

The Montreal Scottish Dancer

February 2024

Vol. 66, Number 3

In this issue: Hogmanay photos, information on upcoming dances, and an interview with A&P's man behind the music, Henry Cobb.



BRANCH NEWS AND EVENTS

∞ **A&P classes** continue on **Tuesday** nights, from **6:45 to 9 p.m.**, with the beginner portion from 6:45 to 8:30 and intermediate/advanced dances from 8:30 to 9. We continue to enjoy live piano music from **Henry Cobb** during our classes! Exceptionally, the **March 19** class will be held at the Greene Centre, 1090 Ave Greene, Westmount.

∞ Though there are no regularly scheduled **advanced classes** at this time, occasional classes are held in various locations when possible. Contact **Holly Boyd** for more information.



The Guild and Young Adult Ministry of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul will host a **Pancake Supper** in **Kildonan Hall** on **Shrove Tuesday, February 13**, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., and the Scottish Country Dancers are invited. The cost is \$10 for an individual or \$30 for a family of four. Please reserve by February 9 with Edna Ralston at ednaralston@bell.net or 514-288-9588. Everyone pays at the door. The dinner will include pancakes and maple syrup, bean casserole, sausages, fresh fruit, and Mardi Gras cake! Dance will start a bit later that evening, and pancake eaters will be invited to stay for a few beginner dances after the meal. The beginners' portion will extend to 9 p.m. that evening.

∞ **Save the date** for an **evening social at A&P** on **March 16, 2024, from 7 to 11 p.m.**, with a program devised by **Dagmar Koeppler**. Cost is \$10 with food or \$20 without food. See the flyer on page 5 for the program.

∞ And **save the date** for another **Spring Dance and Memory Lane Tea**, also at **A&P**, on the afternoon of **May 4, 2024**, featuring **live music** by **Laura Risk** (fiddle) and **Susie Petrov** (piano). The tentative schedule is walk-throughs from noon to 12:45, dancing from 1 to 3:30, wine and cheese from 3:30-4, and a light meal from 4-5:30. An e-bulletin will be sent with details closer to the date. **We hope to see many dancers and former dancers at our biggest social event of the year!**

∞ Happy Valentine's Day, everyone! And I think the groundhog didn't see his shadow, so...early spring?





MEMBERS' NEWS

Welcome to our new RSCDS members, **Jackie Anderson** and **Ka Pui Pang**. We are happy to be dancing with you!

Brian Prentice's beginner dance classes have resumed in **Pointe-Claire**, and are running from **February 1 to May 16** (no class March 7), **Thursdays**, from **7 to 8:30 p.m.**, at the **Noël-Legault Community Centre**. Again, participants must register through Pointe-Claire Leisure. See <https://www.pointe-claire.ca/en/leisure/> for more details (scroll down and click on Physical Activities, then Activities for Adults and Seniors, then scroll down to find the class description), and visit <https://ludik.pointe-claire.ca/> to register.

Jane McCusker's beginner class in **Mansonville** in the Eastern Townships is still going strong. These free classes are **Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, at the Feather in the Wind Senior Centre, 309 rue Principale. Participants of all ages are welcome. For more information and to sign up, contact Jane McCusker at 514-688-9331 or jane.mccusker@mcgill.ca. Jane also invites interested Montreal dancers to stop by and dance with them.

Margaret Wallace is on the road to recovery after falling and breaking her hip in November of last year. She spent two weeks in the Jewish General Hospital for surgery before being transferred to the Catherine Booth rehabilitation hospital. She returned home in mid-January and is continuing to recover, slowly but surely. In an e-mail to the editor, she writes, "I am just so happy to be home, and am making good progress." Get-well calls or cards are appreciated. See Margaret's contact information in the e-mail sent with the newsletter, or contact the editor at katiemkwood@gmail.com.

In other news, Margaret also shared that on a visit to Scotland in the spring of 2023, she met RSCDS Chair **William Williamson** and his wife at a friend's home, and they had a lovely chat. "It was fun to see him again," Margaret writes. "He and his wife were thoroughly enjoying their tenure as international ambassadors, and he did mention that Toronto was on the schedule but sadly, not Montreal."



We are sad to report that **Annie Sapucaia's** cat, **Belle**, chaser of television mice, scourge of oranges, queen of lazy, cozy creatures everywhere, passed away on January 7, 2024, at the ripe old age of 19.

Annie will now have to find other methods of being woken up repeatedly at ungodly hours of the morning, and Facebook followers [will be forced] to look elsewhere for a certain/those feline brand of pithy, common-sense wisdom, shared with a photo and a smile. A typical post: "Hi guys. It's minus 15 today so I

recommend sleeping in the sun near electronics. Follow me for more life tips. Love, Belle”

According to Annie, “Belle’s loves included hanging out on my lap, watching TV, eating like a fatass, drinking water from the bathtub several times a day, and having no respect for my personal space or my food. She lived a very long life, but as it always is, it wasn’t long enough.” You will be missed, Belle (2005-2024).



On a dark night near the end of December, a couple of dozen dancers, including several from Ottawa and the US, ventured out for an evening of celebration, Auld Lang Syne, and many potluck desserts. Enjoy these photos from **Hogmanay, December 28, 2023**.



Photo credit: Ramona Galtoma



March Social Program

Saturday, March 16, 2024, 7 to 11 p.m. Cost: \$10 + plate of food (\$20 w/o food)
Kildonan Hall, Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, 3419 Redpath

Program devised by Dagmar Koeppler.

Beach Dancer	3J32	Eddy West - Wangerai Book of SCD
Pluto's Head	2R32	RSCDS Book 51
Annan Gold	3 cpl set S32	Evelyn Ramwell - Third Kirkbrae Coll
Posties Jig	4J32	R. Clowes - Ormskirk Coll
* The Captain's House	3R32	Holly Boyd - RSCDS Graded 3
* Butterscotch and Honey	4S32	Jean Attwood - Braes o' Lochaber and 3 more SCD
Dancing Dolphins	3J32	Barry Skelton - Dolphin Book 1
~ Break ~		
** Black Black Oil	5R32	John Drewry - Deeside Book Part 2
* Gold and Silver	3S32	Dale Birdsall - TAC 50th Anniversary
The Four Leaf Clover	3J32	Holly Boyd - A Shortcut to Happiness
Montgomerie's Rant	3R32	Castle Menzies - RSCDS Book 10

* Intermediate dances

** Advanced dance

All dances will be walked and briefed.

For cribs and diagrams: <https://my.strathspey.org/dd/list/47107/>





Meet the Dancers

By Katie Wood

Have you ever wondered how a particular dancer first discovered the good ol' RSCDS all those years ago? Or how they spend their time when they're not wearing ghillies? In this segment, editor Katie Wood explores what makes our fellow SCDers tick.

Henry Cobb

In this edition of Meet the Dancers, we actually get to meet the musician behind A&P's live piano music, Henry Cobb. Originally from Ontario and with experience in classical and jazz piano and indie rock, Henry settled in Montreal for his master's degree and the music scene. Now he's sharing his talent with us and learning a new musical genre that is richer and more complicated than he originally thought. Read on to learn more about Henry and what it takes to become a Scottish country dance musician.

Where are you from originally? I was born in Collingwood, Ontario, near the mouth of Georgian Bay, off of Lake Huron, but my mother was originally from Montreal, from an Irish family in Pointe-Saint-Charles.

How did you end up in Montreal? In 2016, I started my undergrad degree at Western University in London, Ontario, in classical piano. I followed an unofficial jazz strain there, too, which led me to want to do my master's in jazz. Especially for musicians, they say you should do your master's in the place you want to live, because by the time you finish it, you're already becoming established in the music scene there. Montreal was the obvious choice because I have family here and it's such a good scene for jazz, rock and roll, and indie, and it's an affordable place to live—or it was. I moved here four years ago, and I plan to stay for a long time, or at least while I'm somewhat youthful.

Do you speak French? Yes, I had to go to the Université de Montréal. So I did a few exchanges before I moved here. I also dated a girl here for three years who was from France, and most of my friends are French speakers. So now I'm really comfortable speaking French.

So you're a professional musician? Yes, I finished my master's in 2022, and I play jazz sets. I also have my own indie rock project called Hank's Dream where I sing and play electric guitar and piano; you can find us on Spotify and Apple Music. In addition to that, I'm the organist/music director/choir director at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in St. Lambert. And now I play for Scottish dance.

Did you always want to be a musician? In high school, I was really into programming and building computers. I was taking private music lessons but not music classes in school. Then in grade 10 or 11, a friend asked me to be in his band, and I had lots of fun. It gave me a taste for what that life was like, and in grade 12 I decided to apply to for music programs at university. When I went to Western there was no more question in my mind; being at school for music was a transformative experience. And being a poor student gave me a taste of what the future would be like as a musician!

How did you start playing for Scottish dance? When I was doing my master's I got a job doing security at A&P. It's a really great job for students because while you are sitting at the front desk watching the door, you can do homework. I would bring my synthesizer and work on songs. While working, I would hear you guys having class. When I heard the recorded music, I wondered if there was any chance you'd want live music. At the same time, I probably had developed a bit of jazz arrogance and thought, I could probably play that!

So I got talking to Holly near the end of last year's session. She said I could come and audition. In hindsight, I'm not sure I did very well, but I was good enough that she saw my potential. Since then it's been such a cool journey to get to dive into what I didn't realize was a whole new system of music with all kinds of unwritten nuances. I didn't anticipate such a complicated and rich musical genre, and I'm still discovering and still have lots of things to improve on. Doing a 32-bar strathspey eight times through means, in effect, you are playing 16 pieces of music one after the other; it's easy to lose track of what you're doing. In a way, it would be easier to learn if there was a master/apprentice system and I could accompany someone more experienced and learn that way. But Holly has set me up with people who are masters of this music, even out of the country, who have helped me learn to do medleys, for example, which are my new favourite thing.

You did a medley for us the other evening, and it was great! We were impressed. So you're enjoying playing for SCD? I'm very much enjoying playing with everyone, and it's been so cool to discover a whole new style of music that's so rich in unwritten things, stylistic things that you can't ascertain unless you listen, read about it, play it, and see the dances. Classical music is like that in a lot of ways, and jazz even more so. The more I do SCD the more I see so many similarities between it and the jazz medium. Jazz music was not made to be written, and often it wasn't. Both jazz and SCD make use of reduced scores, lead sheets with melodies and chords that leave out a lot of detail that is up to the musicians to know how to fill in. When I signed up to play for SCD, I didn't imagine such a sophisticated tradition with so much to learn.

So the short answer is yes, I'm enjoying it. It's also keeping my fingers in shape, making sure I don't just lean into the way I like to do things and slack off on other skills. So I'm very much enjoying it, not to mention the fact that everyone is super nice.

Do you yourself do any forms of dance? Have you tried Scottish dance? No, I haven't. I'm not exactly shy of dancing, but maybe compared to other aspects of my life, I'm somewhat shy in this area.

What is something surprising or interesting that people might not know about you? When I was 10, I got a pen knife in my stocking at Christmas. When I was using it to open my first gift, it got stuck on the tape, slipped, and cut one of the main tendons in my left hand. I still have a huge scar, which includes the four-centimetre cut from the knife plus a three-centimetre cut perpendicular to that because they had to expand upon the original cut during a big, complicated surgery to fix the tendon. It's interesting because if they hadn't been able to repair it, I could have lost my career!

Well, there you go. Now people will come up to you to see the scar and then you can talk and get to know one another better!



Blast from the Past

Don Nemiroff dancing at Victoria Hall, Westmount, on September 26, 1999.
Is that **Jane McCusker** behind him?



❄️ **Contradance Montreal Winter/Spring 2024** ❄️

Dances are usually the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. Upcoming dances: **February 10 and 24, March 9 and 23, April 13 and 27, May 11 and 25, and June 8**—at Patro Villeray from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Consult the website, www.contramontreal.org, for further information and Covid protocol (**masks are still mandatory for some dances**).



DANCING ELSEWHERE – 2024

Feb 17

Ardbrae Scottish Country Dancers of Ottawa Diamond Jubilee Ball. Glebe Community Centre. Music by Atlantic Firth Scottish Country Dance Band. For more information, visit the Events page at <https://ardbrae.org/> or e-mail ardbraedancers@gmail.com or see the flyer below.

Feb 17

The 58th Tartan Ball in Toronto will be held at Havergal College. Music by Scotch Mist. A light buffet will be served. Cost is \$110 for members, \$135 for non-members. Formal attire is requested. Ticket sales close February 9. See <https://dancescottish.ca/tartan-ball.html> for more information.

- Mar 4-8** First in a series of **Scottish Country Dancing and Walking Holidays** in **England** in 2024. See <https://www.scottish-country-dancing-and-walking-holidays.com/> and the poster below for more information on holidays throughout the year.
- Apr 20** **Ottawa Spring Ball.** Save the date. Glebe Community Centre, 175 Third Avenue.
- May 4** **The Great Lakes Group RSCDS Centenary Ball** in **Kitchener.** Dance groups from around Ontario, Buffalo, Detroit, and Montreal have contributed towards a ball to celebrate 100 years since Miss Milligan and Mrs. Stewart founded the Scottish Country Dance Society (which became "Royal" when her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became patron of the Society). Music by Don Bartlett and The Scottish Heirs. Tickets \$130. Visit <https://greatlakesball.wordpress.com/> for more information or see flyer below.
- May 10-12** **Save the date** for the **Boston Highland Ball Weekend.** Registration forms will be up on <https://rscdsboston.org/> at the end of February. Contact weeblyets@rscdsboston.org for more information or see flyer below.
- May 17-19** **Save the date** for the 61st annual **Pawling Weekend** in Copake, New York. Registration opens February 15; early-bird pricing until March 15. See flyer for details or visit <http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/pawling-weekend>.
- July 28-Aug 4** **TAC Summer School** at **Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario.** Registration opens mid-February. See <https://tac-rscds.org/> for details.
- Oct 20-24** **Scotch on the Rocks** with **Duncan and Ailsa Keppie** in **Hortonville, Nova Scotia.** Classes in the morning, excursions in the afternoon. Details at <http://www.rscdsnovascotia.ca/Scotch%202024.pdf>.



The Ardbrae Dancers invite you to join them at their Diamond Jubilee Ball on Saturday, February 17, 2024 at the Glebe Community Centre, Ottawa. Music will be provided by the Atlantic Firth Scottish Country Dance Band. Enjoy a Winterlude weekend in Ottawa, ending with a Sunday Brunch before you set off for home. For program and ticket details, see the Events page at ardbrae.org.



We are experienced in organising a unique mix of sociable and friendly Scottish Country Dancing and Walking Holidays.

Each morning you have the opportunity to join our Dance Workshop, where you can learn more interesting and unusual dances with the help and guidance of our experienced Dance Leaders.

After lunch you may wish to join an afternoon Guided Walk to explore something of the local area.

Each evening brings everyone together in the ballroom for a full and inclusive Program of Scottish Country Dancing



We are experienced in organising a unique mix of sociable and friendly Scottish Country Dancing and Walking Holidays

- 4 nights social dancing, full board
- 3 morning dance workshops
- 3 afternoon guided walks

- HARROGATE -

Cairn Hotel, 4-8 Mar 2024, Twin/Double, £340

- TORQUAY -

Victoria Hotel, 15-19 Apr, 2024, £260 / £300

- SYMONDS YAT -

Paddocks Hotel, 9-13 Sept, 2024, £390 / £450

- BUXTON -

Palace Hotel, 14-18 Oct, 2024, £325 / £475

- St ANNES -

Inn-on-the-Prom, 11-15, Nov, 2024, £340 / £390

www.scottish-country-dancing-and-walking-holidays.com

scottishdancingandwalking@gmail.com

01274 567558 or 07392 006048

- We Look Forward to Welcoming You -



SAVE THE DATE!!!

THE GREAT LAKES BALL
CELEBRATING THE RSCDS CENTENARY
SATURDAY MAY 4, 2024
BINGEMAN'S CONFERENCE CENTRE
KITCHENER, ONTARIO

Tickets \$130 each

DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF
DON BARTLETT AND THE SCOTTISH HEIRS

For more information visit

<https://greatlakesball.wordpress.com>



**RSCDS Boston Branch
Invites YOU to the Highland Ball Weekend
May 10-12, 2024**

Friday Welcome Dance

Music by Torrent: Ross and Sarah Parker, Nadia Gaya

Saturday Ball

Music by Mara Shea, Catherine Miller, fiddle

Beth Murray, piano Tom Pixton, accordion

Stephen Thomforde, pipes

Sunday Brunch and Dancing

**We invite you to spend a delightful weekend with us.
Please share the Ball program with your group this semester!**

Set 1

**Blue Bonnets
MacDonald of the Isles
Westminster Reel
Roaring Jelly
Midsummer Common
Pinewoods Reel**

Set 2

**John McAlpin
Shiftin Bobbins
Luckenbooth Brooch
City of Belfast
Montgomerie's Rant**

Set 3

**Jubilee Jig
The Silver Tassie
Arthur's Seat
Sugar Candie
Left-Handed Fiddler**

Information:

weeb luets@rscdsboston.org

RSCDS NY Branch Presents 61st annual Pawling Weekend

**Registration opens February 15, 2024
Early Bird Pricing until March 15, 2024**



**May 17-19, 2024
Copake, New York, USA**

Featuring

Teachers: Katherine Shearman and Katherine Giacoletti

**Musicians: Elizabeth Anderson, Susie Petrov, Ben
Anderson, Catherine Miller and Ian Bennett**

<https://www.rscdsnewyork.org/pawling-weekend>



Committee of Management 2023/2024

Chairman	Don Nemiroff
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Newsletter	Katie Wood
Website	Sunny Vanderboll
General	Sue Dawson, Jodie Hebert

The Montreal Scottish Dancer will be issued quarterly this year. Approximate publication schedule is: **Sept. 1, Nov. 15, Feb. 1, and May 15.**

Editor: Katie Wood. Gratitude to Alistair Wood for help with photos and graphics.
Please send **submissions for the next issue by May 8**, to katiemkwood@gmail.com or 141 Rue Pierre-Bourgerie, Boucherville, QC J4B 4P4, or by phone at 514-632-2326.
Thanks to all contributors!



Annie exacting passive-aggressive revenge on Guillaume during the Hogmanay group photo for an unspecified slight earlier in the evening.