



The Cumbrae Islands

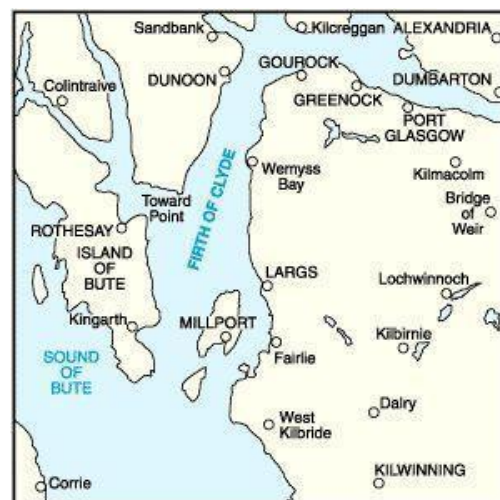
RSCDS HAMILTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER "THE RANT" JANUARY 2019 EDITION

A WEE STORY ABOUT THE CUMBRAE ISLANDS IN SCOTLAND

By John Walton

Rising out of the Firth of Clyde are two small islands known as the **Cumbraes**. The smaller of the two islands has a lighthouse and one dwelling and is known as '**Wee Cumbrae**'. The other island is called '**Great Cumbrae**' and the only town on this island is **Millport**, with a population of about 1,000 people.

In the 20th Century, Cumbrae was a major holiday destination for the people of Glasgow and surrounding area as it could be easily reached by a very pleasant ferry crossing in two to three hours from several of the various Clyde starting points. The most famous ferry boats cruising the Firth of Clyde, was, and still is, the paddle steamer, the '**PS Waverley**'. What a delight it was to be on the crowded deck of the ferry boat, eating an ice cream and listening to the wandering Scottish musicians playing all the old Scottish favourites as they crossed to their holiday destination. It really created the perfect atmosphere for a vacation in Scotland.



Alas, the popularity of the Cumbraes is no more, as the attraction of the Costa del Sol, Ibiza and Majorca and other more exotic and sunnier climes have taken most of the holiday makers away, but the island continues to thrive and there is nothing more pleasing than to hire a bicycle and pedal the eleven miles around the island enjoying the view. Cycling around the island presents perhaps one of the finest views in the British Isles as you look across the waters of the Firth to gaze upon the **Sleeping Warrior on Arran**, the **Isle of Bute** and the beautiful mountains on **Kintyre**. If you are lucky you may see a U.S. submarine wending its way to the American base on the **Holy Loch** or even a cruise ship plying the Clyde waters as it heads towards Glasgow. Seals basking on the rocks are a common sight and of course there are many yachts battling the offshore breezes.

My personal story of Millport is about Scottish Country Dancing. In 2003 I went to a SCD class in Millport run by enthusiastic local ladies who did not have a teacher nor much in the way of dance instruction books and CDs – and were further handicapped by the fact that the ferry to the island stops running at 8 pm.



I determined that they would like to be better organized and would prefer to have a certificated teacher. To this end, I contacted Headquarters in Edinburgh and set the wheels in motion for them to obtain instruction books and to take steps to have one of their number become a teacher.

Things turned out very well. They now have a fully qualified teacher and are members of the RSCDS, they run workshops and week-ends with many of the finest Scottish teachers and dance bands taking part. As you can see, this tiny group has flourished in the past 15 years and is a popular location for their Annual Week-end in May. It is heartwarming to know that Hamilton, Ontario has contributed in a small way to their success.



Millport Harbor



Lighthouse on Little Cumbrae



PS Waverly Paddle Steamer

P.S. The ferry still stops running at 8:00 pm every day.

Does shivering count
as exercise?



*The Rant Committee and your Committee of Management wish
everyone a happy and healthy 2019!*

After an unseasonably mild December, there seems to be lots of groaning and shivering when the mercury has dropped below 0 Celsius in January, and I wonder what we're going to do when winter actually does arrive, as it inevitably will! Soon.

Shivering is not an exercise, Maxine. But Scottish Country Dancing is! And guaranteed to warm you up in a mere 32 bars!

Here is a message from our Chairman, Ian Manson, with some insight into how the COM keeps the Branch working – and you dancing and warm this winter!

Hello Fellow Dancers and Happy New Year.

How has time passed by so swiftly?! Our AGM was in April 2018 and we cheered as the weather improved and we looked to outdoor activities and now here we are back into the winter doldrums again! It's always more difficult to force ourselves to come to classes and dance events when we have to get into a cold car, but I'm sure, like me, you love SCD and have developed a circle of friends that you look forward to seeing every week and have become part of your social circle.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about your Committee of Management (COM).

Your Committee of Management devotes considerable time and energy to arranging all kinds of events for you within the Branch. This enables all our members to maximize their dancing enjoyment and improve their dancing skills – there is always room for improvement! Branch events don't happen by magic but are as a result of careful planning and organization. *Operating smoothly is up to the organizers, operating successfully is up to our members.*

Our membership is the primary source of both dancers and organizers. I hope all members know that the COM is not an exclusive group of self-interested dancers but, rather, volunteers. Everyone on the COM has an important role in maintaining stability, coming up with positive ideas for Branch events, planning ahead, and then making sure all events run seamlessly. New COM members work together with more experienced members as they learn the ropes.

In the past, it has typically been the same core of members that willingly step up to help run the branch. In 2018 several new members volunteered and we would LOVE to continue that trend and have more participation from members who have not been on the committee before. All you need is an interest in improving all aspects of the Hamilton Branch for the benefit of members and the desire to be part of the belief that SCD can and should continue. It does require a willingness to both help and be active in making things happen – and have fun. Please consider joining these active volunteers. We welcome your new ideas and your energy! The Branch is its membership and we would be delighted to have as many people as possible expressing an interest in becoming COM members. I will be very happy to talk to any members about the workings of the COM.

Note that, at your first opportunity to go to a social event this season and you see me there, if I don't ask you to dance then please ask me – I love dancing.

My best wishes to you all.

Ian Manson

The magnificent photo, or image below, was created by Rick McKenzie specially for the Hamilton Branch. Rick is the husband of Diana McKenzie, our Branch Secretary. He has attended many dance events with Diana and taken many photos for our use in the Rant and on our website. Of course, he also visits with dancers and friends he has made over the years at these events, but Rick himself is a non-dancer – which is very fortunate for us, as he focuses on his love of photography and we focus on our love of SCD!

The image below is another amazing example of Rick's talent and support of Diana's hobby – and our passion. Rick created this image using a night photo of Dundurn Castle, superimposing five photos he had taken at our 1867 dance, then, he turned the lights on inside the castle using Photoshop.

Diana, please extend our many **THANK YOU'S** to Rick for his time, thoughtfulness and creativity!



Friendships Beyond the Dance Floor in this issue is called: *The French Connection*

Parles vous français? Four Hamilton dancers realized they either spoke French or wanted to speak French and formed a group *beyond the dance floor* to pursue this common interest. They are **Diana McKenzie, Heather Pate, Brenda Bjarnason and Lisa Morelli**. And here is their story...

This is an unusual common interest. How and why did this group start?

We were at Dundurn Castle for a dance presentation in July 2017. Another group with a kiosk at the event was a French school. Diana went over to ask some questions, because she was teaching French classes at the time. Heather was there and when she learned that Diana taught French, she said that she wanted to improve her French and to learn more. Lisa and Brenda were there and they said that they could speak French too. So, we started to speak French together a little after that and then decided to organize meetings during which we would speak French.

Where do you meet and what do you talk about?

We meet at each other's homes or at local cafes that are convenient to all. We try to speak only in French. We talk about anything--our families, films, dance classes, lots of things. When someone doesn't know how to say something, we try to help the person. Sometimes we have to look in a dictionary.

Did you all speak French to begin with and who in the group speaks the best French and why?

Heather reads French very well, but she didn't speak it as well. Lisa speaks French well and her daughter went to a French school, and also went to a school in France. Brenda lived in Quebec and speaks the language very well too. Diana taught French, but to small children and there are a lot of words that she didn't know. Brenda is the most fluent because she lived in Quebec. She also speaks it the most quickly. Heather said because she is the weakest, she is learning the most!

They eagerly welcome anyone else who would like to join them! You can reach out to any one of them.

The French Connection...

Friendships on the dance floor...and beyond



Diana, Brenda, Lisa



Heather



Fun facts about our fair city

Did you know...

Instead of Hamilton being called 'The Steel City', as it is most often referred to, it would be more appropriate to be named '**The Waterfall Capital of Canada**'. For our city may be the only place in the world that can claim to have more than 100 waterfalls within its city boundaries!

To name a few of the more commonly known or visited, starting in the east we have the spectacular **Devil's Punchbowl Falls** in Stoney Creek, as well as **Albion Falls**. To the west, **Webster Falls** and **Tews Falls** can be found in the Dundas neighbourhood of Greensville. **Tiffany Falls** is off Wilson Street in Ancaster and in between there are numerous other falls of varying shapes and sizes, many of them accessible to the general public, although there are quite a number on private property.

This situation exists because Hamilton sits above and below the Niagara Escarpment and the water drainage from the higher ground to the lower creates the waterfalls. **Niagara Falls** being the most famous example of this situation.

Sometimes we forget what wonderful gifts of nature are in our own backyard! We are unique and fortunate in being able to visit many of these falls, from the rushing shimmering torrents in the spring to the glistening sculptured ice formations in the depth of winter. Maybe 2019 is the year to do a bit of research and plan a day trip to see some of the many Hamilton area falls yourself – for the first time, or again. Here is one internet link.

<https://escarpmentproject.ca/2016/01/top-10-hamilton-waterfalls/>



JUST FOR FUN

Scottish Quiz

1. Where was the notorious pirate Captain Kidd born?
2. Where was Sean Connery born?
3. What was his first James Bond film?
4. Which two-time Oscar winner was born in Aberfeldy and had roles in 'Birth of a Nation' and 'National Velvet'?
5. Which actor, born in Kirriemuir, was considered to be the ideal Englishman?



Still with the topic, *“Where did YOU travel to, to dance Scottish??”*, the *Roving Reporter* reports on Hamilton dancers *J’Ina Middleton and Cate Reid* who travelled to the *52nd Annual Kingston Workshop & Ball, November 2 to 4, 2018*

Q: How long was the drive?

A: Just 3 hours

Q: Where in Kingston did you stay?

A: Thrift Lodge. A bank of rooms was set aside at a reasonable price and many of the out-of-towners stayed there. The drive to the venues was about 10 mins. We had an after-party in the party room.

Q: Where was the dancing held?

A: 2 locations: The classes were at Frontenac Secondary School – a very big gym and a smaller gym. The Ball and dinner at Royal Kingston Curling Club.

Q: Did you do anything else while there?

A: Kingston is a really nice city! Good restaurants and shopping. We shopped one afternoon and had dinner at Stephan’s restaurant next to the hotel on the Friday night. On Sunday after class, there were 3 local dancers who hosted lunch at their homes. You sign up for the location most convenient for leaving to return home. The food was provided by many members of the Kingston Branch. They make an impressive effort are very welcoming to everyone.

Q: Would you recommend this weekend to other dancers? And why?

A: Absolutely!
It’s a well-run workshop at a great location and always good fun!

Q: What was the high-light of the weekend?

A: I think the luncheon on the Sunday is special! It’s definitely a “whole branch” effort. There’s nothing negative to say (about the weekend). I loved the whole event.

Q: What would you say to encourage other dancers to try other locations?

A: The more you go, the more friends you make! Then you really look forward to seeing them again. Teachers are always a draw for me too. Try to go with others from your branch. We treat it as a mini getaway; enjoy the drive, eat out, shop, see parts of the city, and, of course, party! There’s usually some free time built in. Most weekends offer dance walk-throughs for the ball too. Kingston is one of my faves!

Hamilton Christmas Dance, Saturday December 1, 2018

Photos courtesy of Diana McKenzie



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Hamilton dancers at the St. Catharines Christmas Dance, Saturday, December 8th

Photos courtesy of Paul Lafrance



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.

DANCE PLANNER FOR ROBBIE BURNS CELEBRATIONS

OTTAWA	Saturday, January 19, 2019	www.eventbrite.ca/e/gala-burns-supper-ceilidh-tickets-47145805373
LONDON	Friday, January 25, 2019	http://www.rscdslondoncanada.org/events/events.html
OAKVILLE	Saturday, January 26, 2019	http://www.oscdg.ca/events.html
BUFFALO	Saturday, January 26, 2019	http://www.rscdsbuffalo.com/burns.html
KINGSTON	Saturday, January 26, 2019	www.rscdskingston.org/



HAMILTON BRANCH

WINTER CLASSES BEGIN WEEK OF JANUARY 7 AND END WEEK OF APRIL 22

Event: Betwixt & Between Tea Dance

When: Saturday, February 2, 2019

Time: 1:30 to 4:30 pm

Where: Livingston Activity Centre, 18 Livingston Ave., Grimsby

Live Music! By Don Bartlett

This successful joint dance put on by St. Catharines, Grimsby and Hamilton branches is a great afternoon of dance! Tickets available through all branches.

Event: Friday Evening Social Dance

When: Friday, February 22, 2019 and March 22, 2019

Time: 7:30 to 9:30 pm

Where: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 19 Pearl St N, Hamilton

Cost: \$5.00 at the door

Event: John Middleton Dinner and Ball

When: Saturday, April 6, 2019

Time: 6:00 Welcome

Where: Scottish Rite Hamilton

Live Music by: Scotch Mist

Also called *The Blue Sapphire Ball* in honour of the Branch's 65 annual ball! A special celebration not to be missed!

Registration forms available at classes, or through Kathleen Noble, J'ina Middleton or Fiona Stewart or on the website.

Save the Date!

For: A brand new Hamilton Branch Event, "The Summer Solstice Strawberry Social"!

When: Saturday, June 22, 2019 (To be confirmed)

Stay tuned for more information in class, on our website and in the April Rant.

The committee for this *delicious* event is looking for volunteers to help make it a success and lots of fun! Contact Diana McKenzie or Ian Manson.

Upcoming Events

IN THE SURROUNDING AREA

ST. CATHARINES

Event: **Valentine's Social Night**

When: Tuesday, February 12, 2019

Where: Robertson Hall, 85 Church Street, St. Catharines Ont.

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

TORONTO

Event: **The 56th Tartan Ball**

When: Saturday, February 16, 2019

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

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

This is the new home for the Tartan Ball. There is an attached Boutique Hotel/Inn. www.oldmilltoronto.com

LONDON

Event: **Workshop & Tea Dance**

When: Saturday, February 23, 2019 9:00 am

Where: Polish Combatants Association Hall, London, Ont.

More Info: <http://www.rscdslondoncanada.org/events/events.html>

BELLEVILLE

Event: **Workshop and Ball**

When: March 1 to 3, 2019

Where: Masonic Tempt, Foster Street, Belleville, Ont.

Teacher: Atsuko Clement, RSCDS Edinburgh

More Info: David Aston at David.aston@kos.net or <http://www.rscdskingston.org/>

BLAIR

Event: **Blair Spring Dance**

When: Saturday, March 23, 2019 (Flyer shows Saturday, March 24th?)

Where: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 137 Queen Street, Kitchener, Ont.

Cost: \$10.00 per ticket, with light refreshments served

More Info: klecocq@gmail.com or www.blairscottishcountrydancers.ca

OTTAWA

Event: **53 Annual Ball**

When: Saturday, April 13, 2019

Where: Ottawa Conference and Events Centre

Music By: 5 piece Torridon Scottish Dance Band

More Info: wtmoxley101@hotmail.com or <https://rscdsottawa.ca/>

Upcoming Events

WHITE COCKADE SOCIAL DANCES

Event: **Whitecockade Monthly Dances**

When: **Saturdays, January 19, February 16, March 16, 2019**

Time: 8:00 pm to 11:00 pm

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

Cost: \$5.00/members, \$10.00/non-members at the door

<https://whitecockade.webs.com/>

Quiz Answers:

1. Greenock
2. Edinburgh
3. Dr. No
4. Donald Pleasance
5. David Niven

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR RANT COMMITTEE

Out of Town Events:

We like to share our member's memories and stories of dance events that they travelled outside of Hamilton to attend. In the Rant we try to provide a varied and good mix in **UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE SURROUNDING AREA** for those interested in out of town events, but we can't include them all. If you travel to any out-of-town upcoming events, please remember to take a picture or two and let us know so we can include your experience in a future Rant.

Friendships Beyond the Dance Floor:

We are finding **Friendships Beyond the Dance Floor** very interesting and we are getting positive feedback on this feature. But without your help, input, ideas and suggestions, we will run out of articles very soon. Please contact either one of us if you are part of a group of dancers who share a common interest "*beyond the dance floor*".

Sincerely,

Your Rant Committee

John Walton & Lynn Taplay

jwalton15@cogeco.ca or lynntaplay@gmail.com