

DUBLIN SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

NEWSLETTER

31st August 1999

No. 6.

EARLY START TO NEW SEASON!

I hope that you have all had a good summer and are feeling fit and well and *rarin' to go!* We begin our dancing season on the date announced at the end of last session - **Thursday, 9th September 1999**, at 8.00 p.m. at our usual venue, the Presbyterian Church Hall, York Road, Dun Laoghaire. This is our earliest start for some time, as in recent years we have delayed our start till the latter half of September to take account of holidays.

Aad and I have agreed to share the teaching. I will take the first few weeks through to 7th October; Aad will look after 14th October to 11th November and then I will cover the remaining weeks to 16th December.

I apologise for the fact that this is the first Newsletter for exactly one year – as usual I will say that I hope to publish a couple of issues during the year. What would be helpful would be to receive an article or item for inclusion – whether it's a comment on some of our activities or instructions for a dance, just pass it on to me.

BURT ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND

A reminder that the Burt Scottish Country Dance Club are celebrating their 10th Anniversary with a Grand Ball on Friday 24th September and a Big Ceilidh Night on Saturday 25th September. The Ian Muir Sound will provide the music on both evenings.

The Ball will be held in Loreto College, Letterkenny, and the Ceilidh in the Presbyterian Church Hall, Newtown-cunningham. The event is

supported by NIVT (Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust) which *inter alia* awards grants to help in cross-community projects. The cost is therefore very reasonable at £10 for the Ball (£7 for non-dancers) and £5 for the Ceilidh.

Applications should be in by 10th September and if you did not get an application form in the Spring let me know and I'll send you one. Once we know who is going we can arrange to share transport.

DANCING IN OXFORD

Earlier this month I visited Oxford and on the Saturday afternoon 21st August danced at the Oxfordshire Branch open-air dance. The weather was glorious and the dance was held in the grounds of Wolfson College. Although one of the modern colleges in Oxford it has conformed to the original design with living accommodation arranged around a quadrangle of beautiful lawn. In fact it was actually only around three sides, as the fourth side opened out on to a small boating lake, an offshoot of the River Cherwell with a few punts moored on it.

There were about fifty dancers taking part and when it came to the Eightsome Reel, forty people took part in two sets – one set as an eightsome (in which I danced) and the other a thirtytwo-some. That was quite a sight.

On the programme there were the following dances which I really enjoyed and will try to include over the coming session - *The Belle of Bon Accord* – yes, another flowing John Drewry strathspey; *Polharrow Burn* – a five couple reel by Hugh Foss and *Quarries Jig* – from Volume 1 of *Frae A' The Airts* (Book 36). Each dance

has something special about it. For example, *Polharrow Burn* has couples 'chasing' from end to end, and returning to place by means of repeated diagonal half reels. *Quarries Jig* has dancing couples and corners moving in a unique way. While these may sound complicated, they actually flow beautifully, but the intricacies add the excitement which makes them great fun dances.

What was missing from the dance however was 'live' music, and it made me appreciate Judy and John even more when encores ("once and to the bottom") were danced to the same record with the needle lifted after four times through!

Incidentally, most of the dances were danced without recapping!

My overall verdict was that it was a marvellous afternoon and I would encourage everyone to visit Branches or Clubs when you are away on holiday. The Directory and Aad's *EURONEWS* are usually on display on Thursday evenings.

John Gibson

R.S.C.D.S. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

You may be aware that Aad Boode sits on the Executive Committee of the R.S.C.D.S. representing the Delft Branch. Each Branch has a representative on the Executive and branches from across the world often appoint someone nearer to Edinburgh to represent them at the meetings. I am pleased to let you know that Kaoru has been appointed by the Tokyo Branch to be its representative. We wish Kaoru well in her work on the committee. I feel this must be quite a record for a Club not attached to a Branch of the Society to have two members of the Executive Committee associated with it as their regular dance club/class.

REQUESTS TO DANCE

We have the following two outings coming up:

Irish Countrywomen's Association – St. Margaret's Guild: Friday 8th October is the date for our visit to St. Margaret's ICA. As it is situated "behind and beyond the Airport" we have told the Guild that dancing will start at about 8.30 p.m. Exact details of directions will be given in due course.

Glasnevin Active Retirement Group: We have been asked if we would return on Saturday evening 20th November. The group meet in the hall of the Church of Our Lady of Dolours, near the Botanic Gardens. It will last from 8 o'clock to shortly after 10 o'clock. This was an excellent evening last year, with the Group living up to its name of Active Retirement Group.

Volunteers, please! Can you please let me know if you would be willing to dance on either or both evenings?. I will decide on the demonstration dances once I know who will be dancing. Thank you for your support.

CHURCH SERVICE

I was talking to Rev. David Caskie, Minister at York Road over the summer, and mentioned that I had been thinking that it would be an idea for me to ask the dancers to take part in a Church Service on some occasion. He was thrilled at the suggestion and would be extremely happy to welcome us and have us participate in a Service.

When I said that the Sunday nearest St Andrew's Day seemed an obvious date, he was even more excited as the Church Service on Sunday 28th November is being broadcast on RTE radio.

I would be very keen to have us participate in this service. Whether that is possible will depend on how many of you would wish to attend and

possibly take part, and also on David coming up with a suitable theme for the Service. As a starting point therefore, could I therefore ask that you let me know by 9th September

- (i) whether you would like to attend such a Service, and
- (ii) whether you would be prepared to do a reading or prayer.

I would like to see a good cross-section of our members taking part. I realise that it falls the day after our St. Andrew's Day celebration but I would ask that you give it your support.

I don't at the moment know the time of the Service, but it is likely to be about 10 o'clock.

I look forward to hearing from you.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- ✍ Thursday, 9th September 1999: Club restarts – 8 o'clock 🕒
- ✍ 24th/25th September 1999: Burt Scottish Country Dance Club
– 10th Anniversary weekend
- ✍ Saturday, 2nd October, 1999: H.F. Walking Club Barn Dance
Brighton Road Methodist Hall. Rathgar,
Caller: Alan Corsini –at 8 o'clock 🕒
- ✍ Friday, 8th October, 1999: St Margaret's ICA, at 8.30 p.m. 🕒
- ✍ Saturday, 16th October, 1999: Dublin Scottish Benevolent Society of St. Andrew
Table Quiz. York Road Church Hall, at 8 o'clock 🕒
- ✍ Saturday, 20th November 1999: Glasnevin Active Retirement Group, at 8 o'clock 🕒
- ✍ Saturday, 27th November, 1999: Dublin Scottish Benevolent Society of St. Andrew
St. Andrew's Day Dinner and Dance..
- ✍ Sunday, 28th November, 1999: Possible participation in broadcast Church Service,
York Road Presbyterian Church, Dun Laoghaire.
Probably about 10 a.m.
- ✍ Thursday, 16th December, 1999: Christmas Party Dance - 8 o'clock 🕒

DANCE ETIQUETTE

John Barnes passed me a copy of an article which appeared in the Autumn 1998 issue of *English Dance & Song* concerning Dance Etiquette by John Turner. Although looking at English Country Dance I believe the issues are equally applicable to Scottish Country Dance and I decided to share a few thoughts with you.

Although referring to the dictionary definition of *Etiquette* as "conventional rules of polite behaviour", the writer defines *Dance Etiquette* as "our attitude to our fellow dancers". He looks at the dictionary definition of *Social*, and here we are in complete agreement with our English counterparts – Country Dancing is a *social* activity.

The attributes of an ideal dancer for a Social Dance Display Team are expressed as excellent dancing skills, impeccable

sense of timing and elegant posture. But what would make us "*Great to Dance With*"? To the skills as a dancer John Turner writes "we must also take [into] account the social element, 'the welfare of the group'", this final phrase coming from the dictionary definition of *Social*.

So to achieve the accolade "*Great to Dance With*" he argues the attributes required are: Mindful & Supportive of our partners and other fellow dancers; and A pleasant and friendly manner.

I believe John Turner has got it right, and we should all strive for these attributes as much as the earlier ones regarding skill – although never forgetting that improved technique can improve the enjoyment of dancing.