

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Chicago Branch

April 1988

B l e t h e r s

Ingrid Kendall, President

Kenneth Schoon, Editor

Class location change: On Sundays, April 24 and May 1, the Palos Park Village Hall is being used by another group and so our regular branch classes will be held at the Academy of Movement and Music just north of Lake Street (between Harlem and Austin) in Oak Park. Parking is limited, so car-pool if you can. If you need directions, call Bill Moorhead, Chari Wurtzel, or Ingrid.

The Annual General Meeting will be May 22nd at 6:30 at the Palos Park Village Hall. All members should have already received materials about the meeting. Please remember that nominations for officers should be returned to Chari Wurtzel by Sunday May 1st. The Constitution needs to be ratified by the branch, however its form is stipulated by the RSCDS and therefore cannot be altered. Recommended changes to the rules must be submitted to Kent Smith by May 1st. Many thanks to Kent and Chari for all their very detailed work.

Officers to be elected are: chairman, secretary, treasurer, 3 members-at-large, and 3 elections committee members. Permission must be received from all those nominated before their names can be placed on the ballot. All members are encouraged to support the branch and attend the AGM.

Martin Mulligan has accepted a position at St. John's, Newfoundland, and will be leaving for Canada soon after the workshop. For some reason, he thinks that the 2000 mile commute is a bit long for coming to class Sunday evenings. We will miss him. He has been an extraordinary member of our group: serving for two years as coach of our demonstration team, compiling the demo team video tape, compiling our record and tape library, and composing the beautiful dance, Loch Michigan Rant. We will be having a going-away party for him after the AGM.

The Lake Geneva Workshop, June 3 - 5, is almost filled up, however there are still about a dozen places left, so if you would like to attend and have not yet sent in your deposit, you should do so ASAP.

As we will have to find another location to hold it in the future (such as a nice small, wooded, college campus, or ritzy--but inexpensive--resort), any member knowing of such a place should inform one of the workshop committee members, or any branch officer. The location must have three wooden floors, overnight accommodations, and be within a two hour drive of Chicago. If we can find another location soon enough, the 1989 workshop might be held there.

Oak Park Classes: Bill Moorhead is teaching a SCD class in Oak Park on Tuesdays from April 12th to May 31st and you're invited to attend. A flyer is enclosed.

The Chicago Highland Games will be June 18th at the Scottish Home in North Riverside. Chari Wurtzel is in charge of our participation and need volunteers to man our booth.

The Scottish Home Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, July 23rd at the Home in North Riverside. Food, dancing, miniature golf, beer, Scottish records, clothing and other goods will all be available. Plan to spend the day.

Our summer schedule begins June 12. Our classes in the summer are more informal and taught by volunteers. Please sign up at the AGM if you're interested in teaching some Sunday. Because the village hall can become quite (if not exceedingly) hot in summer, class is cancelled on any Sunday if the official Chicago temperature (at O'Hare) reaches 90 degrees at any time during the day (even if it goes back down to the 80's before 6:00).

Best wishes to Barbara Bowker and John Ellis who will be married (to each other) May 1st. May your future hold much happiness, bliss, contentment, achievement, good weather, fortune, and lots of Scottish Country Dances.

Welcome to our newest member, Robin Gaston.

Call for Original Dances: We hope to publish a booklet of dances in honor of our 10th anniversary in 1990. Therefore our branch is holding a competition for new dances. If you have written a dance, or plan to write one, please submit it to our secretary by October 1st. One of the submitted dances may then be submitted to the RSCDS which is planning to publish a special dance booklet also in 1990. (If the RSCDS publishes it, we won't be able to publish it also.) Three dances (that your editor is aware of) have been written by members of our group, perhaps more! There are guidelines, so ask for them if interested.

The bulletin board has the latest minutes of our committee of management, other groups' flyers, guidelines for branch classes, and other items of interest. Take a look.

Demo team video: That video tape of our demo team is available for anyone who would like to see it--or show to their friends. Ask Martin, Dave or Avril.

Our new logo has been approved by the RSCDS. You'll probably be seeing a lot of it in the near future.

RSCDS catalogue: Lynette TeVault has the catalogue of items available from the RSCDS in Edinburgh which includes sweaters and sweatshirts with the RSCDS logo on them, also aprons, brooches, coasters, scarves, ties, key rings, paper, pencils, pens, plates, posters, even playing cards. In addition: serviettes ("dinner napkins" to those born over here) sashes, shoe bags and More! Also instruction books for all our dances, with and without music, records, and books about dancing.

Our demonstration team is usually available for both Scottish and non-Scottish events. If you know of a group which would like a wee look at our kind of fun, check with Avril. (As the team must pay rent for rehearsal space in addition to mileage for drivers, demonstrations can seldom be performed gratis.)

The Illinois St. Andrew Society plug which appeared in the last Blethers omitted the fact that membership includes a complimentary subscription to the Highlander. Dues and money-raising activities, such as the Feast of the Haggis and activities at the picnic in July, benefit the Scottish Home. If interested in membership, see Fiona Robertson, Ann Wood or Ken Schoon.

Thanks to Bill Moorhead for taping our entire collection of dance records.

The editor sends his apologies to Ingrid for reproducing the article on the following page which originally appeared in the Star. It was too good not to share with our membership. Besides she didn't actually ask him not to.



Ingrid Kendall

Kendall is obvious— she enjoys her work

By DIANE E. GALANIS

Queen Elizabeth and Ingrid Kendall have shared a common love for it since the queen was a princess and Kendall, of Country Club Hills, was a schoolgirl in Scotland. While John Knox once banned it and reproved Queen Mary of Scots for continuing to enjoy it, King George VI bestowed the title of "Royal" in 1951 on the society which kept it from disappearing.

Today in Toronto, there is a "hotline" telephone number that visitors can call to find out where in the city it is next going to take place, and Kendall has that number in her handbag.

"It is Scottish country dancing, and Kendall is delighted to share its history and unravel its dance step mysteries with anyone who likes having fun and making good friends.

KENDALL, a certified instructor of the Royal Scottish Country Dance society, has been teaching Scottish country dancing for the Homewood-Flossmoor park district for three years. She is also one of the original members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance society's Chicago branch, originally organized in 1989 as the Loch Michigan Scottish Country Dancers, which dances weekly in Palos Park.

"Of the 60 to 80 dancers in the Chicago area," Scotswoman Kendall noted, "there's probably not 20 Scots. It's amazing, isn't it? I just think that Scottish country dancing is fun. If you like to dance at all, it can grab you. It's a very friendly environment."

Royal Scottish Country Dance society was formed in Glasgow in 1653 to preserve and practice Scotland's national dance, which Kendall notes "was danced in the farmhouse and was danced in the castle."

It is not a folk dance, however, but a social dance; so, while it was traditionally done in both barn and ballroom, it does not encompass anything that would look out of place in the ballroom. Each dance, in fact, begins with the hoisting of one's partner with a bow or a curtsy, the origin of the manners being in the French Court during the period of the "aid alliance" and the origin of the dance, itself, being in the French ballet.

THE SOCIETY has collected the traditional dances dating from the early 1700s primarily from the living information available from Scotland's very old who knew how the dances should be done. Whenever possible, the society standardized the oldest and best forms of these old-style step dances which were handed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth.

The dances have such flavorful names as "Weaving Lilt," "Meg Merrilees," "Ye'll Aye Be Welcome Back Again" and "The Duchess of Atholl's Slipper." While the unwritten folklore of many of the dances is uncertain, "Twenty-first of September" undoubtedly derives from the date of the Battle of Prestonpans when the Scots quashed Sir John Cope's army.

Today, the society has more than 190 branches and almost 500 affiliated groups worldwide, which is how Kendall has come to have friends across the U.S., in Australia, Canada and Japan as well as in Scotland and other European countries.

Obtaining certification as an instructor from the society takes a minimum of two years. Kendall was required to complete 60 hours of schooling and pass two examinations — a preliminary and a final — with written, dance performance and teaching components.

KENDALL offered to teach in the area so that more people could become acquainted with Scottish country dancing. "The more dancers there are," she says, "the more enjoyable it is."

The only criticism she has of her students, who enjoy her classes, is that "they never think they're as good as they are! The Chicago branch of the society has a ball every New Year's — the students came and did very well."

While Kendall is inspired by the even beat of the reel and the fast beat of the jig, her favorite style is the slow tempo of a strathspey. "There's a power and a feel to that step," she relates emphatically. "It's gorgeous."

The strathspey is a unique Scottish rhythm, characterized by its "Scotch snap." It was developed in the 18th century by dance fiddlers in deference to the elaborate hooped gowns worn by the ladies which precluded dancing the traditional reel time tunes unless they were played slowly. The slower reels were further ornamented, eventually giving rise to the distinct strathspey style.

SCOTTISH country dancing also has contributed two formations to dance: The pousette, a forerunner of the waltz, and the allemande, known to many in this country as a square dancing pattern.

Another way in which dress has dictated form is seen in the "kilt grip," necessitated by the sharp silver buttons on the man's Highland evening dress jacket. The man holds the lady's wrists and the lady puts her hands on the man's forearms to avoid tearing her dress or scratching her arms on the coat buttons.

The man's Highland evening outfit, according to Kendall, usually consists of a black velvet jacket and the kilt. Flashes provide a decorative ribbon-like trim for the man's stockings as well as serve the utilitarian purpose of holding up the stockings, particularly during the lively jigs one would suppose. The sporran, a leather pouch, is worn at the man's waist and it is used to hold money.

The man's day outfit is a tweed jacket of a cut styled to coordinate with the kilt.

"THERE IS no set dress for ladies," Kendall points out. "According to old books, women were 'the fashion of the day.' For evening, women wear long dresses mostly. It's tradition to wear a sash over one shoulder, which is a piece of tartan. Members of the society consider it traditional to wear a white dress."

Kendall, who also enjoys other dance steps — especially the fox trot — works as an occupational health nurse. She is also a midwife. "Adventure" brought her to the United States 17 years ago, and she also sought the same in London where she lived for 15 years.

It was while she was living in London that she resumed Scottish country dancing for the first time since leaving Dundee on Scotland's East coast. It was a friend who finally succeeded in getting Kendall to join a class, even though her first reaction was, "What do I want to go to class for?"

Now a fervent expatriate proponent of Scottish country dancing classes, she is anxious to have as many American compatriots in her classes as the dance floor allows. She is not alone in her enthusiasm as she tells of two dancers who recently called to see how the dancing was in each of the areas in which the husband had received a job offer. Concluded Kendall, "They came to Chicago!"

Royal Scottish Country Dance Branch class, Palos Park village hall, contact Avrid Quarrie, 879-9248 or Ingrid Kendall, 957-4494, Homewood-Flossmoor park district class, contact park district, 957-7575, Lincolnwood class, contact Kent Smith, 869-7803, and Racine DeKeven Scottish Country Dancers, contact Barbara Bowker, 957-4494 or Joyce Blaser, (614) 885-2856.



Kendall's spirit as she teaches Scottish country dancing is captured in these photos for *The Star* by Diane E. Galanis.

Branch Classes: Sunday evenings at 6:30 at the Palos Park Village Hall.
Basic and advanced. Instructors Avril and David Quarrie.
Tea and light refreshments served at 8:30.

Calendar:

April 12 - May 31 Tuesday classes at Oak Park 7:30
April 24 Class at the Academy of Movement and Music, Oak Park
May 1 Class at the Academy of Movement and Music, Oak Park
May 8 Classes return to Palos Park
June 3 - 5 Chicago Area Workshop Lake Geneva, Wisconsin
June 12 Summer schedule begins
June 18 Chicago Highland Games Scottish Home, North Riverside
July 23 Scottish Home Picnic Scottish Home, North Riverside

Summer Cancellation Policy:

No classes will be held on any Sunday when the official Chicago temperature reaches 90 degrees at any time during the day.

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Chicago Branch
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Address Correction Requested
