

# Island Fling



**December 2023**

Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society

c/o 3290 Woodburn Avenue

Victoria BC V8P 5B9

Affiliated with the RSCDS, Edinburgh, Scotland

**Web address:** [www.viscds.ca](http://www.viscds.ca)

## **Executive Committee**

President

Kathryn Knowles

250 598-3490

[viscdspresident@shaw.ca](mailto:viscdspresident@shaw.ca)

1st Vice President and Publicity

Hilary Fedoruk

2nd Vice President and Membership

Barb Currie

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Dawn Schell

Newsletter Editor

Ray Fischer

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Social Convenor Committee

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Lori Morrison

Teacher Representative

Joan Axford

**In This Issue:** Another year gone and another one to come; can we stand so much fun? & photos and notes from recent dances

## **President's Comments, December 2023**

Season's Greetings!

Seeing everyone out in their festive holiday outfits at the Christmas Dance was a lovely reminder of the way our group gathers to share, not only the music and dancing, but the spirit of so many special events.

I hope you all have some time to get together with friends and family to celebrate over the holiday season.

The New Year's Eve dinner and dance are just a few days away, I look forward to seeing many of you there. Classes start up again on Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, with our Open House on Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>. Please encourage the uninitiated to attend so they can see what they're missing!

Wishing you all the best in 2024!

Kathryn Knowles

**Check out our Facebook group:** It will have the latest dates, latest photos, latest events, and occasional videos.  
**Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dancers.**

## **Newsletter Deadline**

The deadline for the next newsletter is **March 12<sup>th</sup>**. Please submit any material to Ray Fischer at [ray@fischerperry.com](mailto:ray@fischerperry.com).

**Reminder** to members who are paying their class fees in two (half-year) installments; the January to April fees are due now. Please give your payment (\$65.00) to your class rep or to the Membership Secretary, Barb Currie.

## **Class Descriptions – Spring 2024**

### **Experienced Social - Mondays 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Teacher: Bob Anderson.**

Experienced social for dancers with a good knowledge of all common formations who wish to dance more challenging dances and formations.

### **Daytime Social-Tuesdays 1:15 – 3:15 pm, Teachers: Louise McGillivray and Gordon Robinson**

This is the class for those who prefer a daytime class. We learn/review formations, work on phrasing, covering, handing and the “teamwork” in Scottish Country dancing. We do old and new favourites, and dances from upcoming socials. A friendly group that would love to have you join them, regularly or occasionally!

### **Basic Class - Tuesdays 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Teacher: Sheila McCall.**

In the Basic class you will learn the five steps used in Scottish Country Dancing. You will learn basic formations and become familiar with the concept of sets, progression, and teamwork while you experience the joy of moving to lively Scottish music. You don't need to come with a partner, just come and join us for fun evenings as you learn.

### **Intermediate - Thursdays 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Teachers: Gael Forster and Sarah Kell**

For dancers who want to move beyond basic formations and expand their repertoire, this class will teach a range of formations, and work on phrasing and handing. We will cover a mix of traditional favourites and newer dances at the basic and intermediate levels. \ For more experienced dancers, this will be an opportunity to review dance formations in a social dance setting. Dances from upcoming social programs will also be included.

### **Demonstration Team – Teacher: Joan Axford**

VISCDS also offers a demonstration team to perform at community events as part of the ethnic culture in Victoria. The team dances at seniors' residences and centres, the Highland Games, Burns celebrations, Folkloria, Greekfest, etc. It is an opportunity to share our dance and music, and to encourage others to join our group. Each year, the team learns a new routine. You do not have to be an expert dancer. The team is always welcoming new members. If you like being part of a team and attending community events, this could be for you. The team meets on Tuesday at 7:30 pm about twice a month. For more information, please call Joan Axford at 250-474-1018 or e-mail at [joanaaxford@gmail.com](mailto:joanaaxford@gmail.com).

### **Class Reps**

|                  |                                       |                    |                                  |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Monday:          | Barbara De Leebeeck<br>Susan Baxfield | Tuesday afternoon: | Lori Morrison<br>Martha Morrison |
| Tuesday evening: | David Morrical                        | Thursday:          | Louise Perry<br>Susan Morrical   |

## **Teacher's Corner**

Scottish Dancing at Spencer Middle School

On December 14, 2023, we had an opportunity to share Scottish country dancing with about 80 grade 8 and 9 students at Spencer Middle School in Langford. Many of them enjoyed the music and caught on to the dance quickly. My helpers were Maureen Orr, Lori Morrison, Martha Morrison, and David Walde (who became very popular with a group of the boys). It is important to share our dance with our youth with a hope that someday when someone says to them to come out to a Scottish dancing open house, they will remember the session and be keen to try it again.

Thank you to all your teachers for a good fall term – obvious from the excellent dancing at the Christmas social that your teachers did a good job of preparing you for the dances on the program.

– Joan Axford

## Local Scottish Country Dance Events

Unless otherwise noted, events are at City Light Church Hall, 550 Obed Avenue  
Start time is 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted.

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Dec 31<sup>st</sup></b>   | New Year's Dinner and Dance. 6pm to 11pm |
| <b>Jan 27<sup>th</sup></b>   | Robbie Burns' Social                     |
| <b>Feb. 24<sup>th</sup></b>  | Valentine's Tea. 2pm to 5pm              |
| <b>April 6<sup>th</sup></b>  | Workshop and Ball!                       |
| <b>April 24<sup>th</sup></b> | Spring Fling                             |

## Out-of-Town Scottish Country Dance Events

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Jan 20<sup>th</sup></b> | <a href="#">Seattle Burns Night.</a> 6pm to 10:30pm |
| <b>Jan 27<sup>th</sup></b> | <a href="#">Vancouver Burns Supper.</a> 6pm         |
| <b>Feb 4<sup>th</sup></b>  | <a href="#">White Rock Workshop.</a> 10am to 1pm    |



52nd Annual Workshop and Ball  
February 16-18, 2024  
Chateau Lacombe, Edmonton, AB

### Teachers:

Rebecca Blackhall-Peters—Summerland, BC  
Jeanne Moody—San Diego, CA  
Gael Forster—Victoria, BC



### Musicians:

#### Tartan Ties

Judi Nicolson     Ian Muir  
Kathy Fraser-Collins     Fred Collins  
With Mary Ross



Photos Courtesy of Henderson Images

Questions or to get on our email list email [edmontonballchair@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonballchair@gmail.com)



You're invited to  
RSCDS Vancouver's  
*Diamond Jubilee Ball*



with these fine musicians from Scotland  
*Marian Anderson and Max Ketchin*



**Saturday April 20, 2024**  
**Members \$125 (non-members \$135)**  
**Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson Street**  
**Reception - Dinner - Grand March - Soiree**

Details at <https://rscdsvancouver.org>

Dance program in the January/February White Cockade



## More local events

And now for something completely different.....

### A Very Different February Social

Please join the Tuesday afternoon class on Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup> (2 pm – 5pm) when they host a **Scottish Country Dance Love Story** (it is after all, our “valentine” dance.)

It will be an afternoon of romance, intrigue and celebration.

The following dances will be on the program, woven through the romantic telling of a “**tale as old as time**”. Several of the dances are on the April ball program so here’s a chance to be certain of them.

Belle of Bon Accord, The (R, Ball)

Catch the Wind (R)

Frisky (J)

Gentleman, The (S)

Haste to the Wedding (J, Ball)

John McAlpin (S)

Joie de Vivre (J, Ball)

Lass of Richmond Hill (R)

Mairi’s Wedding (R, Ball)

Minister on the Loch (S)

Miss Johnstone of Ardrossen (R)

Miss Milligan’s Strathspey (S)

Pelorus Jack (J)

Polharrow Burn (R)

Red House (R)

Sailor, The (R, Ball)

Wild Geese (J, Ball)

The only way to hear the story is to attend the dance. So, don’t miss it!!!

## An encounter with Ferla Mor



Our Harvest Social Dance in October included the dance *Ferla Mor*, or *The Big Grey Man*. When this dance was being taught, it triggered a memory I had of a faded newspaper clipping about one of my grandfather's cousins, Professor J. Norman Collie, and his encounter with The Big Grey Man. Norman Collie was an internationally renowned mountain explorer and scientist who climbed the major mountain ranges of the world. In 1898 he discovered the Columbia Ice Fields and made a number of ascents in the Canadian Rockies, where Mount Collie is named after him.

In 1925 he gave the first recorded account of a Grey Man encounter: "I was returning from the cairn on the summit (of Ben Macdui) in a mist when I began to think I heard something else than the noise of my own footsteps. Every few steps I took I heard a crunch, and then another crunch, as if someone was walking after me but taking steps three or four times the length of my own. I said to myself, this is all nonsense. I listened and heard it again but could see nothing in the mist. As I walked on and the eerie crunch, crunch sounded behind me, I was seized with terror and took to my heels, staggering blindly among the boulders for four or five miles down to Rothiemurchus Forest. Whatever you make of it, I do not know, but there is something very queer about the top of Ben Macdui and I will not go back there again"!

Norman Collie was very well known on the Isle of Skye and, in September of 2020, a bronze sculpture of Professor Norman Collie, standing, and crofter and mountain guide John MacKenzie, seated, was erected at Sligachan, against the backdrop of the Cuillin Mountains, paying tribute to the two renowned mountaineering figures.

– Susan (Collie MacNeill) Baxfield!

## “Golden Oldies” for Golden Oldies



On Tuesday afternoon, December 12, at City Light Church Hall, a dance was held creatively called “Golden Oldies” for Golden Oldies. Teachers Louise McGillivray and Anita Mathur came up with the idea to hold an afternoon dance and invite members of VISCDS who used to dance and are no longer able to attend classes and socials.

It was a great event with approximately 45 dancers in attendance and 7 former dancers from years gone by. It was wonderful to see familiar faces again and the look of joy on the faces of the older dancers. One dancer was heard to exclaim “I’m dancing again”!! The program was run by Louise and Anita and consisted of “old” familiar dances especially popular in former years. The program started off with *St Andrews Fair* and continued with *Catch the Wind*, *Saint John River*, *Machine w/o Horses*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Sugar Candie*, *Wild Geese*, *Shiftin’ Bobbins*, *Macdonald of the Isles*, and concluded with the all-time favourite, *Montgomerie’s Rant*. Halfway through the program there was a break for juice and cookies which provided a wonderful opportunity to visit and catch up with old friends and take photos. The tunes were familiar to all, and everyone helped each other through the dances where memories of the dance were not easy to recall.

Thanks to Lori Morrison and David Walde who set up the hall and to many others who helped to organize this special event. And a special thank you to Louise and Anita. It was so well received and attended that plans may be made again for another event of “Golden Oldies” for Golden Oldies.

– June Robinson

Instigators  
Anita & Louise





## “Golden Oldies”



L-R: Anthea Piets, Sally & Alex McAuley, Vicky & Gordon Simpson, Irene Booth, Willie McDermot, Rosemary Balfour, Anne Payne, Jamie Orr.  
Photo: June Robinson



## Etiquette Rules from the November 1983 VISCDS newsletter

### ETIQUETTE by Holly Holloway in the Tartan Tattler

Those who are just commencing to dance will be told the niceties of Scottish Country Dancing by their teachers as these points arise in class; those of us who have danced awhile will admit, we're sure, that a reminder does us all good from time to time...

**E**very gentleman escorts his lady on to the floor and after each dance, returns her to her seat.

**T**ry to be on time to class - this includes arriving in time for exercises, vitally important to everyone.

**I**f you forget where you're supposed to be going during a dance, get out of the way so the others can to keep the dance going. Just go right back to your place: someone will set you back on track!

**Q**uiet while the teacher is talking! You may know the dance but others need and want to hear.

**U**nless all sets on the floor are complete when you arrive, join one that needs you. Don't take your pals, go over in a corner and form a set together when there are sets needing a dancer or two. And no sets should be formed until the dance is announced.

**E**tiquette requires that you thank your partner and the other members of your set at the end of each dance. After all, you couldn't have done without them, could you?

**T**he only place a couple joins a set is at the bottom. And please don't walk through one set on your way to join another.

**T**he top of the dance is nearest the music. Don't always hog the top set. Give others a chance to be close to the teacher's voice and to the music.

**E**veryone should circulate: don't stick with the same partner or set all evening. Mixing will improve your dancing and introduce you to new friends.

ENJOY!!

Compared with the current standard published in the [previous Fling](#), RSCDS priorities for etiquette have changed a bit in 40 years, but the basics are the same: be considerate and have fun.



## St. Andrews Dance Nov 18, 2023

The dance took place at our usual venue, City Light Church, on a fine Saturday afternoon with forty-seven people in attendance, enough for 5 full sets! The music was ably played by computer with assistance from Gael Forster who also briefed the dances.

It being a celebration of St. Andrews, the program had a wee focus on that theme, the St. Andrews cross making its appearance in some of the dances. Gael set the program with an eclectic mix of well known, previously known and unknown (better to say: new, old and exciting) dances.

There was good grub and the fixings for coffee and tea were kindly prepared by the Monday and Tuesday evening classes. Many thanks. The 50/50 haul was taken away by Gordon Robinson.

I had a good time, and I can but hope so did you all.

— Andre De Leebeeck



Photos: Ray Fischer



Here's everyone who showed up wearing a tartan or plaid!



## Christmas Social December 9<sup>th</sup>

The Christmas Social, December 9<sup>th</sup>, at City Light Church on Obed, was less than a month ago, and yet the time has passed so quickly – we're already wishing folks Happy New Year!

One thing that made this night special was having Mary Ross providing us with live music of the season and dance tunes to keep our toes tapping, so grateful to be able to dance to such fantastic music! Plus, our instructors provided helpful briefs for the dances. It is so helpful to have these talk-throughs and the walk-throughs for some of the more complex dances. There were 50 dancers and 3 non-dancers attending.

Our Demonstration team performed during the break The Thistle Waltz, to a darkened room lit with just lantern light. They danced to a version of 'The First Noel', and it fit perfectly with the holiday mood.

Many thanks to all our members who provided the exceptional treats and savories for our break and the Social Convenor committee for the set up and preparing the tea & coffee. A hot cup of tea or coffee really hits the spot with those treats along with chatting with fellow members before the music calls us back to our dancing. The lucky winner of the 50/50 pot of \$80 was Susan Baxfield. Congratulations Susan! And thank you to all who supported our 50/50 fundraiser.

Merry Christmas to you all, and we hope you had a wonderful time.

– Louise Perry

