

Island Fling



January 2021

Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society
PO Box 30123, Reynolds RPO
3943C Quadra Street, Victoria BC V8X 1J5, Canada
Affiliated with the RSCDS, Edinburgh, Scotland
Web address: www.viscnds.ca

Executive Committee

President	June Robinson	250-477-8317	viscndspresident@shaw.ca
1st Vice President and Publicity	Louise Perry		
2nd Vice President and Membership	Barb Currie		
Secretary	Betsy Lockhart		
Newsletter Editor	Edith Chapman		
Treasurer	Sue Langridge		
Social Convenor Committee	Ellen Campbell		
	Donna Clements		
	Sheila Eaglestone		
	Lori Morrison		
Teacher Representative	Gordon Robinson		

President's Report, January, 2021

Well, we passed New Year's and 2020 is now history. We hope it is a not to be repeated history, too. However, time marches on, regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We long to be back to our regular routines, as before the pandemic, and seeing our friends and family in person and dancing in a real class. With the writing of this report, there is much hope that this time will not be far off, with vaccinations for COVID-19 happening now.

In the meantime, dancing clubs throughout the world have come to a standstill, with the exception of New Zealand, where the pandemic is so under control that dancing and activities continue as before. It is a challenge to keep motivated and in touch with one another, as dancing is what brought us together. The RSCDS continues to do a great job, with the Dance Scottish At Home publication and the weekly Zoom classes. We hope to get our Zoom classes up again when we are able to videotape lessons from City Light Church. With any luck this will be next month. Burns Night will not go unobserved as the club is planning a get together on Zoom for January 25. Get your whiskey and haggis ready! A notice will be sent out on e-mail. Stay safe and well!

June Robinson

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the next newsletter is **Sunday, March 7, 2021**. Please submit any material to Edith Chapman at enchapma@shaw.ca.

BE CALM ♥ BE KIND ♥ BE SAFE

Newsletter Delivery

For the duration of the Covid-19 crisis, the Island Fling is available only electronically. The only exception is if you don't have access to email or the Internet, in which case, your newsletter will be mailed to you. When we are able to have in-person classes again, you may elect to receive a paper copy, which will be delivered to the class in which you register. Please indicate your choice on the membership application form. If you later change to another class, let the class rep know.

Membership Report as of January 2, 2021

The membership of the Society is currently 56 + 8 Life members = 64 members. Thank you to all who have renewed their membership for this year. **Membership renewals** are still being accepted. Please go to the website www.viscds.ca and follow the links to the membership application form or send an e-mail to June Robinson at viscdspresident@shaw.ca who will forward it to Barb Currie, the Membership Chair. Again, thanks for all of the renewals in this very odd year!

Barb Currie and June Robinson

Ceilidh Contributions Welcome

The Executive committee is looking for contributions from members to future Ceilidhs. If you can sing, play an instrument, say a poem etc., we are looking for you. Please contact a member of the Executive through the VISCDs President's contact info with your ideas and contributions to help with social activities during this time. Incorrect information was printed in the last *Fling*. The members of the Social Committee would rather you didn't contact them directly with your offers of help.

Sheila Blake turns 90!

Many of you will remember Sheila as a fellow dancer. She was always supportive of our socials and demonstrations. Sheila was pivotal in having an ethnic dance category in the Victoria Performing Arts Festival, and in ensuring that ethnic dancing continued to be supported around Victoria at events such as Folkfest, Folkloria and Heritage Day in Beacon Hill Park.

Sheila recently turned 90 years young on December 16, 2020. She is now a resident of Sandringham Care Centre, and her daughter Christina arranged an outdoor concert for her birthday – performers outdoors and audience indoors! There was singing, music, acting, and of course a piper to finish the show. The VISCDs demonstration team normally dances at Sandringham for Robbie Burns Day. We will miss seeing Sheila and the other residents this year.

Happy Birthday, Sheila!

Joan Axford and Sarah Kell

In Memoriam

It is with regret that we announce the passing of Alice Walker of Comox in December, 2020. Alice and her husband John danced with the Branch in the 1970's and 1980's. I can remember them dancing at Van Isle socials. Alice was pre-deceased by John. Our condolences go to their family.

Edith Chapman

“Address to the Haggis”

Robert Burns wrote this poem ‘off the cuff’ in 1787, while at a dinner in Edinburgh. It was published in the *Caledonian Mercury* a few weeks later. After Burns died, some friends organized a dinner in his honour, during which they recited the poem. This could well have been the first Burns Supper. Nowadays, the haggis is piped into the dining room, the “Address” is given and a toast is proposed in the haggis’ honour.

Further information on the background of the poem, as well as the poem itself, may be found at <https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/burns-night-what-is-robert-burns-address-to-a-haggis-and-what-does-it-mean-a4048051.html>. Here is one of many recipes for haggis: https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/haggis_66072.

- Source - <https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/usfeatures/haggis/addresstoahaggis.html>.

History of Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society, continued

Ceilidhs

Over the years, Van Isle has held many ceilidhs. For a number of years, they were attached to the Workshop/Ball Weekend, and held on the Friday evening. They were a sort of talent show – dances, interspersed with ceilidh acts. In recent years, the ceilidhs were separate from our other socials, and were organized by our then-President Dora Dempster, as a means of attracting new members. At first, the ceilidhs featured some ‘acts’ along with the dances; then, Dora decided to concentrate on dancing and the ceilidh acts became things of the past.

Our most recent ceilidh was held in early December via Zoom, to celebrate the Christmas Season. See the related write-up in this newsletter.

Newsletter

The first ‘newsletter’ that Van Isle produced was a one-page information sheet entitled ‘The First 100 Days’, and we have had a newsletter of one sort or another since then. The newsletter became known as *The Island Fling* in 1995.

Website

By the mid-to late 1990s, personal computers had become more widely used, so a website was created to help pass on news of various classes, events, etc to our members. Several members have had a hand in its creation and maintenance. It contains a wealth of information on classes and social events, as well as the Core Book and archived editions of the newsletter. Members are encouraged to access the website and make use of all this information. Gael Forster is our present Webmistress.

Folkfest

No history of Van Isle would be complete without mentioning Folkfest, which was organized by the Intercultural Association of Victoria (ICA). Van Isle became a member of ICA in 1975 and we were soon invited to participate in their events. We sold scones out of the Town Hall and, by the next year, we had our own Scottish castle kiosk. We sold haggis, Scotch Broth, scones, Forfar Bridies (meat pies) and – one year – shortcake with strawberries and whipped cream. At first, we made enough money to enable us to keep our fees down, but eventually, we were barely breaking even, so we reluctantly let our kiosk go. The Dem Team performed during the duration of Folkfest.

More recently, the Greater Victoria Festival Society organized *Folkloria*, with the view of resurrecting Folkfest. This was held at Centennial Square over two days. Our Dem Team did a performance.

Victoria Joint Scottish Council Burns Tea

Every January, this group celebrated Burns’ birthday with a heather-laying ceremony at the Burns Statue in Beacon Hill Park, followed by a concert and tea at the St Andrews Kirk Hall. The Dem Team performed most years and members helped by donating goodies and serving tea. When the VJSC disbanded, the ceremony and tea ceased to be held, but more recently, a group of interested Scots have resurrected this event. Our Dem Team performs and Van Isle members help by contributing goodies for the tea.

Covid-19

History is constantly being made, and we are living through a ‘history’ that could affect the future of Van Isle and its operations.

We first heard rumblings of a cluster of pneumonia cases in China in late December 2019; a novel coronavirus was eventually identified. By mid-January, there were reports of this virus outside China. By the end of January, there was evidence that it was spreading world-wide. By mid-March, the World Health Organization assessed this virus – by now, it was known as Covid-19 virus – as a pandemic. Within a few days, Dr Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, ordered all non-essential businesses closed, as well as schools, clubs, and various social organizations. And so our classes and social events came to a sudden halt.

We were able to stay connected via Zoom. The Wednesday class continued to dance until the end of June and, to finish off, they held a ‘Night Before Canada Day’ ceilidh, inviting everyone else to join them. The Executive held their meetings virtually. The RSCDS held weekly dance classes, taught by teachers from around the world, and they published a bi-weekly online magazine, *Dance Scottish at Home*. In the fall, Gordon organized and taught weekly classes in Henderson Park on Thursday afternoons. On the Thursday closest to Halloween, participants were encouraged to dress up in appropriate costumes. The classes continued until the weather became too inclement. Classes led by various teachers and filmed at City Light Church Hall began in the fall, also, and continued until we were no longer able to use the church hall, due to more stringent restrictions.

In early December, we held a ceilidh to celebrate the upcoming Christmas Season, with talks, recitations, songs and musical pieces. It was an enjoyable and highly successful evening. At the time of writing, plans are being made for another ceilidh, to celebrate Burns Night.

I hope you have enjoyed this look back at Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society’s history. One wonders what the upcoming years will have to offer

CHRISTMAS ZOOM CEILIDH - DECEMBER 2020

The Christmas Ceilidh was brought to attendees by some of our talented members who entertained us with music, dance, poetry and presentations.

Mary Ross kicked off the program with an arrangement of jigs on her accordion. Joan Axford put together a video of dances that the Dem Teams have performed over the years along with a slide show she created of dancers in costumes and she also taught a dance she devised to 'Jingle Bells'. Robin Gubby did a great presentation on Whiskey tasting, how to enjoy drinking it and explained the different types of the golden nectar. Jamie Orr played a selection of Christmas carols along with the song "Let's Have a Ceilidh" and he also played our finale song of 'Auld Lang Syne'. Louise McGillivray did a brilliant job of her rendition of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" which she read to us and you will be able to enjoy as it is attached to this write-up. Mary Ross and Janet Yonge did a beautiful duet to 'Silent Night' for us. It was a great concert by 45-50 members that tuned in.

On behalf of the Social Committee, Lori hosted and mc'd the program while Gordon looked after the technical side of the program.

The evening was a great way to get into the Christmas spirit with many wearing Christmas hats and sparkly attire. Let's hope next year we will be back to normal celebrating. We are all very happy to say goodbye to 2020 and hope that 2021 will see us kicking up our heels dancing at City Light with the Social Committee back in the kitchen happily setting up and doing dishes!

I would like to express appreciation to June and Gordon for their dedication to keeping us connected through this terrible pandemic.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Slàinte mhath! Cheers!

Lori Morrison

Twas the Night Before Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house,
No one was dancing, except by using a mouse.
The ghillies remained idle, where did we put them last spring?
After Covid eating and drinking, what still fits? Not a thing!

The dancers were nestled each in their Zoom box,
Thinking this pandemic thing is much worse than the pox.
And with June being techie and us on laptops,
We'd just settled down for an evening to talk.

When over my headphones there arose such a clatter,
That I grabbed my mouse, wondering what was the matter.
I scrolled thru participants across pages and pages,
And saw folks I've been missing for ages and ages.

The Zoom gang looked as puzzled as me,
Wondering what they could hear, but could not see.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But an SCD teacher and his dancers so dear.

He was a slightly old teacher, but right on the job.
I knew in a moment it must be our Bob.
More rapid than eagles his dancers they came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name.

Now Lori, now Peter, now Andrew, and Robin;
On Sheila, on Donna, on Heather and Martha.
To the top of the set, at the top of the hall -
Now dash away, stay apart, distance for all.

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky.
So up to the hall top, his dancers slip stepped,
And quickly formed a four couple set.

Continued on next page

’Twas the Night Before Christmas, continued

And then in a twinkling I saw, thanks to Zoom,
Those SCD dancers at the top of the room.
As I peered at my computer, before turning around,
Into the Zoom square Bob Anderson came with a bound.

He was dressed in a kilt, the required teacher attire,
And a Prince Charlie as well that we all could admire.
A laptop computer he had under his arm,
And he knew the music had the power to charm.

His eyes how they twinkled, his warm up caused fear.
Will the circle start with Joan or will it start here?
His usual smile was held firmly in place,
And he corrected their dancing with patience and grace.

He hadn’t a pipe held tight in his teeth.
That’s not allowed at Obed ! We know that - good grief!
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke lots of words – how else to explain -
Ruby Wilkinson, and Return to St. Martins aren’t really the same.
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
He said “they never listen – that’s where first man goes.”

He worked them all hard, a usual Monday night
Then headed out home in his Tesla so bright.
But I heard him exclaim ere he drove out of sight,
Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

Louise McGillivray

Teachers’ Corner

As the pandemic restrictions continue, a challenge for dancers is to try to maintain physical fitness which will enable us to dance enjoyably once dancing returns.

Over the preceding months we have informed dancers of online classes from the RSCDS Headquarters with teachers from around the world. Here in Victoria we held classes outdoors and by Zoom later in the fall. We are currently preparing to do some additional Zoom classes locally, but in the meantime there are other options to get your dancing fix. We recently circulated a notice about SCD classes on Saturday morning from Seattle. The first class was one hour and focused on a couple of basic dances. The teacher, Harry Khamis, was very thorough and these classes would be suitable for dancers of all levels. The links for the upcoming classes are available from Harry by request. Please send an email to June at viscdspresident@shaw.ca and she will forward your request and e-mail to him. In addition, RSCDS Headquarters has all their Zoom classes since April on the RSCDS website [at this link](#). These classes cover a range of easy to more challenging dances and some step dances.

Even if you are not keen or don’t have the space to dance at home, I am sure you know that keeping up physical fitness is important. One area of fitness that is particularly important to our type of dance is calf strength and Achilles tendon flexibility. We often do Achilles stretches and calf exercises during classes. Here are a couple of resources which describe several of these exercises which are useful both for recovering from an injury or conditioning to maintain your fitness. The [first link](#) includes videos and descriptions of several exercises and stretches. The [second link](#) is a booklet from Oxford University Hospitals which includes several exercises as well as a discussion of some of the possible Achilles injuries. One useful point to note is that for the stretches, including those we do in class, it is recommended to hold them for at least 30 seconds to get an effective stretch. We don’t often do this in class due to time constraints. A good time to do some of the stretches is after you have exercised your legs (such as a good walk) because the leg muscles will be warmed up and more limber.

As always, whenever exercising at home, be alert to any fall or trip hazards, using walls, railings, or furniture for added balance as appropriate, and work within your own capacity. If you have any significant injury or health condition always check with a health professional for a diagnosis and advice on suitable exercises for you.

Gordon Robinson

Despite uncertainty, TAC continues to plan 2021 summer events in Calgary Canada

March 1 - online registration opens - no deposit required

July 25 - August 1, 2021

For dancers of all levels

Basic | Intermediate | Advanced

Daily classes | evening social dances | formal ball and banquet | evening after parties | accommodations and dancing at Mount Royal University

Teacher Candidates' Courses for Units 2 & 3 and for Unit 5

July 18 - August 1, 2021.

For info: tcc@tac-rscds.org

Teachers

Janet Johnston, Scotland
Ron Wallace, California
Alan Twigg, California
Barbara Johnston, Canada

Musicians

Judi Nicolson, Fred Collins,
Ian Muir, Kathy Fraser Collins
Not pictured
Terry Traub, Mary Ross



Check our website for ongoing updated event status
tac-rscds.org

Sponsored by Scottish Country Dance Teachers' Association (Canada)



EVENTS – LOCAL Scottish Country Dance Events

All our traditional classes and social events have been cancelled until further notice. We are working on events that can take place virtually. Stay tuned!

Programs for the various socials will be posted on our website, once we are able to dance again.

OUT OF TOWN Scottish Country Dance Events

2021

Feb 21st	RSCDS Vancouver Branch Love to Dance Workshop and tea dance CANCELLED.
Feb 21st – 26th	RSCDS Winter School, Pitlochry Scotland CANCELLED.
Mar 27th	RSCDS Vancouver Branch Heather Ball CANCELLED.
Apr 2nd – 4th	Spring Fling 2021, Aberdeen Scotland CANCELLED. Info - www.springfling2021.com .
Jul 3rd – 9th	RSCDS Atlanta and Carolinas Branches. Blue Ridge SCD School, Appalachian State University Campus, Boone NC. Subject to the status of Covid-19. Info - https://www.blueridgesds.org/ .
Jul 25th – Aug 1st	TAC Summer School 2021, Calgary Alberta. Subject to status of pandemic. See above notice.
Jul 18th – Aug 15th	RSCDS Summer School, St Andrews, Scotland. 4 – one week sessions or 2 – two week sessions. Dates and event are provisional, subject to the current pandemic situation. Info - https://www.rscds.org/events/summer-school-2021 .