



Orange County Ceilidh



Newsletter of the Orange County Branch of the RSCDS

Volume 42, No. 6 November/December 2024

Visit our website at www.rscds-oc.org

“For naught can cheer the heart sae weel, As can a canty Highland reel” — Robert Fergusson

Greetings from the Chair

Fall has arrived and with it comes the beginning of the new dance season. It was launched on September 28th with the 35th Annual Interbranch Dance. Members from all four southern California branches came together to dance to the music of our local band, the SO-CAledonians. See page 3 for photos. Anthea Macdonald



hosted the annual Miscellany sale, with evermore Scottish garb and merchandise, resulting in a lovely profit for the evening.

Looking forward, dancers from the Orange County branch will be performing at the Tustin Tiller Days the first weekend in October, and hope to entice some locals to come try our classes which are held in Tustin. The following weekend will be the Seaside Games in Ventura, so Orange County is not holding a branch dance in October.

Please mark your calendars for our annual Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball on December 14th. We will once again be welcoming Flindrikin to play for our dancing enjoyment. I hope you will be able to join us. Then in January (can it really be almost 2025?), the Burns Ball, co-hosted by the Los Angeles, San Gabriel Valley and Orange County branches, will be held on January 25th at the Torrance Woman’s Club. There will be a plated dinner, presentation of the haggis, all the usual salutes to Robert Burns, etc., followed by dancing to the music of Andy Imbrie and Caroline McCaskey. Don’t miss it!

Terri Speakman, Chair



Orange County Classes

MONDAY

Columbus Tustin Recreation Center
17522 Beneta Way, Tustin
Intermediate: 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Connie Walker: samanthasem@yahoo.com
Pat Zschoche: swisslassie@hotmail.com

WEDNESDAY

Columbus Tustin Recreation Center
17522 Beneta Way, Tustin
Basics: 7:00 – 8:15 p.m.
Beginner: 8:15-9:30 p.m.
Connie Walker: samanthasem@yahoo.com

FRIDAY

Columbus Tustin Recreation Center
17522 Beneta Way, Tustin
Experienced: 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Pat Zschoche: swisslassie@hotmail.com

Note: Classes require enrollment through Tustin Parks and Recreation (www.tustinca.org)

The Next Big Event

*Andrew Rankine Memorial
Christmas Ball*

**December 14, 2024,
7:00 p.m.**

**Tustin Senior Center
Music by Flindrikin**

Calendar of Events

(see branch website rscds-oc.org for flyers of upcoming dances)

HERE

October 2024

No branch dance

November 2024

9 Branch Beginner Dance, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, recorded music

December 2024

14 Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, music by Flindrikin

January 2025

25 Burns Supper and Ball, 5:00 p.m., Torrance Woman's Club music by Andy Imbrie and Caroline McCaskey

February 2025

8 Branch Beginner Dance, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, recorded music

THERE

October 2024

19 SGV Autumn Dance, 4:00 p.m., St. James Episcopal Church, South Pasadena, recorded music

26 L.A. Branch Halloween Dance, 7:00 p.m. First Christian Church, Studio City, recorded music

November 2024

23 L.A. Branch St. Andrews Supper & Ball, 6:30 p.m. El Segundo Masonic Lodge, Music by Patti Cobb, James MacQueen & Caroline McCaskey

December 2024

31 L.A. Branch Hogmanay Dance, 5:00 p.m. El Segundo Masonic Lodge, recorded music

March 2025

29-30 San Diego Branch 50th Anniversary Weekend

ELSEWHERE

November 2024

1-3 San Francisco Branch Asilomar Weekend, Ball musicians Thistle House. Visit rscds-sf.org/asilomar for more information.

1-3 RSCDS Autumn Gathering & AGM, Edinburgh

February 2025

14-16 Aloha Winter Weekend, Honolulu, HI. Music by the Humuhumunukunukuapua'a and Strathspey Society Band ; Teachers Bruce Herbols and David Newitt. More info at RSCDSHawaii.org



Minutes of the COM of August 11, 2024

Meeting Highlights:

- **Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Several cards sent and received; we need to register our delegates to vote at the RSCDS AGM.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Current balance in the general fund is \$9295, of which the Scholarship Fund balance is \$2298.
- **Membership:** 2024-2025 membership is currently 25 members and 33 associate members.
- Connie Learn is investigating performing at the Tustin Tiller Days in October.
- The 2024-25 dance program has been set and the production of cue books is in progress.
- Los Angeles is in charge of the Interbranch Dance this year. Orange County will supply beverages and tablecloths.
- Christmas Ball: Flindrikin is confirmed as musicians; Pete and Line Anderson will supply hospitality.
- We will have the same monthly dance schedule as 2023-24 – no dance in January, April, August or October.

The next Committee of Management meeting will be held on November 10, 2024. Copies of the full minutes of the meeting are available from Recording Secretary Randi Kraemer.



Orange County Ceilidh

35th Annual Interbranch Dance



Orange County Ceilidh

SO-CALedonians Summer Ceilidh in Central Park



Orange County Ceilidh

Scottish Music and So Much More

Imagine for a moment that it is morning in the middle of a California redwood forest. There is neither the sound of traffic, nor cellphone service. There is magic in the air. Suddenly the sound of 200 instruments rises, playing a tune in beautiful harmony.

You are at Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddle Camp, where musicians from all over the world gather to learn and experience the joys of playing music together. However, despite its name, the music camp is not restricted to Scottish music, nor are there only fiddles.

In addition to the Scottish tradition, you hear French, Irish, Spanish, Old Time, Quebecois and other styles played all over the camp. Yes, there are fiddles, which are joined by cellos, mandolins, guitars, pizza box bodhrans, keyboards and whatever else can make music. There are amazingly talented young musicians happily making music wherever there is a free place to sit or stand. There are old-timers who not only have been bringing their children to Camp for years, but are now bringing their grandchildren to be immersed in this musical experience.

The Valley of the Moon was established in 1984 by Alasdair Fraser along with Jan Tappan and other fiddle players to increase awareness of the Scottish fiddle tradition, and who wanted to create a learning space for other musicians in a supportive, non-competitive atmosphere, regardless of ability or experience. The Camp provides an easy-going, communal environment for all participants to explore their own musical expression, with no requirement to attend sessions. One may simply show up to a scheduled session, bring your instrument and join in, or just listen.

This was my first time at Valley of the Moon. Although I had been told a bit about the experience from friends who have attended, I wasn't expecting the feeling of "Community" that one gets when one enters the Camp. Everyone is welcoming – there is the common bond of music that

brings both musicians and non-musicians together. And that is all that matters. Music is the foundation, and everyone is accepted for who they are.

The amount of teaching talent gathered together was incredible. It was hard not to be in awe of so many musicians that I'd heard of over the years but not met

– Alasdair Fraser, Hanneke Cassel, Laura Risk, Neil Perlman, Natalie Hass, Nic Gareiss. Plus, there were many that were not on my radar – Jeanette Duncan, Lena Jonsson, Laura Cortesse, Brendan Hearn, Colin Cotter. It did help to have a few familiar faces – Jan Tappan, Andy Imbrie and Caroline McCaskey.

Every morning all participants gathered together to learn and work on a couple of tunes. Each morning, the teachers would introduce a new facet of the tunes so that by the end of the week, everyone could play their part by ear. There were maybe 200 musicians – fiddles, cellos, guitars, mandolins, all playing in beautiful harmony. The rest

of the day was filled with class sessions for the different instruments and levels, electives, "All Together Song and Dance", "Village Gathering", ceilidhs, walks in the woods, free time, really great meals. At 6:30 every morning, a group got together to play Old-Time music to accompany breakfast. There was even a nighttime "raid" where about 30 people walked through every cabin singing a lullaby at 3:00 in the morning! It ended with them singing "meow, meow, meow, meow, meow" so everyone just smiled and went back to sleep.

I met so many wonderful people, including a couple of Scottish Country dancers, and picked up a fiddle for the first time. I have concluded that it must be the most difficult instrument to play; or at least to make sound somewhat palatable. My admiration for anyone who voluntarily plays the fiddle has skyrocketed exponentially! It was quite a unique and wonderful experience. I am so glad to have had the opportunity to join with this amazing community of musicians, and am hoping that I'll be able to repeat it one of these years!

Connie Walker

Orange County Ceilidh

**Megan Boyd:
Salmon Flies and Scottish Country Dancer**

Scottish county dance appeals to the most intricate of minds: mathematicians, code-breakers, dreamers, and fly-tyers. Yes, that's as in fishing lures. Renowned salmon fly-tyer Megan Boyd loved Scottish country dancing. Although she was better known for her unique craft of designing and tying salmon flies, SCD was her favorite relaxation as she lived an active life, involving herself in environmental and conservation projects like the North Atlantic Salmon Fund, helping the elderly and disabled, and consulting with fishermen about the quirks of Highland rivers and the salmon living within them.

Born Rosina Megan Boyd, 29 January 1915, in Surrey, England, Megan and her family relocated to Sutherland, Scotland, after her father became a river watcher at River Brora on the Duke of Sutherland's sporting estate three years later.

Obviously, this occupation and location influenced his youngest daughter, who, at age 12, was apprenticed to fly-tyer and fellow river watcher Robert Trussler. When she was 15, Megan began her first fly-tying work. Sir Charles Clauson requested she convert some obsolete salmon flies to more modern versions. Many were impressed by the precision and beauty of her work, and local salmon anglers began asking Megan to tie flies for them. Her reputation began to grow.

At age 20, Megan moved into a small, second-hand cottage at Kintradwell, Scotland, overlooking the North Sea. Although there was no electricity, heat, or running water until the 1980s, this was the workshop where she routinely labored 14-hour days, assembling feathers, tinsel, and hooks into lures that were practically guaranteed to catch river salmon. Visiting anglers who came to fish the Brora and Helmsdale Rivers would stop by to watch her tie flies, place orders, or talk about the rivers. Despite never fishing herself, Boyd's precise and quality work made her creations sought by many. She designed a traditional pattern called "The Megan Boyd".

Considered eccentric by some, Megan dressed in her late father's tweeds with a shirt and tie and heavy army-style boots. Her hair style was a short crop of her own cutting. She seldom left her cottage, enjoyed riding a motorbike,



danced at ceilidhs, and counted King Charles III—then The Prince of Wales—as a friend and regular client.

As early as 1938, Boyd's salmon flies were winning competitive awards, and she regularly donated samples to auctions that raised funds for salmon preservation. Her dedication to conservation of salmon, eccentric style, fly-tying skills, and service during World War II as an auxiliary coastguard helped her be considered for an even greater award. In 1971 Queen Elizabeth II awarded her the British Empire Medal and invited her to Buckingham Castle to receive it. Her unconventional refusal explained that Boyd had no one to look after her dog. Her Majesty, a dog-lover herself, fully understood. Prince Charles presented Boyd with the medal later that year. After he married Lady Diana, Megan sent some flies as a wedding present. "...Tell her [Diana] you will be the best catch [she] will ever have," she wrote in an accompanying note.

Almost six decades and tens-of-thousands of salmon flies later, Megan Boyd retired from commercial fly-tying as her eyesight deteriorated. In 1988 she moved from Kintradwell into Brora. She died 15 November 2001 in Golspie, Scotland, at age 86.

Megan's story was captured in an 80-minute documentary film, "Kiss the Water", in 2012. Filmmaker Eric Steel visited her dilapidated cottage near Brora, stepping inside to "feel little traces of her.... You could tell her hands had been there...." The film presents an all-around picture of Megan Boyd rather than focusing only on her accomplishments. Eric, when asked what he thought Megan would have thought of the film, replied, "Megan liked the puzzle she'd made of her life, she liked the contradictions...I think she would have got a kick out of...not being turned into something she wasn't."

After polling the best of the world's fly-tyers, angler/author Joseph D. Bates Jr. stated, "The best are in Scotland, and of course Megan Boyd is the best in Scotland." Her work can be regarded as an art. "During six decades that Megan Boyd created her magical concoctions out of feathers and fur, she did indeed produce flies that many regard as "The Tiffanies' of the 20th century", commented Lyla Foggia in a 1996 tribute to women who have influenced fly fishing. If you desire to know more about this fellow dancer and salmon fly-tyer, consult Lyla Foggia's book, *Reel Women: The World of Women Who Fish*.

Again, an exacting, rigorous mind is challenged and Scottish country dancing benefits.

Karen Kerman

November Branch Beginner Dance

November 9, 2024, Dancing 7:00 p.m., recorded music
Tustin Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin
Cost: \$15 Members; \$18 Non-Members

SPECIAL BEGINNER SECTION

Old Swan Gallop	J	B	Traditional
The Loch Ness Monster	R	B	Boyd/RSCDS Gr 2
The Flying Scotsman	J	B	Thurston/Collins
Happy to Meet	J	B	Boyd/Happy to Meet
The Merry Reapers	J	B	RSCDS Graded
The Riverside	J	B	Ingram/Collins Little

EXPERIENCED SECTION

A Trip to the Drakensberg	J	I	Book 38
Toast to the Mousies	R	I	Book 53
The Dundee Whaler	S	B	Clowes/Ormskirk 1
The Dancing Master	J	A	Drewry/RSCDS 30 Pop
The Mercat Cross	S	I	Dickson/Dunedin 3
Hedwig's Reel	R	B	Phillips/RSCDS Gr 2

The Lady Wynd	J	B	Goldring/Gr & Soc 2
Starry Night	R	I	Harmon/50 Yrs LA
Scotch Mist	S	A	Drewry/Summer 9
The Cranberry Tart	J	I	Glasspool/RSCDS 30
The Waipu Wanderers	R	B	West/Whangarei Bk

Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball

December 14, 2024, Doors open 6:30 p.m., Grand March 7:00 p.m., Buffet supper at first intermission
Tustin Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin
Live music by Flindrikin
Cost: \$40 Dancers; \$30 Non-dancers

GRAND MARCH

Bill and Rajeev's Wedding	J	B	Lajoie/Spark O' Water
Toast to the Mousies	R	I	Book 53
Miss Jane Muirhead of Dunsmuir	S	B	Winter/Dunsmuir
The Ship in Full Sail	J	A	Forbes/Craigievar 2
La Famiglia Graziani	S	I	Landon/Woodhall 3
Crom Allt	R	B	Goldring/RSCDS Gr 3

Welcome to Ayr	J	I	Book 47
The House Keys of Lisbon	S	A	Landon/Woodhall 4
The Cranberry Tart	J	I	Glasspool/RSCDS 30
Midsummer Moon	S	B	Moody/Salute to SD
Blooms of Bon Accord	R	I	Drewry/Deeside 2
The Pawling Porch	R	B	Brunken/Moments

The Wild Geese	J	B	Book 24
The Peat Fire Flame	R	A	Drewry/Bon Accord
Calican Scot	S	B	Tague
Best Set in the Hall	J	I	Book 46
Scott Meikle	R	I	Book 46



OC BRANCH SCHOLARSHIPS

Revised 2020

The Branch has established a scholarship fund to encourage the development of Scottish Country Dancing teachers, dancers, and musicians in Orange County, and to provide opportunities for Southern California Scottish Country Dancing dancers to experience high quality live music both as listeners and as dancers.



To be eligible for a dance scholarship, the applicant must be a current member of the Orange County Branch and be presently attending class regularly for at least one year. Preference will be given to applicants interested in pursuing teacher training.

To be eligible for a musician scholarship, the applicant must be a resident of Southern California, have demonstrated an interest in playing Scottish Country Dancing music, and should play an instrument relevant to Scottish Country Dancing, such as accordion, fiddle, keyboard, piano, recorder, etc.

Applications are available on the branch website and at branch dance classes. Applicants must provide information on how the funds will be used and will need to provide documentation of attendance. Requests must be received at least 30 days before the funds are needed. Awards will be limited to a total of \$500 a year. Requests and awards will be confidential. Scholarships will be granted without attention to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, nationality, ancestry, age, or place of origin.

The dance scholarship is in honor of Orange County Branch founding member and long-time dancer Dorothy Craik. The musician scholarship is in honor of Andrew Rankine, a noted accordionist, composer and renowned Scottish Country Dancing band leader.



If you are interested in applying, send your application to Scholarship Committee, c/o RSCDS-Orange County Branch, 8361 Castilian Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 or email to chair Terri Speakman at tjspeakman@verizon.net.

If not deliverable, return to:

The Orange County Branch of the
Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
8361 Castilian Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646

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Thanks to all contributors!

**THE ORANGE COUNTY CEILIDH IS
PUBLISHED 6 TIMES PER YEAR.**

Deadline for the January/February *Ceilidh* is
December 1, 2024.