



RSCDS HAMILTON RANT NOVEMBER 2019



The Caledonian Canal

It's possible the first "vision" of a canal to connect the northeast highlands to the southwest Scotland originated as far back as 1620 with the Highland prophet **Brahan Seer**. Although politicians and engineers continued to campaign for the benefits of such a canal over the years, it took over 180 years for Seer's prophecy to be realised. Finally, in 1801, the Scottish civil engineer and architect, **Thomas Telford**, was commissioned to investigate the problem of emigration from the Highlands – a problem which started with the conviction of Jacobites for treason following the 1715 uprising, forcing their families to leave their Highland land and homes, and continued with the *Highland Clearances* and the "invasion of sheep farming" starting in 1750.

An excerpt from a poem about the invasion of sheep farming in the Highlands, "Song to the Foxes" by Duncan Ban Macintyre: *My blessing be upon the foxes, because that they hunt the sheep. The sheep with the brockit faces that have made confusion in all the world, turning our country to desert and putting up the rents of our lands. Now is no place left for the farmer – his livelihood is gone; Hard necessity drives him to forsake the home of his fathers. The townships and the shielings, where once hospitality dwelt, they are now nought but ruins, and there is no cultivation in the fields. There is no filly, nor mare with foal by her side. Gone too are the heifers that suckled their calves. No need is there of dairymaids, for every fold is broken and scattered. No lad can earn a wage save only the shepherd of the sheep. The good useful goats, they too are gone.....*

In 1802, Telford published his initial report suggesting the depression in the Highlands could be (partially) alleviated by building a series of roads, bridges and canals – which would provide jobs for people displaced by sheep farming and stimulate industry, fisheries and agriculture by providing a safe, sheltered passageway from Inverness to Oban, protecting ships from violent Atlantic and North Sea weather and attacks from French privateers or pirates.

The government hired Telford to construct the canal. Thomas Telford and William Jessop's final report estimated the canal would take seven years to build at an estimated cost of £474,000. The government agreed to fund the project.

Construction started in 1803 and was finished and officially opened in 1822 – 12 years over-schedule, with a final price tag of £910,000 – almost double the estimated cost.

The canal runs for 60 miles, but only one third is man-made. To put the construction more into perspective, it took 19 years to build 20 miles of canal. The man-made portions connect Loch Dochfour, Loch Ness, Loch Oich and Loch Lochy. There is a total of 29 locks, four aqueducts and 10 bridges making up the length of the canal. Each lock raises or lowers boats by 8 feet. Depending on the distance/drop between the lochs, some locks are single locks, others consist of 4 or 5 locks, and the largest, called "Neptune's Staircase", is located at the village of Banavie and consists of 8 separate locks. It's a quarter mile long and takes about 90 minutes to traverse. The locks are all automated today, but think about this – they were all hand-powered when built.

Annette Sabourin and Lynn Taplay sailed through the Caledonian Canal in October this year, embarking on *The Lord of the Glens* in Inverness on September 29th and disembarking in Oban on October 4th. The cruise travelled 21 of the 29 locks.



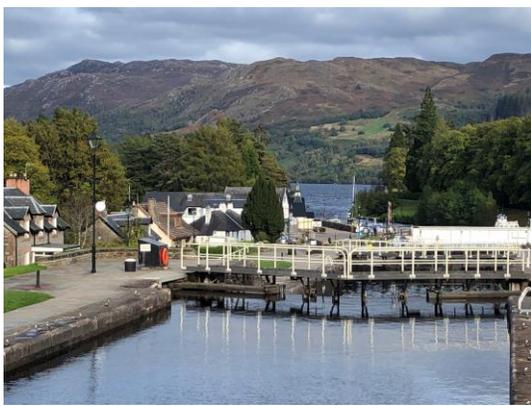
Lord of the Glens at Corpach



Aerial view of Neptune's Staircase



Entering Neptune's Staircase



Lock at Fort Augustus



Enjoying the sunshine on deck...again...



Passing Urquhart Castle ruins in Loch Ness



Tobermory on the Isle of Mull

The canal is no longer an option for the bigger, more sea-worthy ships of today. But the benefits of commerce have been replaced by the benefits of tourism. There was no such thing as "tourism" in Telford's time, but tourism dollars now account for the financial success of the Caledonian Canal as well as providing a huge boost to all the towns along the canal.



Friendships Beyond the Dance Floor in this issue is called: **Stars on Ice!**

Add toques, scarves, hats, coats AND skates, and these dancers are hard to recognize off the dance floor! But you can recognize SMILES of having fun! Our **stars on ice** are Maureen Isnor, Heather Pate, Annette Sabourin, Diana McKenzie and Maureen O'Donnell.



Heather and Maureen Isnor have been skating together for about 10 years. Their rink of choice is the St. George arena, where they get together to skate most Wednesdays from 1-3 pm. Other dancers that have joined Heather and Maureen on occasion are (pictured), Diana, Annette, Maureen, as well as Alexis Hayes, Hugh Morrison, Jim Pate and Mike Isnor, all of whom have know how to skate to some extent. I asked Diana about *"the blue helmet"* she's sporting in these photos – why not a toque? And here is her story... It had been many years since she had skated when she first went out with this group and she fell 9 times that day! So, she decided a helmet might be a good idea before she hurt herself. **THE END.**

When we were kids, girls were given "figure skates" and boys were given "hockey skates" and that's how we learned to skate. It's interesting that, as an adult, Heather was given "hockey skates" instead of figure skates, she kept them and that's what she still skates in. Regardless of style, the sometimes-skaters say that Heather and Maureen are "very good!" and "very fast!". Just like SCD...getting good takes practice!

During the winter they do skate on outside rinks from time to time, such as Waterdown and NOTL. If you would like to dust off your skates and join in on the winter fun, you can contact any of these fellow dancers.



Well...maybe **FUTURE Stars on Ice?!**

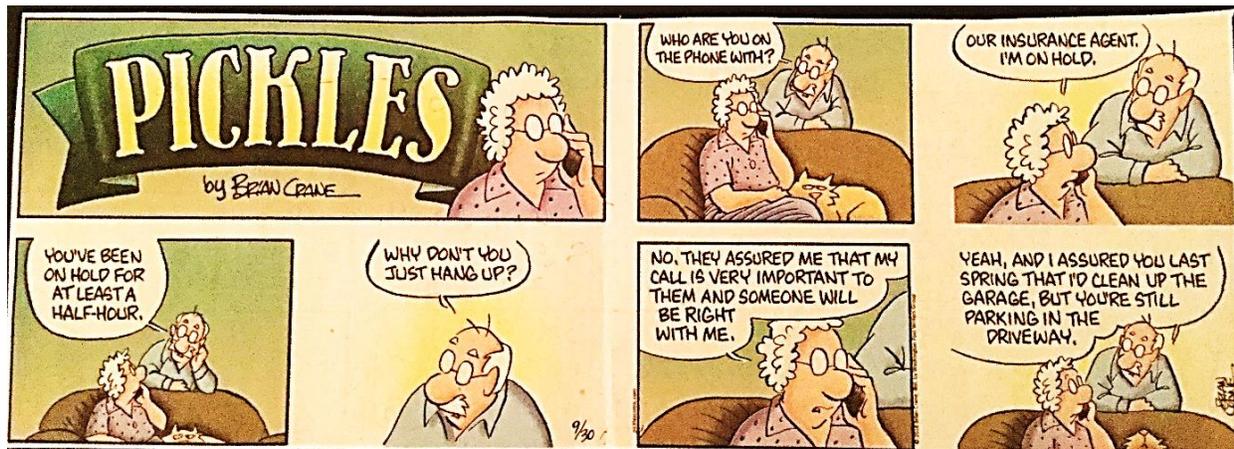
A FRIENDSHIPS BEYOND THE DANCE FLOOR follow up:

In the January 2019 Rant “Friendships Beyond the Dance Floor” was called “*The French Connection*” and introduced a group of dancers who started getting together, socially, just to speak French together and improve their French skills. The original group consisted of Diana McKenzie, Heather Pate, Brenda Bjarnason and Lisa Morelli. As a result of the article, the group has increased in size from 4 to 8! Joining the group are Charlie & Wilma Atkinson, Anne Harrison and Alanna Balcain. Not everyone can make every week so the increased size has help to avoid cancelations. They typically meet Tuesday mornings at either William’s Coffee Pub in Stoney Creek or Taylor’s in Dundas. Not only does Alanna make an effort to take time off work to join the informal group on Tuesdays, but she became so keen on improving her French that she now takes night classes as well.



This photo was taken of a very relaxing get together on Charlie & Wilma’s patio. If anyone else is interested in joining them, you can contact Diana or Heather for more info. The group feels the-more-the-merrier, plus the more participants, the more varied the topics and the quality of their French.

JUST FOR



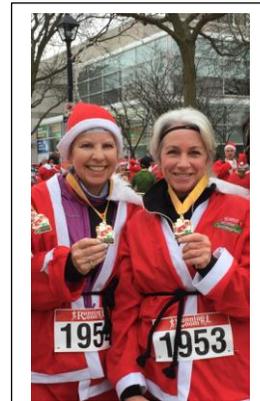
FUN

Have some extra ENERGY??

How about joining the 2019 Burlington 5k Santa run/walk – *just for fun*, like Andy Fallas, Heather Pate & Maureen O’Donnell have done in the past! This year’s event will be held on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 starting at 8:55 am – that gives you LOTS of time to rest up for the Hamilton Branch Christmas dance that night! Everyone that runs **must** wear a Santa suit, which is included in the registration cost. That would make it a whole lot of fun to just watch, too.

Here is the link with all the details.

http://www.santa5k.ca/site-ontario1/Santa_Burlington.html



Since first meeting Pierre at SCD class, I've often wondered how a person with such a French name had such a Scottish accent and looked so at home in a kilt? I was too polite to ask, but now I know!

Did you know...

THE COTTAGE, AUCHINLECK – PART 1

By Pierre Arnold

There is a cottage built of sandstone up to 2ft thick in places with a slate roof. It was set into the wall of the walled-garden about 1765-68 - all part of magnificent plans to beautify **Dumfries House Estate, Ayrshire**. I lived in that cottage from birth until 1954. The cottage was known locally as the garden **bothy**. The cottage with walled-garden is closer to Auchinleck than it is to the estate's address of Cumnock, Ayrshire.

In 1786, John Kennedy, the estate manager (factor) lived in the bothy and he met Robert Burns. Burns must have been quite friendly with Kennedy at a time when the poet was engaged in preparing his poems for publication for the Kilmarnock edition. Kennedy received a copy of "the Cottar's Saturday Night" along with lines titled "To John Kennedy" and inviting him to have a drink with the poet should he ever come in "by Mauchline Corse (cross)". That's was actually a tall order at the time. In 1954, I cycled from the bothy to Mauchline with my cycling buddy. That was a tough 5 miles one way there and back on tarmac roads. Imagine what it would be like on horseback in 1768. John Kennedy subscribed to 20 copies of the Kilmarnock edition.

The Marchioness of Bute, Lady Dumfries, **Eileen Beatrice Forbes**, married the 5th Marquess of Bute in 1932. Soon after, she travelled to Paris looking for a Chef to manage the kitchen at Dumfries House (the Big House). My father was chosen. In 1935 my father, mother, older brother and sister moved from France to Dumfries House. Later in 1935 or 1936 the Arnold family moved from the big house to the bothy. In 1939, my father went to war in France. He received compassionate leave in February 1940 to see me and hold me a few weeks after I was born. He went back to camp in France and never came back.

In 1941 my aunt who was also soon to be widowed came to live with the Arnold family at the bothy. My aunt and her three children stayed with us until 1949. During this time, we, the children, had the run of the estate, its farm, fields, farm animals, wild animals, birds, woods, wild flowers, sawmill, and a river for fishing, swimming, and rafting.

The bothy was in sight of the Barony Coal Tip, the deepest mine in the 1940s, also in sight was Pennylands Military Camp which housed many training missions including French Paratroopers, Canadians, Irish, and Americans. Pennylands became a POW camp guarded by British and Polish guards. Many POWs were not repatriated until 1947. There's many a story about all of the above. The experiences growing up during wartime and after were character forming and ties you forever to the wonderful memories of a place you can still call home.



In this painting by my cousin Christopher Robin Goodfellow shows how the Bothy looked like when we lived there. On the left on top of the wall, you can see the barbed wire to stop the POWs from escaping when they worked in the garden. Also, see the cowshed and a 300-year-old sycamore tree above the cowshed roof. See the old out-house which was not in use in my time. See the clothes on the line to dry – no electricity in those days. To the left, a giant sequoia towers above all else.

Dumfries House is one of Britain's most significant country houses - a mansion designed by the Adam brothers for the 5th Earl of Dumfries. (Earl ranks below a Marquess). The house has a collection of furniture including priceless Chippendale and artworks. I was introduced to the artworks by my mother who worked at the "big house" when I was 8 and again when I was 12. I remember well a few paintings of Reubens and Raeburn. In April 2007, a bothy neighbour sent me news that all of Dumfries House estate was to be sold off privately.

THE COTTAGE, AUCHINLECK, continued

The house and 2,000 acres were put on the market by its owner, the 7th Marquess of Bute – the Formula 1 racing driver Johnny Dumfries – after an initial approach to the National Trust for Scotland came to nothing. As for Johnny, how much of his ancestral inheritance did he blow on motor racing? How many masterpieces did he sell on the fly? (on the fly – Scottish for on the QT)

When I heard the news of the sale I was deeply saddened and depressed. The thoughts were that the bothy, walled garden, and old haunts would be demolished; other than the big house nothing would be recognizable as it was. This was topped by the latest news that the contents of Dumfries House including priceless Chippendale and master paintings were packed and on the road to Sotheby's and Christie's for auction in London.



In 2006, I visited the Bothy and estate and got quite a shock to find that the estate was in disrepair and there were rumours that everything was going to get sold and some of the farmland would be made into a golf course. Here's what the bothy looked like, a derelict cottage going to ruin.

A note related to SCD... On the program for the October White Cockade there was a dance named Lady Dumfries, the recommended tune for that dance is also called Lady Dumfries. There is no claim to author of either dance or tune. I suspect both originated in the 1800s, possibly earlier.

Then, incredibly, at the October dance, Jean Noble showed me a message on her iPhone from her husband in Scotland. Part of the message displayed, "I visited Dumfries House today".

Watch for [Part 2 of Pierre's story in a future Rant.](#)



Scottish Quiz

1. Who was the 5th Marquess of Bute?
2. How old was Robbie Burns when he died?
3. What is Mons Meg?
4. Which is the largest Loch in Scotland? (*Trick question...*)
5. Where and when was Thomas Telford born?



This Roving Reporter! heard from branch members telling us “Where *THEY* danced Scottish this year”.

Diana McKenzie danced Scottish while vacationing in Ireland in May.
Maureen and Mike Isnor danced Scottish while vacationing in England in September.

Dancing in Ireland, from Diana

When my husband, Rick, and I decided that we would be visiting Ireland, I thought, “Wouldn’t it be COOL to go to a class or dance in another country?”

I checked the “Branch & Group Finder” on the RSCDS website and sure enough, there were eight RSCDS branches in Northern Ireland and another two in Ireland. I emailed the Branch secretaries of groups near where we were travelling. Everyone responded, but only one opportunity was a possible fit – the **Fermanagh Scottish Country Dancers**, who said I was welcome to attend their class. I had to “tweak” our itinerary to make it work. “Tweaking” meant a longer drive the following day, but for dancing, it would be worth it!

The teacher, Rita, asked if I had any favourite dances she might include in the programme for the evening. How kind! I thanked her and suggested a couple of dances that I considered “Canadian” and I knew I felt comfortable dancing—Saint John River and Itchy Feet.

The evening finally arrived and Rick came with me to keep me company on the drive and to take photos. There were about twenty people in the class, including both experienced and newer dancers. We started with an easy *Virginia Reel*. Next was “*Dancing Bees*”. The first half also included *Saint John River* and *Orchards of Armagh* (written by a member of the Belfast Branch). During the second half of the class, Rita taught *Itchy Feet*. Many in the class had not done the set and link formation before, so it was challenging, but we all got through it!

The class time was from 8:00 to 10:00 with a tea break. The “tea break” included tea, coffee, cookies, scones, and a variety of other yummy desserts! I contributed some maple candies I had taken with me. During the break, Rita again welcomed me and gave me a gift—a book of dances written for the 70th anniversary of the Belfast branch, and the CD to go with it. One of the dances included was “*Orchards of Armagh*”, which we had done in the first half of the evening. She suggested that each member of the class might sign the book, which was the perfect opportunity for me to give out the pens with Canadian flags that I had also brought as gifts! Each of the people I met was very kind and welcoming and I would love to join them again when I return!



Rosie (Branch Secretary), Diana & Rita



Dancing in Ireland, continued



Dancing in England, from Maureen

While Mike and I were travelling in England in September this year, we took the opportunity to dance with two Scottish Country Dance groups in **Charminster** and **Weymouth, Dorset**. While this was the second time that I have danced overseas, it was the first time for Mike, and he really enjoyed the experience. We were given a very warm welcome.

During each evening, the program consisted of ten dances, with a well-organized Tea Break midway, all done within two hours. Both groups are taught by two or three teachers, each taking their turn during the evening to brief the dances. Mike and I were familiar with several of the dances, such as, *Old Nick's Lumber Room*, *Minister on the Lock*, *Capital Jig*, *The Hollin Bus*, *Wild Geese*, *The Chequered Court* and *Hooper's Jig*, and we were treated to some unfamiliar dances. In addition, one of the teachers gave me a dance that she recently devised. It was inspired by the common experience that occurs when we attend dances which include buffet style food tables. It's called, "*The Supper Dance*", by Val Braithwaite.

We were also invited to join them in Somerset for their Annual Weekend. Unfortunately, we were flying home then, but we left having made new acquaintances with others who share the enjoyment of Scottish Country Dancing.



Upcoming Events



YOUR CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS DANCE PLANNER AT A GLANCE

More details below or on websites shown

TORONTO	Friday, December 6, 2019	http://www.dancescottish.ca/Whats-On-Near.html
HAMILTON	Saturday, December 7, 2019	https://www.rcdshamilton.org/events
ST. CATHARINES	Saturday, December 14, 2019	http://www.rcdsstcatharines.ca/upcoming-events
KITCHENER/WATERLOO	Saturday, December 14, 2019	http://www.rcds.kitchener.on.ca/

AULD YEAR'S DANCE

WHITE COCKADE	Saturday, December 28, 2019	https://whitecockade.webs.com
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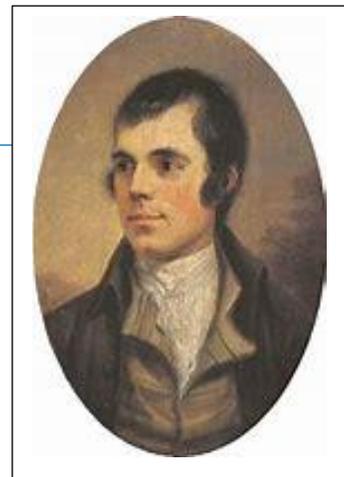
HOGMANNAY

ST. CATHARINES	Tuesday, December 31, 2019	http://www.rcdsstcatharines.ca/upcoming-events
LONDON	Tuesday, December 31, 2019	http://www.rcdslondoncanada.org/events/events.html
TORONTO	Tuesday, December 31, 2019	http://www.dancescottish.ca/Whats-On-Near.html
<i>Glenview's Hogmanay Dance and Ceilidh</i>		
KINGSTON	Tuesday, December 31, 2019	http://www.rcdskingston.org/

DANCE PLANNER FOR ROBBIE BURNS CELEBRATIONS

More information on websites

OAKVILLE	Saturday, January 25, 2020	http://www.oscdg.ca/events.html
KITCHENER/WATERLOO	Saturday, January 25, 2020	http://www.rcds.kitchener.on.ca/
BUFFALO	Saturday, January 25, 2020	http://www.rcdsbuffalo.com/burns.html
KINGSTON	Saturday, January 25, 2020	http://www.rcdskingston.org/



Upcoming Events

For more information on all events listed below, please go to the Hamilton Branch website at: www.rscdshamilton.org. **Events**
Our branch website contains programs, information and registrations for all Hamilton events, as well as website links for other area branches and events.

HAMILTON BRANCH

LAST WEEK OF CLASSES BEFORE CHRISTMAS BREAK: WEEK OF DECEMBER 9TH **SPRING CLASSES BEGIN: WEEK OF JANUARY 6, 2020**

Event: Hamilton Branch Christmas Dance

When: **Saturday, December 7, 2019**
Time: 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm
Where: MacNab Presbyterian Church, 116 MacNab Street, S. Hamilton
Cost: Dancers \$30.00 / Non-Dancers \$10.00
Music: Laird and Dan
For tickets: Available in class or through Diana McKenzie



Event: Betwixt & Between Tea Dance

The annual Hamilton/St. Catharines/Grimsby afternoon tea Dance

When: **Saturday, February 1, 2020 – 1:30 to 4:30**
Where: Livingston Activity Centre, Grimsby, Ontario
Music by: Don Bartlett
For tickets: Available in class

Event: Friday Evening Social Dances will resume in February

When: **Friday, February 28, 2020**
Friday, March 27, 2020
Time: 7:30 to 9:30 pm
Where: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 19 Pearl St N, Hamilton
Cost: \$5.00 at the door – All levels welcome.

SAVE THE DATE!

Event: John Middleton Ball

When: **Saturday, April 4, 2020**

Upcoming Events

IN THE SURROUNDING AREA

ST. CATHARINES

Event: **Christmas Dance**

When: **Saturday, December 14, 2019**

Time: 8:00 pm

Where: Parish Hall, St. Columba Anglican Church, 7 St. Columba Drive, St. Catharines, Ontario

Music by: Don Bartlett & the Scottish Heirs

More Info: <http://www.rscdsstcatharines.ca/upcoming-events>

Event: **New Years Dance**

When: **Saturday, December 31, 2019**

Time: 8:30 – 11:30 pm

Where: Parish Hall, St. Columba Anglican Church, 7 St. Columba Drive, St. Catharines, Ontario

More Info: <http://www.rscdsstcatharines.ca/upcoming-events>

OAKVILLE

Event: **Burns Night Dinner & Dance**

When: **Saturday, January 25, 2020**

Time: Cocktails at 6:30, Address to the Haggis 7:00, Dinner 7:15,

Where: Bronte Legion, 76 Jones Street, Oakville

More Info: Tickets \$25. From: [Susan Eadie](mailto:susan.eadie@brontelegion.com) 905-827-8350 or [Alicia Manson](mailto:alicia.manson@brontelegion.com) 905-849-7180

TORONTO

Event: **The 57th Tartan Ball**

When: **Saturday, February 15, 2020**

Where: The Old Mill Inn Toronto, 21 Old Mill Road, Toronto (Brulé Ballroom)

More Info: http://www.dancescottish.ca/tartan_ball.html

WHITE COCKADE SOCIAL DANCES For more info: <https://whitecockade.webs.com/>

Event: **White Cockade Auld Year's Dance**

When: **Saturday, December 28, 2019 – “Best of the Bands”**

Time: 8:00 pm to 11:00 pm

Where: MacNab Presbyterian Church, 116 MacNab Street, S. Hamilton

Cost: WC Members \$10.00 / Non-Members \$15.00 / Non-Dancers \$5.00

For tickets: Advance tickets needed for this dance. Avail in class or through Alexis Hayes

Event: **White Cockade Monthly Dance**

When: **Saturday, January 18, 2020 – Afternoon Tea Dance**

Saturday, February 15, 2020 – Afternoon Tea Dance

Time: 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Where: Delta United Church, 47 Ottawa Street S., Hamilton

Cost: WC Members \$5.00 / Non-Members \$10.00/non-members at the door

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BRANCH CHAIR

Hello Everyone,

An unexpected blast of winter has reminded us that we are moving quickly through the year. Summer and Dancing on the Dock seemed a recent memory just a few weeks ago and now here we are approaching the Christmas season. Wrap up warmly and look forward to all the events we have arranged for your dancing pleasure.

The Committee of Management meets regularly to organise dancing opportunities for you. These fine volunteers give up a lot of their time to arrange Friday evening dances, Workshops, social events and the John Middleton Ball. Some work quietly on their own and others are involved in sub-committees to beaver away and plan and coordinate a myriad of details from advertising to food that culminate in the final event. The friendships and team spirit that develop as events are organised is a marvellous thing. When functions run smoothly, we are delighted that no loose edges showed. If things are less than perfect then please consider volunteering your services to help with planning the next event.

Our membership is strong but in need of reinforcement from new members. We are constantly looking for ways to increase our membership and your help with this is much appreciated. Please consider spreading the word to your friends and neighbours and bringing them to some of our functions, even as observers. If you like Scottish Country Dancing there is a good chance they will enjoy it too.

We are a dancing organisation so if I don't ask you first, then please ask me to dance with you – it will be my pleasure. I'm looking forward to seeing you on the dance floor.

Ian Manson
Branch Chairman

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR RANT COMMITTEE

I'm sad to announce that John Walton recently retired as our Rant Editor. It was John who wanted to see the Rant revived, proposed the idea and made it happen. I never did find out why he asked me to be the other half of the Rant Committee, but between the two of us, we came up with a plan and a design – and we worked well together from the start. I will miss John's contribution and input.

The Branch Committee of Management want to continue with the Rant as the Branch Newsletter so I will be taking over as Editor.

You're never quite sure, with an electronic distribution, how many members really read what is sent out, but I was rewarded when I heard that the French class doubled in size after an article in the Rant. And, I hope you noticed, that all of the articles in this edition are contributions from members. So, I am very encouraged to continue.

Thank you to those who sent pictures and articles – your input makes reading the newsletter more personal – and more fun. I have kept all contributions and if you haven't seen yours yet, you will.

As always, your comments and input are appreciated. The next Rant will be published in January 2020.

Sincerely,
Your Rant Editor, Lynn Taplay

Quiz Answers

1. **John Crichton-Stuart** is the 5th Marquess of Bute
2. 37
3. The cannon at Edinburgh Castle
4. Loch Lomond has the largest surface area, Loch Ness is the largest by volume, Loch Morar is the deepest.
5. August 9, 1757 · Langholm, Scotland



The 5th Marquess of Bute