

# The Reel Thing

Scottish Country Dancing in America's Finest City



Branch members demonstrated in front of the main stage at the Highland Games in June

## Chairman's Message

By Jeanne Moody, Branch Chairman

Let me start this message by welcoming all our dancers to a new year of SCD in San Diego. It has been my pleasure to serve as our branch Chairman for the past year, and I look forward to the year to come. I extend my deep gratitude to my fellow branch committee members – they've worked hard to keep our organization running. I'd especially like to recognize Peter MacNeil. He ably handles our accounts, our membership, our googlegroups list, as well as our website. A man of many talents. Thank you, as well, to all our members who have volunteered to help to make our events successful.

Highlights from 2010: We continued offering classes twice a week – Tuesday in Poway and Friday in Balboa Park. Thank you, branch teachers, for being there week-in and week-out. The branch celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with an Anniversary Ball in October, 2010. Music was provided by the ever excellent John Taylor and Lyle Ramshaw as we danced the night away to a spectacular program by Ward Fleri. In November we had our Julian Retreat – expanded digs in Blum Lodge saw increased capacity for members of all So-Cal branches. Dancers from our branch participated in demonstrations at the IDA festival in February, the Highland Games in June, and most recently at the Del Mar Fair on July 4<sup>th</sup>. We've had the great pleasure of monthly dance parties in Balboa Park. A special thank you to Sandy

Drew for helping to organize after parties at branch member's houses.

Upcoming Events: Summer Beginner's Series – we're introducing a slightly new format to the series. Our advertising efforts have been so successful in the last few years, and we've seen a great turn-out for the series. As such, it's been quite crowded, and this year we're only opening the series to new dancers, recently new members who can benefit from the intense instruction, and a small group of experienced dancers to act as teacher's aides for demonstration of figures and steps. Tuesday class will be open to all members starting September 6<sup>th</sup>.

Look for information on our Annual Branch Summer Picnic – July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011. I'm expecting a lovely day with good food, fun company, and games that all will enjoy.

Our regular class schedule resumes in September at both Poway and Balboa Park. Let me encourage our membership to attend classes. While attendance for the summer series has been up, numbers for our weekly classes have been low often in the past months. We all know it's more fun to dance when there are more dancers, so get your ghillies (or pumps) on and dance your cares away.

We look forward to the Interbranch dance in Tustin at the end of September. Registration is also open for this year's Julian Retreat Weekend, November 11-13<sup>th</sup>. We have Blum Lodge again, so get your reservations in!

Finally, it's been a while since we've had an issue of The Reel Thing. Thank you to Sandy Drew, whose efforts have drummed up articles, and to Amy Hoffman, editor of the Reel Thing. See you on the dance floor.

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Attached:

Summer picnic flyer with map  
Julian Retreat flyer and sign up form

# The Reel Thing

## Recent Events

Summer

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2011

### Scottish Highland Games and Gathering of the Clans

By Sandy Drew

RSCDS dancers enjoyed the good weather, games, music, shopping, and food at the 38th Annual Scottish Highland Games and Gathering of the Clans on June 25 and 26. Although it was tempting, the dancers left the caber toss to the more fit and stayed with our tent. It gave our branch a chance to let visitors know about our beginner classes and upcoming events. We had many people sign up as interested new dancers for the beginner classes, which was encouraging.

Five RSCDS couples demonstrated on the main stage on Saturday. Thank you to Ward Fleri for leading the demonstration dancers and selecting fantastic music for the dances. After a jig, a strathspey and a reel, at least 15 more couples joined in to try dancing for the first time. More demonstration dances in front of our booth were met with applause and generated interest in the classes.

Many thanks to all the members who manned the booth for the two days and chatted with prospective dancers about the good fun, exercise, and socializing our group enjoys.



Branch members demonstrated in front of the main stage on the first day of the games



Branch members (and a grandchild) demonstrated in front of the branch table on the second day of the games

### History of the Games

According to tradition, Scottish Highland Games had their beginning when the old kings of Scotland tested the strength, stamina, accuracy, and agility of their men-at-arms. Today we see the remnants of these contests in the caber toss, the stone put, archery, wrestling and foot races up steep hills. Piping, drumming, sheep dog herding, and Highland dancing have been added to the competition. Queen Victoria was perhaps the first royal to make the games as popular as they are today, although she was also the one for whom the kilt pin was created after a strong wind came up while she was reviewing the Scots Guards.

# Recent Events

# The Reel Thing

Summer

3

2011

## San Diego County Fair Dancing

By Marjorie McLaughlin

Almost every year since 1995 Branch members have enjoyed a "Day at the San Diego County Fair" (the Fair formerly known as the Del Mar Fair!) and helped to publicize our Scottish Country Dance classes. This year was no exception, and over 30 participants gave up part of their July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday to help out, and we had at least a dozen dancers for each dance. While we usually attend the Fair the weekend after the Highland Games, it was unusual that it fell on the Fourth. Our thanks to all who came along; it was a fun way to spend part of the holiday!

We danced on the San Diego Showcase Stage; thank goodness for the shade since it was a hot day, though we did catch a breeze now and then. After entertaining the audience with some of our favorite Country dances, we invited them to come and join us to learn a couple of easy dances. As always, we had willing, and some not-so-willing, volunteers. Since the 2011 Summer session starts in Poway in July we hope that some enthusiastic new dancers will attend the classes after seeing us at the Fair – and the Highland Games.

Alison Ashworth performed three Ladies Step Dances – Blue Bonnets, The Scottish Lilt and The Flora. Her beautiful and graceful championship style delighted the audience and we were pleased to include her in the entertainment.

The chance for free admission to the Fair is second only to the privilege of free parking in a private lot near the West entrance to the fairgrounds. This is quite a luxury given the heavy traffic and long lines to park elsewhere. After the dancing, everyone had a chance to relax with cool beverages and lunch, followed by time to explore the Fair and the exhibit halls.

We always receive excellent comments from the Special Events staff at the Fairgrounds for our enthusiasm, organization, and inspiring music and dance. They work with hundreds of groups and performers during the Fair and they always look forward to including us in the program.

Thank you again for all who took part. Next year it might not interfere with the Holiday!

**Left: Alison Ashworth performed three step dances in between sets of country dances**



**Many members turned out to demonstrate at the fair on July 4<sup>th</sup>, and we pulled up many interested dancers for participation dances**

### Secretarial Notes

By Betty Ribble, Honorary Secretary

This year's annual general meeting marked the end of our 35<sup>th</sup> Year as a Branch of the RSCDS. Few RSCDS Branches can make this claim. There are many who have come and gone, but there are those whose constant support has made this possible. We owe them our thanks and we soldier on in behalf of Scottish Country Dancing. Our branch recalled our last year's activities, many of which are annual in nature and will be a part of our 2011-12 dance year. The Scottish Highland Games at which we have a tent and perform for the public, the annual IntraBranch Ball in September, a Christmas Ball, our annual Julian Retreat, plus our beginner dance series of classes to encourage new dancers. These are just a few events that share the year with other dance and social occasions.

An Edinburgh headquarters committee was appointed to study ways in which we can be better ambassadors for the Society. Here are a few of their findings that we should use to publicize our dancing:

- Scottish dancing is an inclusive hobby for people of all ages and generations.
- Doing this you learn something new, have fun, make friends, keep fit, and stay healthy – all for very little cost.
- At whatever level you join, we will help you to learn with classes and information about social dances and functions.
- Our friendly members will make you welcome and help you to learn.
- Celebrate, maintain, and learn an important part of Scotland's culture and tradition. Our teachers are qualified and tested to a single standard.
- Scottish dancing has worldwide appeal for all generations.

We have been fortunate to have Mr. Malcolm Brown, member of the York & North Humberside Branch as our contact. It should be noted here that Malcolm was awarded the Society's Scroll of Honor in 2010. I have had the opportunity to exchange emails with him and know he does view our web site. He will most likely read our Reel Thing when offered there.

*Cum slan.....(keep well)*



**Above and Below: Demonstration dancing at the San Diego County Fair in July**

### Teacher's Tips

By Gillian Evans

There is a dance called "Happiness is Scottish Country Dancing."

What a true statement, you can't think of anything else while dancing and all your troubles are swept away with the music.

It has got to be therapeutic, so where are all the smiles and happy faces at class? ☺

I look around and often see frowns of concentration, somber demeanors and occasionally expressions of sheer terror!

So remember enjoy your dancing, relax, and smile, smile, smile. Happy dancing.



# Upcoming Events

**July 12: Tuesday Night Beginner Classes begin.** 7:30 PM in Poway, 12227 Poway Rd., Poway CA (just behind the Denny's in the shopping center at the corner of Oak Knoll Rd.) through August 23.

**July 31: Branch Picnic. VENUE CHANGE!** 10:30 - ? Pioneer Park, 1521 Washington Place, San Diego 92101 (Mission Hills). Please see the attached flyer for a map; we also will send an Email blast reminder.

**Friday Night Classes are not held in the summer**

**September 6: Tuesday Night Classes Resume.** Intermediate/Mixed. 7:30 PM in Poway, 12227 Poway Rd., Poway, CA.

**September 9: Friday Night Classes Resume:** Intermediate/Mixed. 7:30 in Balboa Park begin. Casa del Prado room 203. We expect to hold monthly parties again!

**September 24: Interbranch Dance.** Tustin Senior Center, Tustin, CA. 7:30.

**November 11-13: Branch Retreat at Camp Stevens, Julian.** We have Blum Lodge reserved again! Sign up soon--see the attached flyer.

## Editors' Note

As always, your contributions are welcome! If you would like to write an article about a recent event, please do! Sandy and Amy are aiming to get the Reel Thing published several times this year: mid-October, February, and May. Submission deadlines are set for about a week beforehand. You can easily send us items by visiting the website (link from any reference in this .pdf file), or by emailing me at [ReelThingEditor@RSCDS-SanDiego.org](mailto:ReelThingEditor@RSCDS-SanDiego.org) (put "Reel Thing" in the subject line so I know it's not spam!). If you don't have internet access, call me or talk to either of us in class and we can arrange something!

Also, please send along information about newsworthy items, particularly notices for upcoming events (dancing or otherwise of Scottish interest), recent travel notes, milestone announcements, etc.

Did you know? All references to websites and email addresses in this online .pdf document are "live." You can click on them to bring up your browser or email program at the referenced site/address directly.

Thank you for your support!

--Amy Hoffman and Sandy Drew

# The Reel Thing

## 2011-2012 Board Members

### Committee Members

Chairman: Jeanne Moody

Vice-Chairman: Jesse Evans

Honorary Secretary: Betty Ribble

Treasurer + Membership Chair: Peter MacNeil

Dance Director: Ward Fleri

Program Director: Barbara Schwartz

Publicity Director: Amy Hoffman

Member-at-large: Jack Vandover

Member-at-large: Eric McLeod

### The Reel Thing Editors

Amy Hoffman, Layout

Sandy Drew, Content

### Webmaster

Peter MacNeil

*RSCDS - San Diego*

# **Branch Picnic**

*Sunday, July 31, 2011*

**10:30 - ???**

**NEW VENUE!**

**Pioneer Park (Mission Hills Park)**

**1521 Washington Place, San Diego 92101**

*Come to relax, play games, socialize...*

*Please bring:*

*-your chair*

*-a side dish or dessert*

*-your libation of choice*

*(the main dish will be provided)*

1521 Washington Place, San Diego 92101



