

Peter Elmes' original sets for the books. This event will be suitable for dancers of intermediate level or above. Come and celebrate both the RSCDS and the region with this very special event.

**Tri-region Centenary Ball** – Further exciting news is that Hawke's Bay, Rangitikei and Wellington Regions have combined to host a tri-region ball in Palmerston North, on 4 November. This celebrates the role of the 'fertile crescent', from Hawke's Bay to Whanganui through to Wellington. In many ways, these three regions were the birthplace of SCD in New Zealand. For example, the first three Summer Schools were held in these three regions. The ball will

- feature an international band (*The Balmoral Band*)
- be fully catered
- have a piped grand march
- begin at 5.30 pm so that people have time to commute to the ball and return to Wellington/Hawke's Bay/Whanganui if they desire
- have a programme which features dances from Kiwi devisers, and well-known society dances.

The announcement and Ball Programme are at the end of this issue.

You can download the Centenary Ball programme and a commentary on the history and importance of each selected dance at <https://wellingtonscd.org.nz/lower-north-island-centenary-ball/>. Thanks to Iain Boyd for help with the historical notes.

Tickets should be bought online, especially important for catering purposes.

- The online form will be sent out to clubs and regions soon, and there will be an early-bird discount
- We will be asking clubs to contact former members to see if they wish to join the celebrations. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

**Region Classes** – Details for the classes at all levels are posted later in this issue. We'll send out flyers and further information, class guidelines, along with online registration links, to the club secretaries. Region classes are a fantastic opportunity to meet people from other clubs and really work on your dancing. We are lucky in the Region to have so many able and willing tutors and musicians.

**Classes Coordinator** – Thanks to Aileen Logie ([class-coordinator@wellingtonscd.org.nz](mailto:class-coordinator@wellingtonscd.org.nz)) who has agreed to be the coordinator for the region classes. She should be your first port of call if you have questions about the logistics.

**New Dancers' Celebration** – Thanks to the Carterton Club for the early organisation of The New Dancers' Celebration, to be held at Wairarapa College on 7

October, from 7.30 to 10.00 pm, followed by supper. The programme will be circulated amongst the Region Tutors. Last time Carterton hosted, we had a great night, so put yet another date in your calendar!

There will be two preparation classes in St David's hall in Petone.

**Hogmanay: Call for Organisers** – One of the fun things to do on New Year's Eve is to go to a Hogmanay dance and see in the new year the Scottish way. In 2022, no volunteers were available to organise. If anyone is interested in learning about what is involved, please contact the committee [wellington@dancescottish.org.nz](mailto:wellington@dancescottish.org.nz). The Region has a lot of resources for this task: e.g. a timeline of tasks, copies of the ceremony, song sheets, and information about finding venues, etc. We can help you.

**Region Appreciation Awards** – These awards recognise exceptional sustained service to the Region. Last year we recognised John Gregory and Elaine Lethbridge. We ask clubs to send nominations with supporting evidence to the Region Secretary [wellington@dancescottish.org.nz](mailto:wellington@dancescottish.org.nz) for the committee's consideration.

**Finally** – we hope you all have a great year of dancing. Do take advantage of the opportunities above. If you want to contact us and have any suggestions which help us to do better, please email me [president@wellingtonscd.org.nz](mailto:president@wellingtonscd.org.nz) or the Region Secretary, Michele, [wellington@dancescottish.org.nz](mailto:wellington@dancescottish.org.nz). We are all in a team together!

**Note:** An apology for leaving Elaine Lethbridge off the list of continuing Region Committee members in the last issue of Harbour City Happenings.

### **Michael Laidlaw: RSCDS New Zealand Branch Award**

*From Lorelee Hyde*

Congratulations to Michael Laidlaw from Carterton Club for receiving a RSCDS New Zealand Branch Award on 2 January 2023 at the Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Summer School.

Linda Glavin, RSCDS New Zealand Branch President, gave the commendation for the award:

"Michael has given sterling service to Scottish Country Dancing and the New Zealand Branch over many years. He served as Communications and Publicity Coordinator from 2004 to 2007, and Branch Secretary from 2011 to 2014. In these roles, Michael contributed valuable organisational skills, leaving in place systems and processes that ensured a smooth transition for new

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office bearers. Of particular note is Michael's support and encouragement to younger Branch members taking on management roles, and his continued interest and support for the New Zealand Branch and its activities.

Michael also has skills in event management and planning, and demonstrated these when he took on the role of treasurer for three successful Summer Schools in Wellington and the Wairarapa. Michael is both a dancer and teacher and has been active at club and region levels, and nationally, teaching at club and region events and at New Zealand Summer Schools.

The hours that Michael has spent in the service of Scottish Country Dancing in New Zealand are countless. His contributions were purposeful and always offered with the intent of improving the dancing lives of New Zealand members.

Thank you for your service, Michael."



Michael Laidlaw with his RSCDS New Zealand Branch Award. Photo: Miriam Laidlaw

Michael has also been a stalwart of Scottish Country Dancing in the RSCDS Wellington Region. He started dancing in the region in 1967 and was a member of Kelburn and Lower Hutt Clubs. He taught at Lower Hutt about one night in four, when the tutor, Gary Morris, was working night shifts for the BNZ computer centre. He also taught Kelburn Club in 1968, when tutor Mirth Smallwood went to Rarotonga.

In 1973, Michael was posted to Ohakea with his work as a meteorologist. From there, he went on to Fiji. On his return to Wellington in 1978, his direct involvement in Scottish Country Dancing reduced, due to shift work and

family responsibilities. He taught the intermediate class at the Masterton Summer School in 1972/73 and classes at Wellington Region Weekend and Day schools in 1971, 1974, 1982 and 1983. He was on the Wellington Region Committee for a number of years and has represented our region at RSCDS NZ Branch AGMs.

Michael and his wife Elaine started the Carterton Club in the Wairarapa in 2000. Since then, they have regularly braved our winter weather and driven over the hill to support and enjoy events in Wellington, especially when Elaine was Region President from 2011 to 2013.

An article in *Harbour City Happenings Volume 16 No. 2, August 2013* about the Ngaio midwinter dinner held during a 'weather bomb' shows their dedication, saying, "The atrocious weather made the whole outing quite an experience ... The prize for the greatest enthusiasm must go to Michael and Elaine Laidlaw who drove over the Rimutaka Hill from Masterton, through waves washing over the Hutt Road, slips, gale force winds and snow!"

Together with their team from Carterton, Michael and Elaine have been involved in organising a number of Wellington Region events, including the special *Diamond Jubilee Ball* at Government House on 30 June 2012, as well as Hogmanays and New Dancers' Celebrations.



The organising committee for the Wellington Region Jubilee Ball in 2012. From left, Michael Laidlaw, Eileen South, Shirley Kalogeropoulos, Elaine Laidlaw (MC), Charlotte Williams, Elaine Lethbridge, Edith Campbell, Bev Whitelaw (Convener). Photo: Lorelee Hyde

Unfortunately, the 2021 New Dancers' Celebration in Masterton they had set in place was cancelled at late notice because of Covid restrictions. They are again taking on the role of organising this year's event which is on 7 October.

Thank you Michael for your long and active support of Scottish Country Dancing in the Wellington Region.