

Downey and Iain Boyd for preparing extensive notes on the devisers and the dances selected for this evening.

Thanks also to the decorators of the hall, including beautiful floral arrangements; all those who helped with the hall set-up and packing-up; Debbie Roxburgh for MC'ing this special night of dance; Ian and Sue Pearson for welcoming dancers to the Ball; Michael Laidlaw for organising the Grand March; Nicole Trewavas for her piping and providing supper together with members of the Celtic Spirit Pipe Band; the briefers who entered the spirit of the occasion, especially as a number of dances were not well-known; Duncan, Mary and Alastair McDonald for equipment and technical expertise; Pat Reesby for videography; and Lorelee Hyde for communications, posters, website stories, historical research and photography.

And special thanks to all the dancers who supported the night, some coming a long way, but all entering the spirit to make the night a memorable occasion.

[See more about the dances, the devisers, and photos and videos](#)

All photos by Lorelee Hyde. [View all of Lorelee's photos and download if you wish](#)

Grand March

From Michael Laidlaw

I was asked by the Wellington Region President to marshall the Grand March at the combined Wellington, Rangitikei, Hawkes Bay Regions' RSCDS Centennial Ball. Against my better judgement (I have done this once before and ended up with the most important person right on the side of the final line instead of the middle), I agreed.

How hard can it be? You just stand at the centre front of the hall and with a gentle hand movement indicate to each couple or group of couples as they come up the middle to turn alternately right or left to return to the bottom of the hall and join up with the couple(s)

approaching from the other side of the room. The trick, as I found out after my earlier experience is, on the last return, to direct couples to the opposite side of the room to bring the original first couple into the centre. To be absolutely sure of this, I trialled it on a club night with four couples.

So, on the night, OMG! they are leading in on one side of the hall instead of coming up the middle, presumably because the main doors to the hall are not in the middle. This will be a problem! So frantic arm waving attempts to get them to move over to the centre eventually succeed (no subtle hand indication here!). Whew! But wait there's more – many couples ignore my indication of which direction to turn resulting in more aggressive hand and arm waving – and some just carry on the way they started.

Thankfully, somehow the march ended with the required *high heid yins*, more or less, in the right place in the front row.

Will I do it again if asked? What do you think!

Wellington Region New Dancers' Celebration 2023 — A festive celebration!

From Lorelee Hyde

The New Dancers' Celebration is one of the biggest events in the Wellington Region, celebrating those who have taken up Scottish Country Dancing in the past three years. So it proved for this year's celebration with more than 80 dancers, including 30 newer dancers, taking to the floor on Saturday 7 October in the Wairarapa College Hall in Masterton.

Hosted by Carterton Club, with former Wellington Region President Elaine Laidlaw as MC, the evening was full of smiles and laughter as the more experienced dancers helped the newer ones enjoy the programme of relatively well-known and easier dances with a scattering of those we've not encountered as often.



The Grand March, which was piped in by Nicole Trewavas (Photo: Lorelee Hyde)

Dancers came to the event from throughout the Wellington Region and we welcomed others from the Rangitikei and Hawke's Bay & East Coast Regions.

The wide expanse of floor in the hall allowed plenty of room for flowing sets and beautiful covering. An orchestra pit at the top of the hall was thoughtfully roped off with balloons and plants so we didn't end up going down through the hatches while vigorously setting!



Taking advantage of the large expanse of floor (other than the roped-off orchestra pit!) to enjoy St Andrew's Fair

With 2023 being the RSCDS Centenary Year, the programme included three dances with connections to the RSCDS:

12 Coates Crescent, the address of the RSCDS office in Edinburgh; *The Jubilee Jig* published by the RSCDS in 1973 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee; and *Mrs Stewart's Jig* to honour one of the co-founders of the Society.

A dance of regional significance was the strathspey *The Halfway House*, devised by Elaine Laidlaw. The dance is a tribute to the Community House in Britannia Street, Petone, where the Wellington Region Committee meets. It is published in *The Wellington 60th Anniversary Collection*.



Dancing *The Halfway House*, devised by Elaine Laidlaw

Throughout the evening, we danced to rousing music from Aileen Logie, Jason Morris and Hilary Ferral. Popular dances included *Anderson's Rant*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Mrs Stewart's Jig* and the last dance, *The De'il Among the Tailors* (such fabulous music to dance and clap along to!).

A bounteous supper provided by Carterton Club and experienced dancers who came along was warmly welcomed by all, following the fabulous evening of dancing.

Running an event like this takes a lot of time and organisation. Carterton Club had previously got everything in place for the New Dancers' Celebration in 2021. Just before the dance, the country went into a Covid lockdown which meant the event was cancelled. Thanks so much to Elaine and Michael Laidlaw, and their club members, for taking the time and spending the energy to put on this festive celebration this year.

Photo credit: Lorelee Hyde. See more of Lorelee's photos at <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAXKiv>

NZ Branch Teachers' Workshop, Easter 2024 (29 Mar-1 Apr) – and there's a class and dance for everyone!



From Jeanette Watson

Whether you're certificated, or brief some dances at club nights, or somewhere in between, come and learn more about teaching SCD from Graham Donald – who's been working with the RSCDS on tutor training courses, so he really knows his stuff! The workshop is being held at Hutt Intermediate School – very handy for Wellington people. Music will be provided by Sharlene Penman.

The workshop will cover a range of teaching topics, spread over four sessions (Sat to Mon). The Music session on Saturday afternoon is open to musicians as well, and will concentrate on what teachers and musicians need to know to communicate effectively with each other.

And just so no-one is left out, the workshop will start with an all-comers public class on Friday evening, giving Graham the opportunity to demonstrate a number of teaching skills, which participants can analyse (and hope to emulate!) over the weekend. Live music by Aileen Logie and Hilary Ferral.

A public dance on Saturday night will have a programme devised by the organising committee, with briefings by workshop participants, with Graham as MC. Live music by Lynne Scott, Sharlene Penman, plus one.

Registrations are open now for the Workshop, Class, and/or Music session. See NZ Branch website <https://dancescottish.org.nz/tw2024> for more information, and links to the registration forms.

Grist to the mill – depth of joy to the dance

From the Spurtle-wielder

The appearance of our unicorns at a couple of recent events caused comment. These beasts are of course the supporters of the Coat of Arms of Scotland. Though the Lion Rampant on the shield had been used before by