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# THE SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCER

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Volume 16, Issue 3

November/December 1999

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## Just a Peek Inside...

"Hello, my name is John and I'll be your Editor tonight. This evening we're featuring..."

Well, I *do* feel a little bit like Ed Sullivan when he would look at the audience, put his hands together and declare, "We've got a really big shew for you tonight!"

As our "lead" item, Marge Van Nus has sent me a wonderful article she wrote for *The Caledonian*, describing a trip she took with her husband, Fred, and 45 dancers and three musicians earlier this summer, dancing and dining their way through several Scottish castles. I can't wait to go myself!

I would also like to call your attention to the item describing some SCD-related Web developments, both in Portland and here in Vancouver, too!

"Enjoy!"

## Castle Hopping in Scotland

*By Marge Van Nus*

### First Stop -- Borthwick Castle

Our first formal Dinner-Dance was in the Great Hall of Borthwick Castle, a 30,000 ton masonry, 110 foot tall twin tower fortress built in 1430 on a site where a castle of timber once stood (charter date 1357), 12 miles south of Edinburgh in the Moorfoot Hills.

The castle, once a refuge of Mary, Queen of Scots (1567) and besieged by Oliver Cromwell (1650), has spiral stairs inside its 14 foot thick walls. Someone counted three and one half revolutions from ground level to the State Room, 6 floors up.

We were up and down those stairs three times; up for pre-dinner drinks,

down to dine by candlelight, up for tea/coffee, down to dance, up to gather our belongings, down and out to the bus. During the dancing (many dances date from the 1700s) I had the uncanny feeling of being watched. Every time I rounded a 'corner' I caught sight of a Knight in Armor looking down on us from its niche in the wall!

### On to Lennoxlove Castle

The second castle, Lennoxlove, is a 14<sup>th</sup> century L-plan tower house 1-1/2 miles south of Haddington in the Lammermuir Hills. ("Lammermuir Hills" is a Strathspey.)

Originally owned by the Giffords, sold in 1350 to the Maitlands, it was called Lethington. On the death of the Duchess of Lennox (no tie with the castle) in 1702 her trustees purchased a Scottish property in accordance to her will for her nephew Alexander,

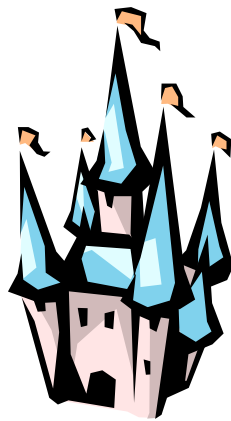
Lord Blantyre and named the property "Lennox Love to Blantyre" (a Strathspey has the same name). Through time the name became shortened to Lennoxlove.

In 1947 it passed to the Duke of Hamilton and is now his home. ("The Duke of Hamilton's Reel" and "Hamilton House"). A beautifully furnished castle, it houses works by Reubens, Van Dyke, Kneller and Raeburn.

Included are portraits of various Dukes and Duchesses, Mary, Queen of Scots, (whose death mask and letter box are on display) and a canvas with 3 poses of Emma, Lady Hamilton, titled "The Three Graces". (Could the Strathspey "The Three Bonnie Maidens" also known as "The Graces" have anything to do with the painting?)

### Duke of Atholl's Blair Castle

*Continued on page 3*



## Manager's Letter

*By Geri Stuart*

Greetings Everyone,

After just having our Fall dance, I'm looking forward to having more! It was a fun time and many people participated - both experienced and brand new that night! Thanks to all of you who spread the word! And "Thank You" to all who helped in the decorations and set up - you did a great job! Extra "Thank You's" to Lisa and Ellen for their music - it makes such a difference having "live" music! Keep encouraging your friends, family, and co-workers to give Country dancing a try with us.

Any questions, comments, concerns you have, please bring them up to a board member. Looking forward to seeing you on the dance floor!

## So, WHAT Web Developments?

First, did you know that the **Portland SCD Branch** now has a Web page? Keith Swingruber has put together a very nice site, complete with dance photographs and a tartan backdrop. I especially like the "thumbnail" versions of the dance and demo photos, so you can get a preview of a photo before investing the time to download and view the full-blown photo. His web site is at:

[www.teleport.com/~anyware/PDXSCD](http://www.teleport.com/~anyware/PDXSCD)

Check it out!

Now, the **Vancouver USA** group is also close to having a Web page! We have most of the content ready to go, and are ironing out a few formatting wrinkles. The last issue to resolve before we "go public" is the actual address for our Web page.

## Calendar of Events

- Nov 13, 1999 **Portland SCDance Party** Odd Fellow's Hall, 13720 SW Pacific Hwy., Tigard (just north of the Portland Branch's normal practice hall) • 7:30pm
- Dec 15, 1999 **Last Class (of Fall Term)** for the Vancouver class
- Dec 22, 1999 **Christmas Ceilidh**, (public invited!) 7:30-11pm at the Marshall Community Center, Oak/Elm Rooms, 1009 E. McLoughlin Blvd, Vancouver. Bring your ghillies, maybe a talent to share, and desserts and finger food for after the dance!
- Feb 19, 2000 **Vancouver Annual Dinner Dance** - music by Lisa Scott and Linda Danielson; more details as they become available.
- Mar 11, 2000 **Portland SCD Workshop/Ball**
- Mar 18-25, 2000 **Dance Workshop in Hawaii**, on the island of Kauai. Music will be provided by **Alisdair Frasier**. Contact Ken McFarland, 800-822-3435, or email [farlands@ptialaska.net](mailto:farlands@ptialaska.net).

## Why a web page?

The World Wide Web is a "paperless" publishing medium. Class details and calendar events can be "broadcast" much more quickly and reach a wider audience than with, say, a conventional newsletter. The Web page won't replace the newsletter, but who could pass up the opportunity to tell even more people about Scottish Country Dancing in and around Vancouver?

We would also like to let people know about the area artists and businesses which augment or support Scottish Country Dancing, or Scottish culture in general, with a set of links labeled "[Friends of Scottish Country Dance](#)". A *sampling* of some of those friends may be found on this page and on page 4.

If you have any questions or suggestions, or would like to donate towards the web page, please contact us. We'd love to hear from you!



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**Castle Hopping** (continued from page 1)

Eight miles northwest of Pitlochry, in a light drizzle, we were ushered into Blair Castle, the massive, rambling, white-washed mansion of the Dukes of Atholl. ("The Dukes of Atholl Reel" was danced that evening.)

Blair is another castle in which a long list of fugures have stayed: Edward II of England, James V, Mary, Queen of Scots, John Claverhouse ("Bonnie Dundee"), Prince Charlie. Thirty-two rooms of paintings, tapestries, arms, armor, china, costumes, stuffed birds and beasts, and fine furniture are open to the public.

After a tour and dinner, we were piped into the ballroom in a Grand march. We danced under the watchful eye of Neil Gow and his fiddle (enclosed in glass under his portrait).

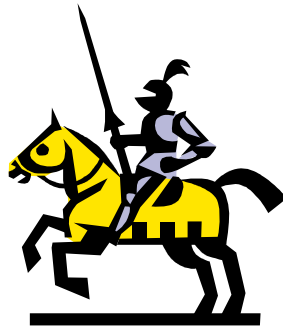
A local gentleman asked me to dance, and if I had not known the late Duke of Atholl died a few years ago without heirs, I would have truly sworn he was a son -- the family resemblance was so pronounced. He introduced himself as "I'm Athole -- spelled A-T-H-O-L-E. -- The other side of the family spell their name ATHOLL." Everyone there who knew him simply called him "Athole".

**Next Dance -- Castle Menzies**

Our next dance was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Z-plan "fortified house", Castle Menzies, 1 1/2 miles from Aberfeldy (Tayside Region).

The property of Menzies family, it was occupied by Cromwell's forces in the 1650's, captured by the Jacobites in 1715 and in 1746 was seized by the (Hanoverian) Duke of Comberland. The Menzies owned the property until 1918. It was purchased by the Menzies Clan Society in 1957.

Our dance program was historic as 10



of the 16 dances were from the Castle Menzies Manuscript of 1749. "Over the Water to Charlie, (New Way)" was the new way in 1749! And the reel enjoyed around the world today, "The Montgomeries Rant" was originally a Strathspey!!

**Cozy Tulloch Castle**

Tulloch Castle at Dingwall (Ross-shire) has a dance hall, which was just lrg enough for our group so no local people joined us. We were shown into a parlor with a fire blazing in the massive fireplace of the small intimate castle. It has a grand wooden staircase leading to the dance hall.

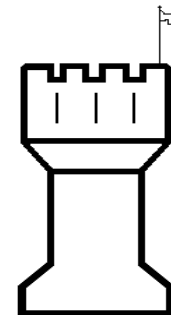
We did peek into a second "great hall", which had a long table set for 56 people and a fireplace at each end. The castle sits on a hill and, with the sun shining, we had a sweeping view of the countryside. One does wonder what the true story is of the name "Reel of Tulloch", a dance performed more often by Highland Dancers than by

Country Dancers.

**Haddo Jouse near Aberdeen**

Deep in Gordon Country (Aberdeenshire) we arrived at Haddo House (a jig of same name) 19 miles north of Aberdeen too late for a tour of the house. We danced with many local people in a specially built hall on the castle grounds. Nothing survives of the castle of the Gordons who held the land from 1429.

In 1644 the castle was destroyed after Sir John Gordon of Haddo was taken prisoner. The present Classical Mansion was built in the years 1731-36 by William Adam for William Gordon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Aberdeen.



The dance "The Gay Gordon" should really be spelled "Gey", Scots for impressive or spectacular. "The Buchan Eightsome" was on our program since it comes from Buchan area of Aberdeenshire. Also, we

*Continued on next page*

*Do you have an item of Celtic interest you would like to see in print?*

You can contact me in any of the following ways:

By mail:

John Shaw - SCD  
PO Box 2438  
Battle Ground, WA 98604-2438

By email: bcjs@pacifier.com

**Castle Hopping** *(continued from page 3)*

danced "Cauld Kail" (cold soup) to the tune "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen." Tho I must say we had delicious hot soup everywhere.

**Airth Castle for the Final Dinner**

Our final dinner was in Airth Castle, by Falkirk (Sterlingshire). Erth (Ardhe or Airdhe in Gaelic) means hill or high. Adam De Erth owned considerable land in 1248 and Fergus De Erth occupied the castle in 1309. The castle sits on a hill overlooking the Forth Valley. The west wing, probably the oldest portion, is a simple square tower with embattlements named the "Wallace Tower." This castle has hosted many historical figures thru the centuries. From 1717 to 1920 it was in possession of the Grahams. In 1971 it was converted into a hotel. We slept in modernized buildings on the castle grounds.

**Final Dance in Edinburgh**

Our final dance was held with many local people joining us in the Assembly Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh. "The Assembly", a private association

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Sylvia Zingesser  
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for dancing, originated in the West Bow (old Edinburgh) in 1710. The moved to Old Assembly Close in 1720. New Assembly Rooms opened in 1746 at Bells Wynd. Then more fashionable venues opened in 1784 at Buccleuch Place behind George Square and in 1783 on George Street in the heart of New Town.

The new rooms, where we danced, opened in 1787 for the Caledonian Hunt Ball.

We, a party of U.S., Canadian, and Scots, danced in the 92x42x40 foot ballroom adorned with three huge crystal chandeliers to a U.S. Band, Music Makers.

Across the hall, in another ballroom, local Scots having an informal ceilidh, danced American Square Dances, "Strip the Willow" and "Posties Jig" to a local band!

Our program featured 17 dances and 4 waltzes and a polka "as danced in the Assembly Rooms from 1795 to 1825".

*M. J. 10 .*