

SCOTCH CIRCLE

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

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Chair's Message

Greetings again to you all! The new dancing year is upon us already – it seems no time at all since we started our summer break back in early December 2008. The summer weather in Canberra & District has been, if anything, hotter than usual, which really requires us to take things easy at our first classes for the year.

This issue contains information about the teaching of classes being run by the Branch this year. Also included is an invitation to attend the first Branch social event for the year – a BBQ and Dance on 28 February at the Hall Showgrounds, with live dance music. You will also find some snippets of news from around the district – Nowra, Cooma and Cobargo. The Calendar summarises the latest information we have about classes and social events being held in 'Canberra & District' during 2009.

The year 2009 marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, and Scotland is treating this year as one of celebration. You can find out something of this in the article on Homecoming Scotland 2009; in particular you may be interested to read about the involvement of the RSCDS and the connection between Burns and Scottish country dancing. Of course, throughout this the 250th anniversary year, celebrations will be held not only in Scotland but also around the world. Canberra's dancers will have the opportunity to play a small part in these celebrations at the Canberra Ball 2009. More about this will be announced shortly.

Although we are a somewhat smaller Branch than was once the case, we still have much to offer Scottish country dance enthusiasts. I hope all your dancing batteries have re-charged during the break and I look forward to seeing you all during the year.

Jack Arthur

Branch News

BRANCH BBQ AND DANCE

On Saturday 28 February the Branch will be holding a Barbecue and Dance to mark the start of the new year of dancing, in the pleasant surrounds of the Showgrounds Hall at Hall Village. Bring your own meal (BBQs will be provided) and fold-up chair. Starting from 6.00pm, meet up and chat with friends as you partake of your food and drink. Then, from about 7.30pm enjoy a relaxing program of dances to the music of Strathmannan. The evening will conclude with a light supper. Dances: Mrs Stewart's Jig; Flowers of Edinburgh; The Minister on the Loch; The Piper and the Penguin; Maxwell's Rant; Fair Donald; The Nurseryman; Miss Johnstone of Ardrossan; The Gentleman; Napier's Index; Jean Martin of Aberdeen; Mairi's Wedding. Extras: The White Heather Jig; Reel of the Royal Scots. Cost \$10.

BRANCH CLASS TEACHERS AND FIRST CLASSES FOR THE YEAR

The Wednesday Beginners Class is being taken initially by Elizabeth Low, with assistance from Hisako Ewing and Elaine Arthur. The first class for the year was particularly well attended despite the heat, with enough dancers to make up two sets of three couples.

The Wednesday General Class, from February until the end of June will be taken for 7-8 weeks each by Elaine Arthur, Ann Parkinson and Elizabeth Low, in that order. The first class, at the new time of 7.30 to 9.30pm was enjoyed by the small but enthusiastic group who came along.

The Friday afternoon Class for gentle Dancers will be under the guidance of Jessie Middlemiss, with assistance from other teachers from time to time as required.

Contact details and venues and times can be found in the Calendar at the back of this issue.

BRANCH OCCASIONAL CLASS

This note repeats and updates our call, already made through the email Newsletter, for expressions of interest from dancers who might like to attend a new Branch Occasional class.

The primary aim of this class is to attract dancers wishing to enhance or maintain their dancing skills. A secondary aim is to prepare a display team for a performance at the National Folk Festival; however, dancers interested in attending this class but who do not wish to participate in any display are still welcome - the emphasis of the class would be on dancing skills.

The class would not be concentrating on learning new or difficult dances. Instead, and certainly in the first instance, the class would look to polishing formations which appear in dances that are either well known or are not of a high degree of difficulty. The class would also work on other aspects of technique such as phrasing, covering, use of hands, deportment and teamwork. And although no Scottish country dancing class could be complete without some footwork, in this class step practice would be to the point and not excessive.

The class would meet less often than weekly and run for just an hour to an hour and a half. It is not intended to replace or compete with any existing class but instead to complement the existing range of classes, without requiring much extra time from those dancers already committed to a weekly class. It would be open to Branch members (\$4) or non-Branch dancers (\$5). Possible days/times for the class include: Monday to Thursday 6.30-7.30pm; or a Friday evening; or a Saturday morning. The venue is to be worked out. The starting date could be late February. The actual frequency of classes is to be decided – perhaps monthly to start, increasing to fortnightly or weekly as the NFF approaches. Whether the class goes ahead at all will depend on the level of interest shown, and decisions on the day, time, frequency and location of the class will take into account the preferences of the interested dancers.

A number of dancers have already expressed their interest by contacting Elaine Arthur (telephone: 6254 7879, or email: Elaine.Arthur@apex.net.au). If you are interested but have not yet been in touch with Elaine, there is still time. A further announcement about this class will be made as soon as possible.

DISTRICT NEWS

FROM THE FAR SOUTH COAST

Cobargo, "The Working Village," situated between Narooma and Bega, and only 15 minutes from Bermagui, is hosting its 14th Annual "Yuin Folk Festival" on the 20th to 22nd February, 2009.

There is a distinctly Scottish Flavour at this year's event with Canberra musicians, Strathmannan, being featured on the programme and Scottish Country Dancing having three prominent appearances. Sheelagh Brunton, the teacher for the Far South Coast Dancers has been asked to participate with the dancers.

On the Friday (20th) she will run a workshop from 5-6pm for beginners. Saturday afternoon from 3.30 – 4.00 will see her dancers demonstrate Scottish country dancing, which will include a medley she has choreographed. On the Saturday evening Sheelagh will comper a Social Dance (5.00 – 7.00pm) which will have music by Strathmannan.

The Folk Festival is very popular and can be recommended for its variety of music and dance with local and overseas performers. If Scotch Circle readers have a spare weekend, come and visit the beautiful Far South Coast. More information with the full programme of the Festival is available at www.cobargofolkfestival.com

ALSO FROM THE FAR SOUTH COAST

It is not too early to mark your diary for the 9th, 10th and 11th October this year to travel to Bermagui for the 10th Annual Social of the far South Coast Group of dancers. To mark the occasion, Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt will be providing the music, firstly in concert on the Friday evening and then for dancing on the Saturday evening.

MONARO CALEDONIAN SOCIETY TARTAN BALL 2009

Date: Saturday, 28 March, 2009
Time: 6 – 6.30pm
Venue: Cooma Ex-Services Club, Vale St., COOMA
Music: Strathmannan
Cost: \$40
Tickets: Eileen Pevere, telephone 02 6452 5154

Programme: 1. Clutha SqR48 (Bk 31); 2. Wee Cooper of Fife 2J40 (Foss); 3. Miss Gibson's Strathspey 3S32 (Lfl 20); 4. Trip to Bavaria 4R32 (MacGregor-Brown); 5. Pride of Erin; 6. Hooper's Jig 3J32 (MMM); 7. Macdonald of the Isles 3S32 (Haynes, Carnforth 2); 8. Mairi's Wedding 3R40 (Cosh, 22 SCD + 2); 9. Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder Sq J 128 (Hamilton); 10. The Silver Tassie 3S32 (Lfl 1); 11. Meeting of the Waters 3R48 (I. Boyd Strathtay); 12. Jubilee Jig 3J32 Lfl 19); 13. The Duchess Tree 3S32 (J. Drewry, Brodie Bk); 14. Barn Dance; 15. Polharrow Burn 5R32 (3 Dances by Hugh Foss); 16. Major Ian Stewart 3J32 (Bk 35); 17. Anna Holden's Strathspey 2S32 (Bk 42); 18. Shiftin' Bobbins 3R32 (R. Clowes, Ormskirk); 19. Postie's Jig 4J32 (R. Clowes, Ormskirk); 20. Rose of the North 3S32 (R. Goldring, Leeds Silver Jubilee); 21. Australian Ladies 3R32 (Glasgow Assembly); 22. De'il Among the Tailors 3R32 (Bk 14); 23. Waverley 3J48 (Bk 15); 24. Miss Milligan's Strathspey 3S32 (Lfl 19).

NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL, CANBERRA, EASTER 2009 SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE BALL

We have received early advice that this year Strathmannan will be providing the music for the Scottish Country Dance Ball to be held at the National Folk Festival in Canberra over the Easter weekend. The program of dances has been devised by Noriel Tarca from Adelaide, who will be calling the dances at the ball as well as running a Scottish country dancing workshop at the Festival prior to the evening of the ball itself.

Program: 1. A Highland Welcome RR Reel 5 x 32, couple facing couple (Craigievar); 2. Joie De Vivre 3J 8x32 (Bk 39); 3. Seann Truibhas Willichan 2S 6x32 (Bk 27); 4. The White Cockade 3R 8x32 (Bk 5); 5. The Rothesay Rant Sq J 4x32 (Birmingham Branch); 6. Lady Lucy Ramsay 3S 8x32 (MMM2); 7. Shiftin' Bobbins 3R 8x32 (Ormskirk); 8. The Duke of Atholl's Reel 2J 6x32 (Bk 16); 9. Balquidder Strathspey 3S 8x32 (Bk 24); 10. Round Reel of Eight SqR 1x88 (Bk 27); 11. The Frisky 3J 8x32 (Bk 26); 12. Lady Glasgow 3S 8x32 (MMM1); 13. The Australian Ladies 3R 8x32 (Glasgow Assembly); 14. Lady Catherine Bruce's Reel 2J 6x32 (Gr Bk); 15. Bruce's Men 3S 3x32 (Scotia Suite); 16. Catch the Wind 3R 8x32 (Bk 45); 17. The Adelaide Strathspey 4S 4x32 (Piping Shrike); 18. The De'il Amang the Tailors 3R 8x32 (Bk 14); Auld Lang Syne; Polka; Spare: St. Bernard Waltz

THE NOWRA SCD GROUP 34TH ANNUAL BALL

Date: Saturday, 16 May, 2009
Time: 6.30pm for drinks and savouries
7.30pm Grand March, leading into the first dance
Venue: Nowra School of Arts
Music: Bob McInnes and Rhonda Langford
Cost: \$35 (includes 2 course buffet dinner, BYO drinks)
Payment requested by 1 May 2009, for catering purposes
Tables: Tables of 8 available; groups of 8 can reserve a table
Billets: Available on request.
Tickets, table reservations, billets and other enquiries: Heather Bardsley 02 4441 5496

Program: 1. A Reel for Jeannie 4R 4x32 (Bk 40); 2. Pelorus Jack 3J 8x32 (Bk 41) 3. Monymusk 3S 8x32 (Bk 11); 4. The Dashing White Sergeant (RR) R 6x32 (Bk 3); 5. Shiftin' Bobbins 3R 8x32 (Clowes); 6. The Robertson Rant Sq set S 1x80 (Bk 39); 7. Ladies Fancy 2J 8x32 (Bk 13); 8. Sueno's Stone 3R 8x32 (4/2008); 9. Gang the Same Gate 3S 8x32 (Bk 36); 10. The Luckenbooth Brooch 3J 8x32 (Dickson); 11. Polharrow Burn 5R 5x32 (3 by Hugh Foss); 12. Seann Triubhas Willichan 2S 6x32 (Bk27); 13. West's Hornpipe 4R 4x32 (5/1965); 14. The Starry Eyed Lassie 3J 8x32 (Bk 23); 15. The Minister on the Loch 3S 3x32 (4/2008); 16. The Music Makers 3R 8x32 (Bk 33); 17. Kendall's Hornpipe 2J 6x32 (Graded Bk); 18. Delvine Side 3S 8x32 (Bk 2); 19. The Royal Deeside Railway 3R 8x32 (Bk 40); 20. Mairi's Wedding 3R 8x40 (Cosh).

HOMECOMING SCOTLAND 2009 WITH A FOOTNOTE ABOUT THE CANBERRA BALL 2009

Homecoming Scotland is an initiative of the Scottish Government with the stated aim:

“To engage Scots at home as well as motivate people of Scottish descent and those who simply love Scotland to take part in an inspirational celebration of [Scottish] culture, heritage and some of the many great contributions Scotland has given to the world.”

The year 2009 was chosen because it marks the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Scotland’s national poet, Robert Burns (born 25 January, 1759). Unsurprisingly therefore, the Homecoming year officially opened over the weekend of 23-25 January with a series of celebrations in honour of Burns’ memory. The weekend program included special events in Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Dumfries and Galloway and Glasgow.

Iconic Burns was staged in Alloway, Burns’ birthplace. Locations in this Ayrshire village such as *Burns Cottage*, *The Brig o’ Doon*, and *The Auld Kirk* were “brought to life” in a display produced by top lighting and design artists.

Alloway also hosted the *Homecoming Burns Supper* which paid tribute to some of those who help keep the legacy of Burns alive. And, in order to include Burns Supper enthusiasts who could not physically be present in Alloway, organisers of Burns Suppers from around the world were invited to register their individual events on the website: www.burnssupper2009.com. As at 31 January some 3,583 Suppers held in dozens of countries had registered on the site. The “top five” countries were: Scotland (1,356); England (1,276); USA (337); Canada (150); and Australia (85). Of course, no Burns Supper would be complete without the presence of Scotland’s national beverage, *whisky*, and the *Homecoming Burns Supper* was no exception, being sponsored in part by *The Famous Grouse*. This company has “created” 250 bottles of *The Famous Grouse 37 year old blended malt whisky*, “signifying every year of Burns’ extraordinary life”. Yes indeed, an extraordinary (but tragically short) life; also, I am sure, an extraordinary drop of whisky at a no doubt extraordinary price.

In Glasgow that weekend, a *Burns Illuminated – Homecoming Event* celebrated Burns with entertainment which included a sound and light presentation projected onto the City Chambers. As well as witnessing appearances from *The Red Hot Chilli Pipers* and *The Phoenix Honda Glasgow Skye Pipe Band*, the crowd was entertained by David Sibbald who presented *The Immortal Memory* and gave a recitation of *To a Mouse*.

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE RSCDS

It is worth recalling that part of Burns’ work lay in collecting and preserving Scottish folk songs, which he sometimes revised, adapted or expanded. Many of these songs are played today as tunes for Scottish country dances danced today. And, of course, Scottish country dancing was a popular pastime during Burns’ own lifetime. A significant part of the Burns celebration in Glasgow on 25 January 2009 was a performance by a team of RSCDS dancers. The team danced *The Homecoming Dance*. Commissioned by Homecoming Scotland to devise a new dance, the RSCDS had organised an open competition which attracted more than 100 entries from several countries. The field, having been narrowed to a short list of submissions from Scotland, England, USA, Canada and Australia, the winning entry was chosen ‘blind’ by a panel of judges. It was devised by Anne Thorne of the Helensburgh and District Branch. The dance which came second in the competition, and renamed *The Grassmarket Reel* by permission of the deviser, Tim Wilson of San Francisco, had already been performed by a team of RSCDS dancers a few weeks earlier at Edinburgh’s Hogmanay celebrations. These two new dances will be published, along with their lead tunes, as a leaflet to be included as an insert in the next issue of the RSCDS magazine *Scottish Dancer*.

Homecoming Scotland 2009 is now well and truly underway, with a vast array of events scheduled throughout Scotland for the rest of the year. In this article the emphasis has been on Burns. This is partly because many of the scheduled Burns events have already taken place due to their association with his birth date (25 January), but also because of the connection between Burns’ songs and Scottish country dances. But many other events associated with different aspects of Scottish culture, heritage, history and geography, are still to come, and these will tempt many a visitor. Visit www.homecomingscotland.com for further information.

CANBERRA BALL 2009

For those people who may not travel to Scotland during the year ahead, there will be numerous opportunities in other places around the world, including at home, to celebrate in some way the Burns 250th anniversary year. To take a local example, this year’s Canberra Ball (29 August, 2009) will provide an opportunity for the Scottish country dancing fraternity here to play its small part. More details will follow soon but, in this year of financial uncertainty, the writer can unhesitatingly advise readers that the purchase of tickets to this event (when they become available) would constitute a very sound investment.

Calendar for 2009 (as at Feb 09)

3 Feb	Belconnen SCD: first Tuesday class for 2009, Macquarie Primary School, Bennelong Cres, Macquarie. Details from Colin Allum 62580009 or email colallum@optusnet.com.au
4 Feb	Branch classes commence at St Andrew's Church Hall, Forrest. Beginner's class 6.30pm. Contact Elizabeth Low 6288 8177 (ah) or by email: cnorton@pcug.org.au General class 7.30pm. Contact Alan McCulloch 6288 5670 (ah) or by email alan.mcculloch@netspeed.com.au
5 Feb	SCDCC first classes 2009, at The Church of Christ, corner of Limestone Ave and Grimes St. Ainslie. Contact Jan Clark 6288 2487 or by email: jan.clark@iinet.net.au
9 Feb	Burns Group first class for 2009: at St Andrew's Church Hall, Forrest. Contact Clare Hughes 6248 9090 or by email: friendly@home.com.au
20 Feb	Branch "Gentle Dancing for Gentle Dancers" first class for 2009, 2pm Fridays, at St Andrew's Church Hall, Forrest. Contact Jessie by email: tmi04138@bigpond.net.au
28 Feb	Branch beginning-of-year social. BBQ and Dance at Hall Showgrounds
13 March	Belconnen SCD advanced social class, 8pm, Macquarie Primary School, Bennelong Cr, Macquarie. Contact Elaine Arthur 6254 7879 or email: elaine.arthur@apex.net.au
28 March	Monaro Caledonian Society Tartan (Cooma) Ball
4 April	Bundanoon Highland Gathering
10-13 April	(Easter) National Folk Festival, Exhibition Park, Canberra http://www.folkfestival.asn.au
17 April	Belconnen advanced social class
8 May	Belconnen advanced social class
16 May	Nowra SCD Group 34th Annual Ball
5 June	Belconnen SCD advanced social class
20 June	Belconnen SCD 33 rd Birthday Social
4 July	Branch "Tea Dance"
12-18 July	34th RSCDS Australian Winter School, Kiama, NSW (Sydney Branch)
7 August	Belconnen advanced social class
29 August	Canberra Ball
11 Sept	Belconnen advanced social class
16 Sept	Branch AGM
Sept	Marengo SCD Social
9-11 Oct	Far South Coast SCD Group, Bermagui Weekend
23 Oct	Belconnen advanced social class. Final for year
7 Nov	Branch end-of-year social
21 Nov	Burns SCD Group St Andrew's Night Celebration
4 Dec	Branch "Gentle Dancing for Gentle Dancers" class Annual Picnic
5 Dec	Combined Belconnen SCD and SCDCC Christmas Social

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Closing date for next Scotch Circle – Friday 1 May 2009

Contributions and requests for electronic version to June Browne at ceilidh@bigpond.com.au