

# SCOTCH CIRCLE

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May 2006

RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Incorporated  
GPO Box 1795, CANBERRA ACT 2601

Co-Chair	Elaine Arthur	(02) 6254 7879
	Brian Gunning	
Secretary	Bruce Clark	(02) 6288 2487
Treasurer	David Parkinson	(02) 6247 0964

## Co-Chairs' Message

The Stop Press news for this issue of Scotch Circle is that the Branch Committee has recently approved the plans and budget that have been prepared over the last year or more by successive Winter School Sub-Committees. This means that we will definitely be proceeding, with the dates set at 30 September to 7 October 2007 (in the midst of the 2007 Floriade). We have agreements from musicians and teachers, the venues have been booked and so has the residential accommodation at the Hotel Heritage in Narrabundah. The brochure will be available soon, and will be distributed at the forthcoming Winter School in Perth (9 to 16 July).

Meanwhile, the year got off to a good start with a beautiful evening for our annual barbecue and dance at the Hall Showground in February: our thanks to Fiona who organised this event.

The Branch Day school held on 25 March was also very successful and well attended. Everyone learned something new from the excellent teaching of Trish Nicholls from Sydney and Elspeth Lacey from Canberra. We all benefit from reminders of our dancing technique and being aware of all dancers in the set. We were very fortunate in having live music for both our classes – Kate, Jane and Mark from Strathmannan and Bob McInnes and Polly Garland. The evening social was great fun with Strathmannan providing the music. We thank Olive for organising the day and also the many helpers, in particular Donald Horne and Jill Vardy for their assistance with 'kitchen duties'. The many dancers who travelled from outside Canberra made the day, and we thank them for coming.

Our weekly Branch classes are continuing at St Andrew's on Wednesday evenings with Jill Vardy and Bruce teaching their very keen groups of Beginners and Intermediates. The more experienced dancers who help with the Intermediate class have a great time and we encourage others to come along and join in the fun and enthusiasm and render some assistance. We can all remember the help we received from experienced dancers in our early dancing days.

We look forward to a visit from Lesley Martin at the end of May. She will be in Australia primarily to examine candidates in Sydney and Melbourne for RSCDS teacher certificates. We hope many dancers will take the opportunity to attend her Canberra classes and benefit from the knowledge of a very experienced teacher from Scotland. Details of her two classes – one aimed at combined Elementary and Intermediate levels (but all welcome) and the other social "from the waist up" – are in the Events page.

On a sad note, we farewell and pay tribute to Elspeth Lacey, who, with Ian, has set off on an extended period of travel. Elspeth has made an outstanding contribution to Scottish Country Dancing in Canberra over many years, including teaching the SCDCC since 1999, Chairing the Branch, and organising countless “demos” and Socials. We express the hope that we will see you both back in Canberra, at least from time to time, and wish you all the very best for your travels and for when you put down new roots.

The current cool weather is very conducive to lots of dancing! Hope to see you on the floor.

*Elaine and Brian*

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## **Branch News**

### **Membership Renewals**

At the recent Special General Meeting a motion was approved for a small change in the arrangements for calculating the annual membership fee. In future, the annual membership fee for the financial year is calculated based on the RSCDS affiliation fee converted at the exchange rate as at 1 May, rather than 1 July (ie £stg10@0.4167) plus \$25 all rounded to the nearest dollar. The result is that the annual fee for 2006/07 will be \$49.00. For those who are interested in the minutiae the rounding involved is +\$0.00192.

There is a reminder slip at the end of issue for you to complete and return with your subscription *on or after 1 July 2006*.

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## **Club News**

### **Canberra Ball – 2 September 2006**

This year we will be holding our annual ball at a new venue, St Edmunds College Narrabundah, with music by Strathmannan.

Come and join us for a pre-ball drink and nibbles before a Grand March. There will also be a light supper during the evening.

The program of dances for the evening is The Summer Assembly, the Kelloholm Jig, Miss Gibson’s Strathspey, The Whistling Wind, The Wild Geese, Cherrybank Gardens, Shiftin Bobbins, Major Ian Stewart, Wisp of Thistle, Miss Johnstone of Ardrossen, Napier’s Index, Sauchie Haugh, The Australian Ladies, Pelorus Jack, Culla Bay, The Montgomerie’s Rant, The 51<sup>st</sup> Travellers, Miss Florence Adams, Joie de Vivre, The Meeting of the Waters.

Tickets will be available shortly. We can arrange billets for those who are coming from places outside Canberra. Call Bruce (02) 6288 2487 or email [jbclark@webone.com.au](mailto:jbclark@webone.com.au).

## **Burns Club Spring Hop 19 August 2006**

The Burns Scottish Country Dance Group will hold their Spring Hop at St Andrew's Church Hall on 19 August 2006, from 7:30pm to 11pm.

Music by Strathmannan, \$10 admission includes supper.

Program: Happy Returns, Miss Hadden's Reel, Miss Milligan's Strathspey, The Piper and the Penguin, Napier's Index, Anna Holden's Strathspey, The Royal Deeside Railway, The White Heather Jig, The Dean Bridge of Edinburgh, Shiftin Bobbins, Kelloholm Jig, Evelyn's Dance, Montgomeries Rant, Posties Jig, Adieu Mon Ami, Reel of the 51<sup>st</sup> Division.

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## **Events Further Afield**

### **Box Hill Scottish Society 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball – 19 August 2006**

The Box Hill Scottish Society will hold a Ball to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, on 19 August 2006 at the Box Hill Town Hall, Victoria. Tickets are \$45.00

Musicians include fiddlers Matthew Robertson, Colin MacLeod & Judy Turner, and David South, Athalie Brooks and Neil Adam. At times the band will be joined by the Performing Group of the Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club.

Program: Grand March, The Luckenbooth Brooch, Meeting of the Waters, The New Scotland Strathspey, Spiers Bruce – the Pole Star, Anniversary Reel, Bonnie Stronshiray, June's Jubilee Jig, The Music Makars, Monymusk, the Duke of Atholl's Reel, Blooms of Bon Accord, Gothenburg's Welcome, The Minister on the Loch, Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterader, De'il Among the Tailors, The Robertson Rant, Mairie's Wedding.

For tickets email Celine [secretarybdhss@yahoo.com.au](mailto:secretarybdhss@yahoo.com.au) or phone Ian on (03) 98902546.

### **Dunedin Summer School 28 December 2006 – 6 January 2007**

The New Zealand Branch will hold their Summer School at Dunedin from 28 December 2006 to 6 January 2007. For further details contact Bruce, or the organiser, Janet Favel on [janet\\_dave@clear.net.nz](mailto:janet_dave@clear.net.nz).

The RSCDS NZ Branch regularly send us their club directory and details of their classes by email. If you are visiting NZ and would like to know if there is dancing on somewhere during your visit ask Bruce to pass it on to you or visit [www.rscdsnz.org.nz](http://www.rscdsnz.org.nz).

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## Events until the Next Issue of Scotch Circle

**Note:** The start time for the Burns Scottish Dance Group Monday night class has changed to 7.30pm for the rest of the winter.

**19 May** - Belconnen SCD Advanced Social, 8.00pm, Assembly Hall Macquarie Primary School, Bennelong Cr., Macquarie, led by Glenys and Peggy. Programme (selected from): Barbara Morrison's Jig, Strathalbyn Jig, Cheers Darling, Company at the Manor, Janet's Hornpipe, Oriel Strathspey, Off to Australia, Southern Stars, Peterborough Liftlock, Johnnie's Welcome Home.

**27 May - Nowra SCD Group 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Ball, Nowra School of Arts**, 6:30pm for non-alcoholic punch and savouries, 7:30pm for Grand March; **Music** by Bob McInnes and Rhonda Langford; **Cost:** \$35.00 includes dinner (BYO drinks), **Enquiries and Tickets:** Judy Sleath (02) 4441 8552. If you have a group of 8 people, let us know and we will reserve a table; billets will also be available on request. Please pay for tickets by 13 May. **Programme:** A Welcome to Nowra, Tribute to the Borders, Margaret Parker's Strathspey, Alan J Smith, Mrs MacLeod, The Trysting Place, The Sailor, Postie's Jig, Sugar Candie, The Australian Ladies, The Minister on the Loch, Pelorus Jack, Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan, Miss Gibson's Strathspey, Napier's Index, Scott Meikle, Mrs MacPherson of Inveran, Butterscotch and Honey, Mary Bain's Wedding, The De'il Among the Tailors. **Instructions:-** <http://www.rscds-canberra.org/texts/NowraBallInst.doc>

**31 May and 1 June** –Lesley Martin, who is visiting Australia from Edinburgh to conduct SCD examinations, will come to Canberra on these days to lead a Branch class at Elementary and Intermediate levels on the Wednesday evening at St Andrews at 7.30pm, and a Social class on the Thursday at 8.00pm at Macquarie Primary School, both with live music.

**3 June** – Sydney Branch Ball, Ryde Civic Centre, music by Chris Duncan, Catherine Strutt and Bob McInnes, tickets \$40; further details available at [www.rscds.org.au](http://www.rscds.org.au) or from [Keithnap@primusonline.com.au](mailto:Keithnap@primusonline.com.au)

**16 June** - Belconnen SCD Advanced Social, 8.00pm, Assembly Hall Macquarie Primary School, Bennelong Cr., Macquarie, led by Barbara and Brian.

**1 July** – Branch Hosted Dinner-Dance. The hosted dinner has become a regular event on the calendar. It is a good chance to catch up with people who you dance with every week and never have time to finish the conversation before the next dance is called. Come and have dinner and chat before adjourning to St Andrews Church Hall for dessert and a short program of dances that everyone can enjoy (including our less experienced dancers). Barbara Monahan is coordinating the event and would be very pleased to hear from you if you would like to host a dinner or would like to come along for the evening 6287-2023. Dinner, dancing and dessert \$20; dancing and dessert \$10. Dinner at 6.00pm at a dancer's home, dancing starts 8.15pm at St Andrews Church Hall. Program; C'est l'amour (The Flirt), Festival Fling, The Laird of Milton's Daughter, Seann Triubhas Willichan, Society Piper, The Jubilee Jig, Rose Garden, Gushet Neuk, Falls of Rogie, Culla Bay, Follow Me Home, De'il Among the Tailors

**12 July** – No Wednesday Branch Classes on this day

**28 July** - Belconnen SCD Advanced Social, 8.00pm, Assembly Hall Macquarie Primary School, Bennelong Cr., Macquarie, led by Elaine and Jenny.

**5 Aug** – Belconnen SCD 31<sup>st</sup> Birthday Social. Details to follow

**19 Aug** – Burns SCD Group Spring Hop at St Andrews Church Hall, 7.30-11pm, music by Strathmannan, Admission \$10. **Programme:** Happy Returns; Miss Hadden's Reel; Miss Milligan's Strathspey; The Piper and the Penguin; Napier's Index; Anna Holden's Strathspey; The Royal Deeside Railway; White Heather Jig; The Dean Bridge of Edinburgh; Shiftin Bobbins; Kelloholm Jig; Evelyn's Dance; Montgomeries Rant; Posties Jig; Adieu Mon Ami; Reel of the 51st Division.

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## Contacts and meeting times for nearby SCD Groups

**If you are travelling in the region, take your dancing shoes along: you will be warmly welcomed at any of the following SCD Groups:**

### **Batemans Bay Caledonian Society**

The Batemans Bay Caledonian Society meets each Monday at the Community Hall, Flora Crs. (behind the Soldiers Club) at 1.30pm---4.00pm. Any visiting dancers are most welcome. Contact Joan Kelly (02)4472 3959 or [jke12184@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jke12184@bigpond.net.au)

### **Bermagui SCD Group**

Meets every Tuesday evening at 7.30 pm at the Bermagui Country Club and would welcome folks from any other groups/clubs who may be visiting the locality and would like some practice and an informal social evening. It would be helpful to get a phone call if convenient, prior to the event, but in any case the welcome mat is laid out. Contact Heather Griffiths at (02)6493 4862 or [heathertom@netspeed.com.au](mailto:heathertom@netspeed.com.au)

### **Far South Coast S.C.Dancers**

Everybody is welcome to have some fun with The Far South Coast Scottish Country Dancers. Contact Sheelagh Brunton on (02)6493 6538 or [wasbrunton@acr.net.au](mailto:wasbrunton@acr.net.au)

- Monday afternoons at The Murrah Hall, ten minutes south of Bermagui on the Tathra-Bermagui Road, 1.30-3.30.
- Tuesday afternoons at the Bemboka Community Hall on the Snowy Mountain Highway in the middle of Bemboka, 1.30-3.30 followed by half an hour with the kids. (best to phone Sheelagh before coming to this one as sometimes the hall is not available.)
- Thursday evenings in the Supper Room of the Cobargo School of Arts, Bermagui Road, Cobargo, 7.30-9.30.

### **Monaro Caledonian Society Scottish Country Dancers**

The Cooma dancers meet on Thursday evenings at 8pm in St Andrews Church Hall on Soho Street, a block up from the front of the RSL where the Ball is held, right behind the Public School. Contact Eileen Pevere on (02)64525154 or [david.eileen@bigpond.com](mailto:david.eileen@bigpond.com)

**Murringo Scottish Dancers** meet at the village hall in the main street of Murringo on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm. Contacts Maurice Harcombe 02 6384 6222 or Jean Williams 02 6382 1514.

**Nowra SCD Group** meet every Wednesday night at 7.30pm at St Andrews Church near the Woolworths' carpark: in Nowra: contact Judi Sleath 02 4441 8552 or [jsleath@netspace.net.au](mailto:jsleath@netspace.net.au)

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### **Rupert Ermert**

Rupert Ermert is moving to Canberra. From 1 May 2006 Rupert's new address is 11 Emerton Street Evatt Act 2617. Telephone (02) 6161 7094. Rupert will still be the co-ordinator for the Bundanoon 2007 event with regard to dancing.

*Jill Vardy*

## Recent Events

### Branch Day School 25 March 2006

Reid Uniting Church was the venue for this annual event where a number of dancers of varying abilities gathered to enjoy a day of dance with Trish Nicholls from Sydney and our own Elspeth Lacey from Canberra. Music was provided by Kate, Jane and Mark of Strathmannan and Bob McInnes and Polly Garland.

The Advanced Class with Trish spent an enjoyable time with an extensive warm-up and mixing exercise before being instructed in an extremely detailed and thorough technique class. Everyone seemed to work hard as well as smile. Some of us tried to remember when last third position has seemed so elusive, and why was a strathspey travelling step suddenly so exhausting?

It was salutary to realise just how sloppy one's feet actually were and how much time one had spent studying the floor. It was lovely to watch Trish skim across the floor seemingly effortlessly and with scarcely a sound. We did try to emulate her steps. Simple dances using what we had been taught were interspersed with the teaching and we covered a great deal during the morning. It was Elspeth's turn after lunch. With her usual easy style and clear teaching we were led through several most interesting dances. Enjoyment was the key factor here. There was little expertise shown by many and certain figures led to more laughter rather than skill. This was entirely due to the participants and not the excellent teaching. In one set a couple simply gave up trying and danced the polka round the room.

Happy and tired, we completed the classes and prepared for the social evening ahead. This was fun too.

Everyone who attended, including a girl from the junior class, must have benefited from the day. Great teaching combined with lovely musical playing and good company ensured this. Thank you to all who were involved including the organizers, those who baked and the tea-makers.

*Camilla Shaw*

### Bundanoon Highland Gathering – 9 April 2006

Canberra fielded only one set of dancers at the Bundanoon Highland Gathering on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April. I know that it is a busy time of year, with the Cooma Ball the preceding Saturday and Easter and the Folk Festival the next week. However, even small groups like Southern Highlands and Bateman's Bay managed to get more than one set of dancers together.

Thanks to all the dancers, including a junior and a newer dancer who fronted up for Canberra. It was a most beautiful day weatherwise, and Rupert had done us proud with his organisational arrangements, including a "dancers' tent" for changing and for storing gear. We danced on time and had most of the day to enjoy the rest of the Bundanoon activities including a visit to the Fiddlers' Tent where Chris Duncan, Bob McInnes, Catherine Strutt and Trish and Tim and Sarah Barker (who used to dance with Belconnen before they moved to Sydney) entertained with wonderful playing.

Jean Farnon of Nowra announced each of the four dances danced in the display, despite being not very well herself on the day. We wish her all the best, and also to Morag Napier from Sydney who managed to attend Bundanoon although getting ready for an examiners' tour to Japan with Elma McCausland shortly afterwards.

*Jill Vardy*

## Scottish Country Dancers Tour of Vietnam and China – March/April 2006

One of the highlights of the Scottish Country Dancers (and friends) tour of North Vietnam and China in March-April was the opportunity to demonstrate Scottish Country Dancing to a group of Black Hmong children and adults in a remote village near Sapa in the highlands. There was no electricity in the village for our CD player, so we provided our own music – singing lustily as we danced “Mairie’s Wedding”. After that, we still had enough breath to get all of the villagers into a large circle to sing Auld Lang Syne. We hadn’t time to teach them the words but as we left they had formed a circle and were chanting something mysterious in their own language as they marched in and out!. (Actually, we discovered later that two houses in the village did have electric light courtesy of racing mountain stream which had been diverted through a little Chinese-made turbine).

Our tour started with a brief visit to Guangzhou, then on to Hanoi, where we did all tourist stuff like Ho Chi Minh’s Mausoleum and his house-on-stilts, the One Pillar pagoda, and West Lake, before heading to HaLong Bay. After a cruise through the mosaic of countless tiny limestone islands (featured, I think, in the James Bond movie “The Man with the Golden Gun”, we returned to Hanoi to catch the overnight “soft” sleeper to LaoCai, located on the banks of the Red River which forms the international border with China, thence by coach into the highlands for our memorable visit to Sapa. The highlands are home to a number of ethnic minority tribes who live happily cheek by jowl with each other in idyllic valleys. We had a glorious walk through one valley, where water buffalo, ducks, chickens and pot-belly Vietnamese pigs were browsing happily among the paddy fields. Sadly, commercialisation is creeping in. A group of children sold us bamboo staves to help us on the steep and slippery path, then escorted us through the valley – concerned we thought about our welfare but they just wanted to get the staves back to sell them to the next group of hikers!

Back to Hanoi on the overnight sleeper train before flying to Kunming, in Yunnan Province via Guangzhou, where we were promoted to the 1st Class Lounge while awaiting our onward connection. Yunnan is also home to a number of ethnic minorities, and includes a Tibetan autonomous region. Three nights in Kunming gave us a chance to catch up with the laundry as well as visiting the Minority Cultural Park, the Garden of the World Horticultural Exposition, the world’s second biggest flower market, and the Stone Forest (a deeply eroded limestone karst area - like the islands in Halong Bay - said to be the highest karst terrain in the world). Another flight took us to Lijiang one of the most picturesque and certainly the cleanest places I have ever seen in China - crystal clear water flowing in shallow streams through old Dayan Town was thronged with fish. It was rightly listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1997. The main ethnic group here is the Naxi, who still use an ancient pictographic script, quite unlike Chinese. Fortunately, high winds saved us from the nerve wracking cable car trip up the top of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, and we settled for a chair lift ride up to the beautiful Spruce Meadow to admire the snow-covered peaks. A perilous coach trip (interrupted briefly by a land-slide triggered by a group of mountain goats) took us to the First Bend of the Yangtze River and the Leaping Tiger Gorge - said to be the deepest gorge in the world.

On then to Guilin where we did the famous Li River cruise to Yangshuo, passing yet more limestone mountains. In Yangshuo the group divided after a farewell dinner – half returning to Australia, while the rest of us went on to Beijing for the usual tourist round – Forbidden City, a Peking Duck banquet, Great Wall, Temple of Heaven, Valley of the Ming Tombs and, of course, shopping in Silk Alley for more cashmere sweaters, silk, goose-down jackets, Goretex anoraks with windstopper linings and so on (it’s good to be able to buy the original factory-made goods in China at a fraction of the price you pay for inferior copies in Australia!).

This was our third Scottish Country Dancers trip to China – the problem now is to pick the itinerary for our trip next year. Europe, South Africa or China again? Let me know if you have any ideas.

*John Clark*

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## **Hugh Foss - Dancing Master Extraordinaire**

### **Some thoughts from Jack Arthur**

#### **following the recent Belconnen social evening of eight Foss dances**

During the twenty years or so that Scottish country dancing has been a hobby of mine, a number of Hugh Foss dances have been and indeed remain almost perennials on Ball and Social programmes, including *Roaring Jelly*, *Polharrow Burn*, *The Clachan* and *John McAlpin*, among others. Yet, Foss has remained to me something of a mystery man of SCD, despite the fact that much was written about him just a few years ago around the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the London Branch of the RSCDS, with which he had a close association. In an attempt to resolve the mystery (in my mind anyhow) I decided to see if I could find out something about the man and his dances with the further object of adding to the repertoire of Foss dances that could be performed at the Belconnen class.

Brian Gunning encouraged me to write this note and he has assisted by providing some of the information I perused, from publications such as:

- “The Reel” – the newsletter of the London Branch of the RSCDS;
- “TACTalk” – the newsletter of the Teachers’ Association of Canada;
- “*Sundry writings anent Scottish dancing*” – a booklet written by Foss himself.

In addition, I have access to:

- Several books and leaflets of SCDs containing dances written by Foss, given to Elaine by the late Archie and Alison Brown. These include: “The Kendoon Set of Dances”; “The Galloway Album”; “Dances to Song Tunes”; “The Rose Collection of Scottish Country Dances”; “The Waverley Fugues”; and a number of the “Glendarroch Sheets”
- A tape recording, loaned to Elaine by Sandra Carroll, of music for some Foss dances illustrative of the collaboration which took place between Foss and the musician Peter White.

Born in 1902 in Japan the son of an Anglican missionary bishop, he was educated in England at various institutions including Cambridge University. During WW2 he worked at Bletchley (Intelligence and Decoding) and in 1942 was awarded an OBE for his work as a codebreaker.. To read a description of his brilliant codebusting achievements, particularly of Japanese secret ciphers, consult *The Emperor’s Codes* by Michael Smith, ISBN 0-593-04641-2, Bantam Press.

He was incorrectly described as an eccentric SCOT, partly because he wore a plain grey kilt, often to work, after having married a Scotswoman, Alison, during the early 1930s. It was about then that Alison took her ENGLISH husband to an evening of SCD at a friend’s house in Chelsea, London. Having sat out the first half he was asked what he thought of the evening so far. He replied that he was enjoying the dancing but did not think much of the teaching (heard that one before?). Invited to do better if he could, Foss quickly read through a book of dances and by the end of the evening was in charge. And so, the story goes, began his great passion for SCD and its MUSIC. This episode apparently came to the attention of the infant London Branch of the SCDS which was concerned by his “unauthorised” teaching of SCD (not a qualified teacher!) but his reply that all he was doing was explaining SCDs to enthusiasts and potential new dancers was accepted, and he was invited to join the Branch. Shortly thereafter he became a regular visitor to the Society’s Summer School at St Andrews where he took his teacher’s certificate. Soon after the end of the WW2 he was a member of the London Branch Committee and it was only a short step or two from there to the job of Branch President, which in those days was effectively the Branch Chairman. In 1951 he produced the first copy of “The Reel” and over the ensuing years contributed many articles to it.

It was sometime during the 1940s I think, although I am not sure of the date, that he bought a house, Glendarroch, located in Dalry near Castle Douglas in south-west Scotland, from where it is said that

he started his prolific output of dances, many of which are contained in the collections of Leaflets which bear the name of the house. This collection also contains numerous dances composed by many other individuals, such as Derek Haynes (*The Black Mountain Reel*) and John Bowie Dickson (*The Luckenbooth Brooch*), to mention just one or two.

There is also an interesting connection here between Glendarroch and New Zealand, which may help us understand the affinity that NZ dancers appear to have with Foss dances. Appended to the issue of “The Reel (September to November 2001)” celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the London Branch, the then editor of the NZ Branch magazine, Marjorie Crawford, wrote that following the publication of Foss’ first collection of dances in 1963, Iain Boyd contacted him and with the encouragement of Foss, Boyd’s first collection of dances was published, also in 1963. In the same year, at a meeting held at the home of Boyd’s parents in Wanganui, the Glendarroch Club was formed. Foss accepted the position of the club’s first patron, a position he held until his death in 1971. Foss composed *The River City Strathspey* for the club (see Galloway Album). Boyd wrote *Glendarroch Gathering* to celebrate the club’s formation and following the passing of Hugh Foss, he produced the dance *Glendarroch*. Marjorie acknowledged Iain Boyd (Wellington) and Murray Corps (Wanganui) as the sources of this information about the Foss/NZ connection.

On his approach to devising new dances, Foss said that one must first give oneself a course in what he termed “The Dance as a Work of Art”. The start of such a course, he advised, “is to soak yourself in the tradition: learn, dance and think about it – particularly think about – all the dances you can”. He believed that a good dance is like any other work of art which, as such, needs unity and variety, must “make sense”, and should have a point without being dull. One of his primary methods of achieving UNITY was to start with a tune, listen to the music and try to think what it suggested to him. Two examples of collections of dances he devised after listening to existing tunes are “The Kendoon Set of Dances” and the dances on the Angus Fitchett Album published by James S.Kerr to tunes written by Fitchett. In the case of the Kendoon Set, musician Peter White was looking for dances to three tunes that he had composed. Foss took the music and the dances that resulted, *The Kendoon – Strathspey*, *The Clachan –Jig*, and *Garple Burn-Reel*, are all regarded as fine examples of unity of dance and music. Similarly, the Fitchett tunes had not been composed for dances but Kerr was looking for dances before committing to recording the tunes. Foss obliged, one of the results being *J.B.Milne*.

Foss dances that we tried out at Belconnen during February, March and April include *Mr William Brown’s Reel* and *Irongray* (from The Galloway Album), *Hey Johnnie Cope*, *Castles in the Air* and *The Wee Cooper o’ Fife* (from Dances to Song Tunes), *Glenfiddich Strathspey* (from the Rose Collection), *Fugal Fergus* (from the Waverley Collection) and sundry dances from Glendarroch leaflets such as *Airie Bennan*, *Earlstoun Loch*, and *Jamie’s Hornpipe*. As well, we revised the half dozen or so Foss dances that we already knew. The Tuesday class of 18 April became a well attended and I think highly successful social evening of eight Foss dances.

Hugh Foss died in 1971, aged 69 years. This is what makes him less well known to me than the giants such as John Drewry, Roy Goldring, and Derek Haynes who came along a bit later. My mystery is resolved. Had I started SCD 20 or so years sooner than I did, I would undoubtedly have become more familiar with his background and his dances. Foss was a dancing master extraordinaire - brilliant - up there with the best of them.

I believe that Foss knew there was a spectrum of expectations among Scottish country dancers. At one extreme are those individuals who aspire to be good dancers and/or teachers; at the other are the persons who just want to dance defined as romp. And as far as I can tell he made no judgment that any expectation in the spectrum of expectations is superior to any other. All participants can

experience enjoyment or entertainment, have fun, or gain satisfaction from achieving whatever expectations they may have. My feeling though is he took the view that if you want to take SCD seriously, always give it your best shot. On the other hand if you were just looking for a romp you could do a lot worse than go to a Village Hall Saturday evening, style-of-yesteryear. For a Hugh Foss description of a sort of activity that once upon a time still qualified as SCD, I leave you with his

*A Running Commentary*

They're off. They're neck and neck. Now the women are leading. Mabel Ovid is two bars ahead of her partner, John Brown of Bodmin. There goes Percy Vere of Peckham, second man. Will he remember to turn? Yes. No. Yes, he's facing down the dance. Angus Turner of Aberdeen, the third man, shakes hands with him to congratulate him. The Bodmin boy sails past Mabel. This is Fairshon Macfeud broadcasting Lady Mary Douglas from – Percy has butted his head into Angus' jaw in the second woman's place – square two – Angus is down. One – two – three – He's up again – That boy can take punishment. Now they're weaving away. Back in their places. The Peckham lad is explaining excitedly to the Aberdeen Angus. Away go John and Mabel down the middle, a beautiful – bad luck sir – Percy, flailing with his left hand catches John over the right eye. He has his back to me. I can't quite see. Yes – he has turned round – yes, there is a cut over his eye. Mabel is looking worried. She gives John her handkerchief as they cast off. John pushes between the two men and stops a right hook that was meant for Percy. It's shaken him. He must be in pain, but he carries on, circling round Angus, who keeps facing him all the time guarding with both hands. John lands a right foot to Percy's toe and slips past him to the third woman. Mabel catches Percy off his guard and he flings her from him towards Angus. John sidesteps cleverly, gathers her up and swings her round. Now to Angus. Now to John again and away they go into the reel of three at the sides. Mabel dodges a feint from Percy. Percy and Angus go into a clinch. Angus disengages. They're weaving away now, dancing in and out - - - dancing?

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### **Battlefield Band in Canberra 30 May 2006**

Well-known Scottish band The Battlefield Band will be performing at the Canberra Southern Cross Club on Tuesday 30 May 2006 at 8pm. The band "mixes old songs and tunes with new self-penned material", playing...bagpipes, synthesizers, fiddles, guitars, cittern, bass, whistles and bouzouki." Bookings essential – ring (02) 6283 7200 for tickets.

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### **Weekly SCD Classes in Canberra, 2006:**

- Mondays** - Burns SCD Group regular Monday class at St Andrews at 7.30 pm. Details from Clare Friend (Ph (02) 62489090, email [friendly@homemail.com.au](mailto:friendly@homemail.com.au)) 3 (note 7.30pm winter time start).
- Mondays** – at Hawker Community College, for beginners: if the class is run, which depends on enrolments each term, it will be held each Monday of the School term from 7:00 pm - 8:30pm. Contact [elizabeth.low@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:elizabeth.low@medicareaustralia.gov.au) or 6288 8177 or the College.
- Tuesdays** - Belconnen SCD regular Tuesday class at Macquarie Primary School, Bennelong Cr, 8.00 pm. Details from Jack or Elaine on [arthur@effect.net.au](mailto:arthur@effect.net.au) or 6254 7879 (home).
- Tuesdays** - RSCDS Branch Juniors class (age 5-15), Yarralumla Uniting Church, Denman St, Yarralumla, 4.30-5.30pm on Tuesday afternoons; contact Sandra 6282 1063.
- Wednesdays** - RSCDS Branch classes: Beginners Class 6.30 – 7.55 pm, contact [Jill.Vardy@Dest.gov.au](mailto:Jill.Vardy@Dest.gov.au) or Ph 62496962. Regular Class from 8.00 to 10.00 pm, contact Bruce Clark [jbclark@webone.com.au](mailto:jbclark@webone.com.au) or Ph 62882487.
- Thursdays** - SCDCC regular Thursday class at St Johns, 8.00 pm. Details from Barbara Monahan at [barbara.monahan@raia.com.au](mailto:barbara.monahan@raia.com.au) or phone 6220 9305 (o) or Jan Clark Ph 62882487 or [jan.clark@inet.net.au](mailto:jan.clark@inet.net.au).
- Fridays** - RSCDS Branch "Gentle dancing" class at St Andrews, 2.00 pm Details from Jessie on [tmi04138@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tmi04138@bigpond.net.au).

## Canberra SCD Group Contacts:

Web pages giving details for all Groups can be accessed from the home page of the Branch web site  
<http://www.rscds-canberra.org>

**RSCDS Canberra and District Branch Inc.** GPO Box 1795, ACT 2601

**Co-Chairs** Elaine Arthur [arthur@effect.net.au](mailto:arthur@effect.net.au) and Brian Gunning [gunning@rsbs.anu.edu.au](mailto:gunning@rsbs.anu.edu.au)

**Secretary** Bruce Clark [jbclark@webone.com.au](mailto:jbclark@webone.com.au) or 62882487

**Treasurer** David Parkinson [dmp@effect.net.au](mailto:dmp@effect.net.au)

**Committee Members** Fiona Ainley, Olive Bassett-MacLeod, Barbara Monahan

**Burns Scottish Country Dance Group Inc.** Contact George Laburn Ph (02) 6258 5713

**Belconnen Scottish Country Dancers Inc.** Contact Jack or Elaine Arthur: [arthur@effect.net.au](mailto:arthur@effect.net.au) or 6254 7879

**Scottish Country Dance Club of Canberra Inc.** Contact Barbara Monahan: [barbara.monahan@raia.com.au](mailto:barbara.monahan@raia.com.au)  
or phone 6220 9305

If you are not already on the email SCD Newsletter mailing list but would like to receive it, please contact [gunning@rsbs.anu.edu.au](mailto:gunning@rsbs.anu.edu.au)

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*Scotch Circle is published by RSCDS (Canberra & District) and the Committee reserves rights of editorial control*

*Closing date for next Scotch Circle – Tuesday 1 August 2006*

*Contributions and requests for electronic version to Bruce Clark at [jbclark@webone.com.au](mailto:jbclark@webone.com.au)*

Canberra and District Branch  
Royal Scottish Country Dance Society  
PO Box 1795, CANBERRA ACT 2601

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### Membership renewal for financial year 2006/07 (payable from 1 July 2006)

- \$49.00 for annual membership is enclosed, or
- \$10.00 for subscription to Scotch Circle is enclosed, or
- I do not wish to continue my membership/subscription

Name:.....

Postal address:.....

Email:.....

Telephone.....(business hours).....(home)

Please return to:  
Treasurer  
Canberra and District Branch  
Royal Scottish Country Dance Society  
PO Box 1795  
CANBERRA ACT 2601