

Lower North Island RSCDS Centenary Ball

November 2023

The following are some preliminary notes on the selected dances. They will be expanded upon as the year progresses, after consultation with people who are even more aware of the history of Scottish Country Dancing in New Zealand.

All New Zealand devisers who have had dances published by the Society have one dance included in this programme.

New Year Jig (3C - 32 - J) **Maureen Robson** 51/8

Maureen Robson is a well-known Wellington tutor who has served several roles in the Region. She has also taught nationally. This dance was devised in 1995, as a means of teaching reels to a children's class. It has been very popular in New Zealand for many years, but was not published by the RSCDS until 2017, in Book 51, which has the subtitle 'Scottish Country Dances for Young and Less Experienced Dancers'. The music was composed specially for Maureen by the late Peter Elmes, the first tune being *Maureen Robson's Jig*. Maureen was the tutor of the Tawa Club for 38 years before retiring in November 2019. She published a collection of her dances (along with music composed by Peter Elmes) in 'From North To South' in 2019.

Morison's Bush (3C - 40 - R) **Ken Shaw** **Morison's Bush**

This is probably the first dance devised in New Zealand and certainly the earliest dance in this programme. It was devised in 1954 and the instructions published in the same year in the first issue of 'The New Zealand Scottish Country Dancer'. The original tune was composed by Charlie Jemmett, a leading musician in the early years of dancing in New Zealand. Ken Shaw was president of the Whakatane Club. For many years, Morison's Bush was for country dancers in the Wellington, Wairarapa, and Hawkes Bay the centre of social life and dances there were not to be missed. Morison's Bush was the site of the first Scottish Country Dance Ball in New Zealand.

Miss Milligan's Strathspey (3C - 32 - S) **RSCDS Leaflet**

What needs to be said? Miss Milligan is the most famous name in the RSCDS. She was one of the two co-founders of the Society in 1923. Dr Milligan was the central force promoting Scottish Country Dancing worldwide. She made a three-week visit to New Zealand in 1974. This dance was devised by an RSCDS committee and has a very nice lead tune.

Mrs Stewart's Jig (3C - 32 - J) **35/1**

Mrs Ysobel Stewart of Fasnacloch was the other co-founder of the RSCDS. She had the idea of forming a group to promote our pastime and served as Secretary for 10 years before moving to South Africa, where she continued to work supporting the society. Again, the dance was devised by an RSCDS committee and has a strong lead tune.

The Meeting of the Waters (3C - 48 - R) Iain Boyd 53/15

Iain Boyd already had two RSCDS dances and this well-known dance was recommended by the Branch for inclusion in Book 53. Iain is a very well-known tutor in the Region and has taught classes throughout the world. Iain has many books of dances, as well as dances in various collections. They are widely danced internationally. *The Meeting of the Waters* was devised to celebrate the 1964-65 New Zealand Summer School in Whanganui, the 'River City'.

Oriel Strathspey (4C - 32 - S) Ian Simmonds 32/2

Ian Simmonds was the founding tutor of the Linden Club and taught there for 53 years. For many years Ian trained a demonstration team which supported nursing homes and hospitals in the local area. Peter Elmes was the long-standing musician for these demonstrations. *Oriel Strathspey* was the second New Zealand devised dance accepted by the RSCDS for publication. The title refers to Peter Elmes' home in Oriel Avenue. The demonstration practices and his Friday night classes were first held in the double garage below Peter's home.

Catch the Wind (3C - 32 - H) Romaine Butterfield 45/5

Romaine Butterfield has four dances published by the RSCDS - the most of any New Zealand deviser. This dance is much loved worldwide. An excellent selection of tunes has been recorded by Peter Elmes, The Music Makars, and other bands. The original music (a set of 'flirtation' hornpipes) was included on an old recording by the late Elma Grech. The title refers to Iain Boyd's pursuit (for marriage) of local teacher, deviser, and later examiner, Noeline O'Connor.

Gary Morris (3C - 32 - J) Alec Hay Morison's Bush

Alec Hay was a highly original and prolific deviser of dances and formations. For example, 'set and link', 'half turn, hesitate and cast', 'set and shuttle' and 'set to corners and cast away' (the *Best Set In The Hall* figure). He founded and taught at the Howick Club (Auckland) for many years. This dance was devised for Gary Morris (tutor, deviser and examiner) and has the first occurrence of the formation now called 'inverted double triangles', later incorporated in the dance *The Nurseryman*.

Balmoral Strathspey (4C - 32 - S) John Charles 22/3

This was the first dance from a Kiwi deviser adopted by the Society. Book 22 was the first book to include only modern dances. John ('Jock') Charles (from Kawerau, Bay of Plenty) was a Scot from Banff who arrived in New Zealand in 1953 aboard the government owned immigrant ship 'James Cook'.

The Reel of the 51st Division (3C - 32 - R) 13/10

This is the first modern dance adopted by the RSCDS, under recommendation from Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II. Famously devised by prisoners of war.

Pelorus Jack (3C - 32 - J) Barry Skelton 41/1

Barry Skelton is another prolific New Zealand deviser with many excellent dances including this one from Book 45. The 'dolphin reels' were originally created by Barry Priddey and first used in his dance *The Flight Of The Falcon*. Barry's dance is much loved worldwide. Pelorus Jack was a famous Risso's dolphin which once accompanied ships from Nelson to Wellington.

The Reverend John MacFarlane (4C - 32 - R) Gary Morris 37/1

Gary Morris was a tutor in Wellington with the Ngaio Club, and later became an RSCDS examiner. This dance commemorates the first Christian (Presbyterian) religious service held on the Petone foreshore on 23rd February 1840. John MacFarlane arrived in Wellington on the 'Bengal Merchant' in 1840 with two shiploads of Scots. He returned to Scotland in Oct 1844 and settled at Inverary, Argyllshire.

Mildred Clancey's Strathspey (4C - 32 - S) Jennie Miller A Touch of Gold

Jennie Miller is an Auckland deviser with a dance in the Society's third Graded Book. She has devised many dances and published several collections of them. Many others have been published in the 'Dance Devisers Day' collections. Mildred Clancey was secretary of the New Zealand Scottish Country Dance Society from 1956-67 and then secretary of the Branch from 1967-74, dying while in office. She arrived in New Zealand from Ireland in 1955 and taught at the Day's Bay summer school (the second summer school) in 1956. Mildred Clancey taught at many summer schools. The inclusion of the 'Glasgow Highlanders' setting was suggested after the deviser saw a picture of Mildred dancing this step.

Best Set in the Hall (3C - 32 - J) Helen Greenwood 46/7

Helen Greenwood is an Auckland dancer and deviser, originally from Yorkshire. The central movement of 'set to corners and cast away' was first used by Alec Hay in his strathspey *Peter White*. This dance has become extremely popular both here and overseas.

Petronella (2C - 32 - R) 1/1

The first dance in the first book published in 1924 by the newly formed Society. Loved by children, and with a great tune, this dance was frequently 'doubled' with both first and second couples dancing the 'diamond' figure.

A Gift From Heaven (4C - 32 - S) Norman Whitson Harbour City

Norman Whitson was a long-time tutor of the Eastbourne club. (Eastbourne was the site of the second summer school - after Napier). This dance was devised in the memory of his daughter, Shona. The lead tune, *The Girl with the Deep Brown Eyes*, was composed and arranged for this dance by an early Wellington musician - Tom Barnes. 'The Harbour City', published in 1986, was the second collection of dances published by the Wellington Region, and, again, included dances from the Wellington to Whanganui crescent.

Seton's Ceilidh Band (4C - 64 - J) Bruce Fordyce 53/12

Bruce Fordyce was a deviser and tutor from Hastings. He was one of the original committee members of the Wellington-Hawkes Bay Association of Scottish Country Dance Clubs - the forerunner of the New Zealand Society and the New Zealand Branch. Jack Seton was the original president. *Seton's Ceilidh Band* commemorates Jack Seton whose band was based at Morison's Bush near Greytown in the Wairarapa, New Zealand. Both Bruce and Jack were early giants of Scottish Country Dancing in New Zealand. They were the principal forces behind the early Summer Schools and the New Zealand Society.

The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh

(3C - 40 - R) Allie Anderson / Florence Lesslie 39/7

Devised by Allie Anderson and Florence Lesslie in 1948 to celebrate the wedding of HRH Princess Elizabeth to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. Miss Allie Anderson was a contemporary of Miss Milligan and a founder member of the RSCDS Edinburgh Branch. Professionally, she taught PE at James Gillespie's High School, Edinburgh. She also co-authored 'A Complete Guide To Scottish Country Dancing' with John Duthie. Mrs Florence Lesslie was secretary of the Edinburgh Branch for many years. When she emigrated with her husband to New Zealand she was given special permission to examine teacher candidates by herself - the only person Miss Milligan gave this permission to. The first examinations were held at the beginning of 1965 at the end of the summer school in Whanganui. Mrs Lesslie had a significant impact on New Zealand dancing and assisted the New Zealand Society to become an RSCDS Branch. She was the first life member of the Branch. This well-known dance has a great driving tune, and finishes the programme with a circle of friendship.

We remember Her Majesty, our immediate past Patron.

Extra

Dancing Spirit (3C - 32 - J) Amy Luxton-Esler 50/11

Amy Luxton-Esler (from Auckland) was one of the young dance devisers who submitted dances for consideration for Spring Fling 2015. The winning entries were subsequently published by the Society in Book 50. Amy has served the New Zealand Branch as a member of the JAM (Junior Associate Members) Committee. She has also published three collections of her dances in her 'Memories Are Made Of This' series.

When the Centenary Ball programme was being developed, we thought that we had included dances from all New Zealand devisers who have had dances published by the Society. Unfortunately, Amy's dance was missed out. It has been decided to include *Dancing Spirit* as an Extra dance (which will be walked through before being danced - should time be available).