

Light and Airy



Scottish Country Dancers of Winnipeg

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Important Dates

Spring 2021

No Dance Events Scheduled

Spring 2021 ? –Maybe gather for group walks?

Fall 2021 ? –Hoping RSCDS dancing resumes in some format?

A Word from the Chair of COM

The geese are back! At least some of the geese are back, as I saw and heard on a recent walk through Assiniboine Park. There were perhaps a dozen or so of them, slowly wandering on the frozen yet basically snow free ground, every so often trumpeting their goose music into the air, boldly proclaiming that they were back in town.

There's something reassuring about the geese returning. After how long a flight, travelling over so many hundreds of kilometres, flying from their warm comfortable climes to their currently chilly summer home, the return of the geese are a wonderful sign and symbol that a new season is dawning. The winter is winding down and the promise of spring is heard in their song.

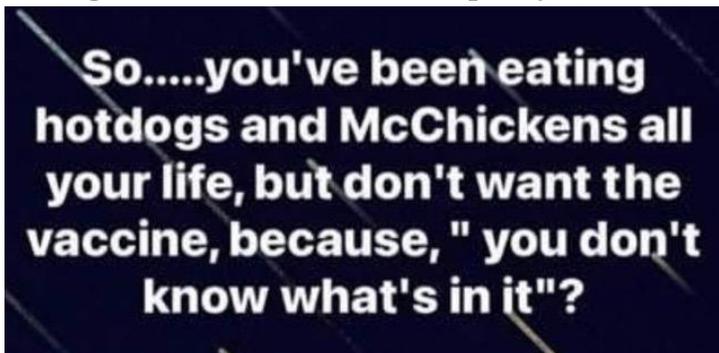
Of course, as these geese discovered, and as we well know, the fullness of spring is not yet with us. There may still be cold days, snow days, teasing tastes of warm weather followed by icy blasts of winter. But the promise of spring is here, not yet in full blossom, but in

the increasing warmth of the sun, in the gentle breezes that are no longer frosty, in the retreating snow and melting ice. Soon, but not yet, the grass will begin to grow, the now solid rivers will transform into flowing streams and the trees will begin to bud. Not quite yet, but soon.

For a year now the whole world has been gripped by the winter of the COVID pandemic. Each of us bears our own scars of this pandemic year, this seemingly unending winter of distancing and isolation, masks and precautions, fear and pain. You don't need me to chronicle the struggle of these past twelve months, other than to say that it has been a tremendous and at times horrendous struggle for so many of us.

But with the advent of the vaccines, with the widespread adherence to health orders, and through the cooperation of ordinary citizens showing genuine concern for friends and strangers, it seems like the winter of COVID is melting away into the spring of renewed hope. We are not out of the woods yet, but hope feels more real now, more tangible, more promising. We still need to wear our masks and keep a respectable, safe distance, but we so look forward to the day when our classes will resume, our Burns celebrations and workshops return, and we can dance once again with our friends. Not quite yet, but soon.

If we can see them, the signs of hope and new life are there. The geese in the park, boldly squawking out their joy that their long journey has safely ended. The progress of vaccines and of medical advances offers the promise of freedom and reconnection with those we love. Not quite yet, but soon.



In the meantime, and in keeping with provincial guidelines, your Committee of Management will work to find ways for us to maintain our connections with one another, including more outdoor gatherings and resuming the walks we started last fall.

Until we meet again, take care, stay healthy, wear your RSCDS mask, and may the blessings of spring-time bring you joy and hope.

Don Johnson

Have you heard?

“Branching Out” Walks

Spring is here! The weather is warm, the sun is bright. And here in Manitoba we can now have gatherings of 10 people in outdoor locales.

Perhaps now is the time we can organize another walk as a way to get together safely. COM will let you know when the next walk might happen.

In the meantime I hope you are staying active and getting out for your own walks around your neighbourhood or parks. What birds have you noticed returned from their winter home?

TAC Summer School is going virtual!

“We can’t meet in person this year, but we’re excited to announce there will be a ‘virtual’ Summer School in July.”

Check the TAC website for ongoing updates and details

tac-rscds.org

From the Teachers

Spring is upon us. The snow has melted, the days are warmer, the geese are back, our back patio is set up and we should be planning our spring dancing events.

As we reflect on our favourite spring/summer dances, maybe the Summer Assembly, Flowers of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Gardens just to name a few, we also look forward to vaccinations and getting together again.

We had all hoped to be dancing by now, but that has not happened, with vaccine rollouts happening I truly hope and believe we will get together again in the fall. Maybe sooner if we resume our walks in the park as numbers allow.

The hope of the teachers here in Winnipeg is that you all stay healthy and safe. We miss you and look forward to happier days ahead filled with the sounds of music, dance and laughter.

Cheryl Durnin

From the Classes

Hello all.

It's almost the 1 year "anniversary" of the end of our dancing world. March 12, 2020.

I was teaching the Thursday Class, and planned to review dances for the upcoming social. Cheryl and Doug were in Mexico.

I was apprehensive because of the recent newscasts.

Mel was clearing out all his equipment from the back room and planned to cancel his classes.

So now, it was up to the COM to make the decision.

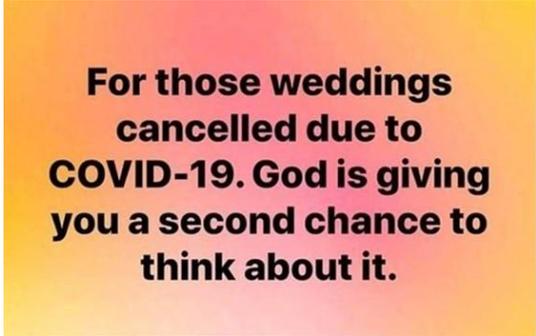
If I had known this was the last class, I would have done a "farewell" dance. This all seems about 3 years ago.

Actually, I'm sitting here teary eyed.

Maureen

Getting to Know

Editor –Do you have a dancing story to share? Let's continue along those lines! I invite one and all to write a note about their experiences in SCD. What have you been doing during this time away from dancing? Have you taken up a new hobby, or gotten back to one you had set aside? Did you work on any projects about the home or cottage?



**For those weddings
cancelled due to
COVID-19. God is giving
you a second chance to
think about it.**

Ron Krug

Scottish Dancing? What was that?? It wasn't my idea you know!!

I had just been transferred back to Winnipeg from my job in Montreal – way back in the dark ages. I had lived in Winnipeg before, and knew several people from the music world. One of them was Margaret Bowie (originator of Mug Pub). I hadn't established a place to live yet, but the Bowies graciously offered me a place with them until I could get myself settled. Well....

As you all know, Margaret, that is persuasive Margaret, headed up the branch dem team at the time. This was Monday, on Friday she was to present a demo at the U of M. She was one man short! Beware – here it comes. She said I was to be that man. I hadn't a clue what Scottish Country dancing even was. Margaret said, "I will instruct you – and you are not allowed to walk in this house – every step will be a proper dance step (even up and down the stairs) - and by Friday you will be converted". She was right. By Friday I could make my way thru the dance and that was it. Soon I was also doing Highland with Mavis Pickett, going to Margaret's branch class and making wonderful new friends.

Not long after that I was transferred back to Montreal, where I danced with the branch there, and then another transfer to Toronto. That really cemented things. I was back into highland, and danced for Bob Blackie on his dem team. What an experience. Again, more friends. And I played piano with Angus Mackinnon's Band and occasionally with Barbara McOwen's band in Boston. All that led to more and more RSCDS involvement like the first time I played for Miss Milligan, dancing highland in a tattoo in Florida, playing for weekend dance workshops, attending St. Andrew's, candidate classes, TAC Summer School, etc. But those are all other stories!!

Peter & Lynn McClure

Reading Glen's piece about getting started in SCD jogged the memory. Although there are some differences, our own story has two important things in common: our involvement grew out of seeing good examples of SCD, and in both cases, it was the women that provided the impetus.

In the 1960s, we were living in Waterloo ON, Lynn working for VON (community nurses) and Peter a MSc student and junior lecturer at U of Waterloo. U of W was relatively new, still smallish, and growing rapidly. One of the newer buildings housed a small theatre, known as the "Arts Theatre", with an apron stage. Each year, the community came together for "FASS Night", a "Faculty And Student Social" occasion, in which various members of the university put together a variety show entertainment. One of the items was always a demonstration of SCD, led by W. A. E. (Peter) McBryde, a professor of Chemistry. He and his wife were keen dancers, the dancers always appeared in formal dress, and it made a lasting impression, seen on the stage from raked seating.

Move forward ten or so years. Further education for both, Peter in England, Lynn at U of Washington in Seattle, settled in Winnipeg, children, now grown to an age where we felt we could get in a child minder and go out for an evening. In late summer of 1977, the Free Press educational supplement included a piece about SCD, probably with a photo, and with time and place of the basic class. Lynn (what did we say about impetus?) connected this with the memory of SCD displays at FASS Night. She got in touch with another couple who might be interested, we went along to Grosvenor School at the given time, to join a class of 50 or so (hard to imagine now) taught by Archie Nixon. As the saying goes, the rest is history. Memorable members of that first basic class: Elaine Adam and Ed Somers.

The other couple we joined with didn't stay with it, but we did, soon became very keen, within a year or two got sashes, the shoes, the kilt, etc, and have enjoyed this activity ever since. It has provided both physical and mental stimulus, and a welcoming community, both here and other places when we've had occasion to travel.

There's always music for us

The headquarters website continues to have weekly classes to keep us interested. Look up The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society info@rscds.org for the weekly Dance Scottish at Home. It also contains a number of links to follow to open up the various goodies they have included such as the link to the online classes, At Home Podcasts, and more.

Online dancing

Join the RSCDS Online Class – keeping moving and connected!

Get ready to dance with us from your living rooms, kitchens, spare rooms, offices – wherever you have room to move – and connect with dancers from around the world.

A class every week.



From the editor's desk

With Manitoba easing some restrictions on outdoor gatherings, perhaps we can meet and enjoy a group walk again!

Thanks to Ron and Peter & Lynn for their contributions this issue. It is great to hear the stories of how we came to know and love SCD. I hope more of you will consider forwarding a note about your start in SCD, what you like about the activity, how you have been keeping busy since the shutdown took place. Have you started or resumed any hobbies or projects? I can include them in future issues of L&A.

March 10 was International Bagpipe Day! How did you celebrate?

Still no classes available locally. Just online possibilities.

If a tree fell in the forest

Just wondering – with no dancing classes happening, if I skipped an issue of L & A, would anyone notice?? (besides Marilyn & Maureen that is!)

There may be a Scottish variant of the coronavirus.
No info on the infection rate as yet.

In the meantime – stay safe!

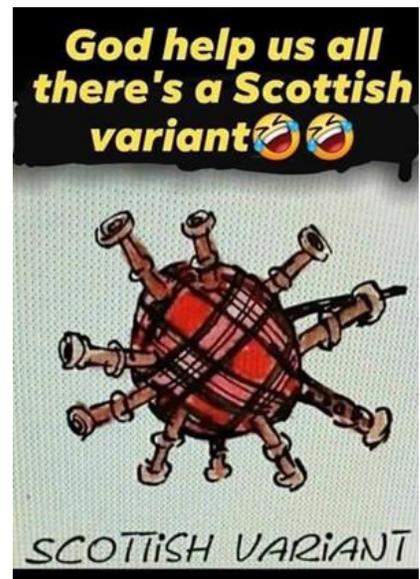
Doug Durnin, Editor

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Here and There...

SCD Books and Music

Anyone interested in buying books of Scottish country dances or recordings of SCD music should be aware of TACBooks and TACSound, two services maintained by Teachers' Association Canada (TAC). You can look at their catalogues on the TAC web site www.tac-rscds.org. If you want to order any items, please do it via the Branch Librarian, as there are discounts available to Branches, but not to individuals.



Scottish Country Dance Ghillies and Pumps

www.avriel.com Shoe shop for dancers.

Clan Info and Scottish Shop

www.scotclans.com

SCD Online

In case you didn't know about these sites:

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Edinburgh, Scotland: <https://www.rscds.org>

A great site to link to other branches and everything in the world of Scottish Country Dancing.

[The Inter-City Scot](#) - lists events across Canada and the United States. For other parts of the world, use the link to SCD groups on the Strathspey site www.strathspey.org to find contact information.

Strathspey www.strathspey.org has a database where you can search for info about dances (including cribs and videos when available), music (some clips), people and more. Also, there is a link to the Strathspey e-mail list, in case you'd like to join an online mailing list about SCD.

SCD Dictionary www.scottish-country-dancing-dictionary.com has info about steps and formations.

We don't really need that, we get it in our classes; however, sometimes a video may help, and SCD dictionary has videos for steps and formations. Also, there is info about dances, as on Strathspey.

Some Out of Town Events

If you have an internet connection, browse for RSCDS & city. For instance RSCDS Toronto hosts workshops and monthly dances and has links to dancing events all over the world. Almost every city in Canada has an RSCDS group. Many have a Facebook site as well.

July 2021 - Virtual TAC Summer School, Calgary AB

And a bit further/farther off for planning:

Sept 25 - Oct 2, 2022 - Australian Winter School 2022: Originally Scheduled for Sept 2020
<https://winterschool2020.com>

Unfortunately, dance branches and groups are waiting to see how dancing might resume.

L&A Submissions

Next L&A: May

Members are encouraged to submit articles, pictures or information of interest to Branch members. Submissions for the *Light and Airy* can be sent to the Branch e-mail address: info@rscdswinnipeg.ca or to the editor at Douglas.Durnin@umr.umanitoba.ca Deadline for submissions: April 10. This and past issues of *Light and Airy* are available at: www.rscdswinnipeg.ca