



Harbour City Happenings

RSCDS Wellington Region Newsletter

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President's Column

From Rod Downey, President



Retrospective – This will be my last report as president. Looking forward, I am hoping to see lots of you at the AGM (assuming I am mobile by then, following my first knee replacement).

AGM – We truly need you there to own your Region. Should we change classes? Should we have a deviser's day? Should we pay musicians more,

now that many are professional musicians, and thus we need to raise door prices for annual dances? I am hoping that at least committees from each club will turn up to represent their clubs.

Come and have a voice! You won't be forced to go on the committee, and we truly want to know what you would like in 2026 and beyond.

Thanks – I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have served on the Region Committee over the time I have been president. All the committee members have given freely of their time, organising classes, events, keeping the whole enterprise running. There have been a lot of highlights over my term which I will report on more fully in my President's Report for the AGM. For example, we have had many events in and around the Society's Centenary. For this column I will stick to recent events.

Since my Last Report

Bereavement – We were all greatly saddened by the loss of the wonderful Janice Henson, who gave so much to many causes, including SCD. Elizabeth Ferguson has written a tribute later in HCH. Such people make the world richer. A great loss.

Committee Business – The committee decided to have an extra event this year, to introduce the region to dances from the new **Book 54** and its accompanying CD. We decided to keep the cost low – at \$5 at the door. This event will be led by Diane Bradshaw.

Archival Project Team – This group has recently gathered most of the information about Region Leadership up to 1997, actually going back to its pre-history in 1953. The group is currently documenting post-1997. This material will all be posted on the Region website once it is completed.

Region Events

Advanced Classes – These were well attended and Joy Tracey kept all running through their paces. We were lucky to have musicians Cassandra Bahr, Keshav Raj, and Rebecca Bourne, as well as delicious afternoon teas, catered, as always, by Elaine and Kevin Lethbridge.

Upcoming Region Events

New Dancers' Celebration – On **4 October** in Knox Church Hall. Linden Club kindly agreed to host this year's New Dancers' Celebration. See the programme later in HCH. There will be two *Preparation Classes* on Tuesdays 23 and 30 September at St David's in Petone which will be taken by Ann Oliver (\$5 at the door).

Special Region Event – Fugues Day – The committee decided to try something new for advanced dancers this year. We will have a day devoted to *fugues*. (\$15 at the door). This kind of class is very successful overseas, such as annually at the Frankfurt Branch, where they get dancers from throughout Europe. It will be nice to try in Wellington. Dancing fugues are analogous to musical fugues, where some figure is repeated as a theme, perhaps with variations. Examples you might know include [The Cranberry Tart](#), or perhaps [Farewell to Balfour Road](#) (which was on Lower Hutt's Annual Dance this year), the latter being a special kind of fugue called a *canon*. In some sense, canons are easier, as everyone does exactly the same thing. The prolific and ingenious deviser Hugh Foss wrote "*Notes on Fugues*", which we have posted on the [Region Web Site](#). [Hugh Foss](#) was a mathematician, musician and remarkable [deviser of dances](#). (During World War II, at [Bletchley Park](#), he made significant contributions, both to the breaking of the German [Enigma code](#), and heading the section tasked with breaking Japanese Naval codes.) Fugues tend to be relatively complicated and are both a

challenge to dance and a great reward when achieved. They are especially good for working on teamwork and phrasing. I will be tutor for this event on 11 October at St John's Church Hall, as my last hurrah as Region President.

Meet Book 54 – On 1 November, at Khandallah Town Hall (\$5 at the door). Led by Diane Bradshaw. This event is partially supported by a grant from the Branch, via the Bernice Kelly Fund. Come along for the last [Region Event](#) for the year.

Hogmanay – Thanks to Chris Totton and Anna Verhaegh for agreeing to organise Hogmanay again this year. The programme and more information later in HCH.

What is Hogmanay, aside from a fun dancing night? If you have not been to Hogmanay and are in Wellington on New Year's Eve, come along for the fun. [Here](#) is an article about some of the Hogmanay customs.

AGM – Please put the date, 4 November, 7.30 at Community House, Petone, in your diaries. We really need your support at the meeting. You won't be co-opted to the committee, but we need you to come. This is your opportunity to give feedback to the committee, which will be changing this year!

Finally, I hope you all have a great remainder of the dancing year. Do take advantage of the opportunities above. If you want to contact us and have any suggestions which help us to do better, please email me or the new president (president@wellingtonscd.org.nz) or the region secretary (Brenda) (wellingtong@dancescottish.org.nz). We are all in a team together!

Obituary – Janice Henson



It was with great sadness that Lower Hutt Club members learned that their President, Janice Henson, had passed away on 3 August, 2025.

Janice danced from an early age in the Wairarapa and came to the Hutt Club in the 1970s. It wasn't long before she was on the committee and in time, took two turns as Secretary and President.

She was an integral part of our club and was made an Honorary Life member in 2000 for all her contributions. A great organiser who had amazing secretarial skills. Her baking was much appreciated too. Janice encouraged new dancers and teachers. She attended as many region events as she could, and loved sharing the stories of friendships she made through dancing.

Over the years, Janice was also very involved at regional level and was on many region committees, and even served as Region Secretary at one point.

Janice was very involved in Christ Church in Taita and the Te Omanga Hospice. Therefore it was very fitting that at our recent Annual Dance, we had a collection in her honour for the Te Omanga Hospice, which raised \$532 – so a big thank you to all who contributed.

Elizabeth Ferguson



The collection for Te Omanga Hospice in honour of Janice, at Lower Hutt's Annual Dance

Dancing in Scotland

From Alison Trotter

Who visits Scotland without taking their dancing pumps? Not Lower Hutt Club members Catherine McCutcheon, Alison Trotter or Damon Collin, who, on separate trips, all danced at Troon, Ayrshire, on three consecutive Monday nights in June.

The Ayr Branch of the RSCDS ran well-attended summer dancing nights at Troon, every week from early May to mid-August. Five programmes of fourteen dances were rotated across seventeen weeks, with live music provided by twelve Scottish dance/ceilidh bands.

Catherine and her sister Heather danced to *Wardlaw* on 9 June. The following week saw Alison dancing to *Sandy Nixon* (with 12 sets on the floor), and a week later Damon and his brother Simon danced to *Alasdair MacLeod*. The programmes included a number of dances that are popular

in NZ, so were not too daunting. However, the evenings progressed more quickly than we NZ dancers are used to, with little time between dances to find a partner for the next dance or to refer to crib sheets (though dances were quickly ‘called’). But as always, an evening spent with fellow dancers, dancing to live music was great fun, and just one of many highlights of three separate visits to Scotland, described in more detail below.

Catherine’s story

From Catherine McCutcheon

In June, my sister Heather and I departed for Scotland (well, North England first). It was the fourth trip for each of us, but the first time “together”.

A year in the planning, trying to ensure I was in a place of Scottish Country summer dancing on the right day at least twice, I managed to dance at York club night the day after we arrived, and a few days later, I set off on foot on a cool evening for dancing at Durham club. Despite checking the website that their season ended at the end of June, nobody arrived. When I emailed the secretary the following day, I got a response that they had made the decision to finish early this year and hadn’t updated the website. Their loss.

After a few days in Edinburgh, we headed for Troon on a Monday evening. The weather was cold, wet and windy. Great for dancing. Troon is a friendly place to dance, all dances were briefed and the occasional one walked.

Heather danced a few and had a great time.

We each did our own thing for a week, then we met up again in our ancestral town of Stornoway. No dancing there, but we did travel on the Ullapool Ferry (known to SCDers for the dance named after it!).



On the Ullapool Ferry

Another week together, finishing up in Aberdeen. Heather then went to Norway and I headed for Shetland on the overnight ferry.

A chance conversation at Hutt Club with Alison Trotter at the beginning of the year revealed that we were both going to be in Shetland at the same time. Too good an opportunity to miss – for a coffee, or a drink. We actually

did better than that. I met Alison and her husband, along with her sister and brother-in-law, in Lerwick for a drink and dinner, and then we walked to The Lounge Bar, right in the middle of Lerwick, for their Wednesday night music session. Things don’t start in the UK till at least 8 pm. The evening started with a father and son on accordion and piano. They were then gradually joined by a banjo, guitar and fiddle – and their players.



Catherine and Alison in the Lounge Bar in Lerwick

A bit later, we ended up with two more accordions and two more fiddles. The place was packed. It became standing room only. People were holding their drink in one hand and their jacket in the other. And it was FREE – apart from the drinks. The sound was amazing. Some of the younger players just waited when they didn’t know the tune, and joined in for the ones they did. Three hours!! A fantastic night.

The following day I noticed that the “Live Music tonight” sign was still out. On closer inspection it named the duo for the evening. Alan Small (whom I happen follow on Facebook) and Brian Gear. An 8:30 pm start on Thursday. The sun was still high in the sky. I was one of the first ones there. I had a brief chat with Alan before they started and settled in for a great night. A front table seat – I was in heaven. I recorded a lot of what they played. No written music. They know what they’re going to play and it was fantastic. There were people there from all sorts of countries. They played some international stuff for the visitors. Alan said they’d play something from New Zealand. I don’t know what I was expecting, but then I heard Alan say “The Clash”. Yay. Two tunes I know well. *The Craic at Clashmore Hall* and *The Kiwi Pipers*. Another three hours well enjoyed. And it was FREE! It was still daylight when I came out at 11:30.

Back on the mainland and on to Pitlochry. Saturday night dance to Alistair McLeod (who was leaving the following day for Australia’s Winter School). A warm night. About seven sets. Dances were briefed. I thought the music was a bit slow actually. Brilliant sound and playing, but a bit pedestrian.



Dancing in Pitlochry Town Hall

Three days later I was in London and dancing to the wonderful Keith Smith and his band. And yes, we did *Toast to the Mousies* (with encore). I don't think I've ever been so internally hot. It had been a 34° day, and was not much cooler at 7:30. The dances aren't generally briefed. You might get the first eight bars and perhaps the whole 32 for a difficult dance.

Something I observed where the dances aren't briefed – I was asked to dance by a gentleman and we were counted as fourth couple. The dance was 24 bars in before he even looked at me, instead, he had his head down studying his briefing notes. That seemed to be the norm round the hall – hardly social.

One woman I spoke to said that the more experienced come **because** they're not briefed. There were still some dances that fell apart. They also wonder why numbers are not what they once were. A worldwide problem, but it is a **huge** step for a dancer to go from a club situation, where the dances are walked multiple times, to an evening function, where they're not even briefed.

Alison's story

From Alison Trotter

My husband Craig and I set off in mid-June on a belated retirement trip to explore parts of Scotland we'd not seen on previous visits, and to visit Shetland for the first time. And, of course, for me to dance in Scotland.

After a few days in England's Lake District, we headed north for the first of three nights dancing – in Troon, followed by Aberdeen and Stirling. All were excellent nights, with live music, warm welcomes from local dancers, and programmes that "kept me on my toes", with mixes of familiar dances and ones I'd not done before.

We based ourselves in Aberdeen – the "granite city" – to explore the city, and visit inland Aberdeenshire (Balmoral, the Cairngorms) and Dunnottar Castle at Stonehaven. A day trip to Forres (the birth- and burial-place of John Mortimer, friend and dancing tutor during my years in

Palmerston North) took us along Aberdeenshire's north-eastern coast (Peterhead, Fraserburgh) and west through the picturesque villages along the Moray Firth.

Our next destination was Shetland, with my sister and brother-in-law who now live in Paris. Shetland has been the home of NZ Fordyce forbears since the mid-1500s, and is from where our great-great-grandfather and his family emigrated in about 1858. We drove the lengths of all three of Shetland's main islands – Mainland, Yell, and Unst. On a walk through Unst's Hermaness Nature Reserve, we could look across to Muckle Flugga and Out Stack – the northernmost point of Scotland and the British Isles. We were excited to visit the remains of our Fordyce family's croft house in Uyeasound, Unst, and other locations of family significance, such as Muness Castle (a Fordyce ancestor is said to have been the architect and master builder).



The remains of the Fordyce family's croft house in Uyeasound

We loved the remoteness of the Shetland landscape, and saw puffins (many visitors don't). Experiencing Shetland's light summer nights – the "Simmer Dim" – was a treat. There's nothing like walking over boggy peatland at 3:30 in the morning, in "broad daylight", before sunrise at 3:54am. We also learned much from visits to excellent museums in Lerwick, Scalloway and beyond.

As Catherine has mentioned, quite coincidentally we were in Shetland at the same time. After dinner together, we all enjoyed three hours of live, traditional music in Lerwick's Lounge Bar. Three piano accordions, three fiddles, and a banjo, guitar and keyboard. A totally unforgettable experience! How lucky are Shetlanders to have access to this every week.

Next, we spent five days in and around Edinburgh with our son and daughter-in-law from Chicago. A day at St Andrews, home of both the RSCDS Summer School and the world-famous golf course, satisfied both the golfers (our son and daughter-in-law) and the dancer.

Craig and I went north again for our last week in Scotland, stopping for lunch at Pitlochry (home of Scotland's Winter Schools), then driving through Inverness to follow part of the popular North Coast 500 driving route. From a B&B near the village of Lybster we went up to John o' Groats, then along Scotland's northern coast via the Castle and Gardens of Mey, to Thurso and Scrabster. Exploring inland Caithness, we encountered both flowering heather and "*hielan' coos*" at close quarters.



One of the "*hielan' coos*"

Our final trip before heading home was the long drive back to Edinburgh, including a detour west, via Lairg, to visit Ullapool (of Ferry fame to dancers), then down through the evocative and beautiful Glencoe, and along the "bonny, bonny banks of Loch Lomond".

Damon's story

From Damon Collin

As Alison has told you, Simon and I joined the dancing in Troon a week after her, and two weeks behind Catherine and Heather. What astonished us was that it made economic sense on a Monday night to engage a three-piece professional band – but the numbers tell the story.

The following morning, we found somewhere to have coffee and breakfast. I was fascinated by the fact that I could barely understand the conversations between the customers and the waitress! They were speaking English, but not as we know it. I mentioned this to the waitress as we left and she said, "*This is the posh side of Glasgow. I live on the other side – you wouldn't understand a word there.*"

We had seen glaciated valleys in northern Italy, but they didn't fill me with awe the way that driving up Glencoe, and beyond, did. It felt as if all those impoverished Highlanders were watching.

That night we did some more dancing in very different circumstances. We were still warmly welcomed at Kilmallie, but without any speed control, the first dance for the two sets was so fast, it couldn't be called a dance. Fortunately, the later tracks had been recorded at a better tempo. The hall was permanently set up for dancing with all the relevant banners hanging around the walls – fabulous.

Applecross was, until relatively recently, only accessible by boat or on horseback. Swiss engineers were engaged to design what is a steep single lane road (with passing bays) up over Bealach Na Ba. As a passenger, this was exciting! At the pass, the true Scotland revealed itself – brutal, wind-driven, freezing rain. Just enough time to leave our cocoon, take some photos and return. I felt for the mature-looking couple who had decided it was a good idea to cycle it!

Our night at the Loch Maree Hotel (where Queen Victoria once stayed) was memorable for all the right reasons. The young man managing the small team of staff was the epitome of good service. Born and brought up not far away, in Gairloch, his accent was a delight and his local knowledge (particularly about the amount of land thereabouts, including the hotel, still owned by the laird) was extensive.

Culloden – others have described the emotional impact of this place far better than I can.

Heading south again was all about dance titles: Pitlochry, Aberfeldy, Perth, Stirling, and the Falls of Rogie, but I cannot leave Scotland without bringing your attention to the remarkable artistic and engineering feat that is *The Kelpies*. I hope this short clip gives you some idea of their majesty: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/8K1pjazpy6aUwG379>.

Connections across the world

From Loralee Hyde

During my years of dancing, I've met many Australian dancers at RSCDS New Zealand Branch Summer Schools, and caught up with them again at subsequent events, including the 48th Australian Winter School, held in July in Port Stephens, New South Wales. Often, they've encouraged me to dance at *Scots on the Rocks* if I'm ever in Sydney.

I stayed in Sydney for a few days after a wonderful week of dancing and socialising at Winter School and was able to go to the *Scots on the Rocks* Tuesday night class from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on 15 July, in the Glebe Town Hall. Built in 1880, extensive restoration works to this hall were completed in 2013 – it's now a beautiful venue to dance in.

That evening, *Scots on the Rocks* hosted the launch of RSCDS Book 54. As it was a mixed class including beginners from this year, our teacher Diana Hastie (she had also taught at Winter School) chose four of the easier dances from

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the book to teach: *Kathy's Fascinator* (this jig includes *set & rotate* and a *knot*, both of which can be tricky for newer dancers in quicktime), *Dancing in Perthshire*, *Donna's Dancing Shoes* and *The Yorkshire Rose*.



The mixed class at *Scots on the Rocks* practicing *set & rotate* in Lydia Hedge's *Kathy's Fascinator*, in the stunning Glebe Town Hall (Photo: Jill Pope)

We were fortunate to have Scottish musicians Gillian Stevenson and David Oswald play for the evening – they were also visiting Sydney after playing at Winter School. There was another connection for me too on the night – with the deviser of *Kathy's Fascinator*, Lydia Hedge, from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Lydia lived in New Zealand for some years and I met up with her at various New Zealand Summer Schools. After returning to Canada, she convinced Philippa Pointon and me to go to an international Scottish Country Dancing school she was organising in Nova Scotia in August 2001.

Lots of new friends made and adventures had!

The class at *Scots on the Rocks* was a great evening of dancing to fabulous music. Plus new connections made between New Zealand, Australia, Scotland and Nova Scotia. [See more about the fun of the night and photos](#)

Levin SCD Club

From Jaki Williams, Levin Club President/part-time tutor

I was asked to write something about the love of dancing to music, more particularly, the love of dancing to *live* music.

“Dancing to live music provides a special experience combining both biological and social cognitive stimulation. This form of expression triggers brain chemicals, leading to feelings of joy, while synchronising movement amplifies music’s positive effects.

“The unique rich sound and direct connection with the musicians add a priceless sensory dimension to the dance, creating deeply immersive and communal activity that fosters connection and relieves stress.”

Well, that's something I found from Mr. Google, but hey, dancing to a live band with real people, playing their own instruments, is such a joy. The band members too react when dancers appreciate their performance, so in turn, their performance is enhanced.

Dancing at its best will energise you and lift your mood, it can even change your mood.

Dancing to live music is not only a physical exercise, but it also brings peace and happiness to the soul.

At our Levin dance in Ōhau during July, we had the wonderful Saltire Scottish Band, with Mary and Glenice on violin, and Sharlene on keyboard, playing at their very best. They love the acoustics in this hall, so they enjoy the experience of playing there, as do we dancers enjoy their music.

This year was no exception, we had seven sets on the floor along with a good many visitors, so in all there were over 80 people in attendance.



Levin Club's Annual Dance

Two pipers welcomed our guests outside our hall, and such a warm welcome they gave everyone. In some cases, I saw people enjoying the sunshine as well the pipers with their bagpipes. Sunshine in the middle of winter, in this part of the country, what a treat. Even the local sheep had their heads up, enjoying the pipes.



We had Melva Waite as our MC and she kept us moving, with a great selection of popular dances.

Our club members were very generous, not only with their donations to the raffles, but also with the amazing afternoon tea they prepared for all to enjoy. A small club can do great things.

For club members, a quick pack-down, clean-up and off home we went, feeling very satisfied that everyone who travelled up or down to the Levin Club Dance had a great afternoon.

Will anybody turn up “on the night”?

Did the Club continue?

From Elaine Laidlaw

We moved from Wellington to the Wairarapa in December 1999 and, after checking out the local dancing scene, we found that the Masterton Club had gone into recess and the only club in the Wairarapa was at Featherston. This prompted us to see if there was enough interest to start a club in Carterton that would draw support from Masterton, Greytown and points further north. Rex Wood in Masterton assured us that the club there was in recess and offered to contact ex-members about the proposal to start the Carterton group. Advertisements in the local papers, and posters placed on community noticeboards in supermarkets, libraries, schools and shops, along with advertising on the two local radio stations, brought a number of enquiries, but there was still that all important question: **“Will anybody turn up on the night?”**

Eight o'clock and Gary Morris was there; then they came in – in ones and twos – enough for more than a set. And we haven't looked back since! Apart from the night of the flood – when nobody turned up – we have always managed at least one set, usually two and sometimes more. Fourteen newcomers in one night is our record!

In late 2000, we held a meeting, elected a committee; and now the Carterton Scottish Country Dance Club was “official”. The highlight of that year was a social evening hosted by the Wairarapa Dancers – a joint venture by the Carterton and Featherston clubs. The theme was a Barn Dance, with decorations appropriate for the occasion. Photographs of a recent local scarecrow festival, hay bales, scarecrows and old farm equipment decorated the hall for the evening. Dress was appropriate too, and the programme reflected the rural theme – for example, *Corn Rigs*, *Lamb Skinnet* and *The Linton Ploughman*. Seventy-five dancers attended from around the Region and from as far away as Hastings. Two members from Kelburn Club even brought their horses (hobby, of course – his & hers). Starting a new club is a challenge, but the rewards are great. Best of all are the sets of smiling faces! As the years have passed, the club membership has fluctuated but there have been many milestones:

- We hosted a Region Event involving lunch and wine tasting at Gladstone vineyard, outdoor dancing in Queen Elizabeth Park and a dinner/dance in the Masterton Town Hall
- New Dancers' Celebrations in Carterton and Masterton
- Two Summer Schools based at the Copthorne in Masterton
- Annual Dance each year – sometimes with a theme
- Mid-year Christmas dinner/dance every year since 2008.

The main contribution to the continued success of the club is the friendly, welcoming atmosphere. The members support other clubs within the Wellington Region as well as Hawkes Bay and Rangitikei. Two highlights over the years were the Balls at Government House to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and the 50th anniversary of New Zealand becoming a branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

This year, Carterton SCD Club celebrates its 25th anniversary with a Ball, on 29 November.



25th Anniversary

25th Anniversary Ball
Saturday 29th November - 7.30pm
 Wairarapa Events Centre, Holloway Street, Carterton
 Music by Jason Morris, Hilary Ferral & Jonny Warnes
 RSCDS members \$18 : Non-members \$20 : Non dancers + juniors \$5
 RAFFLES - 3 draws Tickets \$2 each or 3 for \$5

Saint Andrews Day Brunch / Lunch
Sunday 30th November - 11am
 join Carterton Club members at Farriers Bar & Eatery
 4 Queen Street, Masterton



Please RSVP by 22nd November '25 for the brunch as a group booking will be made elaine@laidlaw.net.nz

Johnsonville Club – Dancing on

From Maureen Sullivan, President, Johnsonville Club

Johnsonville dancers enjoyed a colourful, as well as musical, Tartan Night on 14 July 2025 – a good reason to leave the house in the middle of winter. Fortunately the weather was fine, if cold, despite all the recent rain – a bonus for everyone, including the band.

The hall was well decorated with tartan rugs and bunting, creating a welcoming atmosphere, and the dancers also colourful in their tartan clothing and accessories.

Our band for the night was *Strings Attached* – Lynne Scott, Sharlene Penman and Richard Hardie – all of whom have played for Johnsonville Club before, together or as part of various musical combinations. And of course, they were our band for our Combined Capital City-Johnsonville Annual Dance in 2024.



Enjoying dancing *The Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow* at Johnsonville's winter Tartan Night (Photo: John Patterson)

Our tutor Rod Downey had put together a programme to suit the wide level of dancing experience in the club, including one very special dance. Rod devised [Marjorie Crawford's Hornpipe](#) in 2018, in memory of [previous club tutor Marjorie Crawford](#). Thanks to a demonstration set and the band's repeat performance, we now have a video of this "interesting" dance (we practiced at club, but it still caught some people out on the night).

And as usual, Elizabeth Ngan and the supper team worked behind the scenes to make sure we could all enjoy a refreshing break mid-evening with an excellent supper supplied by members. There was something for everyone with Chinese dumplings, Indian snacks, cheese and crackers and fruit, and to top it off a wonderful array of sweet offerings – with South African milk tarts, brought along by one of our new South African members, an outstanding hit we hope to see more of in future.

Overseas travellers – Of course at this time of year, many of our members travelled overseas. **Moira Broughton** took her dancing shoes with her to London and found herself enjoying some summer dancing at St Columba's Church of Scotland in Kensington. Moira described a fast-paced evening of dance – no briefings – with live music from the

[Craiggellachie Scottish Dance Band](#). Read Moira's interesting article [here](#).

Club member **Anne Holmstead** didn't manage to dance, but still came back with some interesting stories of her and her husband's first trip to Scotland. Fortunately the beautiful countryside and warm welcome they received from people they met made up for the cold and wet ("summer") weather they experienced. Highlights of their trip included:

- The eccentric bagpipe playing South African-born (with Scottish ancestry) owner of the Royal Marine Hotel, Brora, who plied us with food, stories and serenaded us with his playing over dinner.
- Getting lost on the clifftops of Bettyhill, clambering over fences and hills to finally find our way out – but oh, the views!
- Exploring Dunrobin Castle and its gardens ... and watching the Birds of Prey display.
- Eating soggy sandwiches in the rain at John o' Groats, and then the stunning scenery when the sun broke through.

And Anne has a funny story to tell about Miss Milligan. When she visited a shop in Edinburgh to order a sash, she was served by a man who remembered Miss Milligan. She had taught his group a new dance but was a bit puzzled when it didn't work out well when danced, and muttered "*Well, it worked alright in my head when I was thinking in bed last night!*".

Annual Dance – Johnsonville Club has been holding combined Annual Dances with Capital City Club since 2018 (apart from 2020 and 2021 when we had to cancel because of Covid). And our combined dance in 2025 was again a great success.

Newtown School Hall provides a spacious area for dancing, with a great floor and acoustics, a stage for the musicians, and plenty of on-site parking, so our combined dance has been held there for four years now.

We were again lucky to have a clear night to welcome members and guests to a beautifully decorated hall with a sea of tartan rugs covering the walls, shields, Saltires,



Summer dancing in the splendid hall of Columba's Church of Scotland, Kensington, London (Photo: Moira Broughton)

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banners and bright programme posters on display, and bunting hanging high. And of course, the stunning, as always, arrangements of flowers and greenery decorating the stage and surrounds with spring colours, scents and textures – an excellent effort considering the lack of blossoms around this year – and the excellent supper provided by club members.

There was fabulous music from our band—Jason Morris on accordion, Pip Morris on drums, Hilary Ferral on fiddle and Jonny Warnes on double bass – how could anyone not want to dance! Especially when we had yet another special dance devised by Rod – this time a 32-bar strathspey, [Edith Campbell](#) – in memory of [Edith](#) who taught in the Wellington Region for over 60 years. [See more about this fabulous night and photos.](#)



The Reel of the 51st Division was a perfect finish to the Johnsonville-Capital City Annual Dance (Photo: Loralee Hyde)

And the year isn't over yet, with a few more planned events on our calendar – including our final night for 2025 on 24 November – more next time.

Linden SCD Club

From Patricia Fisk

Linden SCD Club held a fun Black and White Theme evening in August. Club members, joined by some friends from the Tawa Club, all came dressed for the theme and some fun. The hall was beautifully decorated with black



Black and white decorations were made by Linden members, and even the band was dressed to theme

and white spotted balloons, musical bunting, fans and flowers made by club members.

Club tutor Ann Oliver selected a programme of dances featuring the terms “black”, “white”, or “chequered” in their titles and we danced to great live music from Jason Morris and Hilary Ferral, who were also dressed for the theme in smart black and white waistcoats.



Dancers all dressed to the “Black and White” theme at Linden

The evening concluded with a delicious supper of black and white themed treats.

We are looking forward to the Region’s final event of the year, the New Dancers’ Celebration, which will be hosted by the Linden Club. We will finish off the year with our final night on Monday 3 November. Visitors are very welcome!

Ngaio SCD Club

From Wendy Donald

On 24 July, we held our annual Dinner Dance. Guests were invited from other local clubs, and soon the 40 seats (all that the lounge adjoining our dance hall can accommodate) were booked. The theme this year was “Flower Power”, so decorations were many flowers, floral table napkins, and a floral-based quiz to keep us amused before dinner. The guests joined in the fun, many wearing clothes featuring flowers.

We enjoyed a sumptuous catered meal, with many choices for mains and desserts. After dinner, our tutor Melva Waite



Kilts and florals (Photo: John Patterson)

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had a lovely programme for us, and we enjoyed musicians Jason Morris on keyboard and Heather Elder on fiddle. We danced floral-themed dances such as *Scotland's Gardens*, *Wisp of Thistle*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, and *The Dancing Bees*. “*The Best Flower in the Garden*” was *The Best Set in the Hall*, masquerading as floral!

When Melva departed on an overseas trip, we were glad to have Chris Totton to teach us for six weeks. We enjoyed his innovative programmes and good teaching. Thank you Chris!

Forthcoming: our AGM; a tartan and fun night on 25 September, with invited guests and supper; our Tartan and Final Night on 13 November. The end of another wonderful year of dance is drawing closer!

Tawa SCD Club

From Désirée Patterson

When our tutor Catherine McCutcheon returned from her overseas travels, Tawa Club offered four beginners classes as part of our club nights in August. Eight hopefuls turned up on the first and second nights, but sadly, we have just four left. However, they are doing very well.

On 11 September, we had a very successful Dessert and Dance Night, to which we invited members from other clubs. Participants brought along a small plate of dessert-type goodies to share. Held on a club night, the evening started a bit earlier than usual, 7 pm, with tea/coffee and dessert, and dancing started at 7:45. Everyone enjoyed the great selection of sweet treats, and of course there was plenty of socialising and catching up with dancing friends.

Catherine had prepared a programme of really easy dances, with our and other clubs' new dancers in mind. All dances were walked through first, so that everyone would feel confident dancing.

There was just one rather more challenging dance – a Dessert Night would not have been complete without a *Cranberry Tart*!



Dancing back-to-back in *Happy to Meet* (Photo: John Patterson)

We were delighted to have six sets on the floor, and everyone enjoyed dancing to the music provided by Mary McDonald, Anne Goodbehere and Sam Berkahn.

What a great night we had!

Capital City Deviser's Day 2025

Deciphering cryptic clues in photos for names of dances

From Robert Vale

On Sunday 6 July, Capital City Club hosted a Deviser's Day. Experienced dancers (intermediate level and higher) were invited to an afternoon of brand new and older dances devised by Peter Beaumont and taught by Jeanette Watson.

The event was held in the spacious Newtown School Hall, where Johnsonville and Capital City hold their joint Annual Dance each year. There were enough dancers for two five-couple sets.

Each dance was represented by a photo on the wall. Some of these images, like a heap of peppercorns, offered a clear connection. Others were more cryptic.



Inspirations for some of Peter's dances: *Best Supporting Couple* (J), *Tidal Pools* (R), *French Knitting* (R), and *Swirly World* (H)

As Jeanette wrote the unfamiliar name of the first dance on the whiteboard, a jig called *Anarchy after Supper*, dancers knew they were definitely in for something different. This first dance did not disappoint, starting with reels in which the man sometimes reeled in tandem with his partner and sometimes alone.

We went on to *The Peppercorn Hornpipe*, followed by the only strathspey of the afternoon, *Isla's Strathspey*.

Jeanette walked the dancers through each dance. The ‘intermediate and higher level’ invitation to the event was quite right; there were no complex formations in any of the dances, but they were certainly challenging. There was no residual memory of having done the dance before, these were all firsts for everyone in each set.

Part way through, dancers were served a generous afternoon tea provided by Capital City club members and then it was back to the mental challenge of more completely new dances.

A slight respite from all this novelty came in the reel *French Knitting*, which called to mind the *hands across* figures from *Shiftin' Bobbins*, but that brief hope of familiarity did not last long. The last dance on the programme was another hornpipe, *Swirly World*, named after a yacht whose photo was on the wall behind us.

At the end of the afternoon, dancers went away with a lot of satisfaction at having attended a ‘world première’. Thank you to Peter for devising so many interesting new dances and to Jeanette for teaching them to us. It was a very enjoyable way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

This article was first published on Johnsonville SCD Club's website.

Diary of upcoming events

Flyers and programmes for many of these events are listed further down.

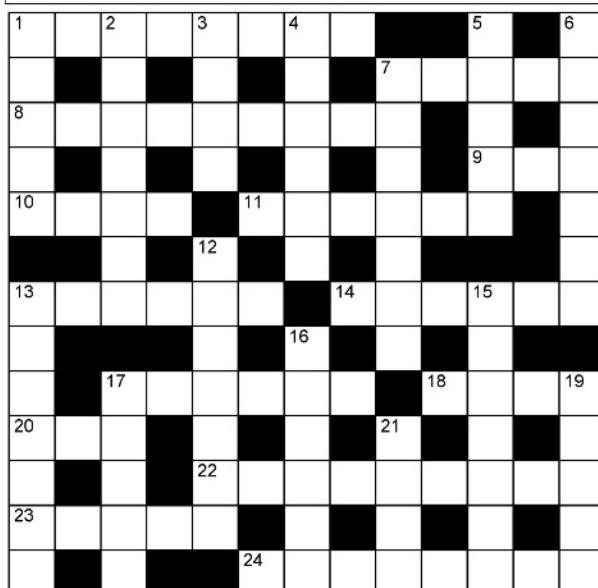
- Tue 23 September – New Dancers’ Preparation class (1)
- Thu 25 September – Ngaio Tartan and Fun Night
- Sat 27 September – Glendarroch Annual Dance
- Tue 30 September – New Dancers’ Preparation class (2)
- Sat 4 October – New Dancers’ Celebration
- Sat 11 October – Advanced Fugues Class
- Sat 1 November – Meet Book 54 - Special Region Event
- Mon 3 November – Linden Final Night
- Tue 4 November – **Wellington Region AGM**
- Thu 6 November – Capital City Final Night
- Thu 13 November – Ngaio Final Night
- Sun 16 November – Capital City End of Year Social
- Thu 20 November – Tawa Final Night
- Mon 24 November – Johnsonville Tartan and Final Night
- Sat 29 November – Carterton 25th Anniversary Ball
- Tue 2 December – Wellington Region Committee Meeting
- Sat 13 December – Closing date for Harbour City Happenings
- Wed 31 December – Hogmanay

Deborah Shuker’s Crossword No.3

Here is the third of Deborah Shuker’s crosswords that she devised for the daily Summer School News – with SCD-related clues! Deborah is a professional deviser of crosswords. She has kindly agreed to have them included in Harbour City Happenings. Enjoy!

You’ll find the solution on page 12.

CROSSWORD 3 by Deborah Shuker ©



ACROSS

- 1 One quarter of a St Andrew’s cross (8)
- 7 Fred Flintstone’s wife (5)
- 8 Schedule (9)
- 9 Native parrot (3)
- 10 As in Robertson and Illabo (4)
- 11 Ice cream dish (6)
- 13 A score (6)
- 14 Singular (6)
- 17 Common term for Hands Round (6)
- 18 Where you wear ghillies (4)
- 20 Lavatory (3)
- 22 Aileen Logie’s forte (9)
- 23 Of the kidneys (5)
- 24 Snail as food (8)

DOWN

- 1 Instruct (5)
- 2 Huge (7)
- 3 Short letter (4)
- 4 Toil (6)
- 5 Lucky accident (5)
- 6 Four people setting in line (7)
- 7 Celebration for Mairi (7)
- 12 Everlasting (7)
- 13 Likened to skittles (7)
- 15 Standing in line (7)
- 16 Positions (6)
- 17 Key to time-keeping
- 19 Principle or belief (5)
- 21 Opera solo (4)

**Closing date for the next issue of
Harbour City Happenings
Saturday 13 December 2025**



NGAIO SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB TARTAN AND FUN NIGHT DANCE

Thursday 25th November 2025

Start 7.30pm

Khandallah Presbyterian Church Hall, Ganges Road, Khandallah (opposite New World Supermarket)

Live Music by Jason Morris and Hilary Ferral

Programme:

The Ferry Boat	J (single circle)	Lets all Dance
The Barmkin	R (square set)	2 nd Grd Book
Minister on the Loch*	S	4 For 2008
Trip to Bavaria**	R	Collins
Scottish Jig	J (round room)	Lets all Dance
Pelorus Jack*	J	Book 41
The After Supper Sweeper	S	John Gregory
The Dhoon	J	Children's Book
The Haymaker	J	Book 2
Borrowdale Exchange	R (round room)	Derek Haynes

SUPPER

All Dances will be walked through once.

Supper will be served at the conclusion of dancing. Door Charge \$5 per person

** Choose a clever partner ** Dance this if you know it.*

SOLUTION 3: ACROSS: 1 Triangle, 7 Wilma,
8 Timetable, 9 Kea, 10 Rant, 11 Sundae, 13 Twenty,
14 Unique, 17 Circle, 18 Feet, 20 Loo, 22 Accordion,
23 Renal, 24 Escargot.

DOWN: 1 Tutor, 2 Immense, 3 Note, 4 Labour, 5 Fluke,
6 Balance, 7 Wedding, 12 Eternal, 13 Tailors, 15 Queuing,
16 Places, 17 Count, 19 Tenet, 21 Aria.



GLENDARROCH SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB

Invites you to our Annual Dance on 27th September 2025, at
Whanganui Girls College, Jones Street, Whanganui

Music by Scottish Saltire Band

Time: 2.00pm

Admission: RSCDS members \$18, non-members \$20, spectators \$5

Raffle: \$2 each, or 3 for \$5

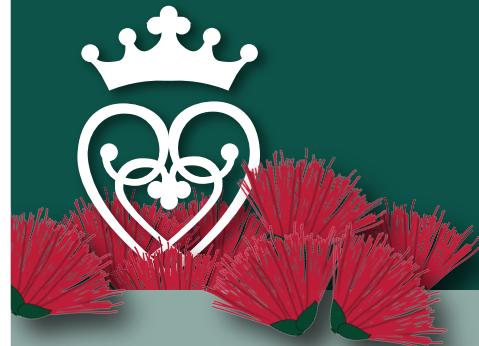
Programme

Ecclefechan Feline	Jig	Le Petit Chat Celtique
<i>Balmoral Strathspey</i>	<i>Strathspey</i>	<i>Book 22</i>
Andersons Rant	Reel	Miscellany
The Wild Geese	Jig	Book 24
<i>Holyrood Strathspey</i>	<i>Strathspey</i>	<i>Book 51</i>
Farewell to Balfour Road	Jig	Book 52
Shiftin' Bobbins	Reel	Ormskirk Book
Bill Clement MBE	Jig	Book 47
<i>Barbara's Strathspey</i>	<i>Strathspey</i>	<i>Book 46</i>
Trip to Timber Ridge	Reel	Book 52

Afternoon Tea

EH3 7AF	Jig	Book 40
Scotland's Gardens	Reel	Goldring
<i>Sugar Candie</i>	<i>Strathspey</i>	<i>Book 26</i>
The Summer Assembly	Reel	Book 35
The Cranberry Tart	Jig	7 Year Itch, Glasspool
Orpington Caledonians	Reel	Book 49
<i>The Water of Leith</i>	<i>Strathspey</i>	<i>Book 53</i>
The Reel of the 51 st Division	Reel	Book 13

RSCDS Wellington Region



New Dancers' Celebration

7.30pm Sat 4 Oct 2025

Fair Enough	J	RSCDS Bk 51
The Dancing Bees	R	Goldring, 24 Graded and Social
Monymusk	S	RSCDS Bk 11
Mrs Stewart's Jig	J	RSCDS Bk 35
The Barmkin	R	2nd Graded
Fair Donald	S	RSCDS Bk 29
Joie de Vivre	J	RSCDS Bk 39
Shiftin' Bobbins	R	Ormskirk
Wisp of Thistle	S	RSCDS Bk 37
Granville Market	J	2nd Graded

Music by

The
Saltire Band

Supper

Ecclefechan Feline	J	Bob McMurtry, Le Petit Chat.
Scotland's Gardens	R	Goldring, Auld Friends Meet
Neidpath Castle	S	RSCDS Bk 22
St Andrew's Fair	J	RSCDS Leaflets
Flowers of Edinburgh	R	RSCDS Bk 1
12 Coates Crescent	S	RSCDS Bk 40
The Reel of the 51st Division	R	RSCDS Bk 13



Knox Church Hall, 574 High St, Lower Hutt

New Dancers \$10

All other dancers a small plate for supper and
Admission \$18 RSCDS Members \$15 Juniors/Non Dancers \$6



**RSCDS NZ Branch Inc. Wellington Region
Region Dancing Day 2025**

Advanced / Fugues Day

Saturday 11 October, 1 - 4 pm

Tutor: Rod Downey

Cost: \$15 (Please bring a water bottle)

Advanced Skills

For Dancers who are already consistently competent in footwork and rhythm, including transitions, dancing tidily with good control, handing and phrasing throughout. You can remember most common formations without prompting. You have a reasonable level of fitness.

Venue: St John's Anglican Church Hall, Bassett Rd, Johnsonville.



Book 54

A Special Wellington Region Event



Saturday 1 Nov, 2025

1pm-5pm (dancing starts 1.15)

Khandallah Town Hall, 11 Ganges Road, Khandallah

Tutor: Diane Bradshaw

\$5 Pay at the Door

The Wellington Region Committee is sponsoring an afternoon of dancing to introduce the Region's dancers to the new RSCDS book, Book 54. Book 54 has a lot of highly social dances which we expect will be popular.

The event includes afternoon tea, and dances will be taught by Diane Bradshaw.

We will also be introducing music from the new double CD by Neil Galloway and his band, recorded for the dances.

Suitable for intermediate dancers or above. Check with your tutor if in doubt.

To encourage attendance, the Region Committee is subsidising the event to keep the cost low, as an end of year treat.

Put in your diaries!!



Capital City Scottish Country Dance Club Final Night

Thursday 6 Nov 2025 7.30pm

Live Music by Lynne Scott, Keshav Raj, Andrea Coop
and the musicians of Capital City club

\$5 members, \$6 non-members

Newtown School Hall, Mein Street, Newtown, Wellington

Parking available in the school grounds



Capital City Scottish Country Dance Club End of Year Social

Sunday 16 Nov 2025 2.30pm

Live Music \$5 adults, \$2 juniors

Easy dances, all dances walked, family & friends welcome!

Newtown School Hall, Mein Street, Newtown, Wellington

Parking available in the school grounds

Johnsonville Tartan & Final Night

Khandallah Town Hall

11 Ganges Rd, Khandallah

7.30pm, Monday 24 November 2025

Music by Lynne Scott, Thomas Nikora & Sam Berkahn

Lady Catherine Bruce's Reel (J) Graded

The Back o' Bennachie (R) J Duthie – 8 SCDS

Cape Town Wedding* (S) T Kerr – 39/4

The Rakish Highlandman (J) 19/6

Sleepy Maggie* (R) 11/5

The Minister on the Loch (S) 4 for 2008

The Reel of the Royal Scots (R) RSCDS Leaflet

Supper

The Machine Without Horses (J) 12/12

One for All (R) R Downey – Golden Bear Coll

Hello Goodbye (S) C Ronald – 51/9

The St Nicholas Boat** (J) J Drewry – Canadian

Mairi's Wedding (R) J Cosh – 22 SCDS

- Adult \$5, Student \$0.50
- Most dances walked, newer dancers welcome
- * This dance is a wee bit tricky, find a clever partner
- ** Only dance *The St Nicholas Boat* if you know it



CARTERTON SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB



Saturday 7.30 pm 29th November 2025
Wairarapa Events Centre, Holloway St, Carterton

Programme

J	Granville Market	Second Graded
R	The Morrison Measure	Goldring
S	The Halfway House	Wellington 60 th
J	Fair Enough	RSCDS Bk 51
R	Rimutaka Incline	Carterton 5 th
S	John McAlpin	RSCDS Magazine
J	Joie de Vivre	RSCDS Bk 39
R	A Silver Link in the Chain	Laidlaw
S	The Water of Leith	RSCDS Bk 53
J	St Andrew's Fair	RSCDS Leaflet
R	The Kissing Bridge	RSCDS Bk 47
S	Lea Rig	RSCDS Bk 21

SUPPER

J	New Year Jig	RSCDS Bk 51
R	Scott Meikle	RSCDS Bk 46
S	MacDonald of the Isles	30 Popular/2
J	Orpington Caledonians	RSCDS Bk 49
S	The Silver Grey	Goldring
R	Mairi's Wedding	30 Popular/2

WELLINGTON REGION

HOGMANAY 2025

BAND: LYNNE, REBECCA & FRIENDS

WHEN: 31ST DECEMBER, 8PM START UNTIL 1:30AM

WHERE: CROFTON DOWNS SCHOOL, CHARTWELL ST

ENTRY: A SMALL PLATE + \$18 RSCDS, \$20 NON-RSCDS, \$5 JAMS & SPECTATORS

Maxwell's Rant	R	Book 18
Ecclefechan Feline	J	Le Petit Chat
Neidpath Castle	S	Book 22
The Wild Geese	J	Book 24
The Ullapool Ferry **	R	Book 52
The Falkirk Lass	S	Book 53
Abbotsford Lassies	R	Montreal 60 TH Anniversary
Beach Dancer	J	Whangarei Book
Barbara's Strathspey	S	Book 46
Allemande To Go	R	SCD is all Around the World

M A X I N A + S U P P E R

Granville Island	J	Hands Across 2
The Dream Catcher **	S	Book 45
Joie de Vivre	J	Book 39
The Flowers of Edinburgh	R	Book 1
City of Belfast	S	Book 48
Scott Meikle	R	Book 46

H O G M A N A Y C E L E B R A T I O N S

The Eightsome Reel	R	Book 2
The Duchess Tree	S	The Brodie Book
The Reel of the 51 ST Division	R	Book 13

** ONLY IF YOU KNOW THE DANCE

ALL OTHER DANCES MAY BE WALKED AS NEEDED