

# OVER THE WATER



A Joint Newsletter of the Northern Virginia and Washington DC Branches  
of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

Spring

2007

\* <http://rscds-greaterdc.org> \* RSCDS Headquarters, Edinburgh - [www.rscds.org](http://www.rscds.org) \*

## A Man's A Man for A' That

Robert Burns was born to William Burns and Agnes Broun on January 25, 1759 in Alloway, South Ayrshire, Scotland. Although he would come to be known as the Ploughman Poet, neither he nor his father had much success at farming. He also attempted flax-dressing, which ended when he accidentally burning down the shop where he worked, and tax collecting. Unlike many artists, however, Burns was able to enjoy the success of his poetry in his lifetime. His first edition of

poems published in 1786 was immediately popular and Burns became a pioneer of the romantic movement, influencing such later luminaries as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley.

Burns was educated mainly by his father and by a tutor by the name of John Murdock. Elevating his rustic background and indifferent education to a form of high art, Burns began to compose poems and songs in his native dialect known as lowland Scots. It was through his active association

with the Freemasons, which he joined in 1781, that Burns was able to have his poems widely published.

It also admitted him to the company of persons of a higher social status to raise him out of obscurity to the place he now holds as the national poet of Scotland.



But Burns' personal life was turbulent and his habits intemperate. We can see seeds of this dissolution of character in 1779 when Burns joined the Tarbolton dancing class in defiance of his father's express command. He went on to father at

## A Capital Weekend

It's not too late! Join the Washington Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society for the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Capital Weekend at the National Cathedral School in Washington D.C. on April 13-15, 2007.

Capital Weekend this year should be as exciting and enjoyable as ever. There will be a welcome dance on Friday, April 13 at 8:00 PM featuring Terpsichore (Elke Baker, Liz

Donaldson & Ralph Gordon). On Saturday there will be classes for Basic/Intermediate and Advanced dancers taught by Norah Link and John Middleton. Classes are scheduled from 9:00 AM to Noon. In addition, there will be two specialty classes taught on Sunday at NIH. Norah Link will teach a Ladies' Step Class from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM, and John Middleton will present a Teachers' Workshop for all SCD teachers and teacher candidates. Pg. 3

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## Burns Night . . .

least ten children by four different women, his acknowledged wife, Jean Armour, bearing two sets of twins. Burns' last child, Maxwell, was born four days after his death on July 21, 1796, at the age of 37.

But Robert Burns' collection of poetry and folk songs celebrating the Scotland we love has left



behind an immortal memory. A few years after Burns' death, several of his friends got together to celebrate the life and works of the Bard of Scotland. Originally held at the anniversary of his death, but now celebrated around the time of his birth, Burns Night Suppers have become a worldwide Scottish tradition. This year Northern Virginia and Charlottesville continued that tradition with their own Burns Night celebrations.

In Northern Virginia we enjoyed a fun dance program by Jay Andrews, with live music provided by Liz Donaldson and Becky Ross. Rosalie and Evan Duncan provided a traditional dinner with a unique rendition of the ever popular ode *To a Haggis*. Barney Lawless toasted Burns immortal memory and Dave Chase and Abigail Acland amused us

## Toast to the Lasses

Present by Dave Chase

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It is only fitting, as we celebrate the birth of Robert Burns, to say a few words in honor of the lasses. Robbie Burns, as legend tells us, was a man who was clearly captivated and enthralled by women--*as fair art*

*thou, my bonnie lass, so deep in love am I; and I will love thee still, my dear, till a' the seas gang dry.* His good and long suffering wife may have wished he had stuck to just the one--it is not for us to make judgments. Be that as it may, Burns was charmed, captivated, love struck and moved, for the good of us

all, to put those feelings into verse--*deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee, warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.*

Perhaps to some men, women represent something mysterious and even at times unknowable. After all, a man can slip on a kilt in minutes and wonder why he is kept waiting for an hour for the woman in his life to slip on a dress. Yes, we are different, and the list of those differences has been the subject of poets, artists,

philosophers and more recently scientists. We may speak different languages or come from different planets, but every man here tonight will surely agree that women are wonderful, alluring, talented, capable, and as necessary to us as the air we breathe. Tonight we salute the differences. We stand in respect and honor and above all in thanks. Robbie Burns probably put it better than I, but then again he had more experience than I. He was passionate about the embrace--*when in my arms, wi' a' thy charms, I clasp my countless treasure, O!* But he was also passionate about all the things we mean to each other. The same, I suspect, goes for every man here tonight. Gentlemen, please raise your glasses.

Where would we be without the lasses  
Is a question I'd like to ask.  
Who'd make us do as we ought  
Who'd make us finish each task?  
If we hadn't got lasses to steer us  
As mothers or girlfriends or wives  
Our world would be without comfort  
They add polish and style to our lives.  
Who'd care for us when we are ill  
Make us wear scarves to keep out the chill  
And though sometimes we have the odd fault  
In our wounds they don't rub any salt.

Instead they persuade us in their own way  
To change for the better, so tonight I say  
Ladies, you are the ones we love most  
To your charm and wit I now raise a toast!

To the Lasses!



## Capital Weekend . . .

Norah Link is from Montreal, Canada and has been teaching Scottish country dancing since 1993. She has studied ballroom, ballet, ballet-jazz, and competed as a premier-level highland dancer. She has taught workshops in SCD and Ladies' Step Dancing throughout Canada and the Northeastern United States. John Middleton was born in Scotland and currently resides in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. He was dragged to SCD classes by his mother as a young boy. Now he travels all over the world sharing his joy in Scottish country dancing. He received his teaching certificates from Miss Jean Milligan in 1961.

Saturday afternoon there will be a ball review from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. The ball begins at 8:00 PM, following a reception starting at 7:15 PM. In a great encore performance, to be sure, Terpsichore will play for the Capital Ball, and Peter Walker will



be there with his pipes for the Grand March.

Of course no weekend like this would be complete without the food. You can purchase a lunch for Saturday afternoon when you fill out your registration form. There will be a potluck brunch Sunday morning at 10:00 AM. Tea will be served midway through each dance program and

contributions to the tea table are always appreciated.

Don't miss this fabulous weekend. For more information, prices and registration forms go to [www.capitalweekend.org](http://www.capitalweekend.org) or contact Jenn Mayrovitz at (410) 381-3948 or by e-mail at [jmayrovitz@verizon.net](mailto:jmayrovitz@verizon.net). We'll see you there!



## Toast to the Lads

Burns Night 2007

written by Abigail Acland

Thank you, Dave, for your comments. I feel it's my duty, as a lass myself, to make a response.

I'm afraid I've never been much of one for overly strict adherence to traditions, much as I might respect them, so I'm going to break with standard format. This will not be in verse, though if you are saddened by this, you can feel free to assume this is free verse.

Now, because we are primarily a dance group, a little advice to the lads about dancing that also

applies to other aspects of life:

When dancing with your partner, it's vital that you actually dance with her and not for her. We all need enough support to help us get where we're going, but enough freedom to let us move on our own.

When turning in circles, we move best when we have enough trust in each other to lean with it. That support has to be both given and received, or the circle ends up the wrong shape and no one ends up where they're supposed to be.

When in doubt, take the hand that reaches out for you. You might still be wrong, but at least you'll be

in company.

Be willing to dance where you are needed. We dance on either side, we love to see a man who can do the same. Dignity is like money; it's nice to have it but it's only really useful when you spend it on something good.

Sometimes the dance is about where you end up. Sometimes it's about how you get there. Most of the time, it's about trying your best and having fun at it, no matter what happens.

There is no substitute for looking your partner in the eye. All the fancy footwork on the floor won't

**To the Lasses  
Based on a Toast to the Lasses  
By Lee Fuell**

There is surely one thing, o' which the Bard loved to sing,  
A power to conquer great masses,  
All that men strive for, e'en what he's alive for,  
I speak now, of course, of the Lasses.

It stands irrefutable, they remain quite inscrutable—  
A life's labour or more to understand.  
Yet offer I keys to life's great mysteries  
'Tween Lasses an' Lads on each hand.

First, all of us know, as a Lad an' Lass grow  
There quickly appears a divide.  
While Lads are still playing pranks, an' no gie ye thanks  
In the realm of adults does the young Lass reside.

And in terms of fine style, Lads are beat by a mile  
By Lasses wi' gems sparkling' sae pretty.  
Nae in sporrans dead, adorned by animal head  
Or as lounge singer Vic frae Sin City.

But Lads there be sure relief, from lang years o' grief,  
If ye'll just leave the toilet seat down.  
For bathrooms remain, the Lasses domain,  
Lest in tubes, bottles, serums and cream ye will drown.

Tho' all planets may quake era a Lad admits a mistake  
Remember it will his Lass evermore.  
In spats profound or absurd she will hae the last word  
Else he just hae begun a new war.

Ye Lasses, who inspire romance, or devastate by a glance  
We lads are like puppets on your strings.  
Yet could any man say he would hae it any other way?  
Oh no! For your love gives us wings.

**To the Lasses!**

**Reply to the Lads  
By  
Shanda Robertson**

I stand here to say, many thanks come your way  
For your kind words in Toast to the Lasses  
Now sit quietly by and I shall give our reply,  
And then to the Lads raise our glasses.

These fine Lasses at hand are nae hard to understand;  
The Bard, he knew what to do.  
So lend a keen ear to all I say here  
That Rabbie may tutor you too.

Sweet words of amour, I admit we adore;  
Though the seat down 's a very fine rule.  
With kind looks and love strong, you cannae go wrong,  
'Specially when paired with a jewel.

Of Lads there's only one kind each Lass hopes to find,  
And he's no necessarily brawny or built.  
But he must be mature, and mighty secure;  
That's a man who looks good in a kilt.

He may hae red 'r fair skin, with hair matted or thin,  
Or hae a belly that jiggles like a haggis;  
Yet with fine thick calves, that he don't hide by halves,  
There's a right winning Ladd sure to bag us.

An' we would ne'er look askance on a man who can dance.  
For too oft we must dance with each other.  
'Though when all ye Lads stayed, some do play a fine maid  
We prefer you dance with us, not your brother.

So come ye Lads all, let us on with the ball.  
Dance with us as only a true Scotsman can.  
Set, cast, turn about—swing your bonnie Lass out,  
By that flip of your kilt, you'll prove you're a man.

**To the Lads!**



### To the Lads . . .

hide it if you're not paying attention to her, and a lot can be forgiven if you can show you're sincere in wanting to dance with her in the first place, no matter how badly you might do it.

So having given that advice, let me say this to the lads, in thanks:

Thank you for your kilts and your calves, your sporrans and your ghillies. We like to see some care given to appearance.

Thank you for your attention to your footwork, the joy and light spirit in your step, and the angle of your turn out.

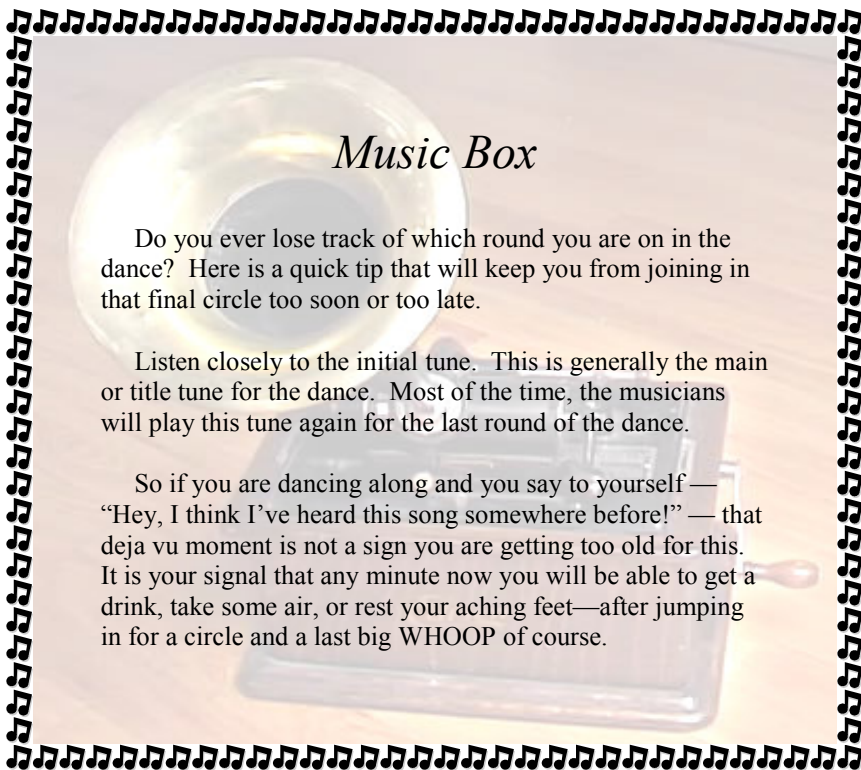
More than how you appear and more than how you turn out, thank you for your appearance, for your turning up in the first place. The dance, in the end, is created by the people who show up to dance it.

Here's to you, lads. Thank you for being here.

### Burns Night . . .

with the traditional and ever-popular Toast to the Lasses and the Reply to the Lads. (These toasts and the toasts from last year are included in this newsletter for your amusement.)

Not to be outdone, Charlottesville held their own wild celebration. Beginning with an afternoon dance, which included a presentation of the Reel of the 51<sup>st</sup> the way it was meant to be danced—all men, dressed in kilts. (Not how it was originally presented of course, but surely the devisors would have approved.) The event concluded with a delicious dinner and uproarious ceilidh at Michie Tavern.



## Music Box

Do you ever lose track of which round you are on in the dance? Here is a quick tip that will keep you from joining in that final circle too soon or too late.

Listen closely to the initial tune. This is generally the main or title tune for the dance. Most of the time, the musicians will play this tune again for the last round of the dance.

So if you are dancing along and you say to yourself — “Hey, I think I’ve heard this song somewhere before!” — that *deja vu* moment is not a sign you are getting too old for this. It is your signal that any minute now you will be able to get a drink, take some air, or rest your aching feet—after jumping in for a circle and a last big WHOOP of course.

## Featured Dances

Did you know that every year the RSCDS chooses a set of featured dances? This year the ten featured dances include old favorites like *Deil Amang the Tailors* and *Seann Triubhas Willichan*, as well as a newer dance, *The Dream Catcher*, which has a formation called “the swirl.” There are dances in longwise sets, such as *Campbell’s Frolic* and *Major Ian Stewart*, and square sets, like *Round Reel of Eight*. There are Reels (*Inverneill House*), Jigs (*Lamb Skinnnet*), and Strathspeys (*Jimmy’s Fancy*). There is even a candidate dance (*Gates of Edinburgh*).



Scottish country dancers all over the world are doing these dances this year. This is just one more way the RSCDS

helps bring us together to create an international fellowship of dancers.

To join in the fun, try this one!

**Inverneill House** (R8x32) 3C (4C set) by J. Drewry, RSCDS Bk 35

1-8: 1s+2s dance 1/2 dbl. fig. 8 (1s cross down), 1s dance down b/w 3s & cast up to 2nd pl. opp. sides.

9-16: 1s+3s dance 1/2 dbl. fig. 8 (1s cross down), 1s dance up b/w 2s & cast to 2nd pl. own sides.

17-24: 1s Petronella to opp. sides.

25-32: 2s & 3s Petronella to opp. Sides while 1s cast round 1st corners & cross b/w 2s/3s to 2nd pl., 2s+1s+3s set.

**Want to know what’s happening? Read the EVENTS CALENDAR:** <http://www.rscds-greaterdc.org/events.html>



## To A Haggis?

brunch or tea, you may want to consider some of the delicious recipes in two delightful cookbooks by Kay Shaw Nelson.

Make authentic Scottish-American meals and learn the history behind them in *The Art of Scottish American Cooking* (Pelican Publishers, \$21). Part history kook, part travelogue, part cookbook, this book contains over 200 recipes and chronicles the many ways Scottish cookery has contributed to our culinary culture, with such well-loved foods as Macintosh apples, Campbell's Soup, graham crackers, and Angus beef.

Or for hearty, wholesome recipes for family dinners, to more sophisticated and exotic dishes for entertaining with flair, *The Scottish-Irish Pub & Hearth Cookbook* (Hippocrene Books, \$24.95) is the perfect source for dining the Celtic way! In this collection of 170 recipes you find old classics as well as recipes sure to become new favorites. And each chapter begins with entertaining stories, legends and lore about Celtic peoples, their

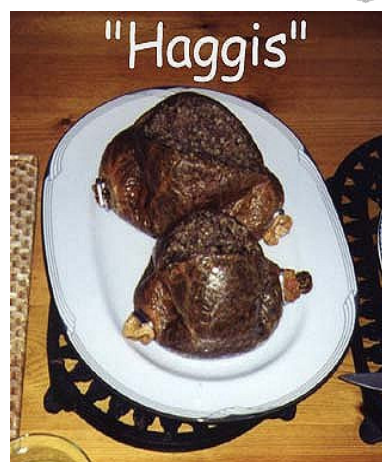
traditions and customs, and the history of their foods.

Ms. Nelson is local author, residing in Bethesda Maryland, and she is known nationally for her writing on travel, food, and history. She has published 19 cookbooks, and is a columnist the *The Scottish Banner* and *Washington Woman*. She has generously agreed to allow us to publish a few of her recipes from *The Scottish-Irish Pub & Hearth Cookbook* in our newsletter. And I hope to be tasting some of these yummys at the next ball!



Is there anything Scots love as much as music and dancing? If there is anything that comes close it would have to be a hearty meal in the company of family and friends. One thing that makes Scottish balls and parties so much fun is surely standing around the tea table chatting and sampling the delightful repast brought by fellow dancers to share, enjoy, or perhaps even show off a little.

The next time you have an occasion to provide a dish for



### Tobermory Smoked Salmon Pâté

“The Fish with the Hebridean Flavor” comes from Tobermory, on the Isle of Mull, a charming fishing village where the exceptional cold bay water results in farmed salmon of superior quality. Silky and succulent with a unique tang of spices and wood-smoke, it blends well with a few ingredients for this pâté.

- ½ c. (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 3 tbl. dairy sour cream
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- Freshly ground white or black pepper
- 3 tbl. minced scallions, with some pale green tops
- ¼ c. diced smoked salmon
- Fresh watercress leaves

In a medium bowl cream the butter until light and fluffy. Add sour cream and lemon juice. Season with pepper. Beat again. Stir in scallions and salmon. Mix to blend well. Refrigerate, covered with plastic wrap, at least 2 hours and up to 2 days. Serve in a mound on a plate. Garnish with watercress leaves. Makes 1 cup.

### Chewy Oatmeal Cookies

Every Gael loves oatmeal cookies. These are flavored with honey and cinnamon, and include raisins and walnuts. They're great for parties or picnics.

½ c. (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened  
¾ c. honey  
1 large egg, beaten  
1 c. all-purpose flour  
½ tsp. baking soda  
¾ tsp. ground cinnamon  
½ tsp. salt  
3 c. quick-cooking rolled oats  
2 tbl. cold water  
½ c. finely chopped walnuts  
¾ c. raisins

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly butted 2 baking sheets. In a large bowl cream butter and honey. Add egg; mix well. Sift in flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Mix well. Stir in oats, then water, walnuts, and raisins.

Drop by tablespoons on prepared baking sheets, about 1 inch apart. Flatten slightly. Bake in preheated oven until tester inserted into center comes out clean and golden, 10-12 minutes. With spatula remove to a wire rack. Cool. Store in airtight container. Makes about 4½ dozen.

### Golden Chicken Croquettes

During the Auld Alliance Scots became devotees of many French-inspired dishes including the croquette, a name derived from *croquet*, to crunch. These creamy morsels in their golden shell of crisp, deep-fried crumbs make excellent party fare, since they can be made up ahead of time and cooked just before serving.

3 c. diced, cooked white meat chicken  
1 med. onion, peeled and minced  
½ c. minced celery  
½ c. minced green pepper  
½ tsp. dried sage  
Salt and pepper to taste  
3 tbl. unsalted butter  
3 tbl. all-purpose flour  
1 c. chicken broth  
¼ c. light cream  
1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper  
Fine dry bread crumbs  
2 eggs, beaten  
Fat or vegetable oil for frying

In a meat grinder or food processor, with metal blade in place, grind or puree the chopped chicken, onion, celery, green pepper, and sage. Season with salt and pepper. Turn into a large bowl.

In a medium heavy saucepan, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Stir in flour. Cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Gradually pour in chicken broth. Cook slowly, stirring often, until sauce is thickened and smooth, about 6 minutes. Add the cream and cayenne. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat. Add to chicken mixture; mix well.

Spread evenly in a flat dish and chill in refrigerator 1½ to 2 hours. With the hands, shape into ovals or rectangles. Roll in bread crumbs to cover lightly. Dip in beaten egg. Roll again in bread crumbs and pat with a knife. Place on a plate or a baking pan. Chill in refrigerator for a few hours or overnight. Before cooking, allow to stand at room temperature for 1 hour.

Fry in deep hot fat (375 degrees), turning once or twice, until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Serve at once. An attractive way to serve the croquettes is to pile them on a napkin in a pyramid or mound, garnished with water cress or strips of raw vegetables. 6-8 servings.



### Wee Nibbles...

- Northern Virginia Branch will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, April 11. Come for the meeting and stay for the live music provided by David Knight on the fiddle.
- Pinewoods has a new jubilee tartan! You can see a sample of it at <http://www.rscdsboston.org/events-pinewoods-tartan.html> or look for Jay Andrews on the dance floor; his new kilt is in the Pinewoods tartan.
- Thanks to everyone who has volunteered as a stooge for the candidate classes at NIH. Examinations will be held at NIH on April 21 & 22. Please contact Jay Andrews ([andrewj@erols.com](mailto:andrewj@erols.com)) or Yvonne Yang ([yvonne.yang@oracle.com](mailto:yvonne.yang@oracle.com)) if you are willing to stooge for the exam.
- We have had some great demo opportunities this winter (including a film premier at National Geographic). More chances to show off and share the joy of Scottish Country Dancing are on the way. April 6th is National Tartan Day and we have been invited to participate in the celebration in Alexandria on Saturday, April 7. We have also been invited to the Southern Maryland Celtic Festival on April 28. Please contact Eva Lanyi ([elanyi@cox.net](mailto:elanyi@cox.net)) if you would like to participate in these events.