancing constantly disrupted by Covid lockdowns and restrictions.

We welcomed RSCDS New Zealand Branch President Linda Glavin, Vice President Debbie Roxburgh with Paul, Communication and Publicity and Membership Coordinator Sue Lindsay and Youth Coordinator Nicole Trewavas. Others from outside the Region included Sue and Ian Pearson from Whanganui along with Doug Mills and Lynda Aitchison from Marlborough, and Dorothy Wilson from Blenheim.

Thank you to MC Damon Collin for leading us through the dances during the evening—and for sharing points about some of the more unusual dance origins or names.

We danced the night away to lively music from the band led by Aileen Logie on the accordion, with Jason Morris (keyboard), Hilary Ferral (fiddle) and Terry Bradshaw (drums). One toe-tapping tune that particularly appealed to the dancers was *The Magic of Merrill (The Reel of Seven)* played for *The Amateur Epidemiologist* devised by Wellingtonian Andrew Oliver. This dance is included in the [Wellington Region Covid-19 Collection](#).



Dancing *The Amateur Epidemiologist* with deviser Andrew Oliver in the set on the right

Popular dances included *Scott Meikle*, *The Water of Leith* and *Violynne*. The more experienced dancers took up the challenge of dancing *The Flower of Glasgow* and *The Aviator*.

A highlight of the evening was Linda Glavin presenting Debbie Roxburgh with an RSCDS New Zealand

Branch Life Membership. Congratulations Debbie for receiving this award—well-deserved after her many years of contributions to Scottish Country Dancing.

With Moggie Grayson (75 years, congratulations Moggie) and Jason Morris having birthdays on the night, we celebrated by singing *Happy Birthday* to rousing music from the band.

Before midnight, Damon led a singalong of Scottish songs. Last year we'd moved to the 21st century with the words being projected on to a screen. Unfortunately, the hall's projector had been stolen so we reverted to the old way of using printed copies!

The ceremony for welcoming in the New Year began with the Old Year and the Sweeper sweeping out the old year while we sang *Auld Lang Syne*.

Wellington Region President Ann Oliver announced the arrival of the First Foot—the first person to come across the threshold in the new year, carrying gifts of coal for warmth, salt or money for wealth, shortbread for sustenance and whisky for good cheer.



Toasting the Wellington Region – First Foot Jason Morris, Region President Ann Oliver, Piper Nicole Trewavas and MC Damon Collin

Followed by piper Nicole Trewavas, First Foot Jason Morris walked a circuit around the hall before presenting the gifts to Ann. The First Foot then raised a toast to the RSCDS Wellington Region and we welcomed in the new year of 2022.

After wishing each other Happy New Year, it was time for dancers to tackle the final three popular dances—the *Eightsome Reel*, *Culla Bay* and *De'il Among the Tailors*. A fitting start to a new year of dancing!

[See all the Hogmanay photos](#)

Summer socials at Johnsonville – one out of two ain't bad

From Kristin Downey

Each year over the summer dancing break, Johnsonville Club organises two social get-togethers.

Casual Christmas lunch

The first is a [Christmas lunch in mid-December](#), before people's social calendars get completely swamped. Not many of our working members can attend, but those with free time during the day enjoy a casual gathering at Café Thyme in Churton Park.

It's a lovely opportunity to socialise in relaxed surroundings, and get to know each other better off the dance floor. And from an organiser's point of view, it's very easy – everyone turns up somewhere between 11am and 2pm, orders their own coffee and/or food or wine, and stays just as long as it suits.

This time round, some of the workers also made it along, boosting our numbers to 17, and making for a very chatty occasion. It was especially nice to have a range of people there, from first-year dancers to

those who've been dancing at Johnsonville since the 1980s.

Of course, one difference this year was the need to have our vaccine passes checked at the door, but it all went very smoothly. And the silver lining was that we could start the process of scanning club members' passes in preparation for the 2022 club year, reducing queueing at the door in the new year.

Summer bowling ceilidh

This was the one that didn't happen this year. Disappointingly, with NZ moving to Traffic Light Red setting, the challenges were too great for us to roll up to Johnsonville Bowling Club for a bowl, ceilidh and pot luck dinner.

But one out of two ain't bad in the current Covid climate. Hopefully next year we'll be back on track for two out of two.

And with three weeks of beginners' classes now behind us, we can also hope our next club event will go ahead.

Please join us at our first Tartan Night of 2022 at 7:30pm on Monday 11 April at Khandallah Town Hall. You can find the programme elsewhere in this newsletter.



Johnsonville's Christmas lunch (photos by Lorelee Hyde)

Victoria University of Wellington

Scottish Interest Group

Meets on the 28th day of the month, but the 2022 programme has not yet been arranged.

Website www.wellyscots.wordpress.com

PLEASE NOTE

Dancers will need to show their Vaccine Pass at all Region events



NGAIO SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

**Invites You to Join Us for Our Annual Dance
at Ngaio Town Hall, Ottawa Road, Ngaio**

Saturday 14 May 2022 at 7.30pm

Admission	\$15.00
RSCDS Members	\$12.00
Spectators & Juniors	\$ 5.00

PROGRAMME

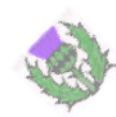
R	Maxwell's Rant	Book 18
J	Granville Market	Graded II
S	City of Belfast	Book 48
R ***	A Trip to Bavaria	Leaflet
J	Pelorus Jack	Book 41
S	The Gentleman	Book 35
R	Shifftin' Bobbins	Ormskirk
S	The Robertson Rant	Book 39
R	The Button Boy	Allanton
R	The Deil Amang the Tailors	Book 14

Supper

J	Hoopers Jig	MM II
S	Anna Holden's Strathspey	Book 42
R	Montgomeries' Rant	Book 10
S ***	Triple Happiness	Book 52
J	A Capital Jig	5 For 2009
R	Scott Meikle	Book 46



**Music provided by Aileen Logie
Hilary Ferral and Jason Morris**



Deadline for the next issue of
Harbour City Happenings
Midnight, Saturday 4 June

Johnsonville Tartan Night

Khandallah Town Hall

11 Ganges Rd, Khandallah

7.30pm, Monday 11 April 2022

Music by Aileen Logie, Hilary Ferral, Jason Morris

Bev's Delight	(J)	B McMurtry – Devil's Quandary
Mr Michael Bear's Reel	(R)	S Phillips – Graded 2
The Birks of Invermay	(S)	16/2
Pelorus Jack*	(J)	41/1
The Coleraine Rant	(R)	R Downey – Golden Bear Coll
The Virginia Reel	(R)	Collins Ceilidh Dances

Supper

Corstorphine Fair	(J)	M Hunter – Dancing Forth Too
Lady Glasgow	(S)	Miscellany 1
The Australian Ladies*	(R)	R Campbell – Glasgow Assembly
The Reel of the 51st	(R)	13/10

Our first Tartan Night of the year is designed to give new dancers the opportunity to dance to live music. Dancers in their first year are welcome to join us.

- Adult \$5.00 Student \$0.50
- Dances marked * are unsuitable for dancers who started this year, but otherwise fine for all
- Most dances walked
- Vaccine Pass required

