



Gamboling with the Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers

by Tim Wilson

Over the past year, the Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers have kept busy dancing for a variety of events from Oakland to Reno, and from Jackson Hole, Wyoming to San Francisco itself. Last summer, we thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Dunsmuir and Pleasanton Games.

In October we had the opportunity to dance to the beautiful music of the California Symphony at the Diablo Valley Country Club. We performed two lengthy medleys to orchestral settings of Scottish tunes, and it was the premiere of Ron Wallace's choreography to *The Songs of Scotland*.

In December we returned to Dunsmuir House for the annual Christmas gathering, and joined several other dance groups at the San Pablo Celebration of Community. A small team danced for the Berkeley City Club in the beautiful Julia Morgan designed building on Durant Avenue.

We held our annual retreat at Bishop's Ranch in January and were joined by members of the Santa Rosa class and Ron's Highland and step classes, to prepare for the Ethnic Dance Festival auditions. Although we weren't chosen this year, it's exciting to audition and to see the other groups perform.

This summer we took part in California State University at Hayward's Multi-cultural Celebration, the California Academy of Sciences Traditional Arts program, and a demonstration at the San Mateo Fire Station to celebrate the newly issued Firefighter hero stamp. Once again we had the opportunity to lead an SCD workshop at the San Francisco Free Folk Festival and perform on their main stage. We also danced at an active retirement center in Rossmoor and at the Dunsmuir Games.

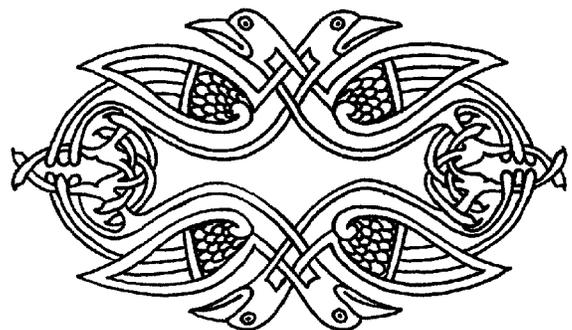
In July, a lucky few headed to the Reno Celtic Celebration. We gamboled and gamboled and, then, we GAMBLED some more! It's definitely true—there's no sound sweeter than the clink-clink-clink of nickels and pennies coming out of the slot machines! Unless, of course, it's the sound of Ron, Gary, Micah, and Mike playing for our dancing! It's a safe bet that we had a

wonderful time with the Silver State SC Dancers, and the Red Thistle Dancers. Thanks to Dave Wilson and the entire Reno class!

This was our first year participating in the Dave Cameron Highland Festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Lee and Liz Hamilton Harris have been setting up house there, and it was a great chance to renew friendships and share the joy of SCD.

In more general news, we are thrilled that Ron Wallace continues to surprise us with new material, and encourage us to dance to our full potential. We are very pleased to welcome to our ranks Sheila Carter-Burke and Melinda Palmer, and to welcome back Robert Sargent. We're also excited about the addition of fiddler Micah Reinhold to the band!

We've had fun gamboling around the Bay (and beyond) this year and anticipate more of the same in the year to come. The odds look good from here!



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2003 Ball Gown Sale and Tea Party

Come and join us for a good time browsing, trying on, buying, or selling. You're sure to find some great bargains! In the past, we've had fun admiring and commenting on dresses others were modeling. Susie's house has lots of space and a huge mirror. So, don't get rid of that gown that doesn't fit or no longer seems to be the right color! Bring it to the Ball Gown Sale!

The annual pre-Valentines Ball tea party and ball gown swap will again be held at Susie Langdon Kass' home in San Francisco. The date is Saturday, January 25 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Even if you don't find something to buy, you still can enjoy a cup of tea, good food, and socializing.

The proceeds of each sale go to the seller, but the entry donations (\$3 per person) will go to the scholarship fund. If you can't make it, you can still send in garments for possible sale.

Look for flyers with directions to Susie's house and **SAVE THE DATE!**

The 2003 Valentine's Ball

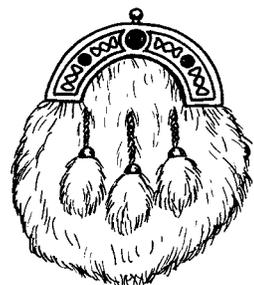
by Cecilia Grote

The 37th Annual Valentine's Ball, hosted by the RSCDS San Francisco Branch will be held on Saturday, February 15, 2003. This year's theme is "Dancing Through Time," showcasing Scottish country dances throughout history. Feel free to dress in the fashion of your favorite period in history.

The event will be held at the Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, California, with the Sherry Social beginning at 7:00 p.m.

This year we will be distributing coupons for the beginner discount to class teachers. If you have less than one year of SCD experience, be sure to get a coupon from your teacher.

Questions? Contact Art Tarsa at (650) 365-5574 or by e-mail at Artdiver@aol.com.



Wanted: inexpensive used sporrán. Have an old extra one? Call Tom Cuthbertson at 831 423 9714 or email tomc@cruzio.com

Volunteers needed!

Branch Committee Candidates

The nomination committee will soon be recruiting members to run for election to the "Branch Committee," our organization's Board of Directors or Executive Committee. Five members will be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May for a two-year term. If you would be interested in being on the Branch Committee, or could suggest someone, please let us know. Contact any "board" member or Susie at susielk@itsa.ucsf.edu , 415-333-9372.

To find out more about the Branch Committee, why not go to a meeting? All RSCDS-SF Branch members are welcome at Branch Committee meetings. The committee usually meets at a member's home in the afternoon of monthly party days. Call one of the Committee members to find out the location. Or, talk to any of the current or former committee members.

The Nominating Committee.

**Berkeley Holiday Party
Saturday, December 14, 2002
Arlington Community Church
52 Arlington Avenue
Kensington**

**Potluck 6:00 p.m.
Caroling 7:30 p.m.
Dancing 8:00 p.m.**

Information: Heather (510)653-7505 or mackay@voicenet.com.

From I-80: exit at Albany. Go E toward hills on Buchanan St., which turns into Marin Ave.; go about 2 mi. When you reach the circle, go about 240° around and take Arlington Ave. for 1.8 mi.

The church is on the left.

There is parking across the street.

Lost and Found

We ended up with only a few "Lost and Found" items from the Pleasanton Games this year! THANK YOU for remembering and taking home your belongings. Please contact Kathleen McAdam, dancermcadam@aol.com, for your left-behind articles.

Please mark all your clothing, shoes, and other belongings with your name. Then forgotten items can be easily returned to you.

Susie Langdon Kass



MONTHLY PARTIES

DECEMBER MONTHLY PARTY
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2002
San Mateo Masonic Temple
100 North Ellsworth, San Mateo

Dance	Type	Level	Source
The Hollin Buss	32J2	B	24/8
The Braes of Tulliemet+	32S3	I	7/12
The Music Makars+	32R3	I	33/1
Autumn in Appin+	32S4	A	31/5
The Sailor+	32H3	B/I	24/4
Joie de Vivre+	32J3	B/I	39/2
The Rose Garden	24S2	A/I	SF vol 2/10
Nottingham Lace+	96R4	A (sq. set)	Bradley
Strathglass House	32S3	I	13/9
Corn Rigs	32R2	B	4/12
The Wild Geese	32J3	B	24/3
Grey Daylight	32S2	B	LAD, too/18
Mrs. Stewart's Jig	32J3	B/I	35/1
MacDonald of the Isles	32S3	I (3 cpls)	Glendarroch 8
The Mason's Apron	32R3	I	Border Book 18

+ new this month; some dances in December were carried over from October and skipped November.

DIRECTIONS TO SAN MATEO MASONIC TEMPLE
100 NORTH ELLSWORTH, SAN MATEO.

From 101: Take the 3rd Avenue exit west to Ellsworth. Turn right and follow Ellsworth to the corner of Tilton Street.

Branch Scholarships
 Scholarships are available for all kinds of dance/music workshops and events. Contact Paula Jacobson at (831) 688-8295 for more information.

JANUARY MONTHLY PARTY
SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 2003
Mountain View Masonic Temple
840 Church Street, Mountain View

Dance	Type	Level	Source
Joie de Vivre	32J3	B/I	39/2
Strathglass House	32S3	I	13/9
Corn Rigs	32R2	B	4/12
Autumn in Appin	32S4	A	31/5
The Music Makars	32R3	I	33/1
The Wild Geese	32J3	B	24/3
MacDonald of the Isles	32S3	I	Glendarroch 8
The Starry Eyed Lassie+	32J3	I	23/11
Grey Daylight	32S2	B	LAD, too/8
Red House+	40R2	I	7/2
The Hollin Buss	32J2	B	24/8
Lady Glasgow+	32S3	B	MMM I
Nottingham Lace	96R4	A (sq. set)	Bradley
The Braes of Tulliemet	32S3	I	7/12
The Sailor	32H3	B/I	24/4

+ new this month

DIRECTIONS TO MOUNTAIN VIEW MASONIC HALL
840 CHURCH STREET, MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94941.

FROM 280: exit at S. El Monte Avenue, to Foothill Expressway. Right on Foothill Expressway, left on Miramonte Avenue, across El Camino Real W., to S. Shoreline Blvd. Turn right onto Church Street.

FROM 101: Exit at Moffett Blvd. Follow Moffett Blvd. south to Central Expressway. Cross Central Expressway to Castro Street. Turn right onto Church Street (5 blocks).

Monthly Party Admission:
 New Dancers, with coupon from teacher.....\$2.00
 Members.....\$8.00
 Non-members.....\$10.00
 Non-members, please join the Branch! You can join now, as an affiliate member (January to May), for \$9.00. You receive the R&S, lower Party fees, help the Branch meet insurance requirements, and support the organization. Membership forms are available from your class manager, or at Monthly Parties.

Congratulations and Thanks to the Branch

by Doug McConnell

Once again the Gathering and Games at Pleasanton over Labor Day weekend is behind us. While the whole weekend was a totally delightful experience, two aspects stand out as remarkable, and I will address each in turn. The San Francisco Branch is unique, and I make that statement as someone who has danced in classes in many parts of the world.

Many Branches are aging and having difficulty in attracting members, whereas the San Francisco Branch is vibrant, active and a joy to be associated with. I sent one small e-mail to my less-than-complete listing of Branch dancers, asking for help on setting up the Celtic Heritage area on the Friday before the Games. Twenty-three people turned up and set up the ARF (raised stage), brought and assembled the San Jose stage, put shade-cloth awnings up to keep audiences from heat prostration, and erected the Branch tent and changing rooms. A further nine persons appeared magically around noon and provided a gourmet picnic for us all. On the Sunday evening the helpers, aided by some of the fiddlers, dismantled everything so that by 7:45 p.m. the area was cleared.

Those who helped were: Alastair Brown, Gary Knox, Verne Casavoy, Bud Wisecarver, Mel Creusere, Miriam Mueller, Larry Wakeman, Gale Holladay, Greg Reznick, Ellen and Jonathan Lovell, Harry Butler, Dave Gord, Alex Harvey, Paula Jacobson, Michael Howard, Bradley Hobbs, Mike Suckow, Susie and Sid Kass. Additionally, Andrea and Rita, whose last names I failed to obtain, and for which I apologize, were tireless workers.

The luncheon angels were Virginia Bissell, Witsie McKelvy, Marjorie Henry, Kay Ellis, Kateri Jones, Susan Reznick, Sue Marchand, Margaret Hard, and Joyce Mann.

Kathleen McAdam (participation dancing) and Gloria McConnell (grandstand finale) and our scribes Suzanne Bailey, Marilyn Stocker, and Bradley Hobbs, also deserve our thanks, along with our two adjudicators, Elinor Vandegrift and Bruce Hamilton. Thanks also to all of those who danced and to their teachers who trained them so well.

It is this wholehearted support that makes this event so pleasurable.

The second striking aspect and a highlight of this year's event was the participation of five sets in the youth category. We have seen some of the "older" young men

and women grow and mature as teenagers and dancers over the years. We saw new youngsters caught up in the joy of the dance and dancing. Kathleen McAdam, Cathy Bertics, and Sheena MacQueen are not only enriching the lives of these young people but also ensuring that Scottish Country dancing will be preserved. Our cultural heritage is in good hands.

Millie Gunn passed away on July 31, 2002 in Florida. Millie was the widow of "Pop" Gunn who served as Chairman of the San Francisco Branch Committee from 1977-1979. The Gunns began dancing in Kathleen McAdam's beginner class in Orinda in 1975. "Pop" passed away on December 5, 1995 in Colorado. "Pop's" and Millie's ashes are buried together under a bristlecone pine in Buena Vista, Colorado. May they rest in peace.

Gifts in memory of Millie Gunn may be made to the RSCDS-SF Branch Scholarship Fund.

Gentle Readers,

It has come time for your *R&S* Editor to say thank you for the opportunity of editing our Branch newsletter for the past seven years. Anyone interested in taking over the keyboard shall please contact the Chair of the Branch Committee, Paula Jacobson. Thanks to all who have contributed articles, artwork, layout, and who have helped with mailings.

Victoria Williams

RSCDS-SF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

revised 09/09/02

OCTOBER, 2002

- 26, Saturday: Asilomar Ball Preview, 1-5 p.m., St. Mark's, Palo Alto: Tim 415/440-7438
- 31, Thursday: Santa Cruz Class Family Night: Juliet 408/733-9035
SF Class Halloween Costume and Goodies night - all welcome. At Noe Valley Ministry: Susie 415/333-9372

NOVEMBER, 2002

- 1-3, Fri/Sunday: ASILOMAR Workshops and Ball: julm-hcs@pacbell.net
- 4, Monday: San Jose Class Halloween Party: Sparky: 408/257-2294
- 8, Friday: Campbell Beginners and Advanced Beginners Classes begin: Rebecca 408/378-3817
- 9, Saturday: Monthly Party, Palo Alto: Sandra 707/643-9162
- 27, Wednesday: Mountain View Class Thanksgiving Bash at Portuguese Hall, Mountain View: Denise 510/713-7813

DECEMBER, 2002

- 7, Saturday: Monthly Party, San Mateo: Sandra 707/643-9162
- 11, Wednesday: Mountain View, Last Classes before Christmas Break: Denise 510/713-7813
- 14, Saturday: Berkeley Holiday Party, potluck, caroling, dancing: Heather 510/653-7505
- 16, Monday: San Jose Class Xmas party: Sparky: 408/257-2294
- 19, Thursday: San Francisco Class Solstice Party: Linnea 415/841-9456
- 28, Saturday: Lafayette Tween Party, Vets Hall: Witsie 925/676-3637

JANUARY, 2003

- 4, Saturday: Monthly Party, Mountain View: Sandra 707/643-9162
- 11, Saturday: 2 p.m., Teachers' Committee Meeting at Busse's: open to teachers and prelims. Bruce 650/328-0474 (NOTE: Changed from Jan. 18)

- 25, Saturday: Ball Gown Swap/Sale/Tea Party: at Susie's in SF 415/333-9372

FEBRUARY, 2003

- 8, Saturday: Valentine's Ball Rehearsal, 1-5 p.m., Noe Valley Ministry, SF. 415/333-9372
- 15, Saturday: Valentine's Ball: Art: 650/365-5574

MARCH, 2003

- 1, Saturday: Monthly Party, Mountain View: Sandra 707/643-9162
- 29, Saturday: Sacramento Workshop and Ball: Bob: 209/745-9063, bobschul@softcom.net

APRIL, 2003

- 5, Saturday: aft. Children's Ball - by invitation: Kathleen 925/934-6148
- 5, Saturday: eve. Monthly Party, Mill Valley: Sandra 707/643-9162
- 12, Saturday: 2 p.m., Teachers' Committee Meeting: open to teachers and prelims: Location TBD. Bruce 650/328-0474 Note change of date from April 26.

MAY, 2003

- 3, Saturday: Monthly Party, Alameda: Sandra 707/643-9162

JUNE, 2003

- 7, Saturday: Monthly Party, Soquel: Sandra 707/643-9162
- 14, Saturday: 2 p.m., Teachers Committee Mtg. Open to teachers and prelims: Location TBD. Bruce: 650-328-0474
- 19, Thursday: San Francisco Class Solstice Party: Linnea 415/841-9456
- 21, Saturday: Campbell Games????
- 28, Saturday: Truckee Workshop and Dance: Marian 775/825-1224 No longer tentative!

Valentine's Ball Program

Saturday, February 15, 2003

Kendall's Hornpipe	32J2	Graded Book
Sugar Candie	32S3	RSCDS Book 26
None So Pretty	40R3	RSCDS Book 19
Burns Night	32J2	Celebrate 50 Years Boston Branch
The Glasgow Highlanders	32S2	RSCDS Book 2
Mairi's Wedding	40R3	Twenty-two SCD, Cosh
St. Andrew's Fair	32J3	Five SCD 1982
Strathcare	32S3	The Ladies of Dunse
Cadgers in the Canongate	48R3	RSCDS Book 9
Miss Gibson's Strathspey	32S3	RSCDS Leaflet
The Scallywag	40J3	Kelly Leaflet
Flowers of Edinburgh	32R3	RSCDS Book 1
Hambo		
Waltz Country Dance	40W2	RSCDS Book 4
Red House	40R2	RSCDS Book 7
1314	128M4	Rondel Book SCD, Drewry
I'll Mak' Ye Fain to Follow Me	32J3	RSCDS Book 6
Adieu Mon Ami	32S3	RSDCS Book 24
The De'il Amang the Tailors	32R3	RSCDS Book 14
Waltz		
Auld Lang Syne		

The Silver State SCD (Reno) is planning a Hogmanay on the 31st of December, 2002, of all times. Depending on the availability of musicians, we will have live music.

We can provide limited hospitality.

Southwest Airlines often has fares under \$90, tax included, for the round trip; check for Internet fares. We would charge about \$10. We need fairly firm commitments by 9 November to determine an appropriate venue and whether funds will be available for a band. If interested, please contact Linda Kuchenbecker (kuch01@mailpuppy.com) or Dave Wilson (allenortep@earthlink.net).



Red Thistle Dancers' Impressions from Cerveny Kostelec, Czech Republic

compiled by Marilyn Stocker

Cerveny Kostelec (pronounced Cher-veni Kos-tel-ets), is a small town northeast of Prague, almost at the Polish border, that has hosted an International Folkdance Festival for 48 years.

On August 21, 2002, the Red Thistle Dancers carried in the Stars and Stripes to an introduction that sounded like "Red Tissel Danserz, Skotska Danserz, San Francisco, Ameritski!" and were greeted with applause. Their crowd-pleasing performances were received enthusiastically by the audiences of 1,500 to 2,700 enthusiasts who attended each of the five days of the festival. The one word I would use to describe this dance festival would be **energy**. Each of the fifteen International, Czech and Slovak dance groups performed ten times in five days. The performances on the outdoor stage, the theater, the grassy knoll of the town square and the parade route were a mass of whirling and leaping color, to the music of flying fingers on the strings and accordions, and the beats of an array of drums, castanets and gongs. Bare feet and those shod in boots, ghillies, sandals, slippers, and shoes danced with intricate and precise steps.

Alan: For five days we lived intensely. Imagine an Asilomar weekend going on for that length of time (with about the same amount of sleep!), punctuated with performances in front of an audience of 2,000, all of whom are enthusiastic about folk music and dancing, but have probably never seen anything remotely like Scottish country dancing or Highland dance. At the end of the festival we were exhausted, exhilarated, and satisfied that we'd acquitted ourselves well as entertainers and ambassadors in a very foreign environment. The rest is a collection of random images: a whole pig roasting on a spit to feed Saturday's audience (and dancers); performing a hard-shoe dance in a village square and being rewarded with shots of a local liqueur; real life Gypsies lurking around the fringes; a troupe of impeccably trained young Slovaks weaving and singing across the stage (can you imagine a dozen eighteen-year-old American boys from the same town doing this?); jam sessions including Czech, Scottish-American fiddles, Italian accordions, Algerian finger-cymbals, Indonesian gongs, Celtic bodhran, Puerto Rican shimmies, and a spontaneous transition into singing *Guantanamera*, led by a Slavic tenor. Food stalls offered potato pancakes, savory doughnuts topped

with cheese and garlic, delicious ice cream at 12 cents for an ounce-sized scoop, and beer rivaling our better microbrews at 60 cents a pint. (Some of us hit the ice cream stall and the beer tent several times a day.)

John: I particularly enjoyed the delightful open amphitheater and its pleasing crowd. I thought Red Thistle was well received, especially since our dancing was so different from most of the other dance forms. The strathspeys, of which no one else has an equivalent (especially nine ladies dancing), provided a wonderful contrast to our fast dances and also to those of other groups.

Sue: My overall feeling was one of considerable privilege of being asked to participate, and of the friendliness and warmth of the Czech hosts and members of the other dance groups. My favorite experience was the parade through the streets of Cerveny Kostelec, ending in the town square. It was a warm, beautiful day and the local residents lined the streets, waved from the church tower, and enthusiastically greeted each group as they performed briefly along the route, and offered us small cups of a fiery liquid which really cleared the sinuses. By the time we got to the town square there was no trouble finding enthusiasm for a rousing *Weaving Lilt* and *Gay Gordons* on a sloping pavement.

Jennifer: Apples will remain in my memory as the symbol of our trip to the Czech Republic. As our bus from Praha to Cerveny Kostelec neared its destination, we noticed many trees laden with ripe apples. Little did we know they would be featured at every meal we ate, and we would even be presented with a large bag to take with us when we departed!

Preparations for this trip began over a year ago when the Red Thistle Dancers were invited to submit a video in order to be considered for participation in this UNESCO level B festival. Once chosen, we were one of ten International groups who joined five Czech and Slovak dance groups to perform at the 48th annual International Folkdance Festival in Cerveny-Kostelec, Czech Republic. The standard of dancing was uniformly high and the audience was generous in its appreciation. No one left until the after-party drew to a close.

There were many special moments. One elderly man came backstage with his daughter, who translated, to tell us that, as a young man, he had had the opportunity to do some Scottish dancing, which he had greatly enjoyed. His daughter said that his feet were tapping out the steps along with us.

Rosemary: Be sure to say something about the “cage.” (The cage was the name we gave to our locker/ changing room, a long, narrow space with walls of open, upright bars—not unlike a zoo cage.)

Jennifer: At first glance one thought it offered no privacy, but with 400 dancers, divided into 15 similar cages stuffed with costumes and equipment it was not only somewhat private but took on the appearance of a Macy’s January clearance sale. A beautifully disciplined Italian flag-waving team occupied the cage next to ours, with the result that canary yellow tights and burgundy velvet tabards were apt to become entangled with tartan sashes and lace jabots.

Michael: Prague was our first destination, and we left with great trepidation as to how the flooding/ weather would affect our group’s plans. As it turned out, the waters receded very quickly and much of the city was reopened for business within days. This is not to say that there wasn’t massive damage. In our walks around the Old and Lesser towns we saw much evidence of flood damage. Piles of furniture, glassware and supplies covered in river sludge were frequent sights, and power was out in much of the city center. Half the Metro stations were closed, but we were fortunate that our hotel was on a line that was functioning well enough to get us to the city center. The food was great and the beer was plentiful, inexpensive and very tasty!

I enjoyed having a chance to do so much performing in a short time as it allowed us to get **really** familiar with our material, even though each show was composed of different combinations from our repertoire. It was also great fun to be able to play music not only with my wife Susan, but also with Etienne Ozorak (accordion), a great musician and companion for this adventure.

Susan: Before the festival, we spent a few days in Prague, as tourists, and were glad to be able to see most of the major sights of the famous city: the old castle, St. Vitus cathedral, Bertramka, the “summer home” from which Mozart set off for the Opera House with the Don Giovanni overture still wet in his hands. A memory we will not soon forget is the eerie sound of footsteps through the Old Town, echoing over the hum of generators and pumps, as many homes and restaurants struggled to clean up from the flood.

Then it was festival time. We joined the group from Algeria for a bus ride of a little over two hours to the festival town. The dormitory accommodations that we

shared with the groups from Puerto Rico and Mexico were about three-quarters of a mile from the festival stage. (Not too far, you say? Well, think of it this way: at least one, and sometimes two or three round trips a day, up and down hill, on foot, sometimes with costumes and/or instruments! Ah well, it was a way to work off the delicious Central European cooking and more of that excellent Czech beer!)

Michael’s singing brought him some acclaim; those who knew more English appreciated that his songs were humorous tongue twisters, in Scots dialect. I was quite tickled when an old Gypsy man who had been in the audience made fiddling gestures and then kissed his fingers after I’d played one night! My very favorite moment occurred when, in the reels at the end of one of our dance medleys, I played *Father Francis Cameron* and the audience started to clap along—hundreds of hands clapping, there in a tiny village in a remote corner of the Czech republic.

One of the high points of the week was Mass on Saturday morning. Most of the non-changing readings were in Latin, with the sung responses in Gregorian chant. The readings specific for that day were in Czech, but the priest also addressed the crowd in English, French, Spanish, and Italian. The Mass began with a procession, led by the Mexican group, in full pre-Cortesian regalia: definitely pagan but not seeming out of place at all!

Marilyn: As the videographer, I saw things the others haven’t mentioned: Kamrin teaching the bunnyhop to a whole string of Czech kids; Alan, Kamrin, Gordon, Coletta clogging to the after-party music; dancers of different nationalities waltzing with each other in the closing ceremonies. Jennifer and John presenting the California Republic flag to the festival organizer; Armin playing the bagpipes and Eric carrying the American flag in the street parade; a mix of dancers of all nationalities leaving the stage in one long conga line after the closing ceremonies.

Paula: Long bus ride, then hurry, hurry! Quick with the iron and off to perform. Nervous excitement, then dance and smile. An ocean of an audience... they like us! Wonderful! Back to the “cage” to change, then lovely Czech beer, music, more dance, joy. It’s hot, can’t sleep, must stay strong and upbeat. Rough stage, torn shoes, blissfully repaired. Taped foot, bandaged blisters, keep dancing, don’t falter. Tensions, pressure, then...release! Ah, to dance and dance. Nothing can compare. Color,

action... new friends, true friends, lightning and thunderstorm, never enough drinking water. A dancer's festival. The experience of a lifetime. Thank you, Red Thistles. I wouldn't trade it for anything!

New World Scottish Dancers: A Year of Mourning and a Year of Celebration

by Claudette Sigg

On Thursday, May 16, 2002, The New World Scottish Dancers celebrated the anniversary of our first year of existence. A year before, our survival had been in serious question: for instance, under such short notice as we had received from our parent class, could we gain recognition as an independent class from the San Francisco Branch of the RSCDS in time to continue to function? Could we find a place to dance? Could we financially support ourselves? In the year that has passed, we found that we indeed could do all these things.

Because of the emergency situation, the Branch Committee granted us independent status on June 2, 2001. Within two months we found and moved into our new home, a Pleasant Hill dance studio with mirrors, a good floor, and dance *barres*. Although class dues had to go up, everyone seems to accept the increase as a necessary price for survival; thus, with the addition of fees earned for performances, we have found ourselves reasonably solvent.

As one might expect, in our first year we made several important decisions. Indeed, at least one crucial decision had been working itself out since mid 1999, namely the sort of face we wanted to present to the world: should our shows be traditional—or should we find a niche of our own not occupied by anyone else? My experiences as an Oakland Museum docent specializing in Gold Rush tours for children coalesced with Scottish dancing: if the world rushed into California for the Gold Rush, then Scots rushed in as well, and they brought their music, their dances, their personalities with them. We began to develop a living history repertoire, not only for the Gold Rush but also for the 1890s, an important period in California history. Equally important, we began to develop a second type of show, a 21st century show with modern choreography and music, using not only the wonderful music of musicians like Alasdair Fraser, John Taylor, and Deby Benton Grosjean, but also the music of contemporary groups like the Wicked Tinkers, Brother, Seelyhoo, and Annwn. In performance the beautiful formal

Edwardian costume in watered 'silk' (patterned after a Frederic Worth of Paris 1890s ball gown in the collection of the Oakland Museum) gives way to short *panne* velvet dresses in vivid colors, black tights, and flying hair as we shift from the classical to the cutting edge mode. Dancers have learned how to act out their roles as well as to dance them: exuberant gold miners dancing variations of a sword dance with picks and shovels, Edinburgh opera dancers lilting their *pas de pas* and striking trebles on a impromptu frontier stage in a saloon-theater; and finally today's Scottish-American who, inspired by the roar of dijeridu mixed with the heat of rock guitars and the tremor of bagpipes, reels into the 21st century.

In February, we held our first class meeting, which was indicative of the kind of structure that we as a group intend for ourselves. The meeting included everyone: the children and their parents, the teenagers, the adult dancers—and even a spouse! The agenda was posted several weeks early, and all were free to add their concerns to it. An important point discussed at the meeting was the need for performing dancers to continue to be supportive of other classes. For instance, several dancers dance with the Berkeley adult classes, and all the children and teenagers dance with the Berkeley children's class, as it is important that they remain associated with their peers and develop their dance skills in a normal fashion.

Another area of great importance for our group is the nurturing of native talent. While dancers are expected to learn and perform traditional dances, the creation of space and an atmosphere conducive to creation of new dances is essential to the philosophy of the NWDS. So far five dancers, including one of our 12-year olds, have shown exceptional talent in this area. Heather Farquhar's *Caelan's Fancy*, to the music of the modern group, Brother, is a frequently performed number in our programs, while Lori Farrell's *Through the Spiral Doorway*, to the Wicked Tinkers, and *Variations on a Theme of Charlie*, to Seelyhoo, promise to become equally popular. My most recent dance, choreographed to one of Alasdair Fraser's wilder compositions, *Mountain Madness*—or *Claudette's Revenge*, as the dancers like to call the dance—had its debut during the Berkeley class intermission on Friday, June 21, and was danced by Charles Clear, Bridget Sousa, and Clara Ackerman.

In the past year, we have continued to perform at various Highland game venues. Our first performance as an independent group took place on Saturday, July

14, 2001, at the Dunsmuir Scottish Games. That was followed in August with the Monterey Games at Toro Park. In advance of the Pleasanton Games, we were honored by having a picture of our group dancing in modern costumes used as publicity on the web site www.caledonian.org. At the Pleasanton Games, we introduced a three-person *Scotch Measure*, danced by Bridget Sousa, Anna Thanukos, and Claire Tongue in a flash of Victorian skirts and petticoats, their footwork glowing with a sparkling clarity. Lori Farrell's *Through the Spiral Doorway* was premiered with Lori, Claire Tongue, and Heather Farquhar dancing it. We also had two sets up for adjudication at Pleasanton, the dances being *Saltire Society Reel*, *Bonnie Stronshiray*, and *Gothenburg's Welcome*. In contrast to the previous year's adjudication that was 'hot modern,' the dances for 2001 were performed in a coolly elegant style: the men in Prince Charlie jackets and the women, hair up, with long white gloves, in ballgowns. At John Muir Ranch Days, held at Martinez in September, we danced a purely Victorian set, as befitted John Muir House. We did three shows, each one well attended, and much appreciated by the audience. At the Dixon Games in September, we experimented with a purely modern show, which despite the somewhat small stage and difficult access, proved extremely successful and popular with the audience, particularly with the younger members.

In November, we continued our association with the Oakland Museum by providing the entertainment for the Bond Party, where the museum personnel were thanked for their participation in a signature-gathering campaign for a bond in support of the museum, zoo, and observatory in Oakland. We gave them the Gold Rush as a prologue, some Victorian elegance before dessert, and a bit of after-dinner spice, all of which was very well received. The Oakland Museum performance also marked the last appearance of George Gates with NWSD, a loss we all feel deeply, both for his unique humor as well as his very active participation in all aspects of the group. This occasion also marked the debut of Charles Clear. Along with Bridget Sousa, Zuriyah Meacham, and Catherine Berner, he danced, as part of our Victorian set, an exuberant and energetic *Reel of the Blackcocks*, a dance well suited for the spontaneity of young dancers.

As far as performances go, our one big disappointment this year was being rained out of the Dunsmuir House Christmas performance. Unfortunately the Dunsmuir House entertainment committee had failed to take

into account bad weather and had made no provisions for performances elsewhere on the grounds for the first weekend of activities. The following week a performance at Ione was a particular and peculiar challenge: only one man available—Steve Wyrick—and nine women! To add to the challenge, this gold rush town (formerly known as 'Bedbug') requested our entire show: Gold Rush to Modern. So on a sparkling clear but cold December day, we put on a 45 minute show, not once but twice, to a wandering audience standing in the aisles, and a bevy of Highland dancers and their teacher who stood entranced!

The 2002 season began in April with the Sacramento Highland Games at Woodland. Several new dances—or variations on old ones—were moved into the repertoire. Particularly noteworthy are twosome versions created by Bridget Sousa and Charles Clear of the step dances *Merry Meghan* and Irene Fidler's *The Thistle*. The two dancers, moving between a rowdy Gold Rush scene and a ballroom scene of grace and elegance, shift from bouncy and brash into smooth enchantment in their two very different presentations. Also added to the repertoire was a sexy, seductive modern version of the classic, *The Village Maid*, danced to the music of Annwn.

In early June, we had a rather intense and very rewarding workshop with Ron Wallace. In the morning, he gave us some pointers on Highland technique and taught some steps which the 'ordinary' Scots immigrant to California in 1849 might have known and used in an impromptu 'sword' dance—with picks and shovels instead of swords. In the afternoon, he taught *Tulloch Gorum*, a simple Hebridean solo dance. The enthusiasm which followed Ron's workshop was such that *Tulloch Gorum* and the 'sword' dance, now named *The Pick and Shovel Reel*, and danced to the music of Shetland folk fiddlers, moved immediately into our repertoire and was danced for the first time at the Dunsmuir Scottish Games in July.

While we lost George Gates to the love of his life in the far north of California, we celebrated one marriage in our group: Lori Farrell and Michael Howard were married on October 13, with all of us and many more in attendance to wish them much happiness and joy in their union. Among the dances on their program was a wedding present, a new country dance reel, *Summer Serendipity*, created to celebrate their marriage. The dance now is one of three dances which make up *A Wedding Set* of dances, along with *Mr. and Mrs. Richard McLaughlin*

of San Diego and Seite an Seite.

All in all, after a rather difficult birth, we have reached our first birthday in a celebratory mood. It is good to be alive and dancing.

SCD Elsewhere

November 2002

FRI-SUN, NOVEMBER 1-3

Asilomar (CA) RSCDS San Francisco Weekend Workshop at Asilomar in Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula. Teachers are Allison Russell (Ayr, Scotland), Catherine Shaw (London, Ontario), Martin Mulligan (St. Johns, Newfoundland), Ruth Jappe (Vancouver, British Columbia), **Bruce Hamilton** (Menlo Park, California), and **Sara Gratiot** (Marina, California). Application available on the website. Applications are being accepted for addition to the wait list. Contact Julee Montes (Registrar) 650-364-4642
julm-hcs@pacbell.net. [www.rscds-sf.org/events.html]

FRI-SAT, NOVEMBER 8-9

Victoria (BC) 29th Annual Workshop and Dance. Teachers are Maureen Lyon, **Alan Twigg**, and Ruth Jappe. Music by Scuttlebutt: Janet Wright (guitar), Davene Browne (bass fiddle), Sudsy Clarke (fiddle) and Kristi Lind-Izat (piano). CA\$60/US\$42 for weekend package. Individual pieces (3 classes, lunch, and evening dance) may be purchased separately. Please register by 25 October. Contact Anne Payne 250-472-0221 or
ericpayne@shaw.ca. [www.rscdsvictoria.org]

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