



## MACHINE WITHOUT HORSES

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society—Detroit Branch

Summer 2014

At our Annual General Meeting on May 24, 2014, we gave out-going chairman, Sue Boczek, a scroll of appreciation for all her work for the Branch over the last few years and welcomed our new chairman, Rhett Heberling, who is shown presenting Sue with the award.



The 50<sup>th</sup> birthday ball for Laura (in the right-hand picture) and Linda Hanson (in the left-hand picture, with their brother Michael behind and to the left of Linda) in Ann Arbor on May 31. Heather Simmons came all the way from Champaign, Illinois, to join us. A delightful afternoon and evening were had by all.



## Dancing in England and Scotland in May

I went to two classes in England in May and to three end-of-season balls, two in England and one in Scotland. Five occasions are not very substantial, statistically speaking, but I did form some impressions from them that I would like to share to promote discussion on the subject of declining membership and increasing age of members.

I learned of the Hereford Branch's end-of season dance at the first class of the Cheltenham Scottish Society's on Friday evening, to be held at the Hereford town hall, a lovely venue, on May 7. The program was almost all new-to-me dances, except for the extras, which we did not get to because of the number of repeats. But the catered food in the interval was lovely, and I danced almost all the dances that I wanted to, largely because of the old friends from the Cheltenham group and other old friends from the Gloucester group and even one gentleman who had come all the way from Stratford on Avon. Again, most of the people at the ball, like those of the Cheltenham Scottish Society, were older, with a small number of younger (30's and 40's) people. On the way back to Cheltenham, we decided that everybody had enjoyed the evening.

The Cheltenham Branch's end-of-season dance was to be held on 10 May, but just about everybody I asked was quite emphatic about going to the end-of-season in Westbury on Trym, a suburb of Bristol, about 40 miles away. It seemed to be more about the perceived rigidity of the Cheltenham group rather than the choice of dances on the program. It was said that the Cheltenham Branch looked down on other groups in the vicinity for making the mistakes that even the Cheltenham Branch made.

Before I had even left the US, I had looked around with the help of Google for end-of-season dances in or around Gloucestershire, preferably those with Irish Rover on the program, and found one in Stratford on Avon, given by the Stratford upon Avon and District Caledonian Society for May 10. They are affiliated with the Birmingham Branch of the RSCDS. I went to their class on the Tuesday before the end-of-season dance. A good number of the members were older, but there was also a fair number of younger people, some in their 30's. The dance was very nice, especially since Irish Rover was on the program; again, the tea break was lovely, and everybody enjoyed the evening. I was given hospitality by the class teacher, Ms. Moira

W Tsolakis, and we had a lovely visit afterwards, when I met the dog she was dog-sitting.

The final dance--no class--was the end-of-season dance of the University of Edinburgh group, largely made up of students, as one might expect, but also a few people in their 30's or 40's who had gone to the University of Edinburgh and stayed on in town. Older people like me were in the minority. There were also several people from other countries, largely students: at least one from France, Germany, Italy, and one other from America. The program had mostly dances that were special to the group--i.e., one written for a couple who had become engaged through the group and another written for one of their special teachers, and again time ran out before the extras were reached because of the repeats. This was the group that seemed to be having the most non-alcohol-fuelled fun. There was no mention of the RSCDS, although a few of the dances came from RSCDS books.

So all this, impressionistic and statistically limited as it is, leads to the questions: why are the branches with older people not having as much success in recruiting people to their dances, finding younger members who will stick around, and communicating how much fun SCD is, and why do the younger groups seem to have so much fun and keep their groups going with decent numbers? We all know that Scottish Country Dancing is fun and good exercise and sociable, so why are the branches with older members shrinking numerically?

Your comments are welcome.

Carrie Carnes (mxrcarnes@gmail.com)

What did you do over the summer vacation? Syma Echeandia went to RSCDS Headquarters at 12, Coates Crescent in Edinburgh and had Lou record her visit for us.



#### **CLASSES**

##### **Detroit Branch - Troy**

Thursday 6:30 - 7:30 PM Basic  
7:30 - 8:30 Combined  
8:30 - 9:30 Experienced  
Troy First United Methodist Church,  
6363 Livernois Road, Troy MI  
Laurel Paterson (586) 294-4329

##### **Roseville - "Red Hackles"**

Tuesday PM 7:30 - 9:30 Experienced  
Erin Presbyterian Church  
Gratiot at Common Rd. (12 1/2 Mile)  
Roseville, MI  
Laurel Paterson (586) 294-4329

##### **Ann Arbor - "Tartan and Thistle"**

Monday PM 6:30 - 7:30 Basic  
7:30 - 8:30 Combined  
8:30 - 9:30 Experienced  
Gretchen's Barn  
2625 Traver Rd. Ann Arbor, MI  
Helen Welford (734) 426-0241  
Joan Hellman (734) 769-1052

#### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Thursday, September 4 – Classes resume, Troy, 7.30

Tuesday, September 9 – Classes resume, 7.30, Roseville

Thursday, October 30 – Troy Class Halloween Party

Sunday, November 16 – Wedding Dance for Molly and Scott, Ann Arbor (Branch members are invited)

Sunday, November 23 – Scottish Sunday, Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church, 10.30

Saturday, March 21 – Workshop, Troy (with Friday night practice dance)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Rhett Heberling (248) 5401  
Immediate Past Chair: Sue Boczek (248) 398-2921  
Vice-Chair: Grant Rutila (810) 765-4125  
Treasurer: Don Sarna (248) 637-2824  
Secretary: Carrie Carnes (313) 554-0002  
Members at Large:  
Molly Glenn (678) 522-8536  
Rachael Harrer (248) 544-9231  
Linda Johnston (586) 228-7370  
Jim Watson (248) 542-5415  
Christine Wipasuramonton (248) 656-1756  
Membership: Bonnie Cook (248) 626-2340  
Demonstration: Glenna Washburn (810) 765-4125  
Publicity: Margaret Sarna (248) 637-2824  
Music, Webmaster: Don Sarna (248) 637-2824  
Newsletter: Carrie Carnes (313) 554-0002  
Teacher: Laurel Paterson (586) 294-4329

