

Introduction ... A Short History of Scottish Country Dancing

At the BC Highland Games held each June, two demonstrations take place. One is a polished performance by the Vancouver Branch Demonstration Team. The team's Director creates



*Vancouver Branch Demonstration Team
BC Highland Games 2008
Photo Stuart Somerville*

a program of dances with choreographed links between them, and the dancers work to refine their individual technique as well as their teamwork. The final performance is stunning, with everyone dressed in bright costumes and moving in unison. It is a wonderful display of intricate, interweaving dance patterns set to music.

The other demonstration is less polished. Participants are dressed in everyday clothes and the dance are easy and often familiar. The dancing is not always elegant, but it is joyful. This is known as the "Massed Demonstration," rather euphemistically these days as the numbers of dancers have declined over the years. It aims to show the audience that everyone can participate in Scottish country dancing. It also demonstrates the truth of the current slogan of the RSCDS: Fun, Fitness, and Friendship.



Massed Demonstration, BC Highland Games 2007

These contrasting views of dancing – on the one hand, dance as a discipline; on the other, dance as an expression of community – lie in our heritage. As we shall see in this brief account of SCD history, the two do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Early Country Dancing

The earliest known dances of the British Isles are communal, danced in a line or circle where everyone is equal.



A medieval "carole" or chain dance

In sixteenth-century England some such dances became known as "country dances," with rural names like *Jenny Pluck Pears* and *Gathering Peascods*. Queen Elizabeth I enjoyed watching them during her "progresses" through the country. They became popular at her court because they were fresh and exuberant, and probably also because they appealed to a Queen who gloried in her nationalism. A late sixteenth-century courtier's diary entry runs, "We are frolic here in Court; much dancing in the privy chamber of Country dances before the Queen's Majesty who is exceedingly pleased therewith."

When country dancing moved to the court, it met another attitude towards dancing which was highly influential in Europe from the time of the Renaissance. This saw dancing as an essential part of education. By refining and controlling their movements, young people proved they were eligible for social advancement. Graceful dancing was also thought to foster balance and maturity of mind. Young gentlemen learned the arts of dancing, fencing, and riding, sometimes from the same instructor!

The country dance soon entered this world of polite manners and dancing masters, as the title of its first published book of instructions shows. John Playford's *The English Dancing Master: Or Plain and Easy Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances* appeared in 1651. Some of Playford's titles sound rural, but others, like *Step Stately* and *Gray's Inn Mask*, suggest that the dances had moved up the social scale. In his Preface, Playford reminds his readers how good dancing is for them morally and intellectually. All 105 of his dances are group dances based on figures. They include rounds for six or eight, squares for four or eight, and longways dances for six, eight, or "as many as will." Many terms we still use, like "lead," "cast," and "hands round," occur in this book.

The English Dancing Master :

O R,
Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to each Dance.



L O N D O N,
Printed by Thomas Harper, and are to be sold by John Playford, at his Shop in the Inner
Temple neere the Church doore. 1651.

Playford's title page

The growing popularity of country dancing led to seventeen more editions of Playford's book. In them, the form of the country dance became more narrowly defined and less communal. The round and square dances were dropped, leaving only the longways set, which fitted the long dance hall rather than the village green. The sets now had a "top," occupied by the couple of highest rank.

English country dancing soon became fashionable in France, where it acquired the elegance of the French courtly style and resulting social prestige. In England in the eighteenth century, country dancing was all the rage. Many towns and cities had assembly rooms where only the genteel were admitted and behaviour was controlled by strict rules of etiquette. For example, gentlemen could invite ladies to dance only after they were formally introduced, and ladies could not refuse an invitation

and then accept a better partner. So country dancing was no longer free and easy, but part of a status-conscious ritual. Eventually, as we see in the novels of Jane Austen, it became a way of showing one's desirability as a marriage partner.



Section of title page, Thompson's Compleat Collection of 200 Favourite Country Dances (London 1780)

Hundreds of collections of the “newest” and “latest” dances appeared, offering up-to-the-moment descriptions of the country dances most fashionable at the Court, Bath, etc. Paradoxically, though, there is a sameness about the dances in these collections. Virtually all follow a standard pattern of 32 bars, with a relatively small number of figures arranged and rearranged. The aesthetic they express is one of order and symmetry, and their music consists of matched A and B phrases. They are like Pope's heroic couplets, without his genius.

Country Dancing Comes to Scotland

After the political union of 1707, the fashion for country dancing spread to English-speaking Scotland. It brought assembly rooms, dancing masters, and pointed toes. While country dancing in England began as the dancing of ordinary people, by the time it arrived in Scotland “country dancing” was a misnomer, and it was essentially the dancing of aristocrats.

The earliest known Scottish manuscripts of country dances were written in the 1730s for the landed gentry. The high prestige of the dance is conveyed by Writing Master David Young's elaborate manuscript for the young Duke of Perth,

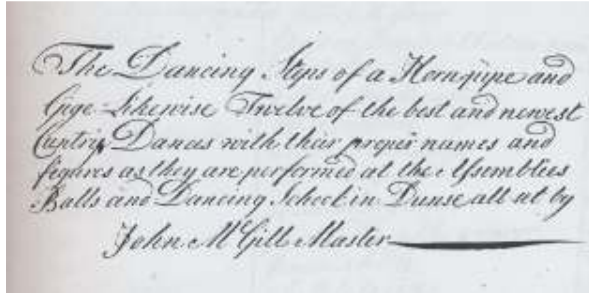
who had just returned from exile in France, and whose support for Bonnie Prince Charlie was to lead to his early death. Young wrote a second collection of the “newest” country dances for the Edinburgh Assembly in 1740. A musician himself, Young provided music for each dance in settings for violin. The Edinburgh Assembly was run by eminently respectable “lady directresses,” and this probably helped win over Calvinists who had been sure that dancing was an invention of the Devil.



A dance from David Young's MS "A Collection of the newest Country Dances Perform'd in Scotland," 1740

Gradually, country dancing caught on throughout Scotland. By the middle eighteenth century, assembly rooms and dancing schools had sprung up in other Scottish towns. A manuscript written in about 1750 by John McGill, dancing master in Dunse, describes the country dances he taught and lists the tunes he used, as well as giving the first surviving descriptions of solo step dances. McGill uses Scots words to describe some movements. “Cleek” means to turn one's partner, for example, and “oxter” (literally “armpit”) is a tight arm grip. This is everyday language for ordinary Scots people!

So country dancing was becoming part of the broader Scottish culture. Through its music, too, it took on the vigour and excitement of the dance described by Burns in “Tam o’ Shanter”: “They reel’d, they set, they cross’d, they cleekit . . .” By 1775 Burns himself, a farmer’s son, was attending a country dancing school “to give my manners a brush.”



*Title page of McGill MS
Courtesy of RSCDS Archive*

How Scottish were the dances themselves? Most of the dance figures in Scotland were taken over from the English country dance, but the dances became “Scottish” through their music. Many were set to Scottish tunes, both popular song tunes (like *Ranting Highlandman*) and pipe reels transcribed for the fiddle (like *Caberfeidh* and *Tullochgorum*). At the Aberdeen assembly in the late eighteenth century, Alexander Jaffray wrote, “country dances were kept up with great spirit to the lively Scotch tunes, and formed a most agreeable amusement, free from ceremony, every one on terms of intimacy.” Things were no longer so stiff and starchy.

The Reels

Reel tunes had originally been used for another form of social dancing popular throughout Scotland: the reel in which dancers alternately set and travelled, often in a figure-eight pattern. The style of the reel seems to have been as lively as its strongly rhythmic music. A 1774 visitor to Edinburgh, Captain Edward Topham, described the effect of this music on the Edinburgh ladies: “. . . Up they start, animated with new life, and you would imagine they had been bit by a tarantula.”

Reel steps were intricate and the dancers improvised at will. The figures of the threesome reel (the middle dancer setting to and turning dancers on either side, then dancing a reel of three with them) reappeared in many of the country dances recorded in the eighteenth-century Scottish manuscripts – another element that gave a Scottish character to the country dances.

Until recently, the reel has been perceived as a dance indigenous to Scotland and transmitted orally: a prime example of a communal dance. Francis Peacock, official town dancing master in Aberdeen, helped to shape this view. In his book of 1805, Peacock described his summer trips into the Highlands where he observed reels, including one danced by two young girls and a shepherd boy. Observing their deft footwork, Peacock concluded that an aptitude for dancing was innate to Highlanders. Other writers and painters of this period also prized the naturalness and spontaneity of the reel. The dancers in David Allan’s painting below, for example, move freely and joyfully within a natural, mountainous landscape.



David Allan, A Highland Dance, c.1780

However, this Romantic view of the reel has recently been questioned by the scholar Michael Newton. He cites Gaelic texts to support his view that reels with their intricate footwork were introduced to Scotland by dancing masters at the great houses of the clan chiefs. They may have originated on the Continent, as the weaving “hey” pattern is recorded in much earlier dances. Only after the breakdown of the clan system did reels become the dances of the common people.

So whereas country dancing was first based on communal participation but later became a display of graceful manners, exactly the opposite process may have occurred with the reel. It was the reel of the post-Culloden Highlands which crossed the Atlantic with the Cape Breton settlers and survived as a dance form based on participation and improvisation.

The liveliness and Romantic associations of reels made them popular throughout Britain in the early nineteenth century. Some London dancing masters like Thomas Wilson were ambivalent about reels: he taught them and even devised new ones, but he warned his students against unseemly spontaneous behaviour:

Snapping the fingers, in country dancing and in reels, the sudden howl or yell so frequently practised, ought particularly to be avoided, as partaking too much of the customs of barbarous

nations . . . and by no means suited to the Ball-Room.

In his frontispiece below, Wilson showed the contrast between the vigorous reelers dancing to the piper, with their raised arms and high stepping, and the demure, elegant country dancers pointing their toes in the background.

Another result of the Romantic movement was an interest in Scottish tunes and Scottish musicians in England. Niel Gow’s band played at Almack’s assembly in London, “the seventh heaven of the fashionable world” (Gronow, qtd. in Emerson 119). The tunes became so popular that many country dances in English collections were set to them and took their Scottish names. Eventually, this provided a fertile hunting-ground for the editors of the early RSCDS books, giving us dances like *The Gates of Edinburgh*, *The White Cockade*, and *The Duke of Atholl’s Reel*.

As Scottish country dancers, then, we are fortunate to have inherited a dance form with hybrid vigour. Take the elegant, restrained country dance of the eighteenth-century ballroom, match it with fast-moving, rousing Scottish music, throw in a few dashes of the vigorous threesome and foursome reels, and we have a dance form which can satisfy the intellect and release the emotions. As Jean Milligan loved to say, ideally it is “controlled abandon.”



Thomas Wilson, Frontispiece to A Companion to the Ball-Room, 1816

The Nineteenth Century and the Dancies

In nineteenth-century Scotland, dancing was still taught as a discipline essential for polite behavior, but it also played a central part in social life. It was both beneficial and fun.

While the dancing masters of earlier centuries taught only the privileged classes, now almost all young people took dancing lessons which included instruction in social etiquette. Their teachers, affectionately known as “dancies,” must have been a familiar sight as they walked or cycled throughout their region, often carrying their fiddle. They offered classes wherever they could attract enough pupils, in towns, villages, and even on farms.

We can glimpse the country dances of 1805 in a manuscript recording the dances taught by a dancie in his regular visits to Blantyre Farm, south of Glasgow. Another manuscript, written by Frederick Hill in 1841, records step dances and country dances taught by travelling masters in Alford, Aberdeenshire.

Although Hill, a young tailor, cannot spell the French words used by his master (he writes “paddy vass” for “pas de basque”), such young people were serious enough about their dancing to write down and study the dances. Hill was in good company, as we have seen in the case of Robert Burns. Even farm lads learned courtly behaviour with its roots far back in medieval chivalry.



“Triumph” as described by Hill

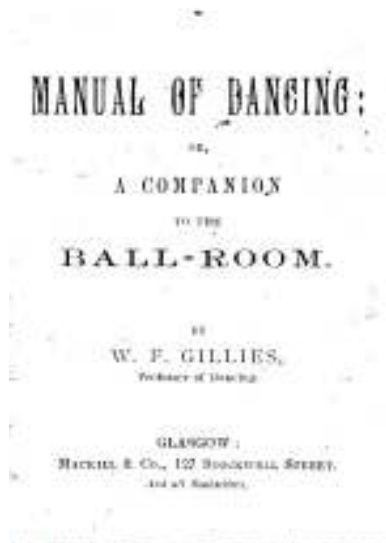
Dancing enlivened social occasions like weddings, kirns or harvest festivals, and hiring fairs in the rural Lowlands. Regular public dances were held in towns and villages, and landlords gave balls for their tenants. In the Highlands, people danced at ceilidhs and even outdoors on moonlit nights. The dancies began by teaching their students to keep time with their feet. The distinctive quality of Scottish dancing, in fact, was a strongly marked rhythm which matched the excitement of the music. The atmosphere is conveyed by this description of a kirk at Harviestoun in 1813 by Charlotte, Lady Wake:

Fast and faster still, each foot kept that wonderful time, of which none who has not witnessed real Scottish dancing can form the faintest idea . . . every limb answers to the marvellous music of the Scottish reel and Highland strathspey. Feet stamping, fingers snapping, eyes as it were on fire, heads thrown back, while shouts mark the crisis of the dance – it must have been seen to be imagined.

The dancies taught country dances, quadrilles, reels, and solo step dances. Quadrilles shared their ancestry with country dances, having developed from English country dances exported to France. After 1815, they re-crossed the Channel and arrived in England and Scotland. So quadrille figures like grand chain and ladies’ chain were incorporated into the country dance. In the larger towns and cities especially, masters also taught the newer couple dances: the waltz, polka, galop, and schottische. In England, these eclipsed the country dance, which survived only in remoter parts of the countryside.

However, a small but stable repertoire of country dances survived in Scotland. *Circassian Circle*, *Petronella*, *Triumph*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Duke of Perth*, *Blue Bonnets*, *Mrs. MacLeod*, *Meg Merrilees*, and *Merry Lads of Ayr* appear over and over in the pocket-sized manuals published between the 1820s and World War 1. *Duke of Perth*, *Mrs. MacLeod*, and *Merry Lads of Ayr* also belong to a small group which some manual writers classify as “Scotch country dances,” on the basis partly of their tunes and partly of their figures. All three include the figure “set to and turn corners” followed by “reel of three with corners,” so similar to the Scottish reel. In contrast,

Petronella and *Triumph* are classified as “English country dances.”



Title page of the manual [c.1880] by W.F. Gillies which includes Glasgow Highlanders

It seems, then, that the country dance, while originally an English import, was set to become traditional in Scotland. The dance *Duke of Perth*, for example, was written down for the Blantyre farming family in 1805. Its tune was recorded much earlier, in David Young’s 1737 manuscript for the grandson of the original Duke of Perth. The dance was published in at least eleven pocket dance manuals. In the late nineteenth century, *Duke of Perth* turns up in the repertoire of dancing masters from several parts of the country. Aristocrats, too, danced it at their Highland Balls.

Scottish “National Dances”

A new, rather self-conscious attitude towards Scottish dance emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The term “national dances” began to be used for reels and for some solo dances. These dances took on an aura of romantic Scottish nationalism, and were believed to stand for elements of the Scottish character like strength and mental resourcefulness. Atkinson (1900) makes this proud statement:

All who know the Scottish National Dances will admit they bear the impress, or are the exponents of a manly, vigorous and healthy people, sound and healthy both in body and mind.

Reels were danced at the balls held in conjunction with Highland Games, those revivals of ancient Highland culture as seen through upper-class Victorian eyes. The wearing of the tartan and the playing of the pipes for dancing reels brought three symbols of Scottishness together. Queen Victoria gave her seal of approval to reels by employing a dancing master to teach them to her own children and even, occasionally, enjoying them herself.

These ceremonial occasions would have their counterparts in the Seaforths’ balls in Vancouver. Because of these symbolic overtones, Highland regiments danced reels as part of their training, and this too would be echoed in early twentieth-century Vancouver. The later nineteenth century saw the development of the *Eightsome Reel*, a fusion of the reel and the quadrille, from within the upper-class culture of the Highland Games and Balls. Books on “Scottish national dances” describe complicated steps which could be used for reels, and at least one writer offered classes focused on the *Eightsome Reel* alone.



Donald Mackenzie, Illustrated Guide to the National Dances of Scotland, 1910, Plate 7

The Early Twentieth Century

Changes in Scottish social structure in the early twentieth century inevitably led to changes in the social dance repertoire. Scotland was becoming more urban and industrialized. Some of the social occasions when people danced (the penny weddings, the kirns, and the rural hiring fairs) dropped out of existence.

Also after the upheaval of World War 1 came an influx of new music and dance styles from overseas. In big cities like Glasgow, young people flocked to commercial ballrooms where they danced the foxtrot and other couple dances inspired by syncopated ragtime rhythms. Dancing was as popular as ever in Scotland – Glasgow had more public ballrooms than any other city in the United Kingdom – but the new dances were based on rhythm rather than set steps, and the French ballet technique with its precise foot positions was no longer relevant.

Similar changes in England led to a deliberate revival of a form of dance which had its roots in earlier tradition: the country dance. In reconstructing country dances for the Folk Dance and Song Society, Cecil Sharp ignored the fashionable country dancing of the eighteenth century and sought to recover the simpler style of the “folk.” He idealized rural life at a time when it was in decline. Sharp collected and published the few dances which still survived in English villages, but he also drew on seventeenth-century printed collections by Playford and others intended for literate urban people.

When they formed the Scottish Country Dance Society in 1923, Jean Milligan and Isobel Stewart were also motivated by cultural nationalism and a reaction against modernism. They felt that insidious new influences, like jazz, were invading Scotland and needed to be repelled. Country dancing, from their point of view, had degenerated into a “romp,” and they wished to restore it as the dancing of the ballroom. So, for example, they replaced linked-arm turns with more decorous turns using only hands.

While the nineteenth-century danciers had been “not too particular” about country dance steps (according to Tom and Joan Flett’s later research), Milligan and Stewart standardized the steps, bringing them closer to the eighteenth-century ballroom style. As only one dance in strathspey tempo, *Glasgow Highlanders*, was still widely known, they were free to invent graceful and mannered strathspey steps. They also stressed ballroom etiquette; here they followed the tradition of nineteenth-century manual writers, who often included “hints” on dress, deportment, and general polite behaviour.



Miss Milligan and Mrs. Stewart in the 1920s
Photo courtesy of RSCDS Archives

In their collections published from 1924 on, Milligan and Stewart published the few surviving country dances, as well as the reels which Mrs. Stewart, a member of the Highland gentry, remembered from attending Highland balls of the kind illustrated on the next page.

Once this had been done, the search for more country dances led Milligan and Stewart to the eighteenth-century manuscripts and to dances with Scottish names published in the English collections. Formations which were no longer danced were standardized according to the SCDS founders’ readings of these sources. Generally, they were tidied up. The pousette, for example, had once consisted of two couples circling round each other in ballroom hold but now became a crisp, square figure with both hands held. Other formations like allemande and double triangles shared only their names with their prototypes.



*Announcement of 1907 "Grand Highland Ball"
attended by Ysobel Campbell, later Mrs. Stewart
Reproduced by Alastair MacFadyen in
An Album for Mrs. Stewart*

The SCDS was a highly serious "movement" to which Jean Milligan devoted her life. Written authority was paramount. Books of dances and music were published regularly and sent to all members, beginning with *Book 1* in 1924 and continuing right through to *Book 49* and beyond.

A system of teacher training also introduced in 1924 ensured that the aims and standards of the founders would be maintained through organized classes. The St. Andrews Summer School, directed by Jean Milligan and first held in 1927, became a mecca to which dancers returned each year to refresh their enthusiasm. Miss Milligan, a Physical Education instructor at Jordanhill College of Education, used her influence to make country dancing a required component of physical education in Scottish schools. Later in her life, Miss Milligan made missionary journeys to many cities, including Vancouver, to encourage people to form branches of the RSCDS.

While Milligan and Stewart were conservative in their outlook, they were very modern women in some ways. In the 1920s women were coming into their own, finally receiving the UK suffrage in 1928. It was natural, then, that many of the early leaders of SCD in both Scotland and Canada should be women, in contrast to the male danciers of the nineteenth century.

While the early RSCDS books contained only dances dating before 1900, an important change took place after World War II when the Society began publishing newly devised dances. One of the first modern devisers was Hugh Foss, a professional code-breaker who had led the Japanese naval section at Bletchley Park. Foss brought his analytical intelligence to bear on the figures of the country dance, conceiving new patterns based on the older ones and bringing new complexity and interest to the dance. Foss dances like *Polharrow Burn* are still enjoyed today.

Foss was followed by others, including Hugh Thurston, also a Cambridge mathematician and junior member of the Bletchley Park team. While the early SCD movement in Vancouver owed everything to Mrs Bingham (our equivalent to Jean Milligan), Thurston's arrival in Vancouver in 1958 ensured that we also had an equivalent to Hugh Foss.



*Hugh Foss (left) in the 1940s dancing The
Hebridean Weaving Lilt, collected by Mary
Isdale MacNab of Vancouver
Photo courtesy of London Branch Archives*

One ... Scottish Country Dancing in Vancouver, 1930–1964

Scots in Vancouver

The Scots dominated the business and politics of early Vancouver. They were also highly organized. So many Scottish societies existed by the 1930s that an annual *Directory* was published to keep track of them. These societies aimed to provide camaraderie, promote the business interests of their members, help immigrants from Scotland who had fallen on hard times, and “extend a welcome to strangers” in traditional Highland fashion. Membership was often limited to immigrants from a particular region of Scotland.

The Scottish societies combined nostalgia with pragmatism. The Lochnagar Camp of the Sons of Scotland, for example, aimed “to cultivate fond memories of Scotland.” However, it also offered insurance and sickness benefits to its members. The advertisements in the *Scots Directory* for 1935–36 (which listed 27 organizations) show their close connection with the business enterprises of Vancouver. The editor appeals to patriotic loyalty in asking readers to patronize the businesses owned by their fellow Scots:

Help yourself . . . and the Scots Directory by patronizing those advertisers whose loyal support make publication of this handy little guide possible. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

One prestigious club, to which the first Mayor of Vancouver belonged, was the all-male St. Andrews and Caledonian Society. This Society sponsored annual “Caledonian Games” at Brockton Point from 1893. The first Games displayed only masculine prowess in dancing, piping, and athletics. The *Vancouver Daily News Advertiser* reported, “The dancing was particularly good, and brought out the best men in the Province” (13 August 1893). Women were cast in the role of spectators, “the true worshippers of strength and manliness.” However, by the following year, “there was dancing by young girls as well as by the gentlemen” (*Vancouver Daily*

World, 13 August 1894). Two years later, according to Eric Heath, women were allowed to compete against men in the sword dance and hornpipe events, both of which were won by women. Perhaps as a result, the organizers decided to segregate future competition by gender.



Girl competitors at the Highland Games, c.1918
Photo courtesy of Vancouver City Archives

In fact, by the early decades of the twentieth century, many leading teachers and performers of Highland dancing in Vancouver were women. Prominent among them was Mary Isdale MacNab, who ran a successful dancing school and also founded the Vancouver Ladies’ Pipe Band in 1927. From 1929, her young pipers and dancers regularly provided entertainment for the St Andrews and Caledonian Society at their meetings, and she would also play a leading role in the SCD movement.

The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada regiment was founded in November 1910 by members of St. Andrews and Caledonian Society, at the suggestion of the Vancouver Pipers’ Society. These affluent Scots funded the Seaforths as a visible symbol both of their Scottish culture and of their patriotic loyalty to the British Empire. The regiment was created and named to carry on the tradition of Highland regiments, famed for their prowess in battle and for their success in defending the Empire. Kilts, badges, marching songs, and most of all the regiment’s pipe band

strengthened bonds of loyalty within the regiment and enhanced its public appeal. The Seaforths served heroically in both world wars and became a source of pride to Vancouver; a huge number of people filled the downtown area to welcome them back after World War II.



Parade of Seaforth Highlanders returning from overseas, 7 October 1945

Photo courtesy of Vancouver City Archives

After 1918, the Seaforths' pipe band was led by Pipe-Major John Gillies, a distinguished piper who had commanded the massed pipe bands at the funeral of King Edward VII. Under his leadership, the band was recognized as one of the finest in Canada. Gillies, too, would play a role in the early Scottish country dance organization.



Seaforth Highlanders' Pipe Band, May 1935

Photo courtesy of Vancouver City Archives

Training in the Seaforths included classes in Highland dancing, as its energy and discipline were believed to foster qualities of strength and vigour. The program of the 1931 "Grand Military Tournament" held by the Seaforths to raise money carries this note:

Classes in Highland dancing are a part of the training given in the Seaforths and every facility is offered to become proficient in the Foursome, Eightsome, Highland Schottische and other Highland dances. There are few dances which provide the opportunity for the full exercise of the dance as the Highland interpretation of it and the exhilarating feeling of the reel must be experienced to be really appreciated. Possibly one of the oldest existing forms of the dance is exhibited tonight in the ancient Reel o' Tulloch.

Actually the Reel of Tulloch is a nineteenth-century dance, but the claim of great age created an important link between "ancient" Scotland and modern Vancouver. In the same program, the sword dance is introduced in this way:

This is possibly one of oldest forms of any dance in existence. The martial ardor and fiery spirit of the Gael are here portrayed as he dances over his unsheathed sword. The dancer Piper MacHardy is well known as one of the premier Highland dancers on the Pacific coast and is in possession of . . . medals for his art . . .

Civic pride and patriotic loyalty must both have been gratified.

Social Dancing in Vancouver

In early Vancouver, social dancing was both a popular diversion and a means by which groups linked either by their occupation or by a common interest built solidarity and displayed their group identity. The City of Vancouver Archives has records of balls held, among others, by the BC Clerks' Association (1892), the Canadian Navigators' Federation (1922), the Canadian Merchant Service Guild (1925), the BC Telegraph Company (1930), and the Hudson Bay Company (250th anniversary of the HBC, 1920).

Balls were also held by charitable organizations, like the Infants' Hospital Auxiliary Ball (1930) and the Firemen's Benefit Association, which held many balls at the Hotel Vancouver. These events had patriotic overtones, if the prominence of the Union Jack in their decorations is anything to go by. This of course was especially true in war time. In 1917 the BC Commercial Travellers held a "War Dance" in aid of the Red Cross, and their program "extol[led] the virtues and leading industries of the City of Vancouver."

Other balls were intended for more exclusive groups, like the Naval Officers' Ball (1921) or the Military Ball (1930), or for people who shared a common origin or interest, for example the Govanites Society (1930) and the Hadassah Bazaar (1930). Large group photographs were often taken at these balls probably to strengthen the sense of group identity.



Flags bedeck Hotel Vancouver for the Military Institute Ball, 1922

Photo courtesy of Vancouver City Archives

As one would expect, the dances on the ball programs were drawn from an international repertoire of popular dances as published in the European and North American manuals of the period. They included waltzes, Lancers, sometimes "round dances" like the schottische, Jersey, Carmencita, polka, and two-step. Schottisches, despite their name, were not specifically Scottish; the two schottisches on the program of the Vancouver Fireman's Benefit Association first annual ball in 1899 were not danced to Scottish music. Several Lancers (danced, like other quadrilles, in sets of eight) appeared on typical pre-1914 programs. However,

they disappeared after World War 1. In the 1920s, waltzes were still repeated up to nine times in a single program, but other round dances like the polka fell out of fashion, and fox trots became as common as waltzes.



*Hudson's Bay Co. Masquerade Dance,
4 November 1920*

Photo courtesy of Vancouver City Archives

The locations listed on the various dance programs in the Archives suggest that Vancouver may have rivaled Glasgow in its number of public ballrooms. With a population of about 200,000 in 1920, Vancouver had the Peter Pan Ballroom, the White Rose Ballroom, the Crystal Ballroom, Lester Court, Cinderella Hall, Alexandra Ballroom, from 1929 the surviving Commodore Ballroom, and probably many more. A headline in the 28 October 1931 *Province* runs, "Dances Lead in Popularity as Form of Winter Entertainment." On 30 October 1931 alone, dances held by eight different organizations were publicized in the newspaper. On 18 April 1931 the Hospital Auxiliary Ball was attended by the King of Siam, and (reported *The Province*) "the social world emerged glorified."

In addition, some groups came together just for the sake of dancing. A group called the Mountaineers' Terpsichorean Club was active between 1902 and 1919. In the 1890s, several groups specialized in

dancing quadrilles or dances in square sets: the Vancouver Central Quadrille Club, Mt. Pleasant Quadrille Club, Social Quadrille Club, and Burrard Social Quadrille Club. These must have been the precursors of modern square dance groups, and they apparently had their counterparts in the late nineteenth-century Glasgow, as a manuscript preserved in the Strathclyde Regional Archives gives instructions for 54 square-set dances including *Clutha*.

Dancing among Vancouver Scots: St Andrews and Caledonian Society

Probably the first fraternal group to hold a ball in Vancouver was the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society, the year after the city was founded. Chuck Davis describes this auspicious occasion:

The St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society of Vancouver was formed in 1886, the same year the city was. Here's a startling statistic: On St. Andrew's Day, November 30, 1887, the society held a grand St. Andrew's Ball in McDonald's Hall at the southeast corner of Hastings and Columbia. Of the 1,000 or so people who lived in Vancouver at the time, 400 attended. In a rainstorm.

Scots were the dominant ethnic group in early Vancouver, and like the Scottish gentry who attended Highland Balls and the London Caledonian Ball, they liked to put themselves on display and celebrate patriotic values at the same time.

The Society's Minutes describe the ball held on New Year's Eve 1916 in glowing terms:

Never in Vancouver's history has there been such a brilliant assemblage of citizens at a ball as on that night. Vancouver's social leaders were there,

in all their beauty and sartorial splendor. Scots people from Vancouver and outside were there and with pipers . . . led off the Grand March.

The dance programs for the St. Andrews balls were eclectic. Dances from the international ballroom repertoire rubbed shoulders with dances expressing Scottish heritage and performed to Scottish tunes. Waltzes appeared many times, and up to about 1908 the Lancers were equally popular. By then, Two-Steps and Three-Steps were just as numerous. Interspersed with these dances were Scotch Reels, Caledonian Quadrilles, and Highland Schottisches. While a seven-piece band played for the ballroom dances in 1894, a piper played for the reels. The tunes were a mixture of the traditional and the fashionable: "Jenny's Baubee" and "The Keel Row" for the Highland Schottische, but "Blue Danube," "Dreamland," and "Visions of Paradise" for the waltzes. In 1908, "Hang out the Front Door Key," "Persian Lamb-Rag," and "Pride of the Prairie" were played for two-steps.

Like the ball programs, the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society itself blended nostalgic patriotism with enthusiasm for progress. One of its objects was "the encouragement of the national spirit by means of games, gatherings and festivals, and the cultivation of a taste for Scottish music and literature." Official Pipers and Standard Bearers were appointed; the society might be seen on the streets of Vancouver marching "as a body" to church, a public equivalent of the Grand Marches of the balls. In relation to the city, the society identified itself with the forces of progress and development. A *Vancouver Sun* headline of 23 January 1921 reads "Vancouver Scotsmen Muster behind Banner of St. Andrew in Steady Drive for Civic Development" and continues "The Scottish stalwarts who carried the St. Andrew's banner are the same pioneers who have done so much to make our city what it is today."



Vancouver Sun headline, 1921

However, the Society's Scottish patriotism was sentimentally archaic in tone. They appointed a Bard who celebrated their occasions in imitation eighteenth-century Scots stanzas, and the victors in a ceremonial tug of war with the St. George Society in 1891 received a "unanimous and hearty cheer" as "thanks and congratulations were extended to the brave sturdy Scottish chieftains" who had upheld "the honour and good name of Scotland." This loyalty to a mythic Scotland of the past was quite compatible with the celebration of British imperialism, with the word "patriotic" carrying a wide range of meaning in the Society's minutes, and words like "noble" and "brotherly" often used.

The dancing of Scottish reels, symbolic of their Scottish identity, seems to have been a ceremonial expression of nostalgic patriotism for members of the Society, despite a comment quoted by Chuck Davis on the 1887 ball: "What the majority of the dancers did not know about a Scotch reel would fill a Gaelic prayer book." The Society minutes imply that members were prone to break into spontaneous reels when excited by patriotic enthusiasm. After a joint meeting of the Vancouver St. Andrews and Caledonian Society and the new St. Andrews and Caledonian Society of New Westminster on 27 August 1898, "The skirl of the bagpipes brought several members to their feet and Reels and other Scottish dances were indulged in" until the meeting adjourned "at the stroke of 12 and Sunday morning approaching."

The Scottish Society

The group who took the name "Scottish Society," however, had a different aim. They were more interested in a systematic study of Scottish culture and literature through a program of lectures. They also differed from the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society in having Scottish music used for all the dances at their annual ball. On Monday 11 February 1924, the second annual dance of the Scottish Society was held at Alexandra Hall. The Grand March was led by Pipe-Major Gillies of the Seaforth's, and then W.W. Robertson's Orchestra played well-known Scottish tunes for a program consisting of five waltzes, four fox trots, one reel, two quadrilles, two one-steps, Lancers, and a

Highland Schottische. This ball also included a display of Highland dancing by Mary Isdale MacNab's dancers – but no country dances.

However, this was to change after the Scottish Society sponsored a "Scottish Country Dance Recital" at the Hotel Vancouver on 24 October 1930. (This was the second Hotel Vancouver, which stood at Georgia and Granville until 1949.) The recital consisted of a program of dances combined with a lecture. The nine dances were drawn from the first six books published by the Scottish Country Dance Society in Scotland: *The Princess Royal*, *The Nut*, *La Tempete*, *Waltz Country Dance*, *Sixteensome Reel*, *The Queen's Welcome*, *Duke of Perth*, *Ninesome Reel*, and *Haymakers*. The music was played by pianist Nettie Wilson, who as Mrs. Nettie Stuart was still playing for dancing thirty years later.

The lecturer at this recital was a recent immigrant from Scotland, Mrs. Thomas Bingham. As Ella Thompson in Glasgow she had known Miss Milligan; in a surviving letter Miss Milligan refers to roles Ella had played in the theatre and the "plays in which she shone." Daughter of a school principal, Ella had received a formidable education, graduating from the University of Glasgow in Latin, Mathematics, French, Moral Philosophy, German, Logic and Metaphysics, and English. (On only one graduation certificate is she given her formal name, Isabella.) The year she left Scotland for Vancouver, 1924, had also seen the publication of the first SCDS book by Jean Milligan and Ysobel Stewart.



Ella Thompson

Photo courtesy of Kristin Shoolbraid

From 1930 on, Mrs. Bingham devoted her considerable ability and energy to establishing Scottish country dancing in Vancouver. She was at once teacher, organizer, and publicist. In many ways, her talents mirrored those of Miss Milligan in Scotland. Those like Hugh Thurston who knew Mrs. Bingham were to remember her high degree of “resolution and persistence” (*The Thistle* 8).

Five days after the recital at the Hotel Vancouver, on Wednesday 29 October 1930, eight of its participants met at the Bingham’s home on Harwood Street. This meeting paralleled the small 1923 meeting in Glasgow from which grew the SCDS. A temporary Vancouver SCD committee was formed, and eighteen people met again on 1 November 1930. A permanent committee was then elected, including Mrs. Bingham as President, Helen Crawford (another recent Scottish immigrant) as Secretary-Treasurer, Andrew Reid, David Suttie, and Thomas Stark.

The group’s first working by-law created charter members, and leaves no doubt about the seriousness of their enterprise:

That those ladies and gentlemen who had taken part in the demonstration of Scottish country dancing at the Hotel Vancouver on Friday October 24, 1930, should be accepted as charter members in recognition of the work they had done in introducing the SCDS and its work to the public of Vancouver and to the province generally.

They are then listed: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bingham, Misses Nancy and Margaret Clark, Miss Helen Crawford, Mr. John Crawford, Miss Mary Hood, Mr. William Hood, Mr. Allan Menzies, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Reid, Mr. and Mrs. William Riddell, Miss Nan Runcie, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stark, and Mr. and Mrs. David Suttie.

Many of these people were active in other Scottish organizations as well. Miss Mary Hood was the pianist for the Scottish Society. Thomas Stark donated medals for Caledonian Games competitions, including the silver medal for the Sailor’s Hornpipe in 1937. Andrew Reid was a professional caterer. He knew how to mix business with pleasure, as his advertisement in the 1935–36

Scots Directory shows: “Andrew Reid wants to meet the convenors of the Scottish societies before making final arrangements for their parties, etc.” He catered successfully for SCD functions. William Fiddes, who joined with his wife Kathleen in 1931, was a sergeant in the Seaforths.

A much later comment by Mary Wattum, another early member of the group, shows how engaged the Bingham’s themselves became in the life of Vancouver soon after their arrival in 1924. According to Mary, Thomas Bingham, a shipping agent, served on the building committee for the new St. Andrews Wesley Church. This was a product of the merger of St. Andrews Presbyterian and Wesley Methodist Church when the United Church of Canada was formed. The photograph below shows the high profile of the new church.



Laying of the foundation stone, St. Andrews Wesley Church, 1 July 1931

Photo courtesy of Vancouver City Archives

Mrs. Bingham, Mary writes, was “never one to sit idly by,” and while the Vancouver SCD group was small, their plans were ambitious. At the November 1930 meeting, Mrs. Bingham “put forward the proposal that a Branch of the SCDS be formed in BC.” Constitutions were drafted both for a provincial organization and for the Vancouver group which would be its first local unit. The first draft of the provincial constitution dates from 1 April 1931:

1. The name shall be the SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.



*Mrs. Bingham's early dance group, with dancers wearing heeled shoes.
The Bingham's face each other at front right.*

2. The objects of the Society shall be:

- a. To preserve and further the benefits of traditional Scottish Country Dances in accordance with the official instructions issued by the Scottish Country Dance Society with which this society is affiliated;*
- b. To promote and encourage the formation of groups throughout BC, such groups to be associated or affiliated with the Provincial Society;*
- c. To provide or assist in providing special education or instruction in the practices of Scottish Country Dances;*
- d. To procure, for the purpose of use or distribution, from the parent society all official publications relating to Country Dances, also, if required, all official gramophone or other musical records.*

The provincial society was to be administered by an Executive Council to which the local groups could all appoint one member for every 16 of their own members. While this provincial organization was not actually formed until 1932, it was envisaged from the outset.

The constitution of the Vancouver group began with this statement:

1. The membership of the group shall consist of an equal number of men and women, all single applications being accepted in order of receipt.

The minutes of the group's committee show that this provision was strictly enforced. In those days, women did not need to dance as "men."

The formal announcement of the first season of dancing issued by the Secretary, Helen Couper Crawford, stresses the group's systematic approach to the study of the dances:

British Columbia Branch (Vancouver) of the Scottish Country Dance Society

A branch of the Country Dance Society of Scotland has been formed under the above title with the aim of studying, practicing and reviving the beautiful Scottish National Dances which were in danger of being allowed to die out.

The Scottish Country Dance Society, whose work in re-introducing these dances to the modern ballroom of the Old Country has been attended with great success, has already issued six books, containing diagrams, instructions and music for 72 dances – for which gramophone records have also been made – for the use of their branches. With these accepted authorities for the dances and music as the basis for instruction the executive committee has made arrangements for the members to meet at the Vanderpant Galleries, 1216 Robson Street, on alternate Saturday evenings during the Winter season, commencing December 6th at 8 p.m., at which the various steps will be taught to those unfamiliar with them, new dances introduced and old ones revived for those others to whom Scottish dancing is already known.

The Vancouver group was recognized in Scotland as a branch of the SCDS, as a report to the Society AGM in 1931 states: “New branches have been formed during the year in Angus, in Lochaber and at Vancouver, BC.”

Alliance with the Seaforths

From the beginning, Mrs. Bingham’s group was closely allied with the Seaforth Regiment, and the connection must have helped the SCD group gain public visibility. Scottish sartorial nationalism was blazoned forth at the Seaforths’ annual balls, rivalling the splendid display of the Caledonian Balls in London. Here, for example, is the *Province* report of the ball for 28 November 1930:

At the base of the raised platform, reserved for an excellent orchestra, the cougar [sic] and regimental trophies were displayed, surmounted by the stag’s head, while the skirl of the pipes, played by Pipe-Major John Gillies for the grand march and reels and schottisches, thrilled not only the Scots but apparently all the many guests. The event was graced by the presence of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor . . . The tartan kilts, the red and white tunics, the glitter of gold lace and service medals vied in colouring and set off to advantage the many beautiful gowns worn by the feminine guests, and during the dancing the ballroom floor resembled a great kaleidoscopic picture.

This ball of 1930 included a dance which dated only from the late nineteenth century yet had become more popular than any other on the programs of Highland balls in Scotland: the *Eightsome Reel*. However, the Seaforths were dancing it for the first time. An announcement in *The Province* for 24 November 1930 reads, “Always a special feature of the Seaforths are a foursome reel and schottische, and supplementing them this year will be an eightsome reel. Practices for these events have been held for some months in regimental headquarters.” Sergeant Fiddes is mentioned among those in charge of arrangements, and Mrs. Bingham almost certainly led the practices.

The Seaforths showed their respect for Mrs Bingham by inviting her to dance in the same *Eightsome* set as the Lieutenant-Governor of BC, the Honorable Randolph Bruce (a Scottish-born former mine owner). Pre-arranged, hierarchically ordered sets were also a feature of the *Eightsome Reels* which opened the London Caledonian balls. (Lord James Stewart Murray, early President of the SCDS, was often the first man in the first set.) Mrs. Bingham’s executive responded with appropriate gratitude to this honour, passing this motion on 2 December 1930:

That our appreciation of the courtesy shown to us by the Seaforth Highlanders in inviting our President Mrs. Bingham to dance in the same eightsome reel as the Honorable Randolph Bruce, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of British Columbia, be here recorded.

Bruce was also invited to become Patron of the Vancouver SCD group.

Mrs. Bingham’s group took every opportunity to gain publicity. They issued press releases. They gave many demonstrations throughout the 1930s, often including Foursome, Eightsome, and Sixteensome Reels (“National” dances rather than country dances in the narrower sense) accompanied by the Seaforths Pipe-Majors John Gillies and Ed Esson, Gillies’ successor. In return, the pipers were given honorary membership in Mrs. Bingham’s organization. The prestige of the Seaforths probably did much for the SCD cause.



Mrs. Bingham (2nd from left in 2nd row) and other dancers dressed for a demonstration, flanked by Seaforth officers. Likely date 1937–38, shortly after the ladies adopted uniform white dresses

Mrs. Bingham had a sense of cultural mission like that of Miss Milligan and Mrs. Stewart in Scotland, seven years earlier. They had revived traditional dancing at a time of rapidly changing dance fashions precipitated by the end of World War I. In the Vancouver of 1930, too, the pace of change was rapid. Social dancing was becoming more and more popular. According to the *Sunday Province* for 19 October 1930, “Dances are becoming an increasingly popular form of

entertainment among fraternal groups in the city” (“Club News of Interest to Women”).

However, the old, staid dances were falling out of fashion. The “Van Swagger” comic strips reproduced below were syndicated and not specific to Vancouver, but they do convey the mixed excitement and suspicion with which people responded to the new dance styles in the early 30s.





Cartoons in The Province for 1, 15, and 22 November 1930

Mrs. Bingham at the Helm

Social pleasure was not at the forefront of Mrs. Bingham's mind. She set out to make Scottish dancing an integral part of the cultural life of Vancouver, where a significant proportion of the population had Scottish roots. Her group took an earnest approach; the term "work" appears no fewer than seven times in their first set of minutes (2 December 1930), and they liked to refer to the country dance "movement." The aim of the Vancouver Branch, SCD Society of BC as listed in the 1934-35 *Scots Directory* was "To study, practice and revive for social purposes the Scottish National and Country Dances in accordance with

the accepted standard of the SCD Society of Scotland."

An article almost certainly written by Mrs. Bingham which appeared in *The Province* for 5 May 1931 stresses this social purpose: "Scotland has a fine inheritance of folk dances, which until recently were the dances of every class in the community." The writer goes on to describe the newly formed SCD group in Vancouver and its ambitious aim, to be "a means of introducing these Scottish folk dances into the national life of Canada as a part of Canadian folk dance."



Province headline, 1931

Mrs. Bingham made sure her group members kept this purpose in mind: "Mrs. Bingham spoke of the cultural advantages of the movement in keeping alive the traditions of the Folk Dance which would enrich in time, the cultural traditions of the new land" (Minutes of 22 May 1931).

Mrs. Bingham was indefatigable, travelling throughout the area to teach. The efficient interurban railway system of Greater Vancouver was a key factor in the spread of SCD! Eventually, other local groups sprang up: North Vancouver, New Westminster, White Rock, University, and Prince Charles. Mary Wattum, an early member and later benefactor of SCD in Vancouver, saw Mrs. Bingham's energy at first hand:

From late 1929 onwards Mrs. Bingham continued what had become her life's mission, to spread the gospel of Scottish country dancing. Nearly every night of the week she travelled by streetcar . . . to several centres in Vancouver, to North and West Vancouver and to New Westminster, constantly increasing the size of her groups. (St Andrews-Wesley Church News, Dec. 1989)

The organization itself was highly structured and hierarchical. The Vancouver group was followed by a West Vancouver group in April 1931, and these local groups sent delegates to the provincial organization, the Scottish Country Dance Society of BC, which began its meetings by May 1932. The Provincial Executive organized an annual ball.

They also sent letters to Edinburgh for clarification of specific dances and passed the responses on to the local groups, known as "branches." They wrote, "We find in Vancouver that absolute adherence to the published instructions avoids disputes on the part of our older members, many of whom have been taught . . . variations which may have been peculiar to their part of Scotland." Mrs. Ysobel Stewart, Secretary of the SCDS in the early days, answered their queries. On 13 April 1933, for example, she informed them that sets of six couples would be standard in the following season.

The surviving minutes of the Vancouver group run from 1930 to 1941, and show that it too was highly structured. Its list of appointed committees included Press and Publicity, Step Practice and House Practice (with Mrs. Bingham as the sole member of both), Refreshment, Programme, and Membership. Membership was carefully controlled, with new active members approved at each meeting, and others placed on a waiting list to ensure equal numbers of men and women. Even guests at the general (dancing) meetings had to be approved by the committee. "Floor managers" were appointed to keep people in order at dances.

At the Vancouver executive's frequent meetings, details of technique and teaching policy were discussed, and new dances carefully selected to build a systematic repertoire. The dances taught on 6 December 1930, for example, were *Petronella*, *Triumph*, *Prince of Orange*, and *Waltz Country Dance*, all published by the SCDS.

These early members were perfectionists. Dances were prepared at "house practices" then introduced to the general membership by demonstration. A motion on 3 February 1931 resolved "That all demonstrations be perfect, the Director having the power to say when the state of perfection is reached."

The committee often discussed and passed motions about the interpretation of dances. Mrs. Bingham clearly wanted to follow the official versions in every detail, no doubt encouraged by letters sent by Miss Milligan expressing "unflagging interest in the progress of the Society." On 1 November 1931 a motion was passed ensuring "that the practices, usages and instructions of the SCDS be followed implicitly." Before any dance could be

demonstrated to the general membership, the leader had to “submit his interpretation of the dance to be demonstrated to the Committee.”

Dancing was at all times to be disciplined. In February 1934, “The President was also asked to draw the members’ attention to the necessity of avoiding a tendency to boisterousness in certain figures of the quadrilles because of the example set to younger members, e.g. to avoid swinging the ladies off their feet, to exceed an allowable distance in the chassé etc.”

Style in the Reels

Issues of style were more complicated where the reels were concerned, since they were already in the repertoire of the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society, the Scottish Society, and the Seaforths. They were danced in a way which accentuated their Highland character and reflected the emphasis on masculine vigour in discussions of Scottish “national dance” by Scottish writers. Men placed their hands on their hips while setting and held them above their heads while reeling, and the turns were pivot turns.

This did not fit the quiet, restrained style of the SCDS, and here the authority of Mrs. Bingham met some challenges. The 16 May 1932 minutes of the Vancouver group read, “Mrs. Bingham then led a discussion of the Foursome Reel and it was suggested that the local usage of the Strathspey steps and half of the Reel of Tulloch be followed.” Action was deferred “until this dance is formally before the group for teaching.” However, again on 5 January 1933 two members moved “that the Foursome be danced on January 7th as formerly.” Mrs. Bingham countered this motion with an amendment “that this meeting adopt the Reel of Tulloch as set out in the instructions in the Books [SCDS].” But the amendment was lost and the motion passed. For once, Mrs Bingham did not carry the day.

The same issue was discussed by the Provincial Executive. Perhaps because of the close cooperation between the Scottish country dancers and the Seaforths, this group was sensitive to local custom, avoiding a draconian approach that might alienate people from the SCD movement. Two of their

resolutions on the style of the reels (as opposed to the country dances) show they wanted to preserve the Highland nature of these dances:

That in the foursome, eightsome, threesome, ninesome, and sixteensome reels all the men hold their hands above their heads and the ladies hold their skirts while setting or reeling, and this is to be a resolution to all branches.

That swinging in the foursome, eightsome, sixteensome, and ninesome reels as now done be continued and recommended to all branches, as otherwise the Highland character of the dance will be lost, and that the pivot be used in the swing. (January 1933; qtd. in The Thistle 15)

Dissension may have lingered among members of the Vancouver group, as on 13 April 1933 it was “resolved that all members of the Executive are expected to treat the discussions taking place in the executive committee as private and confidential and that failure to follow this rule should call for drastic action” (carried unanimously) and “that if members of the Society have grievances their complaints should be made direct to the members of the Executive for action and not to members of the Society in general as this creates lack of unity.” However, the conflict between local tradition and SCDS authority surfaced again on 9 April 1934, when a discussion of the steps to be used in the Oxtou Reel led to a statement from the Chair and a resignation:

The president raised the question of the necessity for loyal cooperation on the part of every member of the Society with the rulings of the committee which are based on the practice and principles of the CDS [sic] of Scotland, incorporated in the constitution of this Society of BC. The members of the committee expressed themselves as being in agreement with these views, with the exception of Mr D.A. Suttie, who did not approve of and could not accept the constitution of the parent society and the rulings based thereon because they were inspired from Scotland and showed, in his opinion, a lack of independent thought. He therefore asked that his withdrawal from the committee be accepted.

David Suttie subsequently re-joined as an ordinary member.

The debate about dancing style continued throughout the 1930s. On 28 November 1938, the Vancouver committee drew a firm distinction between the style of the reels and that of country dancing, where decorum was to be preserved: "After a discussion on the habit of the men raising the hands in setting and reeling, it was decided that in future hands are not to be raised except in the Foursome, Eightsome and Sixteensome Reels." A year later, on 29 November 1939, Mrs. Bingham raised the issue again:

She pointed out that the Eightsome Reel is not being done in the Society according to the book, and mentioned that the Demonstration Committee recommended that this be rectified. . . . It was decided that slip step instead of the skip change will now be done in all circles danced to reel time, and that the reel step be used throughout the Ninesome Reel, as described in the SCD books. The Demonstration Committee also recommended that when setting three in a line hands always be joined, shoulder high.

Reaching Out: Community Relations

Despite the strict regulation of dancing style, in other respects the organization was outward-looking. Unlike other Scottish societies, which required that members be native to Scotland and in some cases to specific regions, the SCD organization was not based on kinship ties. In fact, in September 1935 the group decided to drop its listing in the Scots Directory because it was not strictly a Scottish society: "As we are not a Scottish Society in the true sense of the word we are really out of place in such a directory." Instead, the group had a social mission in BC, "spreading the knowledge of Scottish country dances in this province" (AGM, 25 April 1936).

Mrs. Bingham and her committee set out to accomplish their mission in several ways. Mrs. Bingham was a born publicist and never tired of writing press releases, many of which were published in *The Province*. The committee made up a list of "suitable societies" (including church groups and other ethnic groups) and invited their presidents and their wives to future dances as "this as a way of creating interest in the movement . . .

and increasing our membership" (February 1932). Members of the Swedish, Bavarian, and Norwegian cultural groups were invited to the group's Christmas party in 1937.

However, the most effective publicity seems to have been dance demonstrations. Mrs. Bingham, who after two years as President served for three more years as Secretary-Treasurer of the group, wrote in her Report for April 1934:

Demonstrations, for the purpose of increasing public knowledge of the extent of the work, not only of the original SCD Society in Scotland, but of its Canadian prototype, the SCD Society of BC and its branches, and of encouraging other Scottish societies to go and do likewise, have been undertaken during the season, namely to the Gaelic Society, to the Order of the Eastern Star Kerrisdale Branch, to the Swedish Folk Dance Club, and to an evening of International Folk Dancing sponsored by our Provincial Committee under the auspices of the Women's Educational Auxiliary (Vancouver Branch) of the United Church of Canada.

A team of dancers travelled to the Seattle Folk Arts Festival in April 1936 and received this letter of thanks: "The American audiences were more than delighted with the dances given **and** the dancers. They had no idea that Scotland had such dances as these; their vivacity, joie de vivre and general social spirit were beyond commendation." The result of all this publicity seems to have been an increase in membership: "With such an influx of new members, the question arose of the wisdom of limiting further membership or taking a larger hall" (12 February 1934). As early as April 1933 the President could reflect with satisfaction on "the growing public recognition which Scotland's national dances are receiving in the cultural life of Vancouver through [the group's] efforts."

The Folk Festivals and Multiculturalism

Mrs. Bingham and her group were doing more than promoting Scottish culture. While official multiculturalism was not introduced until the 1970s, the early 1930s saw stirrings of multiculturalism in Vancouver, and Mrs. Bingham

and her group played an active part. The Society was invited by Mary Isdale MacNab (convenor of the section representing Scotland) to demonstrate “Scottish National Dancing” at the First International Festival, held at the Hotel Georgia in September 1933 and subsequently held annually as the Vancouver Folk Song and Dance Festival. These festivals stressed the traditional arts and crafts, so they were anti-modernist in the same sense as the early SCDS in Scotland, yet reflected the internationalist ethos of the 1930s.

The 1933 program began with piping by the Vancouver Ladies’ Pipe Band. It included two songs, a sword dance by Mrs. MacNab’s dancers, *Rothsay Country Dance* by Mrs. Bingham’s group, and *Dashing White Sergeant* by all the dancers together. By 1934 the SCD Society had taken over the sponsorship of the Scottish portion of the Festival. Mrs. Bingham with her usual energy not only worked on the Scottish part of the program, but also served on the Festival’s Advisory Board from 1934 and (as reported in *The Province*) gave “explanatory remarks” before many of the performances.

The following passage is part of an article very likely written by Mrs. Bingham about the Folk Festival and published on page 14 of *The Province* for 13 October 1934. Her tone is free of romantic tartanry. Instead, she emphasizes the inter-relatedness of traditional song and dance and their social function. Miss Milligan with her insistence that country dancing was ballroom dancing, not folk dancing, would not altogether have approved.

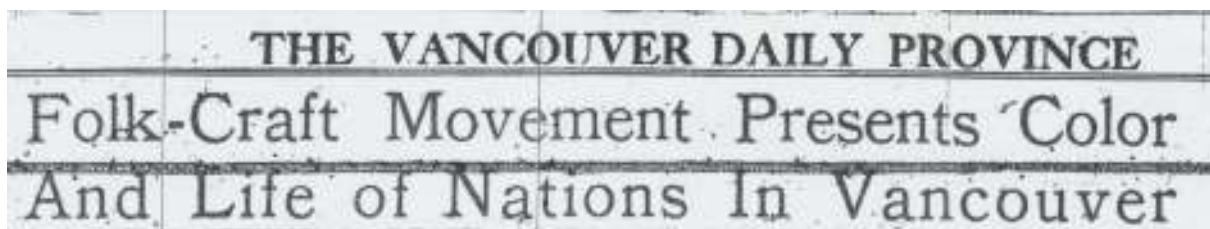
Pipers of the Seaforth Highlanders under Pipe-Major John Gillies will play marches, strathspeys and reels, also accompanying some of the dances. Members of the various branches of the SCD Society will perform dances which represent the

social folk dancing of the nation, known as country dances in contradistinction to the solo and other Highland dances so well known to frequenters of Highland Games and other similar gatherings.

Among the dances performed will be the Lovers’ Knot, a strathspey collected in Galloway, and a typical example of the [Scottish dance] used for social purpose, Tibby Fowler o’ the Glen, immediately following the song of the same name, and interesting as an example of the close connection between the folk song and the folk dances of any nation which in the past seems to have originated through words or dance figures being set to traditional tunes. . . . Mrs. Thomas Bingham is interpreting the folk dances.

The Folk Festivals had government support and approval. The patrons listed in their programs include Consuls-General, the President of the Junior Board of Trade, the President of the Vancouver Branch of the League of Nations, and the President of the Local Council of Women. The festivals undertook to combat racial prejudice, promote peace, and enrich Canadian society. A Foreword by the provincial Minister of Education for the 1935 program stresses the importance of such events in building and enriching the Canadian nation through the contributions of immigrant groups.

This was a time of mounting international tensions, including expansionist moves by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, also the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, and an article in *The Province* for 10 October 1936 hails the Festival and “the folk-craft movement” as a means of furthering world peace, by “bringing nations in direct touch with each other, in [a] friendly spirit.”



Province headline, 1936

It was estimated that 10,000 people saw the exhibits and programs in October 1936, and *The Province* reported that hundreds had to be turned away from the closing concert (19 October 1936). However (as Patricia Roy points out), these events were held in a hotel ballroom and covered on the newspaper society page, so an aura of privilege surrounded them.

An ethical belief in peace and cooperation may have influenced the SCD group's attitude towards dance competition. In October 1933 Mrs. Bingham's group resolved not to take part in competitions, and in April 1936 they advocated the creation of a new non-competitive category for adult folk dance groups at the Folk Festival, "thus enabling the various nations to meet before the public and dance one of their own dances in a friendly fashion." Notes probably written by Mrs. Bingham to accompany the performance of country dances at the 1936 Festival read, "The community spirit of the Scottish national dance is strongly accentuated in contrast with the individualistic spirit of the modern dance." She may have been thinking of the competitive ballroom dance marathons of the 1930s.

Mrs. Bingham and the Council of Women

The promotion of Scottish country dancing was only one sphere of Mrs. Bingham's volunteer work. Her vision of dance was based on its benefit to society at large rather than the social pleasure it offered, and she was also concerned with broader social issues. She was an active member of the local Council of Women, a federation of women's groups in the city which discussed issues ranging from sanctions against aggressor nations to the support of home-grown BC products.

The early 1930s saw the beginnings of dictatorship in Europe and the worldwide economic depression. On the world front, the Council pressed for disarmament, and on the local front they tried to help the unemployed and especially destitute women. They met in the Women's Building at 752 Thurlow. This had been built cooperatively by women's groups as "an investment in civic welfare" and was used for meetings and office space, not social pleasure.

In 1937 and 1938, Mrs. Bingham served as Council President. The resolutions passed during those years were scarcely radical. Briefs were presented on penal reform, and resolutions were passed urging the establishment of Vocational Training Schools, a Cancer Clinic, and a degree-granting School of Home Economics at UBC. In June 1938 a special resolution was passed asking federal authorities to provide a works scheme for unemployed men, but (as Mary Patricia Powell points out) the Council as a whole declined to support those convicted in the Post Office strike. Under Mrs. Bingham's leadership the Council also urged stronger enforcement of anti-smoking by-laws and general civic cleanliness, and the banning of soliciting in public places. The Council had requested the creation of an Appeal Board to censor films in 1935, and Mrs. Bingham was appointed to that Board.

So Mrs. Bingham indeed worked to improve Canadian society, but she seems to have operated within a conservative, establishment set of values. The groups represented on the Council of Women included church groups, hospital auxiliaries, and branches of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and naturally their actions were based on a conception of the maternal, nurturing role of women. Mrs. Bingham probably joined the Council as a representative of St. Andrews-Wesley Church.



Mrs. Bingham's official portrait as Council of Women President
Photo courtesy of Vancouver City Archives

Mrs. Bingham's presidential address of March 1939 ends, "Mutual tolerance and understanding should be the highlight of all our Council work." However, her Council also passed a motion to sing "God Save the King" before every meeting.

Mrs. Bingham also served as First Vice-President of the Women's Educational Auxiliary of the United Church and as Vice-President of the Elizabeth Fry Society. In 1938 she was a delegate to the International Council of Women in Edinburgh, and she took the opportunity to attend the SCDS Summer School in St. Andrews and obtain her teacher's certificate. Later, in 1943-44, she served as Provincial President of the Council of Women, another in her impressive list of presidencies.

Lady Aberdeen SCD Club: Dancing as Philanthropy

Mrs. Bingham's work with the Council of Women led to the formation of a group which became the longest-running SCD group in Canada. It was named for a prominent Scotswoman of an earlier generation, Lady Aberdeen, who as wife of the Governor-General had founded the National Council of Women.



*Lady Aberdeen at Rideau Hall with members of
the National Council of Women, 1894*

Early in 1938, probably at Mrs. Bingham's instigation, the Recreation Committee of the local Council of Women started its own SCD class. In

May 1938, when the Vancouver group organized the National Council's convention at the Hotel Vancouver, Mrs. Bingham again seized the opportunity for publicity, arranging a dance demonstration at the reception. Attendees also listened to a broadcast message from Lady Aberdeen in Scotland.

By 1939 the dance group had become so well established that it became independent of the Council. It held its first Tea Dance at the Hotel Georgia on 22 April 1939. A few days later, the death of Lady Aberdeen was announced, and so the newly-fledged dance group was named as a tribute from one energetic and practical social activist to another.

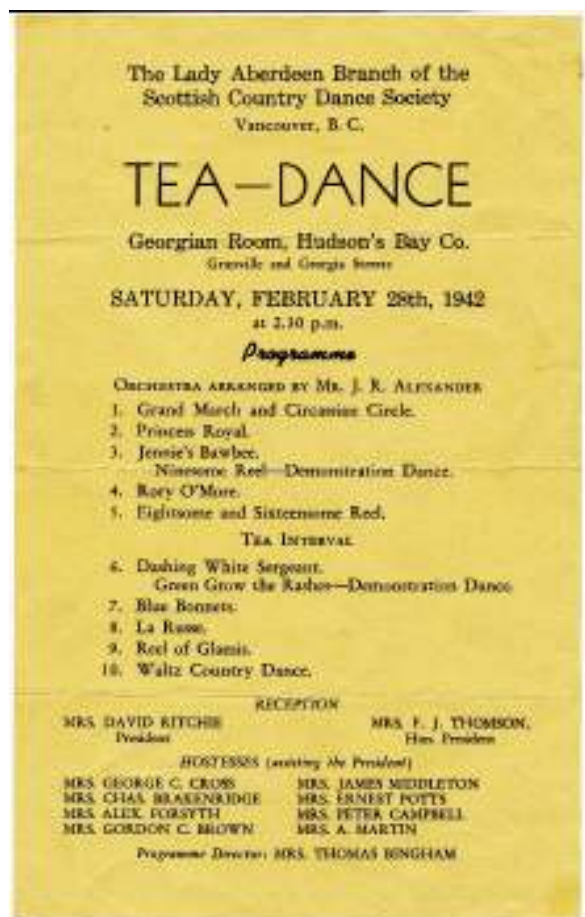


Lady Aberdeen

The Lady Aberdeen Scottish Country Dance Club held classes continuously from 1938 to 2010. The group was at first intentionally all-female, and this may have helped SCD in Vancouver survive the dearth of men during World War 2. Through the 1950s, the club held Tuesday classes at the Moose Hall on Howe Street. In 1961, it had moved to the old Scottish Auditorium on 12th and Fir. It also sponsored two annual events: a Christmas dance and most notably an Armistice Day Tea Dance, an event which still continues every 11 November.



*Performance of the Sixteensome Reel at the 22 April 1939 (all female!) Tea Dance
Photo courtesy of Kristin Shoolbraid*



Lady Aberdeen Tea Dance program, 1942

True to their name, group members followed a tradition of philanthropy. After World War II, they supported veterans: the proceeds of their open party in 1956, for example, enabled them to donate a ninth wheel chair to Shaughnessy Hospital, and in 1957 their Tea Dance proceeds bought four table radios for the Hospital. Later, however, they supported a broader range of social causes, including “the Poppy Fund, the Salvation Army, rape relief and women’s shelters, cystic fibrosis, leukemia research, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation” (Pete McMartin, *Vancouver Sun* 10 November 2010). Such causes reflected the mission of the Council of Women.

By 1960, the Club had 36 members. Mrs. Bingham was succeeded as President by Mrs. Anne Brakenridge, then in 1963 by Mrs. Nellie Forbes (later McKenzie). Nellie Forbes was a woman of great vivacity who continued to dance into her 90s; she also taught the Lady Aberdeen class and chaired the Provincial Executive Committee from 1957 to 1961. Nellie’s daughter Pat was also an active dancer. In 1984, the Club had 43 active members taught by Eileen Bennett, who was succeeded by her husband Ken.



Group (probably Lady Aberdeen Club) with Mrs. Bingham (centre), Nellie Forbes, later McKenzie (to L of Mrs. Bingham) and Mrs. Anne Brakenridge (extreme R)



*Nellie McKenzie celebrates her 90th birthday,
11 November 1992*

While the Lady Aberdeen Club ceased its classes in 2010, the annual Tea Dance tradition continues with sponsorship rotating among different Vancouver groups. Its stress is on continuity; favourite dances reappear on programs from year to year. The high point of every program is *The Reel of the 51st Division* danced by men only, as when first devised by Scottish prisoners of war during World War II.



*Men's Reel of the 51st Division, Lady Aberdeen
Tea Dance, 11 November 1997*

World War II Period: Challenges

At the start of World War II, the Provincial executive passed a resolution "urging the various branches to carry on to the best of their ability under the circumstances, as it was felt this would

tend to lessen in a small way the stress and strain of war conditions.” It was actually decided to hold a Provincial SCD Ball at Hotel Georgia on 12 April 1940. In addition to keeping the home fires burning, the Vancouver group sent cigarettes to members serving in the armed forces, including Pipe-Major Esson of the Seaforths. Two successive shipments were destroyed by “enemy action,” but the third attempt was successful.

Dancing seems to have faltered a little during the war. In 1941, the Vancouver group decided to cut the season short because of its small membership. From an original membership of 18, the Vancouver group had grown to 61 in 1934 but fallen to 30 in 1941. The group also decided “to confine ourselves to dances already tried and endeavour to learn these properly before attacking new ones.” On 5 March 1941, Mrs. Bingham “emphasized the fact that the standard of dancing

was poor and that errors in dancing should in some way be brought to the attention of the dancers.” However, as the Secretary’s report for March 1941 gamely stated, “Many branches have sprung from this parent group and thanks to those eighteen enthusiasts who met in November 1930, SCD has spread throughout the city and province and hundreds are enjoying its old-fashioned charm.” A New Year’s Eve party on 31 December 1941 still attracted 103 people.

A kind of SCD event which became popular during the war was the “Tea Dansant” or tea dance, often organized by all-female groups like the Women’s Auxiliary to the North Vancouver Hospital and of course the Lady Aberdeen SCD Club. Two more women’s dance groups are mentioned in the 5 March 1941 minutes: the Seaforth Women’s Auxiliary and the Women’s Branch of the SCD Society. In 1948, the West Vancouver Branch Ladies’ Scottish Country Dance Society was formed.

The scale of some of the tea dances of the 1940s is suggested by a newspaper report of a dance held by the New Westminster Branch in April 1947 and attended by “nearly 200 people.” It was opened by the wife of the Mayor of New Westminster, and attended by “distinguished guests” including a Councillor of Westminster UK. An all-female team gave a demonstration of *Delvine Side*, *Waltz Cotillion*, and a strathspey, wearing heeled shoes like Mrs. Bingham’s early team. Ten “floor managers” made sure that everything was orderly.



Program for a “Tea Dansant” of 1941



New Westminster Tea Dance, 1947
Photo courtesy of Mavis Pickett
Mavis’ mother, Mrs. J. A. Manzer, is 2nd from L

Mary Isdale MacNab

The professional Highland dance instructor Mary Isdale MacNab was a key figure in the Vancouver country dance movement. Mary Isdale had arrived from Govan, Scotland, as a ten-year-old girl in 1907. She had already studied Highland dancing and continued under D.C. Mather, a piper and dance teacher who had himself emigrated from Scotland. Such was her dancing talent, and so strong was the Vancouver public's interest in Scottish culture, that the very next year she and her sister Lizzie danced *Cameron an' Lochiel* in a performance of *Rob Roy* at the Vancouver Opera House.

Known professionally under her maiden name, Mary Isdale soon became the leading Highland dance instructor in Vancouver. Her students performed at garden parties, teas, concerts, and presented a grand end-of-year recital, "The Gathering of the Clans." They often danced for Scottish groups like the St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society.

In SCD circles, however, Mary Isdale was known as Mrs. MacNab. She attended Mrs. Bingham's introductory lecture, and the Vancouver group minutes of 5 October 1931 state that her name had been placed first on the list of new members "as an expression of our gratitude for her interest in the work of the Society." She served on the Vancouver group's committee, represented Vancouver on the Provincial Society executive, and led step practices in her dance studio.

Mrs. MacNab's expertise on dance technique was obviously of great value to the SCD group. On 3 October 1932 Mrs. Bingham was asked "to see Mrs. MacNab and have one of her pupils come to the house-practice and teach Mrs. MacNab's method of doing the pas de basque and skip change." Later Mrs. MacNab hosted Miss Milligan on one of her Vancouver visits. In 1960, she was a prime force behind the first weekend camp at Crescent Beach, where she also taught. She formed the Prince Charles Scottish Country Dance group (later taught by Hugh Thurston) and led the Braemar group, a demonstration team consisting of experienced Scottish country dancers and several of Mrs. MacNab's friends.

Mrs MacNab is now remembered mainly for the dances she developed for performance by her adult groups as well as her young team, the BC Highland Lassies. They range from choreographed Highland dances to formation dances which were published by the RSCDS after Miss Milligan's visits to Vancouver. Some, like *Bonnie Anne*, became well known to Scottish country dancers throughout the world.



Mary Isdale MacNab (front centre) with her Braemar Dancers in 1963. 2nd from R in front row is Isobel Hyde, still dancing in 2015

Like the urban dancing masters of nineteenth and early twentieth century Scotland such as D.G. MacLennan, Mrs. MacNab was both collector and choreographer. She "collected" dances from expatriate Scots in Vancouver and Nova Scotia (including her teacher D.C. Mather), and also from Scotland during her trips there. However, she took the traditional material as her starting-point, developing and embellishing it in order to create an effective performance. The dances evolved from a workshop process and their final form reflected Mrs. MacNab's feeling for dramatic movement and for dance as spectacle.

The most "authentic" MacNab dances are those with which the connection with Scotland was closest and best documented, having been collected during her visits to Scotland. One of her several Hebridean dramatic dances may illustrate the way in which she combined her instinct for effective display with her interest in transmitting traditional dance forms. When she visited Barra, Mrs. MacNab learned a dance from L. McNeil of Castlebay and published it as *McNeil of Barra*.



Mary Isdale's dance students, 1926
Photo courtesy of Scottish Cultural Centre

Here six women stand in two lines facing each other. A single man in the centre dances Fling steps while the women dance figures around him. The dance ends with 16 high cuts performed by the man, presumably to the awed wonder of the women.

Of course, this was a superb opportunity to exhibit the talents of a star male pupil, and Mrs. MacNab just happened to have one: his name was Billy Kerr. The dance itself, however, may be confirmed from another source. When the dance historians Tom and Joan Flett visited Barra in 1953, they found an 88-year-old piper, also named McNeil. He remembered some details of a dance called *An long Bharrach* or *The Barra Ship* in which six dancers form the outline of a ship and the seventh, who represents the mast, dances with each in turn. Of course Mrs. MacNab changed the meaning of the dance, but the physical basis is the same.

Mrs. MacNab's "set" dances like *Bonnie Anne* and *MacDonald of Sleat* contain elements of both the quadrille and the traditional reel with their alternating setting and travelling. Theatrically they are effective in their movement from one formation into another, but their very complexity separates them from traditional dances. The allusions to Highland history and legend in Mrs. MacNab's concert programs gave the dances an aura of mythology and probably heightened their audience appeal.

Former student Mavis Pickett (previously Manzer) describes the elaborate performance of a dance called *The Brooch of Lorne* honouring the brooch wrested from Robert the Bruce in 1306. It was designed to be seen from the balconies of the Seaforth Armoury, with the dancers making up a colossal Cairngorm pattern. The central "jewel," dancer Bill Elliot, enacted the spirit of Bruce in a "Dirk Dance." Four more men were the "claws" of the jewel, and surrounding them were concentric circles of "rubies," "emeralds," and "sapphires" wearing red, blue, and green caps respectively. First one circle and then another would dance around the central jewel. Lines of other dancers radiated out from them, dressed in white and silver. Such dances were more decorative than historical, but they were splendidly conceived. The scale of Mrs. MacNab's performances indicates the Vancouver public's continuing fascination with traditional Scottish culture perceived through a romantic filter.



Mary Isdale MacNab

Mrs. MacNab's and Mrs. Bingham's strengths complemented each other. They were described by a former pupil as "friendly enemies," but they worked together on many projects, as illustrated



*Braemar Dancers with Mrs. Bingham (near centre in tartan) and Mrs. MacNab (to her immediate R)
Photo courtesy of Kristin Shoolbraid*

by the photograph above, taken when Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Vancouver in 1951. Appropriately, Mary Isdale MacNab's group danced "The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh."

By the last years of her life, Mrs. MacNab had become a Vancouver institution. She toured extensively with the Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band and her team of young dancers, the BC Highland Lassies. Hers was the first Scottish dance team from abroad invited to perform at the Edinburgh Tattoo, where Mrs. MacNab was director of dancing in 1964. Soon after her return from Scotland, on 18 September 1964, the Vancouver Ballet Society sponsored "A Tribute to Mary Isdale" in the new Queen Elizabeth Theatre. The Ladies' Pipe Band played, and the BC Highland Lassies and 28 members of the newly formed Vancouver Branch of the RSCDS performed Mrs. MacNab's own dances. The Mayor of Vancouver made the presentation to Mrs. MacNab, honouring her for a career spanning more than fifty years.

The loyalty inspired by Mrs. MacNab is implied by former student Margaret MacKenzie's 2015 memory that the members of the BC Highland

Lassies could not understand one member's decision to leave the group merely because she was moving to Abbotsford.

Mrs. MacNab may be best remembered today for founding the Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band in an era when piping was a male preserve. The success of the Band continued well after Mrs. MacNab's death; in 1980 they became the first all-female band to win a World Championship title when they won the Grade III competition. The Band wore the MacNab tartan until they dissolved in 1996.



*Vancouver Ladies' Pipe Band
Photo courtesy of Scottish Cultural Centre*

1950s: Dancing in the Park and Extravanzas at the Armouries

Through the 1950s, Mrs. Bingham's drive and determination were undiminished. The beginning of regular summer dancing in Stanley Park was another proof of her ability to gain official support and sponsorship. The Vancouver *Sun* of 4 July 1950 carried this announcement, probably written by Mrs. Bingham herself:

Scottish country dancing on the tennis courts at Stanley Park will be sponsored by the Board of Park Commissioners every Tuesday in July and August from 8 to 10 p.m., beginning today. This new feature in open-air entertainment is being provided not only for local residents but for tourists who might like to participate.

The event had a high profile: attendees at the opening included two park commissioners, the park superintendent, the president of the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society, and Mary Isdale MacNab. Mrs. Bingham's trusty pianist Mrs. Nettie Stuart played the upright piano that was somehow transported to the park.

Dancing in the Park received good coverage in the local papers. However, Mrs. Bingham might not have approved of the tone of the report which appeared in *The Province* the following day, together with an entire page of photographs. The reporter stressed the informal, even frivolous, atmosphere:

It's certainly a safe bet that the old Scottish manors, where the dancing originated hundreds of years ago, never saw anything like the gay summer dresses, the low-cut blouses and swirling skirts, that flounced around the dancing area. Nor the barefoot girl with the bright blue shorts or the rhythm-filled novice in soiled white ducks and bright yellow T-shirt.

In June 1952 Mrs. Bingham wrote to the Mayor of Vancouver regretting that he could not attend the opening night in person and claiming that Dancing in the Park would raise the image of Vancouver up and down the west coast of North America. Her tone is confident, even assertive.



Report on Dancing in Stanley Park, The Province 5 July 1950

I direct these programmes under the auspices of the Vancouver Board of Parks Commissioners and I am sure that as Mayor of the city you will be glad to know that I do my utmost to give them as wide publicity as possible right down the Pacific coast and in the interior. Mr. Woods of the Vancouver Tourist Bureau is extremely helpful in promising to send printed notices to every tourist centre over the Line west of the Rockies. Vancouver is the only city on the whole Pacific coast that presents such an entertainment programme.



Dancing on the Stanley Park tennis court, 1956

In 1963 Mrs. Bingham was still supervising Dancing in the Park, but she invited teachers to take turns in running the individual evenings, a pattern which continues today. The Parks Board no longer sponsored the dancing and apparently the pianist no longer played, as the Board offered free use of the tennis courts and record player if the dancers wished to run the dancing on their own.

The collaboration between Mrs. Bingham, Mrs. MacNab, and the Seaforths continued through the 1950s, in a series of large-scale concerts given at the Seaforth Armoury. On April 30, 1952, for example, the Vancouver School Board presented "A Program of Scottish Country Dances, Massed Pipe Bands, Drill Displays, Regimental Dances, and Excerpts from the 1951 Edinburgh Festival Program." Clearly the Seaforth Armoury was still a focal point for celebrations of Scottish identity combined with fund-raising. This event was featured in *The Province's* weekly *BC Magazine* for 26 April 1952: "The gala evening of wonderful music from the bens and glens will provide funds

to send CARE parcels to Edinburgh and help buy uniforms for the local Seaforth Regiment."



*Cover photo of BC Magazine, April 1952: dancers Nellie Forbes (later McKenzie) at left and Mary Tait at right, with piper Hugh Aird
Photo courtesy of Heather Main, daughter of Mary Tait*



Dancers with Seaforth officers, April 1952: Marguerite Ferguson, Florence Strachan, Don Stickney, A.L. Oldfield, R. Confrey



“Hebridean fisher girls” Annabelle MacPhee and Hellen Stephen (later Chair of Vancouver Branch) with Pat Forbes between them

The Provincial Executive Committee

Through the 1950s, the Provincial Executive Committee (to which each group sent three representatives, paying a fee of 10c per member) still tried to ensure that the standard forms of the dances were followed. Its first object was “To preserve and further the practice of traditional Scottish Country dances in accordance with the official instructions issued by the RSCDS with which this body shall be affiliated.” In the Committee’s minutes of 28 April 1958 a strong statement of policy appears as a “Motion re the correct form of the Scottish Country Dance to be followed on all occasions, with special reference to the Eightsome Reel.” Mrs. Bingham’s influence was still strong, with discipline more important than enjoyment.

BE IT RESOLVED that on every occasion on which the Branches meet to learn and practise Scottish Country dancing or to enjoy social gatherings together, the Branch presidents with their executive officers or/and MC’s will be responsible for seeing that all dances on the programme are being danced according to the dance pattern instructions in the RSCDS books,

*and that if there is any attempt by any of the dancers, be they members or visitors, to deliberately introduce any alteration or addition to the recognized dance pattern in whatever set they may be dancing, the said president, executive officers, or/and MC’s will **immediately** take steps to prevent the further continuance of such action in the dance.*

Birlers beware! One hopes that harmony prevailed.

The second object of the Provincial group also shows the influence of Mrs. Bingham: “To promote and encourage the formation of groups throughout BC, such groups to be affiliated with this Society.” The Minutes of 23 February 1963 include discussion of how best the PEC could help groups throughout the province “by sending teachers, by helping them with advice, music, books, etc. There was wholehearted agreement that the Provincial should go all out to further SCD in the province.” It was decided to send a teacher to any group which requested such help, the PEC covering two-thirds of the cost. Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George, and Chilliwack accepted the offer. Subsequently, the Vancouver Branch continued this policy when it created the Stewart Smith award to support new or small groups anywhere in the province. Perhaps because of the Provincial group’s encouragement, a new club was formed in Kitimat in October 1956.

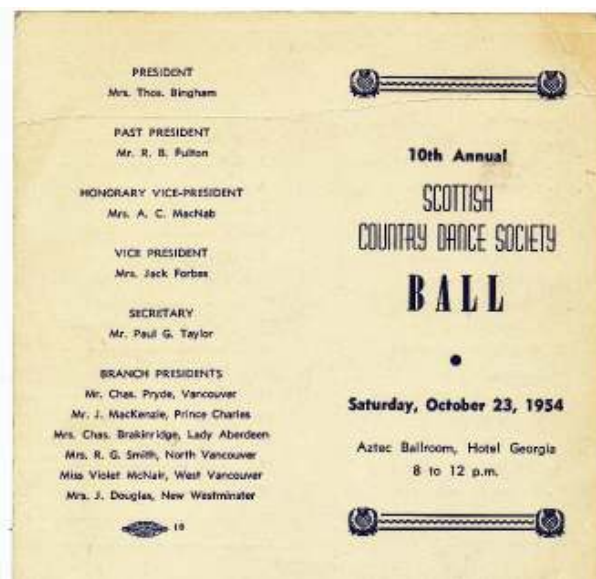
When the White Rock group was formed in 1954, the Provincial group chartered a bus to take members to the inaugural dance. The “splendid turnout” of Vancouver members was mentioned in the 3 November 1954 minutes.

Clearly, Mrs. Bingham was the driving force behind the Provincial group as she had been behind the initial Vancouver group. The AGM minutes for May 1955 mention that “Mrs. T. Bingham has been most energetic and enthusiastic in arranging and supporting the activities of the central body.” Member groups in 1955–56 included Lady Aberdeen, Vancouver Mixed, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, New Westminster, Prince Charles (associated with Mary Isdale MacNab), and White Rock; a University Branch is also mentioned.

Annual Ball

The main local function of the Provincial group seems to have been sponsoring an annual ball, usually in late October. The balls may have been sporadic at first, since one is recorded at the Hotel Georgia on 12 April 1940, and the “10th annual ball” was held in 1954. From 1954, balls were held every year until 1964 when the newly formed Vancouver Branch took over their sponsorship. The locations read like a litany of once glorious Vancouver institutions: the Hotel Georgia, the Astor Hotel, Oscar’s, and the Coach House.

The prices for the balls – \$2 reluctantly increased to \$2.25 in 1954 – are another temptation to nostalgia. The Ball Fund was kept separate from the General Fund, and many balls ran up a worrisome deficit. Music for the early balls was provided by Mrs. Stuart, Mrs. Bingham’s regular pianist, augmented by a violinist and drummer. When Murray Black of Powell River offered his band in 1963, the Committee decided that the fee of \$86 was more than they could afford, “even though the players themselves would probably provide quite an attraction.” Also applying to play was the “Vancouver Scottish Orchestra” with piano, accordion, violin, and drums. They were willing to have Mrs. Stuart play with them, and they got the job: the first time an established band, rather than a group of individual musicians, played for the ball.



Ball tickets and programs of the 1950s

Ball programs did not change much during the 1950s. A relatively small repertoire of country dances predominates: *Circassian Circle*, the *Eightsome Reel*, *Waltz Country Dance*, *Reel of the 51st Division*, and *Glasgow Highlanders* are on all four surviving programs from the 1950s. The only dances of modern composition are *Reel of the 51st* and *The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh* with their patriotic overtones, and Mary Isdale MacNab’s *St Andrew’s Nicht*, which a member of Mrs. Bingham’s committee had asked her to teach.

Although the Provincial Executive wished only dances published by the SCDS to be danced at their regular meetings, their ball programs included quadrilles, *St. Bernard’s Waltz*, *Lancers*, *Gay Gordons*, *Pride of Erin Waltz*, and a dance

called *Canadian Seaforths Twostep*. This may have been an attempt to attract more people, particularly important as the balls tended to lose money. A newspaper announcement of the 1957 ball reads, "The program will include Scottish dances like the *Eightsome* and the *Ninesome*, quadrilles and lancers, strathspeys, two-steps, and waltzes."

Quadrilles, old-time dances, and waltzes began to disappear from the programs in the early 60s and had quite gone by 1967. By that time, of course, the annual ball was sponsored by the new Vancouver Branch. On the other hand, *Glasgow Highlanders* was on every available program until 1968. The *Eightsome Reel* persisted similarly until 1969, and was probably a ritual component as a piper often played for it. Apparently energy abounded and no talkthroughs were needed, as programs consisted of at least 20 dances.

Annual Camps and Workshops

As well as the annual ball, the Provincial Executive ran another, more casual event, one which opened up the Vancouver SCD scene to influences from other parts of North America. In 1959, Mary Isdale MacNab, Hugh Thurston, and Andrew Shawyer attended a dance week organized by the Boston Branch of the RSCDS at Pinewoods Camp in Massachusetts. In its forest setting, Pinewoods had been running since 1919 and offered leadership training for Girl Scouts as well as English country dance weeks run by the National Country Dance and Song Society. Jeannie Carmichael, founder of the Boston Branch of the RSCDS, began the annual SCD Pinewoods Camp in 1952. After their trip to Boston, MacNab, Thurston, and Shawyer resolved that Vancouver should have a similar weekend of concentrated instruction.

The result was the camp held at Camp Alexandra, Crescent Beach, from September 9 to 11, 1960. This was the first such event held on the Pacific coast. Forty dancers from White Rock and Vancouver attended three days of classes in Scottish country dancing, Mrs. MacNab's set dances, men's Highland, women's solo, and "miscellaneous international" – the dancers of

those days certainly had stamina! The *Surrey Leader* published a photo of four dancers posed to dance the *Foursome Reel* on grass almost long enough to hide their ghillies.



Foursome Reel with June Gow, Rodger Shoolbraid, Charlie Elliott, and Una Bain

Alistair Ross wrote, "Whether Edinburgh would have approved of the 'finish and technique' achieved in the outdoor sessions is somewhat doubtful, but everyone had a wonderful time. I can still remember Bob [Simpson] attempting high-cuts in a dance on the grass, and sinking lower and lower into the subsoil with every step he took!" A mere \$10 per person covered tuition, meals, and accommodation, and the teachers included Hugh Thurston, Mary Isdale MacNab, Mary Shoolbraid, and Mrs. Bingham. The informal atmosphere is captured in the photo below of an outdoor hula.



*Outdoors at Crescent Beach, 1960:
L to R Harvey Barnes, Joyce Simpson, two
Seattle dancers, Hugh Thurston, Bob Simpson,
Murray Shoolbraid*

Stewart Smith of San Francisco taught at the 1963 camp and clearly became a favourite instructor in Vancouver, as he was invited to return several times. In the early 1960s, the current spate of new dances had barely begun to flow, and the camp served to introduce these new dances to Vancouver. A handwritten letter from Stewart Smith to Mary Shoolbraid outlines his plans to teach *Hooper's Jig*, *Angus MacLeod*, *Garry Strathspey*, and *White Heather Jig* – all popular in San Francisco – and *The Thistle* for February 1966 mentions that *Rest and Be Thankful* has been a favourite in almost every group since Stewart Smith taught it at the 1965 camp.

The second and later camps were held on the Victoria Day long weekend in May. They were so successful (100 attended in 1962) that larger quarters were soon needed, and the 1964 camp was the first of many to be held on the UBC campus. *The Thistle* for October 1964 reports:

The 1964 camp provided the usual opportunity for hard work and the rewards that go with it. Technique was polished and new dances were learnt, and gaiety abounded. Though there was a slight lack of intimacy compared to the earlier smaller camps at Crescent Beach, the move to UBC was well worth while in view of the larger numbers now attending. The Band [Murray Black and the Teuchters of Powell River] was a great success at the Saturday evening dance, for which Brock Hall provided a magnificent setting.

Chairing the Camp Committee for several UBC weekends of the later 1960s was Simon Scott. Simon writes, "I cannot remember life without Scottish country dancing." He grew up in England in a dancing family and first danced on his parents' lawn at the age of five. After immigrating to Canada with his family, Simon began dancing in Vancouver in 1961. He quickly went on to take his teaching certificate, and has since taught at some two hundred workshops locally and internationally as well as teaching regularly for the Gleneagles Club and for the Branch. Simon's early memories remain strong, and he speaks of Stewart Smith as his "greatest inspiration."



*Three dancers of the early 60s: L to R: Allan Mason, Rodger Shoolbraid, and Denys Lloyd
Photo courtesy of Allan Mason*

Night School Classes and the Betwixt and Between

The first Vancouver group to be subdivided into different levels was the Night School classes. These were an offshoot of Mrs. Bingham's Vancouver group. According to *The Thistle* of November 1962, they came about through an expulsion:

One evening, when the Vancouver group were dancing in their regular hall, the hall committee were dining downstairs; and the noise of the dancing so alarmed them that they cancelled the dancers' lease. Someone suggested a school gymnasium. To use this, however, the dancers had to form an official class under the School Board. Not everyone liked this. Those who didn't managed after a while to find a hall and re-form their group. Those who did formed the nucleus of the "night-school classes" which now meet three times a week, with Mrs. Bingham teaching. They provide much of the formal teaching in Vancouver, and are the only group to be divided into three levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

These classes met on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday at Fairview School on Broadway and Granville, with parties in the King Edward High School gymnasium. True to Mrs. Bingham's humanitarian interests, the proceeds of one annual party were sent to the Save the Children Fund.



Fairview School

Courtesy of Vancouver Public Library Archives

A name that first appears in association with Mrs Bingham's night school classes is Mary Shoolbraid, who had immigrated to Vancouver with her brothers Rodger and Murray in the late 1950s. Mary provided a direct link with the dancing master tradition in Scotland, as three generations of her family had taught dancing in Fife. Later she played a key role in the formation of the Vancouver Branch. Alistair Ross wrote of her, "As assistant to Mrs. Bingham, Mary offered inspiration to all." After a meeting at Mary's home in November 1959, a social club was formed to support the Night School Classes, the "Vancouver Night School Scottish Country Dancers."



Mary Shoolbraid (L) with Denys Lloyd, Pauline Barnes, and Tommy Craig

Control of this group clearly belonged to Mrs. Bingham:

As teacher of the Night School classes and the inaugurator of the club, also because formation of the club is principally to make easier the social aspect of the classes, she felt that governing control of the club should be in her hands. This was agreed to by all present and will be further clarified in the Constitution (Minutes of 8 December 1959).

As was typical of Mrs. Bingham, the group took a serious approach, proposing regular meetings at which "we could perhaps see films, have discussions, and generally learn all we could about the background of Scottish country dancing" (Minutes of 24 November 1959). A bulletin of local SCD events was also suggested, but did not materialize until Hugh Thurston began to publish *The Thistle* in 1961.

The night school group flourished, with 92 members in 1960. It was the third dance group for which Mrs. Bingham served as president, following the original Vancouver group in 1930–31 and the Provincial Executive in 1954–57. Mary Shoolbraid served as Secretary for the night school club and later for the Vancouver Branch.

The night school group began an annual event which continues more than fifty years later, the Betwixt and Between dance. "It was thought that if we could arrange for a party for class members and friends to take place between Christmas and New Year, this would be good publicity" (Minutes of 24 November 1959). The inaugural Twixt and Tween Party, as it was first called, was held on Tuesday 29 December 1959 at the Jewish Community Centre.

The early Betwixt and Betweens, as Pam Jeacocke remembered them much later, were relatively intimate affairs:

[The original B and B] was a party given by Mrs. Thomas Bingham for the dancers attending her night school SCD classes. We each received a personal Christmas greeting card from Mrs. Bingham with an invitation to attend the party. It was very much a "family" affair which was of

course easier in those days when there were fewer dancers. After the Vancouver Branch was formed in 1964, the Branch took over sponsorship of the B and B. It continued to be a real Christmas and New Year party rather than just a dance: there were games, charades, skits, carol singing etc. interspersed with the dancing; a Christmas tree; fun prizes of the 5 and 10 cent variety rather than the expensive bottles of today, and much fun was had by all. (Letter to Branch Committee, 1970s)

By the early 1960s, Mary Shoolbraid had taken over the teaching of the “Vancouver Branch” from Mrs. Bingham. By this time, the group was meeting at the Dunbar Community Centre, but it still followed the pattern established in the early 1930s. Meetings on the first and third Saturdays of the month were preceded by half an hour of step and formation practice for newcomers. Mrs. Eric Stuart continued to play piano for the group.



Mrs. Bingham in later life

Hugh Thurston and the West Point Grey Club

When Hugh Thurston arrived in Vancouver in 1958 to teach mathematics at UBC, Mrs. Bingham was cautious. On 28 April, “Mrs. Bingham asked the [provincial] Society to take note of Mr Thurston’s arrival and thought a welcoming dance would be a wise procedure.” As she may have realized, Hugh Thurston took a very different approach to traditional dance from her own, one which was analytic and questioned authority.

As a very young Englishman during World War II – obviously a mathematical whiz kid – Thurston had worked as a cryptographer at Bletchley Park, deciphering the messages of the Italian navy and later the Japanese armed forces. His friendship with Hugh Foss (leader of the team working on Japanese naval codes) must have dated from that time, and Foss likely sparked his interest in Scottish dancing with its complex patterns.

Hugh Thurston took his PhD at Trinity College, Cambridge. While there, he likely joined the Cambridge Reel Club, and he would have met fellow Cambridge mathematician and dance historian Tom Flett. While still in his early 30s, Thurston amassed a huge amount of information on the historical background of the dances, and in 1954 he published *Scotland’s Dances*, the first book on the subject by a modern researcher. This book is meticulous in its detail, and covers the whole gamut of Scottish dancing, from reels, Highland dances, and Hebridean dances to country dances.

Once he arrived in Vancouver, Hugh Thurston lost no time in founding the West Point Grey Scottish Country Dance Club. He befriended Mary Isdale MacNab and taught her dances with enthusiasm. His classes took place in an old army hut on the UBC campus, at first once a week and later twice as his following grew. He taught according to his conception of traditional style. In his favourite Duke of Perth, for example, he taught an arm hold which he called the “elbow cup” grip. He did not like “artificially contrived exhibitions” of country dancing, preferring to see country dancing “as it is normally and naturally done” (*The Thistle* 24). The club was close-knit and friendly: after the



Friday class, everyone went to the home of a member for tea, and listened to Hugh talk about the dances and their history.

In 1961 Hugh Thurston began issuing his own remarkable dance magazine, *The Thistle: A Magazine of Scottish Country Dancing and Allied Subjects*. Its first issue began with two sentences typical of Hugh's understated style: "We have decided to issue a magazine. This is it."

The Thistle was the first SCD newsletter in Vancouver. However, it was more than a newsletter. It published new dances and historical studies of traditional dances. It explored similarities and differences between Scottish dancing and other dance traditions. It answered readers' questions on all matters connected with dancing. It gave advice on dance technique. It contained puzzles and quizzes to intrigue its readers (Hugh was ever the playful cryptographer) and also poems by Hugh Foss.

While the original articles were not signed, almost all (perhaps even some of the "readers' questions"!) were pretty obviously written by Thurston himself. Above all, the 55 issues of *The Thistle* show Thurston's erudition and the breadth of his interests. He writes with authority not only on SCD, but on Serbian, Bulgarian, Scandinavian, Portuguese, and Irish dancing, and on New England contra dancing. Other articles show his detailed knowledge of music.

Thurston's attitude towards the RSCDS was complex. He combined great personal respect for

Miss Milligan with a critical perspective towards the work of the RSCDS in reconstructing old dances. Various *Thistle* articles pointed out misinterpretations by the RSCDS editors, often showing the reader the difference between the dance as originally written and the dance as arbitrarily re-written by the RSCDS.

Yet when Miss Milligan visited Vancouver in 1963, Hugh and Nina were eager to host her. Marianne Taylor of Boston remembered a story originally told by Stewart Smith:

Miss Milligan and Stewart Smith are flying to Vancouver, where she intends to give Dr. Thurston a piece of her mind about his recently published comments on the RSCDS research techniques and their way of figuring out Scottish dances. They get to Vancouver; Hugh meets them; his wife Nina gives them a lovely meal and then Hugh and Miss M. go into his study, while Stewart sits outside, chewing his nails and listening for sounds of conflict. After about an hour, Hugh and Miss M. emerge, all smiles, and Miss M. trumpets, "Dr. Thurston and I have agreed to disagree!" Hugh was such a marvellous, intelligent charmer that he charmed even her! And he was most likely right, as usual.

After her stay, Miss Milligan showed nothing but appreciation for the kindness of the Thurstons.

Hugh Thurston and his wife Nina (they married in 1962) taught at SCD workshops in Vancouver, Calgary, Kamloops, and Prince George. They were also active in the international folk dance community, and eventually they left SCD for folk

dancing. Many years later, Dub Fortenberry of Seattle remembered Hugh Thurston's teaching at folk dance workshops: "I was amazed at what he knew about Swedish dancing. He knew the rhythm of every country in Europe. When he was teaching, for example in Bellingham, he called them off like you'd say 2 + 2."



Glasgow Highlanders at Folkfest 1963 outside Queen Elizabeth Theatre (L to R Dorothy Ross, Alistair Ross, Hugh Thurston, Nina Thurston)

Doldrums of the Early 60s

In the early 60s, many SCD groups in Vancouver seem to have struggled. The Provincial Executive minutes of November 1960 reported that several societies were in financial straits through reduced membership and the lack of halls at reasonable rent. The West Vancouver group had ceased to exist by 1960. The Provincial group did its best to help; its President Nellie Forbes (later Nellie McKenzie) wrote to the North Vancouver group, "The Provincial Group have felt for a long time that they have done nothing to support the various SCD Societies in and around Vancouver, who have always supported the Provincial Ball so well." While the Provincial Executive agreed to sponsor a dance both for the North Vancouver and the New Westminster groups, the offer seems to have come too late. The North Vancouver dancers replied that they did not feel they could organize a dance, since they now numbered only nine.

The Provincial Executive's own balls were also running at a deficit in the late 1950s, and fund-raising parties were held to recoup losses. In contrast to the eight member groups listed in 1955, the July 1961 report for the RSCDS *Bulletin* mentions only four affiliated groups in Vancouver: Point Grey, Night School Vancouver Branch, Lady Aberdeen, and Prince Charles. After only 70 attended the 1961 Ball and it too ran a deficit, the committee wondered whether the ball should be continued, also (reasonably) whether the deficit had resulted from the ball being held on a Thursday. However, the 1962 ball in late November at the Georgia did better.

In February 1963, Provincial President Denys Lloyd "commented on the need for improving membership of local groups – it was not a question of starting new groups, but of putting new life into the groups already in existence and attracting new members" (Minutes of Provincial Executive Committee).

Children's Festivals

Also at the February 1963 meeting, as a way to attract more young people to SCD, Mary Shoolbraid suggested that the Provincial Executive should sponsor a festival for young people. Mary was immediately appointed chair of the Festival Committee, and Mrs. Bingham as usual took the initiative, arranging a meeting between herself, Mary, and Dr. Sharp, Superintendent of Schools. The first festival was held on 30 November 1963. Teams were grouped by age (10 and under, 12 and under, 15 and under, 18 and under), and each performed two dances, one set and the other chosen by them. They were judged for good phrasing, good posture, and neat footwork. The festivals continued in the early years of the Branch, and must have represented a huge commitment by the teachers.

Visits by Miss Milligan and the Formation of the Vancouver Branch

The catalyst in changing the status of the Vancouver organization was probably Miss Milligan herself. As President and senior

examiner for the RSCDS, Miss Milligan went on many whirlwind tours to conduct examinations and weekend schools, “determined to ensure that as the world learns to dance, it dances properly,” according to the *Glasgow Herald* of 9 April 1975.

In 1954, Mary Isdale MacNab visited Scotland and met Miss Milligan, who promised that the RSCDS would send representatives to BC to hold teachers’ examinations. Only official RSCDS branches, however, could hold teacher training classes. Miss Milligan's first visit to Vancouver was announced in a July 1961 letter from the Chairman of the Toronto Branch, who wrote that “Miss Milligan [then aged 75] will not likely be able to repeat her present visit to Canada.” This prediction underestimated Miss Milligan's energy and determination several times over, as she came to Vancouver four more times.

Nellie Forbes served as chair of the committee for Miss Milligan's visit on October 24–26, 1961. Her report shows that Vancouver welcomed Miss Milligan in style:

Mrs. Forbes, together with Mrs. Bingham, Mrs. MacNab and Mrs. Kerr, went out to the airport to meet Miss Milligan. Mr. Miller from White Rock had come to pipe Miss Milligan off the plane. He was not able to get out to the plane, but he did pipe her through the waiting room and out to the car. We know that she appreciated and enjoyed this very much.

This first trip was a teaching visit. Miss Milligan taught 160 people in the Kitsilano High School Gymnasium on Tuesday 24 October. She also watched a demonstration by Mrs. Bingham's team and a display of the MacNab set dances. Mrs. MacNab had previously met Miss Milligan on one of her visits to Scotland, and Miss Milligan's high regard for the MacNab dances was shown by their subsequent publication by the RSCDS.

Miss Milligan's next visit (November 1–3, 1963) led more directly to the formation of the Vancouver Branch. Again she taught the combined classes at a weekend school in the Dunbar Community Centre. Also teaching were Margaret Bowie, Hugh Thurston, and Stewart Smith, who had flown from San Francisco with

Miss Milligan. Miss Milligan gave a talk on the work of the RSCDS and impressed everyone with her story-telling ability. In an article sent to the Women's Editor of the *Vancouver Sun*, Mary Shoolbraid wrote that those who had attended Miss Milligan's previous classes “will remember her teaching and infectious enthusiasm with enjoyment.” Simon Scott remembers that “She had a huge presence – she held the whole room.”



*Miss Milligan shares a joke with Paul Rising
(Mrs. Bingham on L)*

This time, Miss Milligan must have strongly encouraged the formation of a branch, since Mary Shoolbraid later wrote to her, “We benefited enormously and the help and encouragement we all received will, I trust, have far-reaching results.” Mary Shoolbraid also wrote to Miss Haddon, secretary of the RSCDS, for advice on branch formation. Miss Milligan refused to accept more than \$25 for her teaching at the weekend. As President Denys Lloyd of the Provincial Executive Committee reported, she “expressed a very strong wish that a branch of the RSCDS be formed in Vancouver and strongly advised that any funds raised by the school should be used for that purpose.” (About forty Vancouver dancers were already individual members of the RSCDS.) So she exerted some pressure on the Vancouver dancers!

A meeting was announced in the newspapers and Denys Lloyd reported on April 27, “At a meeting held on April 14, 1964, Scottish country dancers in the Vancouver area voted in favour of becoming a branch of the RSCDS.” Years later, Alistair Ross captured the atmosphere of 1964:

Eventually the big day dawned and with it the “Will we, won’t we?” meeting. Dorothy and I recall walking down Granville Street that afternoon (it was a Sunday) with Pam Jeacocke and Hellen Stephen. The meeting was held in a room above some stores on Granville between Pender and Dunsmuir. Representatives of all groups attended, some enthusiastically for Branch formation, others not so sure, or perhaps just anxious that things be done correctly. Bob [Simpson], with his outgoing personality, was elected first chairman – he was always able to find middle ground.

Reporting to the Kamloops group, Denys Lloyd stressed the advantages of a branch: closer ties with the RSCDS, an annual book and bulletin, and the right to appoint a representative to the Executive Council and send two voting delegates to the Society AGM.

The April 14 meeting set guidelines for the operation of the Branch which are still followed today. This statement appears in the minutes:

The various clubs would continue to function freely as in the past and there would be no compulsion for members of these clubs to become members of the Branch. It was hoped, of course, they would join the Branch, but even so they would be free to dance, as before, with their own groups and/or to dance in the Branch classes which would be established.

The only disagreement at the meeting concerned the name of the new Branch. Alistair Ross outlined the debate:

Much discussion centred on whether the branch would be a Vancouver Branch, a Vancouver and District Branch, or a BC Branch. Those who favoured a more limited area felt that a BC Branch would be unwieldy. They also suggested that some

dance groups outside Vancouver might fear interference from the Branch, even though in fact a branch would have no control over them. Those who favoured a BC Branch believed that the RSCDS members in other parts of the province might prefer to be affiliated with a BC Branch rather than with none.

At first the group opted for “BC Branch” as the Executive hoped to draw members from across the province. The executive was to be elected from the membership at large, with the clubs still functioning independently. The Secretary of the Victoria SCD Society objected, however, fearing domination by the Branch executive. Lloyd tried to reassure him by arguing that the function of the Branch would be like that of the SCD Society of BC which it would likely replace. The final vote favoured “BC Branch” by a small majority.

However, Edinburgh had other ideas. The Executive Council of the RSCDS quickly approved the application to form a new branch. But they disagreed with the chosen name, as RSCDS Secretary Miss Hadden wrote:

It was felt by the meeting that it would be unwise to call the Branch ‘British Columbia Branch’ on account of the possible problems with affiliated groups and also the possibility of other districts eventually wishing to form Branches of their own. It was therefore suggested that the Branch should call itself either “Vancouver Branch” or “Vancouver and District Branch.”

That foresight was justified by the later formation of the Victoria Branch. So, of course, we became the Vancouver Branch. With the demise of the Victoria Branch in 2012, Vancouver is again the only RSCDS branch in BC.

Two ... RSCDS Vancouver Branch, 1964–2015

Early Years of the Branch

Under Chairman Bob Simpson, and with Alistair Ross as first Treasurer, the new Branch flourished. Graded classes were immediately organized at Dunbar Community Centre. For the first year, Mary Shoolbraid taught the Basic class and Margaret Bowie the Intermediate / Advanced, but the following year three levels were introduced, with Beryl MacMillan teaching Beginners, Hugh Thurston Intermediate, and Pauline Barnes Advanced. A notice in the newsletter suggests that the tone of the early classes was serious:

You will be expected to keep up with the work and standard of the class you attend – sluggards and laggards beware! You will be expected to work hard during class, but the social dancing which follows each class, when you can relax and enjoy yourself, will be all the more rewarding.



First Chairman Bob Simpson with his wife Joyce in the 1980s

In 1973, classes moved to the Scottish Auditorium on Fir Street and 12th Avenue, where as many as four levels were offered. The closure of that building in 1982 forced the classes to move into

different elementary schools until the opening of the new Scottish Cultural Centre in 1986 gave them a new and natural home.

Some Vancouver traditions continued, including the Betwixt and Between party between Christmas and New Year's Day. By 1965, the Branch shared the sponsorship of this annual dance with Mrs. Bingham's group. That year 125 dancers attended, and "the Masonic Hall bulged at the seams" according to the Branch newsletter. The newsletter itself was brand new that month, and edited by John and Jessie Hicks.



Second Chairman Alistair Ross in 1968

Live musicians for the Betwixt and Between – for many years Alex Jappy and more recently Mary Ross – are another more recent Vancouver tradition. From December 1998, music was guaranteed in perpetuity by a generous grant from Mary Wattum. Originally Mary Bowden, Mary attended Mrs. Bingham's early classes as a fellow member of the St. Andrews Wesley congregation, and until her death in 2008 she was our link with the early days of dancing.

Another Mrs. Bingham tradition, dancing in Stanley Park, was taken over by the Branch in 1967. The Branch continued the pattern set by Mrs. Bingham in 1963 when she invited all teachers to take turns in organizing the dancing.

Mrs. Bingham's Night School classes continued only for a short time after the formation of the Branch. The September 1966 newsletter carried this announcement:

Of special interest to all Scottish country dancers is the announcement of Mrs. Thomas Bingham's retirement from teaching the Night School classes. Her long association with Scottish country dancing in Vancouver has made her a legendary and respected figure. We hope she will continue to give all Scottish country dancers the benefit of her experience and wealth of local lore.



Mrs. Bingham at her retirement party in April 1967 with Dem Team members: L to R Flora Thompson, Margaret Zadworny, Pauline Barnes, Dorothy Ross, Mrs. Bingham, Mary Murray, Hellen Stephen

Mrs. Bingham and also Mrs. MacNab were invited to become Honorary Vice-Presidents of the Vancouver Branch, as "Scottish country dancing in Vancouver owes its inception and flourishing success to your foresight and energy."

Teacher Training

Now that Vancouver was an official Branch, teacher training classes could be held, and when Miss Milligan next came to Vancouver in October 1965, the Branch gained five new teachers with preliminary certificates and two with full certificates. They had been trained by Mary Shoolbraid.

Miss Milligan held subsequent teachers' examinations in Vancouver in September 1971, April 1975, and April 1977. The report on the 1971 visit reads, "The candidates were both challenged and encouraged by Miss Milligan who passed on to them both her own undimmed enthusiasm for SCD and her concern for high standards." Neither age nor arthritis could deter her: she gained a new lease of dancing life at the age of 89 when she acquired new plastic knees.

In 1973, when Miss Milligan could not make the trip, Mina Corson conducted the examinations, including a session in unusual circumstances when two Victoria candidates could not attend the scheduled exams because of a family emergency. Mrs. Corson offered to fit them in during her stopover at the Vancouver airport en route from California to Edmonton. CP Air made an office available, eight "stooges" were arranged, and both candidates passed.



Miss Milligan with teacher candidates, 1965: Clockwise from bottom left Murray Shoolbraid (musician), Mary Shoolbraid, Nina Thurston, Margaret Zadworny, Harvey Barnes, Barbara MacPhail, Beryl MacMillan, Sheena Ellis, Una Bain

An event which augured well for the future of the Branch occurred in 1966 and was reported in the newsletter: “We welcome to Vancouver Mr. and Mrs. James Murray who recently arrived from Edinburgh where they were very active in SCD. May your stay be long and active with our Branch.” It has certainly been that. Not only has Jim served as Chair of the Branch, but Mary has been our long-serving Teacher Coordinator and Demonstration Team Director. From 1973 to the present, she has also led all the teacher training courses in Vancouver. Mary remembers the 1973 session as particularly significant for the Branch. Many of the 16 successful candidates started new classes, and membership in the Branch reached an all-time high.

Miss Milligan made her last visit to Vancouver in 1977 at the age of 90, a year before her death, complete with new knees and undaunted in spirit. Mary Murray reported, “Miss Milligan was in fine form and charmed everyone with whom she was able to have a chat. Included in her tour this time was a four-day visit to Honolulu to which she was very much looking forward, and she even threatened to return in a grass skirt!” Her personality was well summed up in her comment to a *Province* reporter: “My dear, the dances are my devouring passion!”



1977 teacher candidates George Will and Doris Tycho with Miss Milligan and Mary Murray

The caption for the *Province* photograph above was true in more than one sense: “Miss Milligan’s staunchly behind Scottish country dancing in Vancouver.”

Early Influence of the Vancouver Branch

Because the formation of the Vancouver Branch preceded that of the San Francisco Branch (1966), Seattle Branch (1978), and Victoria Branch (1973), Vancouver played a mentoring role to other West Coast centres. The Demonstration Team went to Portland and Seattle so often that director Pauline Barnes called Seattle the team’s “second home.”

In the early days of the Branch, Vancouver teachers led workshops in many areas in western Canada and the US, including the Prairie Provinces. In their 1963 report to *The Thistle*, the Calgary group wrote, “A timely injection of Vancouver enthusiasm inspired us to attempt many ‘new’ ventures. These included a TV appearance, a summer evening of outdoor dancing and a stage performance at the Jubilee Auditorium.” At the first Asilomar, California, weekend in October 1967 the teachers were Vancouver’s Pauline Barnes and Mary Brandon as well as San Francisco’s C. Stewart Smith.

Closer to home, the Branch reached out to smaller communities across the province and encouraged them to develop their own dance groups. The third goal in the Branch Constitution of 1965 was “To encourage the performance of Scottish Country Dancing in the Greater Vancouver area and where possible beyond it.” To help achieve that goal, the Branch set up the C. Stewart Smith award soon after the early death of Stewart Smith. This provided seed money for new groups and supported workshop attendance as well as teacher visits.

Demonstration Team

Another innovation by the Branch was the formation of an official Demonstration Team in January 1965 under the direction of Mary Shoolbraid. Alistair Ross wrote, “Mary wished to start an organized demonstration team and set out to whip the locals into shape. Some of us required more whipping than others, we recall.” The new team gave public performances at venues like the Malkin Bowl, the Planetarium, and the Kitsilano Showboat.



Demonstration Team dance outside the Planetarium, 2 June 1969. Men from L Alec Marshall and Simon Scott; women from L Pam Jeacocke, Mary Murray, Margaret Zadworny, and Pauline Barnes

The team also travelled further afield, to the Tacoma and Anacortes Folk Festivals and even the Saskatchewan Folk Festival in 1967. According to the Branch minutes, they “have stimulated interest in Scottish culture and the work of the RSCDS wherever they have appeared” (31 May 1967). Pauline Barnes, who became Team Director after Mary Shoolbraid left Vancouver in 1966, wrote “Vancouver is in the enviable position of having a demonstration team whose members can appear – literally on three hours’ notice – well turned out, smiling, and prepared to give of their best” (Minutes of 14 May 1968). Between 1966 and 1970, the team gave 167 performances. In 1975, they even went to Ottawa on a government-sponsored trip to promote multiculturalism.

Allan Mason, an early member of the team, sent this story:

Does anyone remember the days of the Kitsilano Showboat demonstrations we used to do in those long-ago summers of the 60's? I remember a time when the demonstration team was performing a

dance and one of the couples involved was Bob and Joyce Simpson. Bob had a magnificent posture of self-assurance when dancing that far exceeded his memory but not his wit! I can't remember the dance but it had reels of four on the sides but for some reason Bob turned right and danced all on his own across the whole length of the stage before he realized that he was alone – but with a smile and not a single pause he turned and danced back to smoothly re-enter the formation just in time which brought loud approval from all the onlookers except for our teacher!

The repertoire of the early Demonstration Team included at least one dance with purely local associations, *Gassy Jack's Eightsome*, written by Mary Shoolbraid for the BC Centennial in 1967. Mary Isdale MacNab dances like *Bonnie Anne*, *Brig o' Doon* and *Macdonald of Sleat* also became staple dances of the team, together with other dances in the international RSCDS repertoire. In the early days, the team danced in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre as part of the Vancouver Folk



Demonstration Team 1971 Men clockwise from L: Alistair Ross, John Allan, Sandy Marshall, John Havelotte, Malcolm Mayhew. Women clockwise from L: Joan MacArthur, Pam Jeacocke, Josie Sleightholme, Pauline Barnes (Director), Hellen Stephen

Festival. In March 1966, an enlarged team of seven sets opened the World Curling Championships at the Vancouver Forum, on wooden platforms hastily laid over the ice.

Under subsequent directors Mary Murray, Dorothy Hargreaves, Simon Scott, Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, and Kay Sutherland, the team has had varied assignments. They have danced on top of Grouse Mountain in the fog, in Chilliwack and Fort Langley, and at Expo 86 before an audience of thousands. They have danced to the music of Alasdair Fraser and shared the floor with the Simon University Pipe Band. They have mounted huge displays on ballroom floors and adapted to tiny stages in church basements. These assignments reflect the team's multiple purposes: to entertain audiences, to promote SCD and draw in new members, and to bring the pleasures of music and dance to people in care homes.



Demonstration Team on Grouse Mountain, 1996: L to R Tony Popplewell, Drew Simpson, Wendy Hutcheon, Megan Hurn, Ian Allan, Duncan MacKenzie, Jean Hudson, and Debbie McEwan with Clayne Conings behind



Demonstration Team, 1980s: Front row L to R Anna Brown, Joan MacArthur, Mary Murray (Director), Irene Money, Cathrine Conings; middle row Barbara Campbell, Debbie MacEwan, Audrey Gordon, Dorothy Hargreaves; back row Drew Simpson, Derek Hill, Clayne Conings, Malcolm Mayhew, Alan Brown, Jim Murray, Tom Money Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt

An indication of our changing demographics is that 9 of the 15 dancers shown above were born in Scotland, in comparison with 3 of the 19 shown below.



Demonstration Team, 2015: Front row L to R Kathleen Hall, Rebecca Blackhall-Peters (Director), Louise Steinway, Gerry Stensgaard, Kay Sutherland, Katherine Shearman; back row Sandy Marshall, Ruth Burns, Duncan MacKenzie, Louise Murphy, Leslie Dawes, Alison Moen, Sally Marshall, Anna Lee Boulton, Gail Urquhart, Diane Coulombe, Diana Bodnar, Sandy Caruth, Mike Nichols Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt

Branch Workshops

For several years after the formation of the Branch, the annual “camps” continued to be held at UBC over the Victoria Day weekend, and the Camp Committee remained separate from the Branch Committee. However, falling attendance and booking problems led to the cancellation of the 1971 camp. At that point the Branch stepped in. The newsletter announced the new venture:

Those who have mourned the passing of the annual Camp weekend of fond memory which was held for a number of years on the 21st of May weekend . . . may be interested to know that the Committee is actively looking into the possibility of holding a weekend workshop in the fall.

The event was reborn in 1973 as the “Vancouver Weekend,” now under the direct control of the Branch Committee.



Stewart Smith (L) instructs Flora Thompson, Denys Lloyd, Sheila Brown, and Josie Sleightholme

Through the late 1970s and the 1980s, the weekends moved upscale; they were combined with the annual Ball from 1978. They were usually held at Easter in a big city hotel: the Hotel Vancouver, the Bayshore, or the Four Seasons. Such ambitious thinking was justified by the numbers: 209 were registered for the 1978 weekend, and 317 attended the Ball (as Mary Murray remembers, once 50 hotel rooms had been booked, the ballrooms came rent-free).

Stewart Smith returned to teach in 1980, and other favourite teachers included Bob Blackie of Toronto and Vancouver’s own Mary Murray and Simon Scott. In August 1986, Mary, Simon, and Bob Blackie were joined by Alastair MacFadyen (Chairman of the RSCDS) to teach at a week-long workshop at St. George’s School, held in conjunction with Expo 86. Over 200 dancers came, from North America and overseas, and the event was an enormous success.



*L to R Mary Murray, Alastair MacFadyen, Simon Scott, and Bob Black at Expo Workshop
Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt*

The Branch launched another ambitious venture in 1995 with the first Whistler weekend. Events were held in the Conference Centre in Whistler with dancers staying in several hotels in the village. Dancers came from throughout North America and beyond for the expert instruction of Mary Murray, Bob Blackie, and Ron Wallace. At the Ball, over 40 sets filled the vast floor at the Conference Centre.

Two years later, a second successful Whistler weekend was held, and a third was held in May 1999, with Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent again playing for the Ball and instructors Marjorie McLaughlin, Geoffrey Selling, and Simon Scott. As in 1995, the weather was perfect, and piper Kevin Watsyk led an impromptu procession of dancers through Whistler Village to the Convention Centre.



Grand March at the Whistler Ball, 1999, with Ken Bennett and Duncan MacKenzie carrying Scottish and BC banners, and instructors Marjorie McLaughlin and Simon Scott behind

Although the Whistler weekends were highly successful, the concrete floors of the Convention Centre were unkind to the feet. Unless we can declare SCD an Olympic sport and order our own sprung floor, the Whistler weekends will probably not return.



Procession through Whistler Village, 1999, with piper Kevin Watsyk and Branch Chairs Angela Gauld and Bob Armour following

A different kind of workshop was held seven times in the first decade of the 21st century. This was the Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, the first SCD instructional event anywhere to bring teachers and musicians together. Top teachers and musicians were brought in to lead the workshop, many of them from Scotland. Separate sessions for teachers and musicians were followed by a joint practical session at which teachers and musicians learned to work effectively together.

The workshop was made possible by the generous bequest of Pearl Holmberg (nee Baillie), who died in 1997. Pearl had been a Vancouver dancer of long standing. Having grown up near Dundee, she immigrated to Toronto in 1925, and moved to Vancouver in 1939. One day in Hudson's Bay Company she heard Scottish music wafting from the sixth floor, and discovered Mrs. Bingham leading one of her Saturday afternoon dances in the Georgian Room. Pearl then joined first Mrs. Bingham's Night School classes and later the Vancouver Branch, still attending events as she approached the age of 90.

The Pearl Holmberg workshops put Vancouver on the international dancing map, attracting participants from throughout the continent. Angela Gauld, first co-organizer of the event with Elspeth Rennie, wrote about the first Pearl Holmberg workshop, "During the weekend of May 12 to 14, the Scottish Cultural Centre was buzzing, and bursting at the seams with musicians and teachers from all over North America."



Iain Fraser (centre) leads fiddlers at the 2000 Pearl Holmberg Workshop

Of the 2001 workshop, teacher coordinator Wendy Swaine wrote in the *Celtic Connection*:

And how will this wonderful weekend affect the weekly classes in September? The dancers may notice renewed vigour and awareness in their teachers, there may be more live musicians to replace the usual tapes and CDs, and they may be assured that their enjoyment of SCD is the priority of those folk who promote this favourite activity in the Lower Mainland.



Kathy Fraser-Collins (foreground) leads keyboard players at 2001 Workshop

The annual Branch workshop has become a less formal affair, perhaps closer to its roots at the Crescent Beach Camp. Beginning in February 2000, and close to Valentine's Day every year, the Branch has held the workshop which started as "Back to Basics" and evolved into the current "Love to Dance" workshop. It has become a day when dancers, new and experienced, from all the Lower Mainland groups get together for a full day of enjoyment and learning.



Instructor Simon Scott leads his class at the Love to Dance workshop, 2012

Balls and Bands

The annual balls formerly organized by the Provincial Executive Committee were taken over by the Branch. For several years from 1965, music was provided by the only SCD band in the area, The Teuchters of Powell River. Apparently a number of recent Scottish immigrants worked at the MacMillan Bloedel pulp mill, and "Teuchters" (originally a derisive Lowland term for Highland Scots) certainly advertised the band members' Scottish identity! Murray Black, leader of the band, was also a piper.



First Branch Ball, Hotel Georgia, November 1964: piper Jack Miller and (L to R) Simon Scott, Joyce Fairbairn, Bob Simpson, Joyce Simpson, Denys Lloyd, Mrs. Bingham

In contrast to the traditionalist 1950s, many dances by modern devisers were beginning to appear on the ball programs. The 1965 program included dances by Allie Anderson, Jack McConachie, John Duthie, Hugh Thurston, Mary Isdale MacNab, and Bob Campbell, none of which were published by the RSCDS. Mrs. Bingham, together with Mrs. MacNab, was a guest of honour at this ball, and one wonders what she thought about all those non-traditional dances. Afterwards, *The Thistle* carried this report:

The recent most successful ball at the Coach House, North Vancouver, will have evoked many memories among the old-stagers of earlier balls at the Astor, Oscar's, and the Georgia. And it is indeed most gratifying that at long last an appropriate setting should have been found for this highlight of the social season. (The Thistle 26)

In fact, the balls continued to be held at the Coach House until 1968, but after that they were moved to the Hotel Vancouver.

From 1972 to 1975, Jack Rennie's Thistle Band of Los Angeles flew in for the balls. Musicians and dancers coped with marathon programs: the 1972 ball had 25 dances and 6 extras. In 1976, Stan Hamilton's legendary band came from Ontario to play. Demand for tickets was so strong that the Ball had to be moved out of the Hotel Vancouver to the Carson Graham School gymnasium.

Vancouver dancers had long wanted a band of their own, and their wish was finally granted with the formation of the Schiehallion Band. The band's first recorded performance, under leader Ian Price, took place at the Glenayre Club party in December 1975. They went on to play for virtually all the SCD events in the area. In 1981–82, for example, Schiehallion played for Fort Worden, the Bairns' Ball, the Glenayre dance, the Gleneagles Ball, the Branch Burns Supper, the March Branch party, the April 1982 Branch Ball, the Calgary Ball, and the Burnaby 10th Anniversary Ball. The band also issued two recordings during their short but intense career. When they retired in May 1987, this comment appeared in the Branch newsletter:

The band began as the brainchild of two Ians, Brady and Price, following the ceilidh of the 1975 Vancouver workshop. They went from a band that (by their own admission) was a little rough around the edges to one that is greatly sought after in the central and western Canadian dance world. They were the only band in the Northwest for a number of years and by dint of working their hardest, and always striving to improve, became possibly the greatest musical asset "out west." They have remained friends for the twelve years they have been together, during which time they have given



Members of Schiehallion from the record cover for A Vancouver Collection: L to R Derek Hill, Ian Brady, Davene Browne, Celia Collin, Murray Shoolbraid, Ian Price

some 200 performances. . . . Only once have they missed a commitment – they were snowed in at the airport and unable to play for the Edmonton group in 1986.

Ian Price, leader of Schiehallion, organized one of Vancouver's most unusual dance events in 1988. Hoping to create a new world record for the most participants in a single dance, he orchestrated a 256-some held at Simon Fraser University. Ian envisaged this as "a great opportunity for the intermingling of all the groups of dancers in the area . . . whilst at the same time working together towards a spectacular promotional statement for the SCD which we all love so much."

Dancers from Vancouver, Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and Washington State converged in a North Vancouver school gym to practise over the winter. The grand finale came on April 24 when the SFU Pipe Band led the dancers down the broad steps to Convocation Mall.



Ian Price in 1st row with his wife Jane on his left

The 256-some was more than 32 Eightsomes danced in one place. As they gave “hands around,” the dancers formed a single series of concentric circles with each line facing another as they whirled by. The experience was exhilarating!

The dance was performed twice over, and made not only the Guinness Book but the front page of *The Province*.



*Newspaper report of the 256-some:
Drum Covers in foreground and Drew Simpson
and Gerry Stensgaard behind*

Schiehallion came out of retirement briefly to play at the Chairmen’s Ball on 11 November 1989, held at the Gizah Temple to mark the 25th anniversary of the Branch. This was instigated by the first Chairman of the Branch, Bob Simpson, and organized by all previous Chairmen. Decorations were created by second Chairman Alistair Ross, formerly Head of the Art Department at Kitsilano High School.

Ian Price’s creative thinking was also responsible for a musical group which has played for many of our events for the past 25 years. In 1990, Price met Tom Scott, leader of a group of fiddlers eager to play Scottish music.



*Chair Hellen Stephen with former Chairs at the
Chairmen’s Ball: L to R Dennis Sallaway, Jim
Gordon, Andrew MacArthur, Bob Currie, Alistair
Ross, Jim Murray, Denys Lloyd, Bob Simpson
(missing: Ken Morgan)*

Together, they saw an opportunity to continue the tradition of live dance music for Scottish country dancers, and at the same time provide a collective performing outlet for musicians with a desire to develop their skills in a traditional genre. The Vancouver Fiddle Orchestra was the result. (Ian Price in VFO brochure)

Under its first director Ian Price and now under Janet Wright, the orchestra has played regularly for the Gleneagles Ball, the Burnaby annual dance, an evening of Dancing in the Park, and many other dance events, as well as offering concerts of its own. The soaring fiddles, backed by the strong rhythm section, practically sweep dancers off their feet!



*VFO at Branch Burns Supper 2015 (Director
Janet Wright at R)
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*

Here are VFO Director Janet Wright's comments:

What fun these musicians have, playing for the dancing! Imagine the sense of anticipation as 20 plus musicians take to the stage, and 100–200 dancers to the floor. The opening chord, and they're off. The dance ends and the dancers' obvious enjoyment inspires the musicians to play the next with even greater enthusiasm, which, in turn, inspires even greater pleasure in the dancers. There is a wonderful energy that passes back and forth between musicians and dancers throughout the evening, inspiring each to greater heights of musicianship, dancing and enjoyment!

Now well into its third decade, the VFO has grown in skill, confidence and enthusiasm, regularly contributing musicians to various smaller ensembles – playing for workshops, weddings, ceilidhs, country dance and step dance classes, various Burns, Scottish and other cultural events. Precisely as Ian and Tom intended!

Some years ago, Julie Smith (regular pianist for the Fort Langley club) joined up with the late Tony Popplewell on guitar to play for fun at parties. In 2006 the Tartan Players grew from this collaboration, at first with Carole Berger on flute, Celia Collin on fiddle, and Davene Browne on bass. Fiddler Deborah Jones then joined, and later another fiddler, Lukasz Wieczorek, together with an occasional bass player.



*The Tartan Players at the Love to Dance Workshop 2015: L to R Carole Berger, Deborah Jones, Joseph Condie, and Julie Smith
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*

The distinctive sound of the group, according to leader Julie Smith, is Carole's flute combined with one or more fiddles. Since 2007, the Tartan Players have played for the Vancouver Branch, Fort Langley, Glenayre, West End, White Rock, and Vanisle in Victoria. At the 2015 West End party they added Julie's granddaughter Naomi Groom on fiddle.

Keeping Tradition Alive

Two events in the dancing calendar which are based on ritual are the Lady Aberdeen Armistice Day Tea Dance and the Burns Supper. The annual Burns Supper follows the same pattern every year: the haggis is piped in and addressed, then eaten with the customary neeps and tatties. Speeches follow dinner: the "Lassies" are toasted, a spirited reply is given, and a toast to the "Immortal Memory" follows. In 1999, Publicity Director John Menzies commented, "It is remarkable that every year the format is essentially the same, yet every year the tickets sell like haggis cakes."



*Sandy Marshall pipes as Gerry Stensgaard carries the haggis, 2015 Burns Supper
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*

One aspect of tradition has been modified a little, however. At the first Burns Supper in 1974 the Lassies' Reply was given by Simon Scott (all early Burns Suppers were for men only), but since then the "Lassies" have been allowed to speak for themselves.



Isobel James addresses the haggis as Drum Cavers watches, 2013 Burns Supper

When the Lady Aberdeen Club ceased its classes in 2010, the Branch decided that the Club's Armistice Day dance was a tradition worth preserving. This popular event, with its underlying values of remembrance and charitable giving, continues to be held each November 11, its sponsorship rotating among dance groups. Attendance is usually close to the 200 mark.

Balls in the 21st Century

Vancouver dancers welcomed the new century with a Millennium Hogmanay, when Mary Wattum's generosity brought John Ellis and His Highland Country Band from Scotland. Howard Meredith's glittering hangings transformed the space, so as Committee Chair Duncan MacKenzie remembers, "You wouldn't have known it was a gymnasium."



Dancers at the Millennium Ball, 31 Dec. 1999

A very different event was held to usher in 2001, the Shoestring Gala organized by Howard Meredith and Wendy Swaine. They stressed fun and participation: all teachers were invited to suggest dances for the program, and dancers brought food for a potluck supper and designed their own playful hats. Howard set the tone:

The Shoestring Gala will bring together all Lower Mainland dancers and teachers in an evening of festivity fit to carry us into the new century. From the start, this is an event based on participation by everyone, and focused on unity and appreciation within our dance community.



Shoestring Gala organizers Howard Meredith (L with Isobel James) and Wendy Swaine (R with Ken Bennett)

The early 21st century also saw the start of a grand cooperative venture as reported by Sandy Caruth in January 2004:

One cold and rainy day this last November, dancers from Seattle, Skagit, Bellingham, Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, and Victoria met as a newly formed Steering Committee and launched the idea of uniting for one grand SCD experience. Thus the seed for the Pacific Northwest Ball was sown.

The name "Thistle Ball" was soon chosen for the event. The inaugural Ball, held in Vancouver at the Squamish Nations Hall, coincided with the Branch's 40th anniversary. Benefactor Mary Wattum enabled the Branch to bring Marian Anderson and her band from Scotland. All 280 tickets were sold out months in advance, and the event was a huge success. A subsequent Thistle

Ball was held in Bellingham, sponsored by Seattle, and one was planned for Victoria but had to be cancelled. A further Thistle Ball was held in Vancouver in 2008, coinciding with Youth Weekend West and the Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians.



Benefactors Mary Wattum (L) and Pearl Holmberg in the 1990s
Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt

Since 2010, the annual Branch ball has been known as the Heather Ball. It draws on the traditions both of earlier Branch balls and the highly successful Delta Spring Flings held at the Gizeh Temple in March and featuring the music of Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent.



Dancers at the Thistle Ball 2008: Rebecca Blackhall-Peters and Bill Zobel in foreground
Photo courtesy of Jean Wagstaff



Dancers at the Heather Ball 2012: to L of Louise Murphy is Nell Bird, still dancing in her 90s
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt

The Vancouver Branch's 50th anniversary celebrations culminated in a Golden Jubilee Ball on 21 March 2015. 186 guests, including 50 from out of town, danced to the music of the Torridon Band from Ontario enhanced by guest musicians Ian Muir from Scotland and Judi Nicolson from Texas. That evening also saw the launch of the *Golden Anniversary Collection* of dances by Vancouver Branch members, and the presentation of a Branch Award to 50th Anniversary Committee Chair Jean Wagstaff.



Dancers at the Golden Jubilee Ball
Rachel Pusey of Seattle in foreground
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt



*Branch Chairs at the Golden Jubilee Ball:
L to R in order of their terms of office are
Duncan MacKenzie, Hazel Robb, Brian
Corbould, Elizabeth Peerless, Ed Wagstaff, Paul
Lowe, Jennifer Shearman, and Gerry Stensgaard
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*

Children's Classes

A year after the Branch began, children's classes were established at community centres throughout the city, at Hastings, Kitsilano, North Vancouver, Dunbar, Kerrisdale, Marpole. The Children's Festivals started by Mary Shoolbraid continued each year. The 6th annual festival in 1969 had 38 teams and was judged by Stewart Smith. Mary Shoolbraid Brandon, "the founder of the festival," returned as a judge in 1970.

In 1967 Sheena Ellis was appointed as the first Coordinator of children's classes. For many years, Mary Anderson was an energetic children's leader. Her class of 10-year-olds eventually blossomed into a teenage demonstration team, with Mary driving them to performances throughout the city. Through newspaper drives, Mary raised much of the cost of running children's classes.

From 1993 until her retirement in 2015, Maureen Hood served as Children's Committee Chair. Assisted by her daughter Colette and others, Maureen organized Saturday morning classes at three levels on the North Shore as well as a Children's Christmas Party and annual Children's Workshop and Dance in the spring.



*The Delbrook Dancers
Photo courtesy of Cindy Goodman,
North Shore News*

The more experienced members of the North Shore classes perform as the Delbrook Dancers. They have danced throughout the Lower Mainland: at Arts in Action, the BC Highland Games, the Langley Harvest Festival, the Vancouver Children's Festival at Vanier Park, and even with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. In another music-dance partnership, the group choreographed a dance to perform with a musical piece by the young fiddlers of the North Shore Celtic Ensemble. A highlight of the year, Colette remembers, was dancing at the PNE: "The girls worked and practised and got free passes to the fair. You can imagine how much they enjoyed this!"

Colette also writes, "It always amazed and delighted Maureen and me to watch the girls develop and grow in confidence and skill. We encouraged the older girls to mentor and co-teach the younger ones, and all enjoyed this."



*The Delbrook Dancers with Maureen Hood on R
Photo courtesy of Lisa Birrell*

The March of Technology

Changes in technology have had many effects on our dancing over the years. In the 60s and 70s, the teacher's equipment consisted of record player and LPs. In the midst of teaching, she had to select the correct track and delicately lower the needle, trying to avoid scratches and that awful "stuck in the groove" shudder. The record player had to be placed well away from shocks travelling through the floor from over-enthusiastic feet.

Even then, reproduction of the music could be less than ideal. This comment appeared in *The Thistle* 16 about the 1964 camp: “Those musical people who were excruciated by the poor fidelity of the gramophones last year will be glad to know that this year we shall have available at least three first-class machines in the various classes.” However, there were complaints about the “atrocious artificial amplification” for the Teuchters’ band at the 1964 ball (*The Thistle* 21).

Sometimes, unexpected things happened. When Liz Johnston was teaching children in a Point Grey church, she did not know that recorded chimes were played through the belfry instead of actual bells. But one afternoon one of the children came in and said, “Mrs. Johnston, do you know they’re playing Scottish country dance music all over Point Grey?” Someone had flipped the switch and jigs and reels were replacing the solemn bells.

By the late 1980s, records were displaced by cassettes. Unless cued beforehand to a specific track, these were impractical in class. So diligent teachers spent many hours copying music to five-minute (in the case of reels and jigs) or ten-minute tapes (in the case of strathspeys), amassing libraries of these short tapes. Once CDs came on the scene, the tapes were not worth the plastic that encased them.

For nearly 20 years, CDs reigned supreme. Through the Pearl Holmberg Fund, the Branch generously provided the groups with monumental Califone machines which seemed destined, with their engraved plaques, to last for ever. But David again vanquished Goliath, and the complete teacher these days strolls into class with hundreds of digital recordings instantly available on a laptop

/ I-Pod / I-Pad connected to small but powerful Bluetooth speakers.

Newsletter technology, too, has changed dramatically. For twelve years from 1976, Liz Johnston produced a monthly newsletter on a machine she called her “tripewriter” and ran off copies herself on an old Gestetner machine and later on a photocopier. As much material was submitted by phone, it was fortunate that Liz knew shorthand. (This newsletter, with its wonderful diatribes, was signed not by Liz herself but by “Patti Baask” with “Ron Dell” lurking in the background. Most knew the actual name of the editor, but Liz remembers one teacher who persisted in addressing her as “Patti.”)

Even when the newsletter was sent out to a printer, things were not simple. Photographs for the early *White Cockades* of the late 90s had to be taken and developed, then screens of the chosen shots produced and glued to the finished printouts, sometimes a little crookedly. All that ended, of course, with the advent of digital photography.

In 1994, editor Jackie Wilkie asked Al and Helen Hughes to help her mail the newsletter. For the next quarter century, Al and Helen stuffed, stamped and mailed every single envelope. Helen regularly visited an auctioneer on Cordova Street to buy old stamps at a 10% discount. That meant as many as 800 stamps to be stuck on 400 envelopes each month! Envelopes, of course, will soon become collectors' pieces themselves, as regular mail delivery follows record players and cassette tapes into extinction.



Masthead of the newsletter, 1980s

The public face of the Branch is now our website, www.rscdsvancouver.org. Angela Gauld created a web presence for the 1999 Whistler Workshop, and the website evolved from it. For some years the site was maintained by the late Stuart Somerville, whose roots ran deep in the Vancouver SCD scene. His parents were strong supporters of Mrs. Bingham, serving on the Executive Committee of her West Vancouver group, and he had early memories of being taken to the Stanley Park tennis courts on dancing nights and standing by the upright piano. Our current website manager and newsletter editor is Mary Ann McDevitt.

Evolution of the Vancouver Branch

The 1970s and 80s were heady times for Scottish country dancing, not only in Vancouver but throughout Western Canada. Immigration from Scotland was still high and ensured a steady supply of dancers. A classic event was hosted by the Calgary branch every October at the Banff Springs Hotel; in 1974 some 200 dancers were registered (including 68 from Vancouver) and another 200 had to be turned away. A report of the event mentions “partying all night, meeting new friends, even some dancing.”

That same year, some 21 adult SCD classes were offered in Vancouver, and the Branch Committee reported “not enough tickets to fulfil demand for any of this year’s balls or the Burns Supper.” Total Branch membership stayed well above the 400 mark through the 70s and 80s, and attendance at major events was correspondingly high: 200 dancers came to the 1985 workshop.

By the 1990s, however, membership began to decline, and attendance at events also began to suffer. In 1998, Branch Chair Angela Gauld wrote to RSCDS Chair Bill Clement:

The Vancouver local association is very active and enthusiastic, but our membership . . . is ageing, and we notice a slow erosion in our numbers as a result. In addition, a significant reduction in immigration from the UK has resulted in a corresponding decline in our traditional source of members. We are gradually

increasing our publicity effort and hope to attract younger members, as well as those from differing ethnic backgrounds.

In response to this need, several changes took place. The repertoire of dances was now so large that dancers could not be expected to remember them all. So briefing dances slowly became the norm at Branch socials and parties, with a formal motion in April 2000, “Given the changing requirements and wishes of members and other local dancers, the Vancouver Branch Committee of Management encourages briefing at all formal and informal events organized by the Branch.”

In 2001 a Task Force under Carole Berger was appointed to survey members and make recommendations. These focused particularly on the needs of new dancers, and included recommendations for a welcome package for beginners, greeters at events, more audience participation at Stanley Park, and the creation of a core list of easy dances to help dancers prepare for events.

Thanks to the energy of Duncan MacKenzie, one significant initiative was the monthly ceilidhs for young people which are still going strong. These evolved in Fall 1999 from classes for young people sponsored by the Saltire Society. Duncan wrote in 1999, “The emphasis is on fun, and the hope is that some of the attendees will want to continue into the more formal classes.”



*Duncan MacKenzie (centre) leading a ceilidh
Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt*

In 2005, former Coordinator of the SFU Centre for Scottish Studies Harry McGrath wrote a piece for *The Scotsman* called “Changing Times for British Columbia Scots.” Commenting on the changing fortunes of Scottish organizations in Vancouver, McGrath wrote, “While some groups are getting stronger as others fade, ultimately Scottish culture and traditions will survive because what they’re doing is reinventing themselves.”

Our Branch has risen to this challenge. Our energetic Publicity Directors, most recently Diane Coulombe and Cathrine Conings, have invented new ways to connect us to the wider world of contemporary Vancouver. While the Multicultural Festivals of the 1930s were enclosed within the walls of the Hotel Vancouver, the Canada Day parades of the early 21st century are noisy, very public downtown demonstrations of our country’s multiculturalism. Cathrine Conings wrote this report of the 2013 parade:

Our wonderfully large and colourful group of 35 dancers reeled and jigged and waved banners along the route behind our tartan truck. The Scottie dog, as well as the flags, balloons and banners, helped to increase our visibility and the sound system, turned up to full volume, managed to compete somewhat with other entries’ powerful speakers!



Canada Day parade 2008: Janet Mather and Gerry Stensgaard carry the banner



*Branch members on Canada Day 2013
Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt*

The Vancouver Branch has continued its tradition of fine teachers. In particular, Mary Murray, Simon Scott, Ruth Jappy and Rebecca Blackhall-Peters are in demand for workshops and schools around the world. We are proud of them!



*Jim Murray, Mary Murray and Simon Scott,
Burns Supper 1996 – Photo Sid Dyke*



*Rebecca Blackhall-Peters with former Branch
Chair Paul Lowe, Pearl’s Party 2012
Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt*

The Branch has also been fortunate in its volunteer leaders, especially its Dancing Coordinators (previously Teacher Coordinators), who have organized classes, functions, and workshops. They have included Mary Murray, Liz Johnston, Mary Anderson, and Wendy Swaine. Since 2004, Fran Caruth has brought skill and dedication to this demanding job.



Fran Caruth receives a Vancouver Branch award at the Love to Dance workshop, 2013

Like similar organizations, our Branch depends on its many willing volunteers who often work behind the scenes. They are the people who sell tickets, hang decorations, brew tea, serve food and wash dishes so that others may enjoy their dancing. Without them we could not dance.



*Volunteers Heather Hankin, Pat Hollingdale, and Elspeth Rennie, 2014 Betwixt and Between
Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt*

Three ... Dance Groups in the Vancouver Area

In Mrs. Bingham's day, the various groups (misleadingly called Branches) operated independently. Each sent delegates to the Provincial Executive Committee which administered regional events like the annual ball. In many ways, that structure has continued under the Vancouver Branch. The Branch Board is largely an umbrella group responsible for teacher training, summer dancing in the park, the Demonstration Team, and events like the Betwixt and Between, Burns Supper, annual ball and annual workshop. This has left other groups and clubs free to develop their own distinctive style and identity, and the range of approaches to teaching and dancing in our area is one of our strengths. Following are accounts of several of these groups, most written by their own members and leaders.

Burnaby Scottish Country Dance Club

By Elizabeth Peerless

In September 1972, Flora Thompson was appointed by the Vancouver Branch to teach a Monday night school class offered by the Burnaby School Board at the Bonsor Community Centre. A core of keen members soon emerged. Numbers grew and in 1973 a beginners' class was started, taught by John Duke.

In 1974 the arrangement with the School Board ceased and Burnaby became an independent club, responsible for finding and funding its own space and teachers. Maggie Misfeldt was the first club president. The new dance location was at Edmonds Secondary School on Edmonds and Canada Way.

In 1977 three members of the class, Maggie Misfeldt, Doris Tycho and Eileen Bennett, tutored by Margaret Zadworny, successfully took their Preliminary Teaching Certificate, with Miss Milligan herself as the examiner. Two years later they gained their Full Certificate, this time with Nancy Arnott as the examiner.

The Burnaby Club now functioned at the James Cowan complex and offered three classes, with the senior class on Mondays and intermediate and beginners' classes on Wednesdays. The club also organized and ran three functions a year: a Fall dance in November, a Spring dance in March and a summer Tea Dance at the Burnaby Lake Pavilion.



Long-time members of Burnaby Club at 40th anniversary dance: L to R Elizabeth Peerless, Susan and Gerry Stensgaard, Janette Steel, Pat and Drum Cavers

The members have always enjoyed many social gatherings outside class time and events. In the early years there were trips to the Calgary workshops at the Banff Springs and Chateau Lake Louise Hotels. There were Burns Night excursions to the Harrison Hot Springs Hotel. One hasn't lived unless one has experienced a happy group in the hot tub at Harrison at 2 a.m. belting out "The Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen."

This socializing has long been a feature of the club with annual picnics, a group trip dancing around Scotland in 2011, and a large contingent sharing a house at the Seattle Fort Worden workshop in 2014.

Since 1990, the club has been taught by Rosemary Coupe with the assistance of Elizabeth Peerless and Cathrine Conings. After many years at the Edmonds Seniors' Community Centre, in 2013 the class moved to the Scandinavian Community Centre in central Burnaby.



*Burnaby annual dance, March 2015
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*

Carisbrooke Scottish Country Dance Club

By Cathrine Conings

The Carisbrooke Club, founded in 1970, was named after the elementary school in the Upper Lonsdale area whose gym has served as its headquarters. It was the first Scottish dance club in North Vancouver, started by the Caledonian Society and the RSCDS as a joint project. Bob Menzies ran the club, which in its first year had 60 dancers, taught by none other than Mary Murray. She certainly gave it a wonderful start!

After that, the club benefitted from a number of excellent teachers, including Doris Tycho, Mairi Morgan, Alison Steele, John Allan, Barbara MacPhail, Alan Brown, and Mary Anderson. Liz Johnston, who started with the club when it began, became a teacher for Carisbrooke in about six years. After Bob Menzies, Joe Hutton was at the helm for a time, then Bob again briefly, before the longest-serving chairman and teacher, Charlie Dobie, took over in 1978. In that year Helen Hughes was elected treasurer, after dancing with the group since the beginning. Helen provided the continuity and stability so important for a club with a constantly changing membership.

Also in 1978 Al Hughes decided to vote himself “chairman of the floor” and gave himself “sweeping powers” because the dancers got the gym after the soccer players, who seemed to leave a lot of dirt behind them. In that same year Valerie Ralston served briefly as secretary, then Charlie, his wife Margaret, and Helen found themselves managing the club. The club had a large

membership in those days, and hosted a Valentine’s Dance every year for all the local dancers.

Unfortunately Charlie became ill and had to step down in January 1991. Helen Hughes took over as chairperson. Mary Anderson taught for the winter term, and then Cathrine Conings took up the challenge, working through her preliminary and full teaching certificates with the Carisbrooke dancers as her long-suffering “guinea-pigs”!

Carisbrooke continued to offer classes under Cathrine’s teaching and Helen’s administration until 1998.

Deep Cove Scottish Country Dance Club

By Dorothy Hargreaves

In 1985 I resigned from teaching Branch classes as I was taking a course which demanded much of my time. In the Fall of 1986, a friend in Deep Cove who was in charge of the community programming for the area asked me if I would consider teaching a SCD beginner class. I told her I would if she could find twelve interested people and if it was close to home in Deep Cove. I thought it would take her a long time to find twelve in this area who might be interested.

To my surprise she phoned me within two weeks to say she had twelve and to ask when we could start. Thus our club was born. Of that original group there were, until recently, six still dancing with us. Most of them had Scottish heritage, but some like me just loved to dance.



*Dorothy with her Branch Award, 2010
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*

We have held our classes in many venues around Deep Cove: all the local schools and then Parkgate Community Centre when it opened. Recently we moved to Maplewood School, which is as far west as we can go without being out of the Deep Cove / Seymour area.

As our beginners became advanced, I started a new beginners' class. A few years ago one of our founding members, Kay Sutherland, obtained her teaching certificate and is now teaching one of the classes. During the years five women from Deep Cove have gained their certificates and we now have a teaching team of four instead of one.



*Deep Cove Dance 2015: current teachers Kay Sutherland (L) and Alison Moen (centre)
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDenitt*

Delta Borderers Scottish Country Dance Club *By Ruth and Alex Jappy*

The Delta Borderers Class was started in the fall of 1978 with approximately 13–15 people. Heading up the original group were Alister and Doreen McCorquodale who danced in Vancouver for many years and lived in Tsawwassen. So for the first few years, the class was held in Tsawwassen. The class was attracting people from other areas and therefore was moved to Ladner for easier access. Some years later and for the same reasons, the class moved to Richmond and remains there today.

I started teaching with Alex and Maureen playing for the class in 1979, and together Alex and I have

had a wonderful association with the Delta Borderers over these many years. Music has always been a huge part of the class, and we have always focused on making the dancers aware of it. We therefore started running Friday night socials where we could dance to Alex and Maureen along with other musicians in a social atmosphere rather than a class. These proved to be very successful even though there was no published program, and dancing to the music was always the focus.

The club has been run in the same manner for all these years and with some of the same people in charge – namely founding members Jim and Mairi Maxwell, Allan and Christine Fairbairn, and Emily Gordon. Over the years we lost the McCorquodales and Bob and Ann Simpson who were stalwarts of the club. We are very fortunate, like many other clubs, in having many willing helpers to do whatever is needed.



*Delta Borderers founder members, 1978
Photo courtesy of Mary Ann McDevitt*

We held our 10th Anniversary celebration at the Gizeh Temple on 19 March 1988 with music by the Alex Jappy Trio consisting of Alex, Maureen and Freddy Collins on drums.

On 18 March 1989 we held our first Spring Fling at St. Joseph the Worker Hall in Richmond. We brought out from Toronto Bobby Brown and Kathy Fraser, so along with Alex, Maureen and Freddy we had a five-piece band on stage. One week later on March 24 we ran an evening of Modern and Old Time Dancing at the Cultural

Centre. Both these events were greatly enjoyed by all who attended. For the next four years until 1993, we continued bringing Bobby and Kathy out to head up our Spring Flings. The 1990 Spring Fling was held at St. Joseph the Worker, and then in 1991 we moved to the Gizeh Temple, a wonderful venue for dancing.



Alex and Ruth Jappy at the Spring Fling, 2003

Our goal had always been to bring the entire band of Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent out to play. On 19 March 1994, we achieved that, leading of course to an instant hit with all the dancers. Here in Vancouver: the best SCD band and the best floor to dance on. Our Spring Flings continued until 15 March 2008, the last one that we did as a club. We held 20 Spring Flings in all.



*Scottish Accent Band at the Delta Spring Fling:
L to R Laird Brown, Fred Collins, Don Wood,
Bobby Brown, Kathy Fraser-Collins*

We continue to run our November dance in Tsawwassen and since 2008 we have held a series of dances focusing on music from bygone eras and tributes to many of the great bands. On 28 November 1998, we invited Donald Bartlett from Toronto to play with Alex, a wonderful reunion of these two musicians. In November of 2013 and 2014 we again had the pleasure of inviting Donald, this time to play solo piano. This was great exposure for the dancers as most had never heard Donald playing solo.

Although the club has held many other fun social events over the years (picnics, car rallies, golf tournaments, Christmas Dinner Dances, and our New Year's Evening Dinner/Party), the weekly classes are still about dancing and always about music.

It is a great pleasure to teach this class.

Fort Langley Scottish Country Dance Club

By Derek Bisset

In August 1999, it started with three couples and an enthusiastic teacher-in-training. All got together one afternoon at the Fort Langley Community Centre to take some photos which a kind supporter turned into a brochure advertising a new dance class locally. Much enthusiasm and support since then have produced a very successful dance club.

The brochure went to the local paper, leading to a photo shoot and a full page article. Rebecca used her local connections to find a place to dance; the first classes were set for Tuesdays in September; and the group waited for that first big night. Nearly fifty people, with only six who had danced before! Oh dear! Have you got enough juice, Margot? Over to you, Rebecca. What a debut!

The three original couples (Margot and Tony Popplewell, Karen and Mike Hamilton, Chris and Derek Bisset) had met and danced at the Abbotsford class led by Joan House. Not a lot of dancing experience, but the Fort Langley venue was wonderful. The upstairs floor in the Community Centre was one of the few remaining wood sprung floors so highly prized in early days

for dancing. Fortunately we had Rebecca Blackhall-Peters as a beginning teacher who ought to have been in shock, but instead took it in her stride and started with emphasis on simple dancing and fun; style and formation learning would come in time. It worked and everyone came back for more.

The class developed quickly. Alex Jappy came to play for the Christmas Dance, becoming a regular fixture for years. The enthusiasm carried on into spring and the class continued later than most with the Whisky Tea Dance at the end of May and a wrap-up barbecue in early June including the Voyageurs Canoe dance on the blacktop at the Bissets'. Stella provided the haggis trap as a prize for the biggest mistake of the year.



Fort Langley 5th Anniversary Dance, 2004

The group wanted to emphasize live music and have regularly sponsored musicians specializing in SCD music for dances. Julie Smith plays piano for all classes. When Sid and Lee Dyke decided to hang up their dance shoes, they gave the club a legacy of equipment which raised money for a scholarship fund enabling dancers to attend workshops. Within a few years a group of twenty toured Scotland, dancing with Jessie Stuart in Dufftown and with David Cunningham in Fort William, and ending with the last dance of the summer in Pitlochry. There was birling.

Meanwhile we participated in the May Day parade, dancing at Fort Langley Celtic Days, at Fort Brigade Days, at Campbell Valley Park, and

other events with the emphasis less on demonstration than participation in an enjoyable social activity.



Fort Langley 10th Anniversary Dance, 2009

Dancing elsewhere to gain experience and social interaction with other classes were encouraged early on, with many other teachers and dancers coming to take part in Voyageur activities. Early support from the Vancouver Branch was appreciated. Recognition goes to the class members for supporting activities requiring extra help. Maureen and Larry Onotera joined the class early and have been invaluable in their unfailing efforts to keep the group running smoothly.

Learning to dance socially, meeting dancers in the local area, and then joining a global dance community – all add up to a rewarding experience.



Rebecca Blackhall-Peters (2nd from L) with members of Fiddlesticks and Ivory Band at Fort Langley Dance, 2004

Glenayre Scottish Country Dance Club
Information from Betty Lyon, Jean and Ed Wagstaff, and Brian Corbould

In the very early 1960s, an informal group began dancing in the home of Greta Smith, who lived in the Glenayre district of Port Moody. About 1963, when the group became too large for Greta's house, it moved into Glenayre School and evolved into the Glenayre SCD Club. Classes and dances continued at Glenayre School into the 1980s. Greta Smith also led the Glenayre Junior Dancers, who took two awards in the 1969 Children's SCD Festival. In 1970, Greta left to return to Scotland, where she later became the Vancouver Branch representative at the RSCDS AGM.

Glenayre prospered under its new teacher, Mary Murray. When an adult SCD competition was held at the Highland Games in Mission, the Glenayre team, coached by Mary, won in both 1970 and 1971. Team members, who included many stalwart early members, were Bob Currie, Bill Lyon, Glen Allan, Mike Miller, Harriet Allan, Betty Lyon, Isabel McCartney, and Mairi Morgan.



*The winning Glenayre team, 1970
Photo courtesy of Jean Wagstaff*

When Glenayre held a Christmas party in 1971, the Branch newsletter reported, "Every dancer from miles around must have been there." The spring dance of 1972 was obviously well attended too, as we read that the Glenayre Club had the record for the area's largest turnout excluding the Branch Ball. In November 1974, Glenayre and

Burnaby held a joint fundraising dance with ballroom dancing and entertainment as well as SCD, and the newsletter reported that 200 attended and "the floor was jumping all evening."

In 1975 Glenayre held the first dance at which Ian Price's band Schiehallion played. Classes took place for some years in various Coquitlam schools, and later in the Cameron Community Centre and the Dogwood Recreation Centre. Since 2008 the club has met at the Jewish Community Centre near Coquitlam Centre. Teachers for beginner and intermediate classes have included Mairi Morgan, Jane Price, Mike Miller, Dorothy Hargreaves, Liz Johnston, Colette Hamner, and since 1989 Glenayre's current teacher Jean Wagstaff, who now shares the joint Beginner-Intermediate class with Fran Hillier.

The dance *Schiehallion* was popular among group members too. Brian Corbould, who joined the club in 1976, remembers the beginner group learning and practising that complicated dance, with its "zoomin' loops" as described by Liz Johnston: "We were determined we were going to do it."

For the past few years, the Glenayre Club have gone en masse to the Fort Langley St. Andrews Dance, held on a Tuesday, class night for both clubs. Musicians for this event have been Alex Jappy and Mary Ross, and Jean Wagstaff wanted her new dancers especially to experience dancing to live music. The Fort Langley dancers reciprocate by attending the Glenayre Christmas dance.



*Glenayre annual dance 2015: Louise Steinway
and Ed Wagstaff dancing in centre
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*



*Glenayre members at 50th anniversary dance, April 2013: L to R in centre teacher Jean Wagstaff and long-time members Brian Corbould, Alison Hume, Beth Armour, and Cathie Devlin
Photo courtesy of Jean Wagstaff*

Gleneagles Scottish Country Dance Club

By Marion Dutcher, Archivist, and Simon Scott, Teacher

Inspired by the dancing in the 1960 film *Tunes of Glory*, Dean MacKay and wife Jean along with other member-couples of the Gleneagles Golf Club of West Vancouver approached Mary Shoolbraid for instruction. From the sounds of a piper outside the Clubhouse for one evening's event, other local couples were attracted. So in 1962 the Gleneagles Scottish Country Dance Club was on its way with some 40 members. Harvey Barnes and Simon Scott then became the Club's teachers.

Classes grew at various levels and were later taught by May Loudon, Janet Dickson, Alison Steele, also Hellen Stephen, Rosemary Coupe, Dorothy Hargreaves, and Maureen Hood, then Phyllis Gaskell, Scott Macdonald, Marie Disiewicz and Louise Murphy.

The Club's annual highlight is the Gleneagles Ball, just before Christmas each year, the first formal Ball being held in 1967. The first musicians to play for these special occasions were Murray Black and the Teuchters. Others have

included fiddler Alasdair Fraser and pianist Stan Hamilton, Ian Price and the Schiehallion Band, the Alex Jappy Trio, Angus MacKinnon and the Scots Canadians, fiddler Calum MacKinnon, the San Francisco band Fiddlesticks and Ivory, and continuously for the past 21 years the Vancouver Fiddle Orchestra.



Gleneagles teachers Janet Dickson, Simon Scott, and May Loudon with copies of tunes named for them in the Schiehallion recording of John Drewry's dance Gleneagles Dominie, 1979

In 1977, for the first time, the annual ball was held in the Pacific Ballroom of the Canadian Pacific Hotel in downtown Vancouver. This resplendent Ballroom in the renamed Fairmont Hotel Vancouver continues to be the venue of choice. On this occasion, the annual balls of 1988, 2003 and 2013 were recognized and celebrated as the Club's 25th Silver Anniversary Ball, the 40th Ruby Anniversary Ball, and the grand 50th Golden Anniversary Ball.



Grand March at the Gleneagles Ball

Gleneagles is a cultural and social club of long standing in West Vancouver. On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary Ball the District's Mayor sent a letter of congratulation, as did the Chairman of the RSCDS. Greetings were also received from the Lieutenant Governor of BC on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Patron of our worldwide society.

Richmond Reelers

By Nan McKay

The Richmond Reelers dancing group commenced in 1994-95 because of a Burns supper held in the local Presbyterian Church when the organizers "imported" dancers! We ladies said, "We will dance next year," and we did.

We are still going strong and have three of the original members with us. We have had a few teachers throughout the years and now we are fortunate to have Laurie Lang.

Thursday Thistles

By Laurie Lang

It had come to my attention that there was no morning class. It became my mission to start one at the Vancouver Branch – a class I thoroughly enjoyed. Marie Disiewicz

In the summer of 2012 I met with Marie as she wanted to give a "new" teacher a chance to teach using the skills she had acquired. Thus I took over the class in October, 2012. We are a small social group who prepare for upcoming programs by working through the more "difficult" dances, also try out new dances and enjoy each other's comradeship. We named ourselves the Thursday Thistles in September 2014. Our enthusiastic members range up to the age of 92.

West End Scottish Country Dance Club

As soon as he obtained his teaching certificate, Duncan MacKenzie remembers, Jim Fairley insisted that now that Duncan was "certified" he should have a class. Jim did "a lot of the legwork" in organizing the class, and the West End class began in 1992. Residents in the downtown area come and go, so the membership of the club is constantly changing although a few have attended since the beginning. The West End group has always offered teaching practice to those taking teacher training, beginning with Denise Cunningham. Now Denise co-teaches with Duncan; they take turns in preparing the class plan and also alternate teaching dances.



Gerry Stensgaard, Pascaline Denblyden, Lindsay Carter and Alison Moen at the Fall Frolic 2015
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt

The first Fall Frolic was held on 3 September 2011, with Michael Beech playing the pipes to welcome dancers. It has been held every year since, always with live music, most often the Tartan Players. It is a wonderful opening to the new dance season.

West Point Grey Scottish Country Dancers

By Wendy Hutcheon, Margaret Moore, Margaret Nichols, and Ann Thrasher Rogers

One of the early Scottish country dance clubs in Vancouver was started in the 1960s at West Point Grey Presbyterian Church at 12th and Trimble. It was a children's class; Joyce Lind, a young girl from the church, was the instructor. In the 1970s Ron Arrowsmith started the adult class, ably assisted by Jim Shaw who looked after the music. The dancers included Pearl Holmberg, Mary Wattum, Jean Aspinall and Marjorie Thrasher.

One night, Jim turned on the music for the dancers, not realizing that the switch for broadcasting the church bells on a Sunday morning had not been turned off. Wendy Hutcheon, a resident living nearby, heard the music and traced it to the basement door of the church. Opening it, she was graciously invited in by Ron Arrowsmith. Wendy continues as an active dancer in the group.



Back L to R Margaret Nichols, Margaret Moore, Paulina Barnes, Ron Arrowsmith. Front L to R Lorna Mornin, Edward Mornin, Larry Moore
Photo courtesy of Margaret Moore

Ron set an excellent example for dancers to follow. He not only taught dancing, but also wrote many dances. In 1986 Ron wrote a reel – *The Merry Moores* – for the 25th anniversary of

Margaret and Larry Moore, and for Ed and Lorna Mornin he wrote the strathspey *The Mornins' Awa*. In 1994 he published *The Doune Collection of Scottish Country Dances*, and a second collection followed in 1998. Another dance, *The Royal Deeside Railway*, continues to be one of the group's favourite reels. Ron taught the West Point Grey dancers for two decades.

In the 1990s Paulina Barnes became the instructor and wrote dances for the class and for other publications. Her strathspey *The Shamrock* is frequently danced by the group. One night a water pipe broke in the upper floor of the church, and water cascaded down the steps onto the dance floor. The result was another dance by Paulina, *The Great Flood*. When Irene Vavasour, a member of Paulina's class, announced she was to be married in the summer, the group secretly wrote and then performed the dance *Irene's Wedding*. It was danced at her wedding in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1994.



Irene Vavasour (front row 2nd from L) and Wendy Hutcheon (front row R)
Photo courtesy of Margaret Moore

In 2002 the group moved to Aberthau and Irene Vavasour, formerly a member of Paulina's class, became the instructor. Irene received her teaching certificate in 1998. Several couples dancing in our group have announced their engagements at class session. The most recent to include Scottish country dancing at their wedding receptions were Daniel and Fiona Been and Michael and Sandra

Mendenhall. Irene continues as our much appreciated instructor with Wendy Hutcheon as the substitute teacher. In 2015 the class consists of an enthusiastic group varying in age from their mid-twenties to a few of Ron's original dancers who are now in their eighties.

White Rock Scottish Country Dance Club

By Gerda Barwieck

In September 1954, thirteen SCD enthusiasts decided the time was ripe to form a club in the White Rock community. Little would they have imagined that in 2014 a much larger group would be celebrating their Club's success on its 60th anniversary.

Dancing started in October 1954 and continued every second week at the White Rock Hotel, under the guidance of Mrs. Bingham from Vancouver. Music was provided by pianist Mrs. R.M. Dey from New Westminster. In 1956 teaching was taken over by Mrs. Davidson with Mrs. Wintersteen as pianist. The following year weekly dance classes started and a special course was offered for teenagers. In 1958 classes were moved to the Ocean Park Community School, and a record player was purchased.

On 22 October 1959, the SCD Society of BC invited the White Rock group to affiliate with the parent group at a fee of \$10 per annum. The invitation was accepted. Several Club members were privileged to attend a special class taught by Miss Jean Milligan in Vancouver in 1961. In 1967, annual membership of \$2.25 was paid to the RSCDS.

Classes were held at Peace Arch and District School in 1970, and the following year at Peace Arch Elementary School. John Allan of Vancouver taught two successive weeks, followed by two weeks taught by Mrs. Elsie Miller. John Allan was appointed full-time teacher in 1974, and a beginners' class was started. In 1975, Sheena Ellis took over as teacher, and a children's class began. In 1980, Maureen Lyon became the teacher for adults and Robin Leach for children. Membership remained at 25 to 30 dancers.

Elsie Miller and Sheila Carmichael, both founding members of the Club and White Rock residents, were elected Honorary Members marking 25 years' faithful service to the Club.



Founding members Sheila Carmichael, Elsie Miller, and May Duncan at the White Rock 50th Anniversary Ball

A demonstration group of ladies was formed in 1982. They performed at community events and seniors' residences. The Tam O' Shanter Dancers evolved when men joined the group in 1987. The Tams dance frequently in the community and work closely with the White Rock SCD Club to promote SCD and to recruit new members for the regular class.

The first annual Tea Dance was held in 1989 with Quern, a band from Linlithgow, Scotland. It is now an established end-of-season event.

A banquet and ball marked the Club's 40th anniversary at the Gizeh Temple, Burnaby, in April 1995. To commemorate this occasion a decorative quilt was fashioned by members of the Club and signed by all those present at the ball. It is now proudly presented on special occasions.

The Club celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a very successful 50th Anniversary Ball at the Star of the Sea Hall, White Rock, on 16 October 2004, with music by the Vancouver Fiddle Orchestra. A commemorative plaque was presented to the Club by Judy Forster, the Mayor of the City of White Rock. Sadly by the end of the year we bade a final goodbye to Sheila Carmichael, the last active founding member of the Club.

Maureen Lyon was honoured at the 2005 Spring Tea Dance and presented with a Celtic pin for her

25 years of dedication as the Club teacher. Alex Jappy played for this very popular event. A first picnic was held at Redwood Park.

Highlights of the 2005–06 season were the Annual May Tea Dance which attracted over 100 dancers to the Star of the Sea Hall, and the White Rock Spirit of the Sea Torchlight Parade in August.

Mary Ross from Victoria played for a very successful 2007 Spring Tea Dance. In 2008 John Carmichael, accordionist from Glasgow, was invited to play for the Spring Tea Dance. A lively ceilidh dance rounded out John's visit.

At the annual RSCDS Love to Dance event in March 2009, teacher Maureen Lyon was presented with the RSCDS Vancouver Branch Award in recognition of her contribution to SCD and Gaelic activities over the last 30 years.

For the Club's 55th anniversary in 2009, John Carmichael returned to provide his very special music. A book of dances by Club members was compiled for this event. After earning awards for the past three years, a float was entered for the last time at the White Rock Torchlight Parade.



White Rock 55th Anniversary: April Phillips and Hamish Jackson dancing in centre

The success of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games was marked by a dance, *Olympic Celebration*, displaying the formation of five

interlocking circles representing the symbol of the Olympics.

Accordianist Gordon Shand from Scotland, joined by local drummer Bill O' Donnell, played for the 2011 May Tea Dance. They also entertained ceilidh dance enthusiasts at the Elks Hall in White Rock. The Club hosted the annual RSCDS Lady Aberdeen Tea Dance at the Scottish Cultural Centre on Remembrance Day 2011.

In 2012 the Annual Spring Tea Dance was renamed the Annual May Dance, and held on a Saturday evening. Renowned accordionist Jim Lindsay from Scotland joined by local drummer Bill O'Donnell provided the music. Vancouver's own Tartan Players played for the Club's 2013 Annual May Dance.



*Marian Anderson Band play at White Rock 60th Anniversary Ball, May 2014, with teacher Maureen Lyon on R
Photo courtesy of Kerry McDevitt*

In March 2014, a group of members performed at the Celtic Fest at the Cloverdale Museum. In the same month the Club hosted a successful Spring Workshop. To commemorate the Club's 60th anniversary in early May 2014, members, friends and supporters enjoyed a Gala Ball at Star of the Sea Hall in White Rock, to the very special music of Marian Anderson. Max Ketchin, and Jim Nicol, all from Scotland.

The Club hosted spring and fall workshops for intermediate and experienced dancers in 2015. Music for the Annual May Dance was provided by Lindsay Weir and Colin Garvin.

Concluding Comment

The survey of dance history at the beginning of this account suggested that social dancing may be seen in two ways: as a discipline and as an expression of community. Several of the people we interviewed believed that Vancouver Scottish country dancers have become less concerned with maintaining high standards of dancing than they once were. However, clubs are all about community. Several interviewees stressed the vital importance of communal feeling, especially among newer dancers learning together.

Kay Sutherland, for example, made this comment about the early days of Deep Cove:

We were all beginners, but quickly we were doing things like Clutha and Bratach Bana – we did get quite messed up, and we ended in gales of laughter . . . We were always a very sociable group partly because we were all located [in Deep Cove]. . . . It was very much a community activity, so lots of us became really good friends.

Also, Ed and Jean Wagstaff and Brian Corbould remember the days when dances on a program were not briefed and they would get together with a group of Glenayre friends to practise: “You really got to know each other.”

The images on the right show on the one hand the happy community of dancers and on the other the sheer joy of the dance which is possible once the discipline is mastered.



Branch members on Canada Day 2013



*Sandy Marshall and Katherine Shearman of the
Demonstration Team, November 2015
Photo courtesy of Dave Clendenan*

Appendix A ... First Fifty Years of the Vancouver Branch: A Timeline

1964	(14 April) Vancouver dancers vote to become a branch of the RSCDS	1970	(May) Annual weekend, Totem Park: Paulina Barnes, John Duigeman, Sheila Gairns, Stewart Smith, Margaret Zadworny teach
1964	(7 July) First Branch AGM		
1964	(September) First Branch classes held at Dunbar Community Centre	1970	Carisbrooke SCD Club formed with teacher Mary Murray
1964	(November) First Branch Ball at Georgia Hotel: Murray Black and the Teuchters play	1971	(February) Annual Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Teuchters play
1965	(January) Branch Demonstration Team formed under direction of Mary Shoolbraid	1971	(September) John Allan, Sheila Brown, Frances Clairmont, Katie Dunn, Gerry Dunn, Marian Elliot, Michael Miller, Jim Murray, Flora Thompson, Iris Woodruff, Stevens Woodruff pass Preliminary Test; Mary Murray, Josie Sleightholme pass Full Certificate
1965	(October) Harvey Barnes, Sheila Gairns, Nina Thurston, Beryl MacMillan, Barbara MacPhail, Margaret Zadworny pass Preliminary Certificate		
1965	(November) Annual Ball, Coachhouse: Teuchters play	1972	(February) Annual Ball, at Hotel Vancouver: Jack Rennie and the Thistle Band play
1966	(May) Annual weekend, Totem Park, UBC, sponsored by Camp Committee; Teuchters play	1972	Branch class formed in Burnaby with teacher Flora Thompson
1967	Branch takes over the running of dancing in Stanley Park	1973	(February) Annual Ball, at Hotel Vancouver: Thistle Band play
1967	(May) Annual weekend, Totem Park: Paulina Barnes, Tom Flett, Beryl Macmillan, Ena McNaught, Margaret Zadworny teach	1973	(October) Alan Brown, John Duke, May Loudon, Marie Morgan, Jessie McCready, Hugh McCready, Alison Steele, Stan Ward pass Preliminary Test; John Allan, Gerry Dunn, Katie Dunn, Mike Miller, Jim Murray, Iris Woodruff, Stevens Woodruff pass Full Certificate
1967	(October) Bob Hutton, Simon Scott, Greta Smith pass Preliminary Test; Margaret Zadworny passes Full Certificate	1973	(May) First "Vancouver Weekend," St Francis de Sales, Burnaby: Iain MacFarlane, Stewart Smith, Hugh Thurston, Margaret Zadworny teach
1967	(October) Workshop; Mina Corson and Stewart Smith teach		
1968	(February) Annual Ball, Coachhouse: Teuchters play	1974	(January) First Branch Burns Supper
1969	(February) Annual Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Teuchters play	1974	(March) Annual Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Thistle Band play
1969	(May) Annual workshop, Totem Park: Paulina Barnes, Mary Brandon, John Duigeman, Stewart Smith, Hugh Thurston teach	1974	Branch classes centralized at Scottish Auditorium on Fir Street
1969	(October) Mary Murray passes Preliminary Test; Barbara MacPhail, Simon Scott pass Full Certificate	1974	(May) Annual weekend: Bob Blackie, Mary Brandon, Elinor MacKenzie, Hugh Thurston teach
1970	(February) Annual Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Teuchters play	1975	(March) Annual Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Thistle Band play
		1975	(April) Miss Milligan visits

- 1975 (May) Annual weekend, Capilano College: Bob Blackie, Jeanetta McColl, Mary Nixon, Hugh Thurston teach
- 1975 Schiehallion Band formed
- 1976 (April) Annual weekend, Langara College: John Kelly, Jean Patrick, Marianne Taylor, Hugh Thurston teach; Schiehallion play
- 1976 (April) Annual Ball, Carson Graham School: Stan Hamilton and the Flying Scots play
- 1977 (April) Combined workshop and ball, Jericho and Hotel Vancouver: Bob Blackie, Ena McNaughton, June Shore teach; Schiehallion play
- 1977 (April) Eileen Bennett, Janet Dickson, Maggie Misfeldt, Doris Tycho, George Will pass Preliminary Test; Sheila Brown, Judy Davis, Audrey Gordon, Liz Johnston, May Loudon pass Full Certificate
- 1978 (April) Workshop & Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Sandy Bain, Mary Brandon, Bobby Watson teach (236 at workshop); Schiehallion play
- 1978 Delta Borderers SCD Club formed with teacher Ruth Jappy
- 1979 Kerrisdale Seniors group begins, with instructor Ron Arrowsmith
- 1979 (March) Workshop & Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Bob Blackie, Duncan McLeod, Paul Sarvis, Stewart Smith teach; Schiehallion play
- 1979 (May) Christine Abercrombie, Dorothy Ross, Barbara Warman, Charlie Dobie pass Preliminary Test; Mary Anderson, Eileen Bennett, Ruth Jappy, Maggie Misfeldt, Doris Tycho pass Full Certificate
- 1980 Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church group begins, with teacher Hellen Stephen; continues to Jan. 2000
- 1980 (May) Workshop & Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Sandy Bain, George Emmerson, Stewart Smith, Elinor Vandegrift teach; Don Bartlett and His Scotians play
- 1981 Dorothy Hargreaves, Jane Price pass Preliminary Test; Charlie Dobie passes Full Certificate
- 1981 (April) Workshop & Ball, Hotel Vancouver: Wes Clindinning, George Emmerson, John Middleton teach; Schiehallion play
- 1982 (April) Workshop & Ball, Four Seasons: Bob Blackie, Mary Brandon, Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach; Schiehallion play
- 1983 (April) Workshop & Ball, Four Seasons: Sandy Bain, Wes Clindinning, Georgina Finlay, May Loudon, Mike Warren teach; Schiehallion play
- 1983 (May) Heather Mann passes Preliminary Test; Joan Axford, Harvey Barnes, Bob Vroom pass Full Certificate
- 1985 (April) Workshop & Ball, Bayshore: Bob Blackie, Johan MacLean, Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach; Schiehallion play
- 1986 (March) Ball, Bayshore: Schiehallion play
- 1986 (August) Week-long Expo Workshop, St George's School: Bob Blackie, Alastair MacFadyen, Mary Murray, Simon Scott, teach
- 1986 *Vancouver Collection* of dances published
- 1986 Branch classes held at new Scottish Cultural Centre on Hudson Street
- 1987 (April) Workshop & Ball: Bruce Hamilton, Ruth Jappy, Nancy McLaren, George Will; Schiehallion play
- 1987 (April) Anne Bancroft, Charles McIntyre, Kay McIntyre, Rosemary Read pass Preliminary Test; Janet Dickson, Monica Roots pass Full Certificate
- 1987 (August) TAC AGM held at Scottish Cultural Centre
- 1987 Deep Cove SCD Club formed with teacher Dorothy Hargreaves
- 1988 (May) 256-some Reel, Simon Fraser University: SFU Pipe Band play
- 1988 (May) Workshop, UBC: Wes Clindinning, Simon Scott, Elinor Vandegrift, George Will teach
- 1988 TAC AGM weekend, Scottish Cultural Centre
- 1989 (May) Workshop, UBC: Bob Blackie, Mary Murray, Marianne Taylor teach
- 1989 (November) Chairmen's Ball, Gizeh Temple, sponsored by past Chairmen; Schiehallion play

- 1990 Vancouver Fiddle Orchestra formed
- 1990 (May) Workshop & Ball, UBC: Dorothy Leurs, Mary Murray, Simon Scott, David Tague teach; Alasdair Fraser and Barbara MacDonald Magone play
- 1991 (March) Cathrine Conings, Clayne Conings, Gael Forster, Colette Hamner, Elizabeth Peerless pass Preliminary Test; Barbara Campbell, Maureen Hood, Rosemary Read, Jean Wagstaff pass Full Certificate
- 1991 (May) Workshop & Ball, UBC: Ron Arrowsmith, Marjorie Easton, Liz Johnston, John Middleton teach; Barley Bree play
- 1992 Richmond Reelers formed
- 1992 New class at downtown YMCA; evolves into High Glen class which meets at St Andrews-Wesley Church to 1999
- 1992 (May) Workshop & Ball, UBC: Rosemary Coupe, Dorothy Hargreaves, Robert McOwen teach; Barley Bree play
- 1993 (January) Jean Hudson's Book of the Month class begins
- 1993 (April) Liz Gray, Julie King, Duncan MacKenzie, Jack Vlug, Dorie Smith pass Preliminary Test; Cathrine Conings, Clayne Conings, Maureen Lyon pass Full Certificate
- 1993 (May) Workshop & Ball, Royal Towers: Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach
- 1993 (June) "Golden Girls" Liz Johnston, Elspeth Rennie, Dorie Smith, Jean Wagstaff host birthday dance at Squamish Nation hall; Schiehallion play
- 1993 (September) Inverary step dance class with teacher Barbara Campbell starts
- 1994 (March) First West Coast appearance of full Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent Band at Delta Spring Fling
- 1994 (May) Workshop & Ball, UBC & Delbrook CC: Dorothy Hargreaves, Maureen Lyon, Tony Moretti teach; VFO play
- 1995 (April) Joan House, Duncan MacKenzie, Elizabeth Peerless, Dorie Smith, Jack Vlug pass Full Certificate
- 1995 (May) First Whistler workshop: Bob Blackie, Mary Murray, Elinor Vandegrift, Ron Wallace teach; Scottish Accent play
- 1995 West End SCD Club formed with teacher Duncan MacKenzie
- 1996 John Drewry visits Vancouver
- 1996 (February) Mini-Workshop, USCC: Liz Gray, Ruth Jappy, Simon Scott teach; Murray Shoolbraid and Friends play
- 1996 (March) Branch newsletter renamed *The White Cockade*
- 1996 Bob Armour, Elizabeth Breuer, Cathrine Conings, Wendy Hutcheon give birthday dance
- 1996 Vancouver Branch incorporated under BC Societies Act
- 1997 (March) Fran Caruth, Dianne Evans, Marie Disiewicz, Marion Heath, Shelagh Hodgins pass Preliminary Test; Colette Hamner passes Full Certificate
- 1997 (May) Whistler Workshop: Johan MacLean, Robert McOwen, David Tague teach; Scottish Accent play
- 1997 Angela Gauld launches Branch website
- 1998 (January) Pearl Holmberg bequest announced
- 1998 (February) Mini-Workshop, SCC: Dorothy Hargreaves, Mary Murray, Elinor Vandegrift teach; Alex Jappy and Maureen O'Brien play
- 1998 (August) TAC Summer School held at UBC: Cathrine Conings leads local committee
- 1999 (April) Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, Penelope Bornhold, Raymond Perkins, Ed Pitkin, Judi Hallenbeck pass Preliminary Test; Fran Caruth, Dianne Evans, Linda McDonald pass Full Certificate.
- 1999 (May) Whistler Workshop: Marjorie McLaughlin, Simon Scott, Geoffrey Selling teach; Scottish Accent play
- 1999 Fort Langley Voyageurs formed with teacher Rebecca Blackhall-Peters
- 1999 (December 31) Millennium Hogmanay: John Ellis and His Highland Country Band play (sponsored by Mary Wattum)
- 2000 Hellen Stephen's class at Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church ends after 20 years
- 2000 (February) Back to Basics Workshop, SCC: Ruth Jappy, Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach; Mary Ross and Siobhan Monaghan play

- 2000 Mary Murray awarded RSCDS Scroll of Honour
- 2000 (May) First Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, SCC: Johan MacLean teaches dance; Iain Fraser and Muriel Johnstone teach music
- 2000 (December 31) Shoestring Hogmanay organized by Howard Meredith and Wendy Swaine
- 2001 (February) Back to Basics Workshop, SCC: Rosemary Coupe, Bruce Hamilton, May Loudon teach; Scuttlebutt play
- 2001 Denise Cunningham, Phyllis Gaskell, Yvonne Worobec pass Preliminary Test; Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, Judi Hallenbeck pass Full Certificate
- 2001 (May) Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, SCC: Elma McCausland teaches dance; Bobby Brown and band members teach music
- 2001 Duncan MacKenzie holds his first Ceilidh Dance
- 2002 (February) Back to Basics Workshop, USCC: Mary Murray, Rebecca Blackhall Peters, Wes Clindinning teach; Scuttlebutt play at Beginners' Ball
- 2002 (April) Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, SCC: Bruce Frazer teaches dance; Ralph Gordon, Andy Imbrie, Calum MacKinnon teach music
- 2002 (May) Pacific Spirit Ball, Squamish Nation Centre: David Cunningham Band play (sponsored by Mary Wattum)
- 2003 (February) Back to Basics Workshop, SCC: Bob Anderson, May Loudon, Margaret McMurtry teach; Mary Ross plays for Beginners' Ball
- 2003 (May) First Youth Weekend West, West Point Grey
- 2003 (April) Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, SCC: Ian Hall teaches dance; Ralph Gordon, Andy Imbrie, Calum MacKinnon teach music
- 2003 Pat Blair, Sandra Crosby, Kathryn Knowles, Hazel MacDonald, Scott MacDonald pass Preliminary Test; Denise Cunningham, Phyllis Gaskell pass Full Certificate
- 2003 (October) "Vancouver Dances," SCC (program of dances devised by Vancouver Branch members) organized by Rosemary Coupe and Elizabeth Peerless
- 2004 (February) Love to Dance workshop, SCC: Fran Caruth, Liz Gray, Peter McClure teach; Scuttlebutt play for Beginners' Ball
- 2004 (May) Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, SCC: Helen Frame teaches dance; Barbara McOwen, Jennifer Wilson teach music
- 2005 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: Ruth Jappy, Fiona Miller, Irene Paterson teach; Mary Ross plays for Beginners' Ball
- 2005 Michelle Campbell, Davina Crowe, Jon Roney, Raymond Thomson pass Preliminary Test; Pat Blair, Hazel MacDonald, Kathryn Knowles pass Part 2
- 2005 (May) First Thistle Ball, Squamish Nation Centre: Marian Anderson Band play (sponsored by Mary Wattum)
- 2005 *Ruby Anniversary Collection* of dances by Branch members published
- 2005 (October) "Vancouver Assembly," SCC (re-creation of an 18th-century Assembly) organized by Rosemary Coupe and Elizabeth Peerless
- 2006 Branch Awards given to Ron Arrowsmith, Rosemary Coupe, Ruth Jappy, May Loudon, Duncan MacKenzie, Mary Murray, Elspeth Rennie, Hellen Stephen, Mary Wattum
- 2006 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: John and Jennifer Kelly, Mary Murray teach; Ron Krug and Ken Natrass play
- 2006 (May) Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, SCC: Ann Dix teaches dance; Elke Baker and Liz Donaldson teach music
- 2006 Ruth Jappy awarded RSCDS Scroll of Honour
- 2006 (September) Cathrine Conings, Wendy Hutcheon, Elizabeth Smith, Yvonne Worobec give birthday dance
- 2007 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: Rebecca Blackhall Peters, Barbara Campbell, Heather Flint, Bill Zobel teach; Muriel Johnstone and Keith Smith play
- 2007 (April) Barbara Bell, Richard Bennett, Karen Marshall, Gail Sibley, Kay

- Sutherland pass Teaching Certificate Part 1; Sandra Crosby, June McFadden, Gordon Robinson pass Part 2
- 2008 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: Barbara Johnston, Hazel MacDonald, Simon Scott teach; Deby Benton-Grosjean, Liz Donaldson, Calum MacKinnon play
- 2008 (May) Pearl Holmberg Workshop for Teachers and Musicians, SCC: Lesley Martin teaches dance; Neil Copland, Maureen Rutherford teach music
- 2008 (May) Thistle Ball, Squamish Nation Centre: Neil Copland Band play
- 2008 (November) Marie Disiewicz sponsors Heartland social and ball, SCC; Colin Dewar Band play
- 2009 Branch Awards given to Maureen Hood, Al and Helen Hughes, Maureen Lyon
- 2009 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC
- 2009 (May) Fran Hillier, Laurie Lang, Heather Main, Rebecca Mintz, Louise Murphy, Katherine Shearman pass Teaching Certificate Part 1; Richard Bennett, Karen Marshall, Gail Sibley pass Part 2
- 2009 (September) Marie Disiewicz starts her Thursday morning class at SCC. This evolves into the "Thursday Thistles" taught by Laurie Lang
- 2009 (October) "First Fifty Favourites," SCC (dance program covering five decades of dancing in Vancouver) organized by Rosemary Coupe and Elizabeth Peerless; Tartan Players play
- 2010 (March) First Heather Ball, Gizeh Temple: Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent play
- 2010 Branch Award given to Dorothy Hargreaves
- 2011 (February) Love to Dance Workshop: Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach; Tartan Players play
- 2011 (March) Heather Ball, SCC: The Scottish Accent play
- 2011 (May) Bernadette Edmond passes Teaching Certificate Part 1; Fran Hillier, Laurie Lang, Louise Murphy, Katherine Shearman, Kay Sutherland pass Part 2
- 2012 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach; Tartan Players play
- 2012 (March) Heather Ball, Gizeh: The Scottish Accent play
- 2012 (June) Duncan and Margaret MacKenzie give dance to celebrate their 25th anniversary of dancing, SCC: Tartan Players and VFO play
- 2013 (February) Love to Dance Workshop: Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach; Tartan Players play
- 2013 (February) Branch Award given to Fran Caruth
- 2013 (March) Heather Ball, Gizeh: Gordon Shand Band play
- 2013 (March) Branch award given to Kirsten Earl of Terrace
- 2013 (April) Glenayre Club 50th anniversary dance
- 2013 Lindsay Carter, Gael Forster, Sarah Kell, Mary Ann McDevitt, Alison Moen, Louise Steinway pass Teaching Certificate Part 1
- 2013 (December) 50th annual Gleneagles Ball
- 2014 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: Mary Murray, Simon Scott teach; Tartan Players play
- 2014 (March) Heather Ball, Gizeh: Scotch Mist Band play
- 2014 (May) White Rock 60th anniversary ball: Marian Anderson Band play
- 2015 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: Rebecca Blackhall Peters, Maureen Lyon, Gordon Robinson teach; Tartan Players play
- 2015 (March) Golden Jubilee Ball. Hellenic CC: Torridon Scottish Dance Band play
- 2015 (March) Branch Award given to Jean Wagstaff
- 2015 (March) *Golden Anniversary Collection* of dances by Branch members published
- 2015 (May) Daniel Been, Karin Wagstaff pass Teaching Certificate Part 1; Crystal Goodwin, Alison Moen, Rachel Pusey, Louise Steinway pass Part 2
- 2016 (February) Love to Dance Workshop, SCC: Rebecca Blackhall-Peters and Ruth Jappy teach

Appendix B ... Branch Boards

1964–65:

Chair Bob Simpson, Treasurer Alistair Ross, Secretary Beryl MacMillan, Members at Large Sheena Ellis, Mary Shoolbraid, Tommy Craig, Denys Lloyd, Jack Miller; Honorary President Dr. J.B. MacDonald (President of UBC), Honorary Vice-Presidents Mrs. Ella Bingham, Mrs. Mary Isdale MacNab.

1965–66:

Chair Bob Simpson, Treasurer Alistair Ross, Secretary Nina Thurston, Members at Large Sheena Ellis, Mary Shoolbraid (replaced by Laurie Shearer), Harvey Barnes, Denys Lloyd, Jack Miller.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Mary Shoolbraid, Archivist Pam Jeacocke.

1966–67:

Chair Bob Simpson, Treasurer Alistair Ross, Secretary Moira Black, Members at Large Jenny Craig, Judy Davis, Pam Jeacocke, Harvey Barnes (replaced by Bob Hutton January 1967), John Hicks.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Mary Shoolbraid (replaced by Pauline Barnes), Archivist Pam Jeacocke, Editors John and Jessie Hicks.

1967–68:

Chair Bob Simpson, Treasurer Alistair Ross, Secretary Moira Black, Members at Large Judy Davis, Pam Jeacocke, Bob Hutton, Alec Marshall, John Williamson.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Pauline Barnes, Archivist Pam Jeacocke.

1968–69:

Chair Alistair Ross, Treasurer Denys Lloyd, Secretary Mary Harwood, Members at Large Judy Davis (replaced by Dorothy Burke), Pam Jeacocke, Glen Allan, Bob Hutton, Alec Marshall. Appointments: Senior Instructor Pauline Barnes, Archivist Pam Jeacocke, Editor Pauline Barnes.

1969–70:

Chair Alistair Ross, Treasurer Denys Lloyd, Secretary Mary Harwood, Members at Large Judy Davis, Pam Jeacocke, Glen Allan, Bob Hutton, Alec Marshall.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Pauline Barnes, Archivist Pam Jeacocke, Editor Pauline Barnes.

1970–71:

Chair Alistair Ross, Treasurer Gilbert Anderson, Secretary Mary Harwood, Members at Large Marilyn Angus, Judith Davis, Bob Hutton, Alec Marshall, Flora Thompson.

Appointments: Senior Instructor: Paulina Barnes, Archivist Pam Jeacocke, Editor Judy Davis.

1971–72:

Chair Jim Murray, Treasurer Gilbert Anderson, Corresponding Secretary Jessie McCready, Recording Secretary, Flora Thompson, Membership Secretary Marilyn Angus, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Judith Davis, Bob Hutton, Alec Marshall, Alan Walsh.

Appointments: Senior Instructor: Paulina Barnes, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Judy Davis.

1972–73:

Chair Jim Murray, Treasurer Alan Walsh, Corresponding Secretary Alison Steele, Recording Secretary Marie Morgan, Membership Secretary Eric Fairclough, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Ian Brady, Bob Currie, Judy Davis, Bob Hutton.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Judy Davis.

1973–74:

Chair Jim Murray, Treasurer Andrew MacArthur, Corresponding Secretary Alison Steele, Recording Secretary Marie Morgan, Membership Secretary Eric Fairclough, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Ian Brady, Bob Currie, Judy Davis, Bob Hutton.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Judy Davis.

1974-75:

Chair Denys Lloyd, Treasurer Andrew McArthur, Corresponding Secretary Liz Johnston, Recording Secretary Pearl Brakenridge, Membership Secretary Mary Anderson, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Bob Currie, Judy Davis, Bob Hutton, Ken Morgan.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton.

1975-76:

Chair Bob Currie, Treasurer Andrew McArthur, Corresponding Secretary Liz Johnston, Recording Secretary Fran Ruegg, Membership Secretary Louise MacLeod, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Eileen Bennett, Ian Brady, Ken Morgan, Wilson Youngson.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Fran Ruegg.

1976-77:

Chair Ken Morgan, Treasurer Andrew MacArthur, Corresponding Secretary Jessie McCready (May Loudon from August 1976), Recording Secretary Eileen Bennett, Membership Secretary Leslie Wilson, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Jim Dobie, Derek Hill, Liz Johnston, Fran Ruegg.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Liz Johnston.

1977-78

Chair Ken Morgan, Treasurer Andrew MacArthur, Corresponding Secretary May Loudon, Recording Secretary Eileen Bennett, Membership Secretary Denys Lloyd, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Bob Currie, Liz Johnston, John McLellan, Les Wilson.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Liz Johnston.

1978-79:

Chair Ken Morgan, Treasurer Les Wilson, Corresponding Secretary May Loudon, Recording

Secretary Mary Raphael, Membership Secretary Denys Lloyd. Members at Large Helen Anderson, Bob Currie, Andrew MacArthur, Cathie Miller, Wilson Youngson.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Liz Johnston.

1979-80:

Chair Andrew MacArthur, Treasurer Norman Tycho, Corresponding Secretary May Loudon, Recording Secretary Margaret Zadworny, Membership Secretary Denys Lloyd, Members at Large Cathie Miller, Helen Anderson, Elma Youngson, Malcolm Mayhew, George Will.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Murray, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Liz Johnston.

1980-81

Chair Andrew MacArthur, Treasurer Norman Tycho, Corresponding Secretary May Loudon, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Elma Youngson, Members at Large Cathie Miller, Helen Anderson, Jim Duncan, Ruth Jappy, Jim Murray.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator George Will, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Liz Johnston.

1981-82:

Chair Andrew MacArthur, Treasurer Norman Tycho, Corresponding Secretary May Loudon, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Elma Youngson, Members at Large Helen Anderson, Audrey Gordon, Ruth Jappy, Jim Murray, Pam Jeacocke.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Sheena Ellis, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Liz Johnston.

1982-83:

Chair Jim Gordon, Treasurer Jim Duncan, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Mary Anderson, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson, Members at Large Pam Jeacocke, Liz Johnston, Harvey Barnes, Jim Murray, Bill Watson.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Sheena Ellis, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Liz Johnston.

1983–84:

Chair Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair Bill Jamieson, Treasurer Jim Duncan, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Bill Watson, Members at Large Ann Baker (editor), Nancy Currie, Pam Jeacocke, Harvey Barnes, Jim Murray.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Sheena Ellis, Archivist Bob Hutton, Editor Ann Baker.

1984–85:

Chair Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair Bill Jamieson, Treasurer Jim Duncan, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Bill Watson, Members at Large Nancy Currie, Jim Murray, Joan MacArthur, Dennis Sallaway, Hellen Stephen.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Liz Johnston, Archivist Hellen Stephen, Editor Liz Johnston.

1985–86:

Chair Bill Jamieson (Dennis Sallaway from August 1985), Vice-Chair Dennis Sallaway (Hellen Stephen from August 1985), Treasurer Jim Duncan, Corresponding Secretary Ann Watson, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Bill Watson, Members at Large Joan MacArthur, Derek Hill, Barbara Campbell, Jim Murray, Hellen Stephen. Additional members August 1985: Ken Bennett, Nancy Currie.

Appointments: Senior Instructor Liz Johnston, Archivist Hellen Stephen, Editor Liz Johnston.

1986–87:

Chair Dennis Sallaway, Vice-Chair Hellen Stephen, Treasurer Jim Duncan, Corresponding Secretary Anna Brown, Recording Secretary Ann Watson, Membership Secretary Ken Bennett, Members at Large Joan MacArthur, Derek Hill, Stan Bremner, Cathie Miller, Irene Money.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Liz Johnston, Archivist Hellen Stephen, Editor Liz Johnston.

1987–88:

Chair Dennis Sallaway, Vice-Chair Hellen Stephen, Treasurer Ian Loudon, Corresponding Secretary Anna Brown, Recording Secretary Ann Watson, Membership Secretary Ken Bennett,

Members at Large Joan MacArthur, Derek Hill, Stan Bremner, Cathie Miller, Irene Money. Editor Liz Johnston.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Audrey Gordon, Archivist Hellen Stephen, Editor Liz Johnston.

1988–89:

Chair Hellen Stephen, Vice-Chair Neil Wilkie, Treasurer Ian Loudon, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Ken Bennett, Members at Large Beth Armour, Mike Connelly, Sheila Hodgins, Joan MacArthur, Cathie Miller.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Audrey Gordon, Editor Ian Price / Jackie Wilkie.

1989–90:

Chair Hellen Stephen, Vice-Chair Neil Wilkie, Treasurer Ian Loudon, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Steve Brown, Members at Large Beth Armour, Mike Connelly, Shelagh Hodgins, Mollie Faulkner, Maureen Hood.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Archivist Hellen Stephen, Editor Jackie Wilkie.

1990–91:

Chair Hellen Stephen, Vice-Chair Duncan MacKenzie, Treasurer Ian Loudon, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Anna Brown, Membership Secretary Ken Bennett, Members at Large Sophia Alexandrova, Beth Armour, Shelagh Hodgins, Tony Scott, Rolf Gundersen.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Editor Jackie Wilkie.

1991–92:

Chair Duncan MacKenzie, Vice-Chair Sophia Alexandrova, Treasurer Denys Lloyd, Corresponding Secretary Barbara Campbell, Recording Secretary Angela Gauld, Membership Secretary Ken Bennett, Members at Large Rolf Gundersen, Wendy Hutcheon, Hazel Robb, Tony Scott, Anne Thomas.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Branch Shop Hazel Robb, Archivist Hellen Stephen, Editor Jackie Wilkie.

1992-93:

Chair Duncan MacKenzie, Vice-Chair Mary Anderson, Treasurer Ken Hudson, Corresponding Secretary Barbara Campbell, Recording Secretary Angela Gauld, Membership Secretary Wendy Hutcheon, Members at Large Hazel Robb, Diana Bodnar, Dorie Smith, Anne Scott, Jean Wagstaff. Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Ron Arrowsmith, Branch Shop Hazel Robb, Archivist Hellen Stephen, Editor Jackie Wilkie.

1993-94:

Chair Duncan MacKenzie, Vice-Chair Mary Anderson, Treasurer Ken Hudson, Corresponding Secretary Anne Scott, Recording Secretary Phyllis Gaskell, Membership Secretary Jean Wagstaff, Members at Large Hazel Robb, Sid Dyke, Louise Gray, Ed Mornin, Marion Carruthers. Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Ron Arrowsmith, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Branch Shop Hazel Robb, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Jackie Wilkie.

1994-95:

Chair Hazel Robb, Vice-Chair Mary Anderson, Treasurer Ian Loudon, Corresponding Secretary Anne Scott, Recording Secretary Julie King, Membership Secretary Louise Gray, Members at Large Ed Mornin, Marion Carruthers, Ian Allan, Ann Boyd, Janette Steel. Appointments: Teacher Coordinator May Loudon, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Branch Shop Jeanette Stark, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Jackie Wilkie.

1995-96:

Chair Hazel Robb, Vice-Chair Art Van Wart, Treasurer Ian Loudon, Corresponding Secretary Yvonne Calderwood, Recording Secretary Janette Steel, Membership Secretary Angela Gauld, Members at Large Ian Allan, Marilyn Buchanan, Jim Fairley, Moyra Heyerdahl, Henry Vaughan. Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Dennis Sallaway, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Jackie Wilkie / Rosemary Coupe.

1996-97:

Chair Hazel Robb, Vice-Chair Art Van Wart, Treasurer Ian Loudon, Corresponding Secretary Yvonne Calderwood, Recording Secretary Mary

Raphael, Membership Secretary Angela Gauld, Members at Large Gerda Barwieck, Margaret Berard, Jim Fairley, Moyra Heyerdahl, Liz Peerless.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Dennis Sallaway, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe.

1997-98:

Chair Angela Gauld, Vice-Chair Bob Armour, Treasurer Marie O'Hagan, Corresponding Secretary Yvonne Calderwood, Recording Secretary Gerda Barwieck, Membership Secretary Jim Fairley, Members at Large Wendy Swaine, Bonnie Volker, Stewart Cunningham, Margaret Berard, Liz Peerless.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Dennis Sallaway, Branch Shop Marie Disiewicz, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

1998-99:

Chair Angela Gauld, Vice-Chair Bob Armour, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Wendy Swaine, Membership Secretary Jim Fairley, Members at Large Margaret Berard, David Foreman, John Menzies, Yvonne Doig, Bonnie Volker.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Dennis Sallaway, Branch Shop Marie Disiewicz, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

1999-2000:

Chair Angela Gauld, Vice-Chair Bob Armour, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Wendy Swaine, Membership Secretary Rebecca Blackhall Peters, Members at Large David Foreman, Janet Hanson, Yvonne Doig, Bonnie Volker, Isabel Van Wart.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Branch Shop Marie Disiewicz, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2000–01:

Chair Bob Armour, Vice-Chair Brian Corbould, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Recording Secretary Wendy Swaine, Membership Secretary Rebecca Blackhall Peters, Members at Large Carole Berger, Yvonne Doig, Yvonne Martin, James Smith, Isabel Van Wart.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Mary Anderson, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and Bob Armour, Branch Shop Marie Disiewicz, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2001–02:

Chair Bob Armour, Vice-Chair Brian Corbould, Treasurer Barbara Wagner, Corresponding Secretary Stewart Cunningham, Recording Secretary Elspeth Rennie, Membership Secretary Rebecca Blackhall Peters, Members at Large Yvonne Doig, Cathy Gibson, Anne MacLeod, Isabel Van Wart, Bonnie Volker.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Wendy Swaine, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and Bob Armour, Branch Shop Marie Disiewicz, Archivist Susan Richardson, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2002–03:

Chair Brian Corbould, Vice-Chair Ed Mornin, Treasurer Barbara Wagner, Corresponding Secretary Yvonne Doig, Recording Secretary Anne Scott, Membership Secretary Sandy Caruth, Members at Large Cathy Gibson, Ray Eagle, Isobel James, Hazel Mackie, Wendy Swaine, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Wendy Swaine, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and Bob Armour, Branch Shop Marie Disiewicz, Archivist Susan Richardson, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2003–04:

Chair Brian Corbould, Vice-Chair Ed Mornin, Treasurer Barbara Bell (previously Wagner), Corresponding Secretary Stewart Cunningham, Recording Secretary Bonnie Volker, Membership Secretary Sandy Caruth, Members at Large Hazel

Mackie, Ray Eagle, Gwyneth Walker, Isobel James, Wendy Swaine.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Wendy Swaine, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and Bob Armour, United Scottish Society Representative Brian Corbould, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2004–05:

Chair Brian Corbould, Vice-Chair Elizabeth Peerless, Treasurer Stuart Honeyman, Corresponding Secretary Stewart Cunningham, Recording Secretary Dorothy Easton, Membership Secretary Sandy Caruth, Members at Large Hazel Mackie, Wendy Swaine, Margaret MacKenzie, Frances Caruth, Barbara Moritz.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Frances Caruth, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and John Toomer, United Scottish Society Representative Brian Corbould, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2005–06:

Chair Elizabeth Peerless, Vice-Chair Ed Wagstaff, Treasurer Stuart Honeyman, Corresponding Secretary Stewart Cunningham, Recording Secretary Derek Bisset, Membership Secretary Sandy Caruth, Members at Large Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, Frances Caruth, Heather Graham, Margaret MacKenzie, Barbara Moritz.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Frances Caruth, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and John Toomer, United Scottish Society Representative Brian Corbould, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2006–07:

Chair Elizabeth Peerless, Vice-Chair Ed Wagstaff, Treasurer Stuart Honeyman, Corresponding Secretary Stuart Somerville, Recording Secretary Derek Bisset, Membership Secretary Sandy Caruth, Members at Large Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, Frances Caruth, Heather Graham, Margaret MacKenzie, Barbara Moritz.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Frances Caruth, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and John Toomer, United Scottish Society Representative Duncan

MacKenzie, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Angela Gauld.

2007–08:

Chair Elizabeth Peerless, Vice-Chair Ed Wagstaff, Treasurer Richard Beattie, Corresponding Secretary Stuart Somerville, Recording Secretary Derek Bisset, Membership Secretary Jean Mullard, Members at Large Frances Caruth, Diane Coulombe, Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, Fran Hillier, Pat Hollingdale.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Frances Caruth, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and John Toomer, United Scottish Society Representative Duncan MacKenzie, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Stuart Somerville.

2008–09:

Chair Ed Wagstaff, Vice-Chair Paul Lowe, Treasurer Richard Beattie, Corresponding Secretary Stuart Somerville, Recording Secretary Louise Murphy, Membership Secretary Jean Mullard, Members at Large Frances Caruth, Diane Coulombe, Annabel Herdman, Pat Hollingdale, Libby Alexander.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Frances Caruth, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott, John Toomer, and Richard Beattie, United Scottish Society Representative Duncan MacKenzie, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Rosemary Coupe, Webmaster Stuart Somerville.

2009–10:

Chair Ed Wagstaff, Vice-Chair Paul Lowe, Treasurer Richard Beattie, Corresponding Secretary Fran Hillier, Recording Secretary Pat Hollingdale, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson-Smith, Members at Large Frances Caruth, Annabel Herdman, Maureen Onotera, Jennifer Shearman, Stewart Cunningham.

Appointments: Teacher Coordinator Frances Caruth, Children's Committee Maureen Hood, Funds Simon Scott and Gill Beattie, United Scottish Society Representative Stewart Cunningham, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor

Pascaline Denblyden / Karen Marshall, Webmaster Stuart Somerville.

2010–11:

Chair Paul Lowe, Vice-Chair Jennifer Shearman, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Fran Hillier, Recording Secretary Drum Cavers, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson, Past Chair Ed Wagstaff, Members at Large Frances Caruth, Maureen Onotera, Pat Cavers, Phil Holton, Simon Scott.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Heather Ball Chair Rosemary Coupe, Demonstration Team Director Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, North Shore Children Maureen Hood, United Scottish Society Representative Stewart Cunningham, Safety Coordinator Jennifer Shearman, TAC Representative Jean Wagstaff, Ceilidh Director Duncan MacKenzie, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Karen Marshall, Webmaster Stuart Somerville,

2011–12:

Chair Paul Lowe, Vice-Chair Jennifer Shearman, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Vicki Downey, Recording Secretary Drum Cavers, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson, Members at Large Frances Caruth, Isabel Bauder, Pat Cavers, Cathrine Conings, Simon Scott.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Demonstration Team Director Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, North Shore Children Maureen Hood, Heather Ball Chair Mary Ann McDevitt, TAC Representative Jean Wagstaff, Ceilidh Director Duncan MacKenzie, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Eleanor Pedersen, Webmaster Stuart Somerville.

2012–13:

Chair Jennifer Shearman, Vice-Chair Gerry Stensgaard, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Vicki Downey, Recording Secretary Drum Cavers, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson, Past Chair Paul Lowe. Members at Large Cathrine Conings, Simon Scott, Sue Sochasky.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Events Coordinator Pat Hollingdale,

Burns Supper Chair Peter Richards, Heather Ball Chair Simon Scott, Demonstration Team Director Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, North Shore Children Maureen Hood, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Eleanor Pedersen, Webmaster Stuart Somerville, TAC Representative Jean Wagstaff, Archivist Rosemary Coupe, Editor Eleanor Pedersen, Webmaster Stuart Somerville,

2013–14:

Chair Jennifer Shearman, Vice-Chair Gerry Stensgaard, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Vicki Downey, Recording Secretary Drum Cavers, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson, Members at Large Cathrine Conings, Heather Hankin, Mary Ann McDevitt, Francis O'Farrell, Simon Scott, Sue Sochasky.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Burns Supper Chair Gill Beattie, Demonstration Team Director Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, 50th Anniversary Chair Jean Wagstaff, North Shore Children Maureen Hood, TAC Representative Jean Wagstaff, Ceilidh Director Duncan MacKenzie, Editor Eleanor Pedersen, Website Manager Mary Ann McDevitt.

2014–15:

Chair Gerry Stensgaard, Vice-Chair Peter Richards, Treasurer Laurie Johnston, Corresponding Secretary Vicki Downey, Recording Secretary Sally Marshall, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson, Past Chair Jennifer Shearman, Members at Large Cathrine Conings, Heather Hankin, Mary Ann McDevitt, Francis O'Farrell, Simon Scott, Sue Sochasky.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Burns Supper Chair Gill Beattie, Demonstration Team Director Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, North Shore Children Maureen Hood, 50th Anniversary Chair Jean Wagstaff, TAC Representative Jean Wagstaff, Ceilidh Director Duncan MacKenzie, Editor Eleanor Pedersen, Website Manager Mary Ann McDevitt.

2015–16:

Chair Gerry Stensgaard, Vice-Chair Peter Richards, Treasurer Laurie Johnston, Corresponding Secretary Gill Beattie, Recording

Secretary Sally Marshall, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson, Members at Large Cathrine Conings, Heather Hankin, Janet Mason, Francis O'Farrell, Simon Scott, Sue Sochasky.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Betwixt and Between Coordinator Katherine Shearman, Dancing in the Park Alison Moen, Heather Ball Chair Denise Cunningham, Demonstration Team Director Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, North Shore Children Maureen Hood, United Scottish Society Representative Stewart Cunningham, TAC Representative Jean Wagstaff, Ceilidh Director Duncan MacKenzie, Archivist Mary Ann McDevitt, Editor Karen Sommer, Website Manager Mary Ann McDevitt.

2016–17:

Chair Peter Richards, Vice-Chair Heather Hankin, Treasurer Laurie Johnston, Corresponding Secretary Gill Beattie, Recording Secretary Sally Marshall, Membership Secretary Paul Lowe, Past Chair Gerry Stensgaard. Members at Large Sandra Anderson, Anne Brand, Hamish Jackson, Janet Mason, Francis O'Farrell.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Burns Supper Chairs Sally & Sandy Marshall, Dancing in the Park Alison Moen, Heather Ball Chair Rosemary Coupe, Demonstration Team Director Kay Sutherland, Ceilidh Director Duncan MacKenzie, Editors Mary Ann & Kerry McDevitt, Website Manager Mary Ann McDevitt,

2017–18:

Chair Peter Richards, Vice-Chair Heather Hankin, Treasurer Stewart Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary Gill Beattie, Recording Secretary Sally Marshall, Membership Secretary Patsy Jamieson. Members at Large Sandra Anderson, Anne Brand, Hamish Jackson, Janet Mason, Francis O'Farrell.

Appointments: Dancing Coordinator Frances Caruth, Betwixt and Between Katherine Shearman, Burns Supper Chairs Sally & Sandy Marshall, Dancing in the Park Alison Moen, Heather Ball Chair Gail Urquhart, Demonstration Team Director Kay Sutherland, Ceilidh Director Duncan MacKenzie, Editors Mary Ann & Kerry McDevitt, Website Manager Mary Ann McDevitt.

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