

The Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston, MA, Inc.
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 3 June 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by President Jeremy Thorpe.

Jeremy opened the meeting with a few comments.

- Thank you to MaryEllen Scannell and Susie Petrov for stepping forward and doing such a great job chairing Highland Ball 2019. Thank you MaryEllen and Susie!
- Thank you to Thom Howe for shuffling the Branch sound equipment around to various locations.
- The Branch functions strictly on the work of volunteers. This is the first year where there were no candidates for the open at-large positions on the Executive Committee. There are two open at-large positions, one position on the Nominating Committee, plus the need for Ball chairs. If you would like to make your voice be heard and to put changes in motion, this is your opportunity.
- This year, the Executive Committee worked on updating the Branch Policies and Procedures and changed the structure for Branch Classes. With the new structure, any class with four members will be covered under the Branch's insurance policy, any class with eight members will qualify for a music subsidy of \$265, and any class with twelve members will qualify for a \$365 music subsidy.

Minutes of the SAGM: The minutes of the SAGM, November 5, 2018 were approved as distributed.

Election Results: Jeremy read the results of the recent Branch election. Seven ballots were cast to re-elect Marsha Byrnes as Vice-President and Cathy Crabtree as Treasurer. There were no candidates for the two at-large positions or the open position on the Nominating Committee.

Treasurer's Interim Report: This is an interim report because our fiscal year ends on September 30. Treasurer Cathy Crabtree reports that the total Branch revenue is currently at \$59,557. Membership dues are flat, the Ceilidh had a slight loss but was benefited by the grant from NHScots, the Highland Ball had a small profit, Pinewoods numbers are high because some of this year's fees are yet to be paid, and the TMC Workshop had a slight loss which the Branch subsidized. In addition, the cost of our insurance is higher because we needed better coverage for property damage and some other areas needed to be adjusted.

SDCEA: Bob Littlehale presented the Class Awards on behalf of Vickery Trinkaus-Randall, SDCEA President. Other members of the SDCEA include Julia Mullen as the clerk, Rebecca Gore, Bob Littlehale, Peter Tandy, and Kendra Eshleman. The board administers several funds and awards scholarships from those funds to aid Scottish Country Dancers attending Pinewoods Scottish Sessions I and II, ESCape, and New Hampshire Highlands. The SDCEA awards half scholarships to these activities while encouraging participants to pay part of the cost themselves. Preference is given to Branch members, although some awards are also available to non-Branch members. Contributions to the SDCEA are always welcome. If you would like to donate, you can speak to a Board member, pick up a donation form at your next class, or print a form from the Branch web site.

Membership: MaryEllen and John Scannell reported that there are 211 Branch members and 18 Associate Members. In addition, there were 34 individuals and 4 associates who did not rejoin. Fourteen classes contain eight or more members.

Mailing List: No report was submitted.

Boston Scottish Country Dancers (Demo Team): Laura DeCesare, Team Coordinator, reports that the Boston Scottish Country Dancers performed at the 1st annual Joint Ceilidh in collaboration with Highland Dance Boston and were able to incorporate dancers from the Mladost Folk Ensemble. They also performed at the annual Ancient Universities Burns Night and had their first performance at the Holi Festival so they could be more visible to the people of Lexington where they rehearse. The team took sections of the 12-minute NEFFA suite and assembled them into a new 3-dance suite that they believe will be more interesting to watch. They hope to do it again for future performances. The next performance for the team will be at Dance for World Community on Saturday June 8th. They are also looking forward to dancing in the second annual Joint Ceilidh and hope to again collaborate with the Mladost Folk Ensemble.

The team expresses its thanks to the RSCDS Boston Branch for funding their rehearsals and to the Dance Inn in Lexington for hosting them on Sundays.

The team is actively looking for new members who want to join and improve their footwork and presentation. Please speak to Laura DeCesare or Andy Taylor-Blenis for information concerning rehearsals, performances, and what is expected in terms of commitment.

Teaching and Music Committee (TMC): Charles Liu, Chair of the Teaching and Music Committee, reported on the activities of the Committee in the past year. TMC is responsible for planning and organizing the teaching and music aspects of the Highland Ball, the Pinewoods Scottish Sessions, and other events to promote Scottish Country Dancing and musicianship.

For the Highland Ball, the TMC put together a fun and accessible program. Thank you to Jen Schoonover and Robert McOwen for taking the lead in devising the program. The TMC would also like to thank the Ball co-chairs, MaryEllen Scannell and Susie Petrov, who stepped up to bring together a wonderful evening of dance.

For Pinewoods Scottish Sessions, we were fortunate to have Susie Petrov returning as the Music Director for 2018, and we are look forward to the great music led by Music Director Elke Baker in 2019. Elke has assembled an all-star music staff this year including renowned Scottish fiddler Keith Smith. On the teaching staff, we will be welcoming Janet Johnston from Edinburgh, Jean Dodds from Adelaide, Australia, Katherine Giacoletti from the Philadelphia area, and several teachers from the Boston area, including Lance Ramshaw, Howard Lasnik, and Lois New. The dancing and music will be great!

The TMC continues to work on introducing interesting teachers who have not been to Pinewoods to the teaching staff for the coming years. So far, the confirmed 2020 teachers are Fiona Grant from Bristol, England and Sharon Barker from Alberta. Both are new to Pinewoods. The TMC will pass on more information as it becomes available.

Thank you to the co-chairs, Kat Dutton, Ellen Scannell-Woods, and Laurie Somario for their hard work in organizing Pinewoods Scottish Sessions.

The TMC organized and supported several dance workshops and outreach events. The Family Picnic and Dance led by Jen Schoonover and held at Saugus Iron Work last September was a great success. TMC also brought a Scottish Country Dance workshop led by Robert McOwen to Fairlee, Vermont last January, and it was well attended. The TMC

would like to recognize Karen Sollins who took the initiative in organizing Scottish Country Dance events at NEFFA this year. TMC will continue to organize more workshops and outreach events for the coming year.

Candidate Class – One of the big projects that the TMC has been working on this year is the teacher candidate training. Three candidates are taking Part 1 (preliminary) and four are taking Part 2 (full certificate). The TMC is very pleased to see several candidates from the classes outside the Boston area. The candidates have met throughout the spring under the guidance of Susie Petrov as the tutor. TMC would like to thank all the volunteer dancers who have come to support them during their practice teaching sessions. The exams will be held on June 8 and 9, and volunteer dancers are also needed (organized by MaryEllen Scannell). The TMC wishes each candidate the best of luck and thanks TMC members Karen Sollins, Robert McOwen, and Nora Smith who have worked behind the scenes to make the Candidate Class happen.

Departing TMC members – The TMC would like to thank Nora Smith, who will be stepping down this year, for her service over the last six years. They would also like to acknowledge Roberta Lasnik who stepped down from the TMC last summer after over twenty years of service.

In conclusion, the TMC would like to thank all Branch members for their support. They continue to welcome your ideas in any areas where they can help to promote Scottish Country Dancing and musicianship.

Tartan Times: Barbara McOwen reported on behalf of herself and Evelyn Murray. Evelyn has been the editor since the 1960s. While some Branches are using technology and their websites to distribute information, the *Tartan Times* complements the website. It continues to report people news and event information from other Branches, something that the website doesn't necessarily cover. The Boston Branch is large in area, numbers of members, and in events, so please continue to send in your information and pictures.

Website: The report submitted by Meyer, Laura, and Matt Billmers was read by Jeremy. The webmasters would like to remind all event organizers to let them know when the dates for an event become finalized. Since the Highland Ball is past, the Upcoming Major Events section of the home page has only two events listed: Pinewoods Sessions and New Hampshire Highlands. Remember that a major event on that list is defined as any event with its own page on our website, such as the Pinewoods Benefit Ball or the Fall Ceilidh.

They would also like to remind organizers that the Calendar of Events is no longer part of our website and following the link to it takes you away from our site and onto Google calendar. New listings and queries about listings should still go to calendar@rscdsboston.org, but these no longer go to the webmasters. In fact, if you do send a calendar posting to the webmasters, we won't be able to post it. Access rights to a given calendar are granted to someone connected with that calendar, and they alone can post to that calendar. When in doubt, send email to calendar@rscdsboston.org.

Do you ever wonder what happens to event announcements that you send to the webmasters for distribution? First, they go to our RSS feed (accessible from the

“Subscribe” tab on the website). These are read by anyone who in turn subscribes to our feed using their RSS (Really Simple Syndication) client, a variety of which are available for Mac, PC, iOS and Android. We then send the announcement to the mailing list for general interest in the Branch, which is self-serve signup from the Subscribe tab on our website and open to anyone. Finally, the announcement goes to the members mailing list. The general interest list now has 140 people signed up, and the membership list has 197 people. We have no way of tracking the number of people who subscribe to our RSS feed.

Please, please, please proofread your submissions to us. It is not our job to catch errors and we hate to publish things multiple times as errors are corrected. Furthermore, once an erroneous listing is published, people may not look at a corrected copy. Usage of the website has been trending downwards for the past 4 years, from 1.8 million page requests and 1.2 million pages delivered in 2016. This year we are on track for about 800,000 page requests and 400,000 pages delivered. The webmasters have no theory as to why this is so. As in previous years, the largest number of page requests are for our photo gallery. The most popular operating system we see is Windows followed by MacOS, but the most popular browser generating requests is now Safari for the first time, with Chrome, then Firefox in the top 3. Microsoft’s Internet Explorer is a distant fifth. And the most frequent source of requests is our own rscdsboston.com followed by Google searches.

Calendar: Jeremy Thorpe reminded everyone to send their calendar information to calendar@rscds.org. Several people have asked for privileges to upload their own event information. Please check with Jeremy if you would also like access.

Equipment: Jeffrey Hopper reports that Thom Howe can be reached to arrange for the sound equipment by emailing equipment@rscdsboston.org. He would appreciate a 30-day notice for when the equipment is needed so that arrangements can be made.

Archives: At the time of this meeting, Gregor Trinkaus-Randall was still collecting items to be taken to the archives at UNH. (As of September 2019, Jeffrey Hopper has agreed to be the Branch Archivist.)

Bookstore: Dawn and Mike Little, as the Bookstore Managers, would like to pass the job on to someone new. Exec will be discussing what the managers do and how Bookstore could look/function.

Pinewoods Camp: Bruce Mabbott reports that since his report at the SAGM last fall, there has been a lot happening at camp. The Executive Director, Carl, had a relatively quiet winter at camp, for which we are grateful. The Board of Directors met in March and will meet again in July.

Tree clearing has been ongoing during the off-season with the bulk of the work already performed due to a less severe winter this year. Carl and his crew are keeping a close eye out for any trees that may need attention. About 6 large trees fell over the winter, but they all fell in fortuitous directions!

Raising the roof on Newbiggin is scheduled for this upcoming fall. The design has been completed and contractor pricing is being reviewed. Since the ramp was added last year, this pavilion has gotten more attention, so PCI feels that it should have the same clearance as other pavilions.

The deck at C# will hopefully be completed before camp season starts in earnest. The work commenced, but then, there was an issue about setbacks from a vernal pool at camp. Although it is believed that formal permits and notifications are not required, PCI decided to err on the conservative side and make a submission to the local Conservation Commission. This has delayed the completion of this project, but they are hopeful that it will be completed imminently. This project will enable dancers to exit the dance pavilion and get a drink without getting their shoes dirty or getting wet if it is raining. It should hopefully also become a social gathering spot.

There are two new crew cabins in the Highlands. These are of a design similar to Money Musk and Rory O'More, which were built a few years ago near Pinecones. Crew housing has been getting tighter and tighter, so this expansion was a necessary one.

New roofs on 19 buildings (including Hunsdon House and the Bookstore) have been completed this off season. This roof work also included roof vents to try and relieve some of the summer heat. Window glazing and window painting has been completed at all cabins at camp (except for Pineneedles and Quite Carried Away (coming soon!). This work should extend the life of the windows by about 15 years.

Accessibility work is ongoing at camp. More railings have been or will be installed at cabins with two or more steps. Grab bars have been installed in all bathrooms.

New Generation Initiative (NGI) scholarships continue to provide opportunities for young adults to enjoy sessions at camp that they otherwise might not be able to afford. Hard as it is to believe, some of these scholarships go unused, so please make sure that you apply for them!

After more publicity, applications for crew positions increased from last year, and Carl felt that he had a deep enough pool of applicants to make good choices. All positions are currently filled, but volunteers are always welcome. Please contact Carl (manager@pinewoods.org) for details.

The new maintenance/caretaker, Dennis Carchedi, has proved his worth at camp already. His short commute from the end of Cornish Field Road is very helpful! He was on-hand at the work weekends, when the docks were installed, and when much work has been performed.

That is all the news from Pinewoods Camp, Inc. and enjoy any sessions you attend this summer!

Joint Ceilidh 2018: Linda McJannet and Cathy Crabtree presented their report on the Ceilidh. On November 10, 2018, the first Scottish Ceilidh jointly sponsored by the RSCDS Boston Branch and Highland Dance Boston was held at the Irish Social Club of Boston in West Roxbury, MA.

Rather than the more formal concert held annually in Lexington, the Ceilidh was an informal, family-friendly evening party, combining instrumental sets and dance performances with Ceilidh dancing for all. Music was provided by Campbell Webster and The Celtic Beats and members of the NH Pipes and Drums. Robert McOwen was performance coordinator, Karen Mahoney served as MC for the evening, Cathy Crabtree and Linda McJannet co-produced the show, while Jen Schoonover, Abbie McQuarrie, and Andy Taylor-Blenis led the social dancing.

Attendees enjoyed watching highland sets (including a “massed fling” and a Broadswords) and several country dances (including a set of dances done “old style” to mouth music performed by Jen Schoonover). A cash bar was available, and complimentary snacks, coffee, and desserts were included in the ticket price (\$10 in advance, \$15 at the door). The event was well attended but not sold out. Thanks to a grant from the NHScots Fund, we incurred only a minimal loss of \$40.10. many volunteers helped with providing food, ushering, and managing the raffle table (sometimes at short notice!). Hearty thanks to all!

As we plan for next year’s Ceilidh, the committee is applying the lessons learned from our first experiment at a different kind of “public facing” event. We are fine-tuning the timeline (including greater adherence to the start time) and rethinking ticket prices. Parcel of Rogues will provide the music next year. We are also partnering with the Scots Charitable Society, combining our event with their annual dinner in hopes of creating synergy. Attendees will have the option of two ticket prices, one including a Scottish buffet and one for the Ceilidh only.

Stay tuned and save the date: Saturday November 2, 2019!

Pinewoods Benefit Ball 2018: MaryEllen Scannell reports that the Pinewoods Ball was held in Salem at the Bridge at 211, on December 1, 2018. Music was provided by A Parcel of Rogues and dancing commenced after a gourmet Potluck supper. The Salem class teachers MC’d the dances. The event was well attended, and a check for \$1200.00 was sent to Pinewoods Camp Inc and received with grateful thanks. Thanks to all who attended for an evening of dancing & merriment that contributed to the support of Pinewoods that has become a branch tradition for over 40 years. Salem will be hosting the Pinewoods Benefit Ball again this year.

Highland Ball 2019: The Highland Ball Weekend was brought to you by Susie Petrov & MaryEllen Scannell - your bail out ball chairs. In a moment of weakness, we answered a plea via Branch email for 2019 ball chairs and got right to work! The venues for Friday & Saturday were already in place as was the band for the Ball, thanks to Exec.

Invitations, applications, programs & dance instructions were sent to all the branch classes. The webmasters facilitated multiple updates and welcoming information via branch mail and RSS feed.

We also compiled a list of teachers and class contacts between here and South Carolina and invited members of the Strathspey server (announcing Hanneke’s appearance) which resulted in attendees from California, North Carolina, Canada, New York, and New Haven, who joined our branch members from Albany to VT to Maine.

Ferreira Foods was engaged to cater the reception with whom we were all very well pleased. Great tasting food for all dietary requirements was beautifully presented and available right up to the Grand March.

We felt that the price point of \$65 worked well. The Welcome dance cost \$16 in advance and \$18 at the door. Friday night tickets paid all of the costs of Friday night’s event and contributed to the costs of Saturday night. The ball had approximately 130 attendees with 11 tickets sold at the door just in time for the Grand March. (Note: 95 of our 230 current members attended.)

The Ball weekend began with a Welcome Dance Friday evening held at The First Parish Church in Weston, MA. Music was provided by Elizabeth Anderson & Jerome Fung, with Thom Howe providing sound. Flo Hearn managed the door, Sharon Gilmour managed refreshments as well as decorations, and Leonard Webster was a great help setting up the hall. There were 7 sets on the floor for the greater part of the evening dancing to the lively program devised and MC'd by Howard Lasnik.

The main event of the weekend was held in Melrose, MA at Memorial Hall. In January, we met with the venue manager, Terry Hanley (sound), and caterer Mary Ferriera, pleasantly locking down all the details. Susie kept up communications with the band and sound. Thistle House with guest Hanneke Cassel provided an evening of lively music facilitated by sound engineer Terry Hanley. MCs for the evening were Gayle Koyanagi, Robert McOwen, and Cathy Fahey. The dancing commenced with a welcoming invitation from the chairs to walk dances as they were briefed should any couple feel the need.

Many thanks to Gregor Trinkaus-Randall for the Grand March and the MCs who kept the evening on schedule.

Sunday Brunch was hosted by Diane Lockhart with the assistance of Alex Bowers, Cathy Fahey, and Roberta Lasnik. Even as the weather drizzled away, there was plenty of food and a music session hosted by Elizabeth and Ben Anderson.

According to the preliminary numbers our treasurer Cathy Crabtree has provided, we seem to have come out in the BLACK!

Susie and I have enjoyed bringing you this year's Highland Ball. We learned a lot and have prepared additional statements and suggestions going forward to be presented to the Exec committee and TMC.

RSCDS AGM 2019: The Headquarters AGM will be in Perth on November 2, 2019. If anyone would like to be a delegate and represent the Boston Branch, please express your interest to any member of the Executive Committee.

Class Reports: Class reports were received and placed on file from Cambridge, Chelmsford, Salem, and Stow, Massachusetts, from Greenland, New Hampshire, from Brunswick, Maine, and from Fairlee, Vermont.

Other Business:

- Jeremy Thorpe thanked Jeffrey Hopper and Sue Chari for their service on the Executive Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Haines, Secretary