



# *The Oceanside Rant*

## Oceanside Scottish Country Dancers Newsletter

WINTER

OCEANSIDE RANT

JANUARY, 2011

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#### **Classes:**

##### **Basic Class**

Each Wednesday 6.30 pm

##### **Intermediate Class**

Each Wednesday 8.00 pm

All classes are held at:  
Qualicum Beach  
Community Hall, Corner  
of Memorial Ave &  
Veterans Way,  
Qualicum Beach

#### **Web site:**

[http://  
www.oceansidescd.net](http://www.oceansidescd.net)

## President's Rant

All the best for 2011 to everyone!

Our fall season was highly successful with a delightful blend of fun, friendship and dancing. It was wonderful to enjoy the company of our regular out of town visitors.

Many thanks of appreciation to our dedicated teachers Janetta and Rita and our hard working executive.

Please check 'Special Events' on our website for details of past and future events at <http://www.oceansidescd.net>

Mark on your calendars the 'Old Fashioned Social' Saturday Feb 19<sup>th</sup> and the 'Spring Gala' Saturday April 2<sup>nd</sup>

A ditty to OSCD to the tune of 'Mhairi's Wedding'

Step we gaily here we come  
Wednesday nights to Qualicum  
Arm in arm all set for fun  
On for country dancing

Dancing in Rath Trevor Park  
Supper, singing what a lark  
Open House and Christmas cheer  
That's a toast to end the year

Step we gaily here we come  
Wednesday nights to Qualicum  
Arm in arm all set for fun  
On for country daaaaancing!

*Ann Kullman*

# “Won’t You Join the Dance”

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## Manners and Courtesy

Scottish Country Dancing is many things to many people but for new dancers it can be overwhelming as they try to absorb all the footwork, phrasing, timing etc., and for more experienced dancers there can be frustration as they strive to improve their technique and footwork.

With all there is to learn, sometimes we forget that manners and etiquette also play a large part in SCD. We all know we should join a set at the bottom, say “thank you” to our partners and not dance with the same person all evening. However, there are other small things to be aware of such as acknowledging ones partner before and after the dance. Looking at your partner while doing so sets the tone for the dance you will do together. (This does not mean “eye-balling” your partner which can be most disconcerting as well as unnecessary.)

The vitality of the dance comes from both the music and the people who are dancing together as a team. SCD is not a solo sport. Without the happy co-operation of all in the set, even the best cannot dance successfully. The whole spirit of the dance comes from a good team working together with friendliness and helpfulness. Being helpful is just that! Keeping eye contact with ones partner gives us the opportunity to signal a direction if we lose

our way. Being bossy or pushy has been known to turn away would-be dancers. By all means lend a hand but remember to do it with courtesy and kindness.

Good phrasing and hands make the dance feel great, not pointy toes and stiff bodies. Good phrasing makes you feel as though you are dancing on cushioned air and this only comes when everyone in the set is working as a team and counting their bars. During a dance, one doesn’t want to have to “find” a hand to hold because eye contact is lacking... however, it is just as difficult to have a hand that won’t “release”. We have all had at some time, a crushed hand, jarred shoulder, or twisted wrist.

Some people can look so miserable at dances, rarely making eye contact and appearing to just go through the motions. This does nothing to enhance the dance or uplift the dancers. Be aware of your partner as well as others in your set and remember to smile occasionally. Your partner in a dance can make the difference as to whether you find a dance good, bad or indifferent. Favourite dances can be spoiled by a partner who barely acknowledges you but a dance you aren’t too fussy about can be transformed by an engaging partner.

Happy dancing.

*Rita Gibson*

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## Modern Scottish Country Dance

During the early 20th century, SCD still had a part in social entertainment especially in rural Scotland, even though the number of dances within the active repertoire had gone down to only a few. Country dancing was in danger of dying out, when in 1923 the [Scottish Country Dance Society \(SCDS\)](#) was founded in Glasgow with the goal of preserving "country dances *as danced in Scotland*" (this was only recently changed to read "Scottish country dances"). The SCDS began to collect and publish

the remaining dances as well as reconstruct (or reinterpret) from old sources dances that were no longer being danced.

In the process, the dances and technique, which might differ considerably depending on where in Scotland a dance would be collected, were strictly standardized, which from the point of view of preservation was of course a terrible thing to do, but which paved the way for universal "compatibility" among dancers from (eventually) all over the world. The efforts of the SCDS became quite popular, and its influ-

ence on the training of physical education teachers meant that most Scottish children would be exposed to at least a minimum of SCD during school. The Society achieved Royal patronage in 1947 and henceforth became known as the RSCDS (for "Royal" Scottish Country Dance Society).

Fairly soon after the inception of the SCDS people started inventing new dances in the spirit of the older ones, but also introducing new figures not part of the "traditional" canon. Today there are over 11.000 dances catalogued, of which fewer than 1.000 can be considered "traditional". Anybody can come up with a new dance, but many dances are of local importance only; the RSCDS does publish collections of new dances every so often but does not try to control the invention of new material. Neither is it in a position to dictate how dances are danced and who may teach them, but the Society does hold significant influence since they teach the majority of Scottish country dance teachers, and their canon of

dances makes up a very large proportion of the "global" repertoire that one can expect to meet wherever Scottish country dancing takes place.

Modern SCD has evolved considerably from the early 18th century, with the constant devising of new dances, new concepts, informal variations and entirely new ideas appear. As a pursuit, Scottish country dancing is no longer confined to Scotland. Active communities can be found throughout the world - in the rest of Britain, continental Europe, Canada and the US as well as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, with occasional groups in places as diverse as Russia, South Africa, Argentina and Hong Kong. Gay and lesbian Scottish country dancing groups, first being organised in [London](#) and now in [Manchester](#) and Edinburgh aptly named [The Gay Gordons](#) offer same-sex Scottish country dancing, and the London group uses "leaders" and "followers" instead of "men" and "ladies" .

*Excerpted from Wikipedia*

## Women's Dress in the Highlands

The fashion-conscious woman in about 2600 wore an ankle-length dress under a striped or check plaid, buckled but not belted. The ensemble was completed by a linen ruff and a headdress of similar material with bracelets on her arms, and a necklace or necklaces according to her taste, or her husband's pocket. In the latter part of the seventeenth century and up to about 1745, the standard female garment was the *arisaid*, a tartan plaid of black, blue, or red stripes on a white back-

ground. This was secured at the breast by an elegant and elaborate metal buckle, silver or brass according to the wearer's status, which could be as big as a plate. Married women wore a linen headdress rather like a hood: maidens, or unmarried women, wore headbands or hair-ribbons. Their long stockings sometimes had no soles to the feet, in which case they were fastened by a loop over the toe.

*Excerpted from Scotland and her  
Tartans*

## Joke

jock was out working the field when a barnstormer landed.

"I'll give you an airplane ride for \$5," said the pilot. "Sorry, cannae afford it," replied Jock.

"Tell you what," said the pilot, "I'll give you and your wife a free ride if you promise not to yell. Otherwise it'll be \$10." So up they went and the pilot rolled, looped, stalled and did all he could to scare Jock. Nothing worked and the defeated pilot finally landed the plane. Turning around to the rear seat he said, "Gotta hand it to you. For country folk you sure are brave!"

"Aye," said Jock "But ye nearly had me there when the wife fell oot!"

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# Memories Of A Scottish Christmas And New Year

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At our Oceanside SCD Christmas party on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, our Vice President said she would like to find out more about Scottish traditions over the festive season, and I was not prepared when she asked me to say a few words on the matter. However, now that I am putting it into writing, there isn't much to say about Christmas in Scotland.

When I was a child, before and during the Second World War, there were no Christmas trees or decorations. There were church services and carol singing, and stockings hung up on the mantelpiece by the fire, but nothing else. Whether the Presbyterian religion had an influence on Scottish behaviour at that time, is a mystery.

Then, when war broke out in 1939, the country was a very dark, gloomy place, as street lights were forbidden and house windows had to have dark coverings to hide the light. At that time, there wasn't the build-up and pressure which happens before Christmas today, but times have changed, and commercialism has won.

I have more vivid memories of New Year's Eve, known as Hogmanay. As a child on New Year's Day, my parents and I would go to my grandparents' house, where all the relatives had gathered and presents were exchanged, followed by a sing-song round the piano.

I did not understand "first-footing" as a child, and it wasn't until I was almost 20, that I experienced what Hogmanay was. Everyone

had to return to their own homes before the bells rang to greet the New Year so that we might start it with our family. Then the first-footing would begin. Every house had been cleaned from top to bottom, as was the tradition, so that the New Year started with a fresh beginning.

The first person to enter your home was your "first-foot" in the door, so to speak, and was supposed to be a tall, dark-haired man carrying a lump of coal to represent a gift of warmth. First-footers to your house would have their own bottle of whisky etc. to share with the host and hostess, and then would move on to the next house after they had enjoyed the food which every household produced. There was always black bun – a very densely fruited cake covered with a light pastry – sultana cake and shortbread, as well as many other foods.

Ceilidhs could be heard in every home, especially after the war, when people were so happy that the fighting had ceased.

When my own children were older, we encouraged them to bring their friends to our house, and many a Ceilidh we had. These were great times.

May I wish all members a Happy, Healthy New Year.

*Janetta Begg*

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## Oatcakes

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At our last potluck supper, the recipe for these oatcakes was much in demand.

- 3 cups rolled oats
- 3 cups white flour
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 ½ cups shortening (butter)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ cup cold water
- 1 ½ tsp artificial maple extract

Combine dry ingredients, work in shortening well (melted). Stir maple extract into ½ cup cold water and mix. Knead dough before rolling thin with flour on board. Cut into squares and bake at 350 degrees. (12 to 15 minutes)

Submitted by *Jessie Abrahamson*

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## Tell Your Friends

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Tell your friends. For those who don't know, SCD is a fabulous pastime which is super exercise for body and mind. SCD is, naturally, rooted in Scotland but there are groups in almost every country so you can learn here and then dance with other groups when you vacation or travel.

SCD is not to be confused with Highland Dancing which is more solo dancing. SCD is usually done with a partner in groups or sets however you do not need to come with a partner. It is more akin to Square Dancing.

It takes a year or two of classes, workshops, etc. to get the basics learnt then you can hone your skills in advanced classes. You start by learning the steps and formations. Dances (of which there are over 13,000) are made up of these formations so a good grounding will give you the ability to learn a new dance fairly quickly.

SCD has its HQ in Scotland and is known as the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) and there is a Vancouver Branch of the RSCDS under which there are many clubs throughout the Province (there also is a Victoria Branch).

There are classes all up and down Vancouver Island, a number of the Gulf Islands, the Cariboo, Okanagan, etc. etc. There are various groups all over this great Province, Country, World and who knows where else! Check the Branch website for all these details - [www.rscdsvancouver.org](http://www.rscdsvancouver.org)

You will find many friendly people who will be eager to help you and welcome you to their club.

You never know, your friends actually might like it!!

*Adapted from the Ceilidh Dance  
Newsletter, November 2010*

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# Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

The **Royal Scottish Country Dance Society** (RSCDS), was founded in 1923 as the **Scottish Country Dance Society** by Jean Milligan and Ysobel Stewart of Fasnacloch, who wanted to preserve country dancing as performed in Scotland, country dancing having fallen into disuse after the influx of continental ballroom dances such as the waltz or quadrilles and, later on, American-style dances like the One-step or fox-trot. (The SCDS didn't become the RSCDS until the early 1950s.)

The RSCDS collected dances from living memory as well as from old (17-19c.) manuscripts and re-published them in a series of books. Most of these dances needed some interpretation, and the dance style itself underwent serious standardisation, becoming much more balletic instead of the easy-going style that was the norm in the early 20th century, and which the RSCDS's founders considered sloppy and untraditional. After some argument, in the late 1940s the RSCDS also started publishing newly-devised dances.

Today the RSCDS numbers some 20,000 members all over the world, served from the headquarters in Edinburgh and the continuous well-being of the Scottish country dance scene is largely due to the efforts of the Society. The RSCDS offers teacher training and holds an annual summer school in St Andrews, Fife for four weeks in July and August.

Despite the apparently healthy membership, many of the society's members are middle-aged or elderly, with relatively few younger dancers. This is more of a problem in Scotland itself, and the society is trying to encourage the younger generation to take an interest in Scottish country dancing. The main problem in Scotland appears to be one of image, with other Scottish dance societies such as the St Andrews Celtic Society, founded in 1796, and Dunedin in Edinburgh attracting many young dancers. The RSCDS is making inroads into making the society more appealing to younger dancers. Elsewhere in the world, the age structure of the RSCDS membership is much more homogeneous.

*Excerpted from Wikipedia,*

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## Some Will Rogers quotes:

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The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back in your pocket.

There are three kinds of men: The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence and find out for themselves.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

If you're riding ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.

Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier'n puttin' it back.

After eating an entire bull, a mountain lion felt so good he started roaring. He kept it up until a hunter came along and shot him. The moral: When you're full of bull, keep your mouth shut.