



Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
New Zealand Branch Incorporated

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

President's Report

My first year as President began with welcoming several new members to the Management Committee – Lesley Nicol as Vice President, Ed Duggan as Treasurer, Jeanette Lauder as Youth Coordinator and Fiona McCutcheon as IT Coordinator. Both Lesley and Jeanette have previously served on the Management Committee and I was delighted to welcome them back.

Not long into the year I regretfully accepted Ed Duggan's resignation as Treasurer. I am grateful to Lesley Nicol who stepped in and managed the Treasurer's duties for the remainder of the year.

The Management Committee continued its practice of operating throughout the year using a mix of face-to-face and Zoom meetings. Face-to-face meetings are used for discussion of significant issues, forward planning, and meetings with Advisers, the Editor, Shopkeeper, and School Organisers. These meetings take place over 4 afternoons at Summer School and a day-long mid-year meeting.

Face-to-face meetings are supplemented by bimonthly Zoom meetings used to address current issues and discuss ongoing work by coordinators.

For the first time, at the Nelson Summer School, we offered an informal "Meet the Management Committee" session that was open to all interested parties. This was a great opportunity to hear directly from dancers, who rarely get to chat with the whole committee at one time. Feedback from those attending was positive and we will be running a similar session at this year's summer school.

During the year I have had opportunities to join dancers around the country on the dance floor. To all the clubs and regions who invited me to share their special anniversary dances thank you. I enjoyed meeting your members and especially enjoyed meeting your newer dancers, hearing how they got started, and what Scottish Country Dancing means to them.

So far this year I have visited Knox Club (Auckland), the North Schore Combined Ball, Napier Club, Lower Hutt Club, a Matariki Tea Dance that was part of a SCD musicians' weekend, and of course club events within my own region. There are still some celebrations to attend in the latter part of 2024, including Royal Oak's 50th Anniversary dance and the Canterbury Region Ball.

My thanks to all the members of the Management Committee, I am grateful for your support. Special thanks to Lesley and Joy who are always there with a listening ear and good advice. You make my job a great deal easier. To all our members, please remember that every committee member works hard on behalf of dancers, although much of this work takes place 'behind the scenes.' At the AGM on 1 January 2025, we farewell Jeanette Watson who steps down as our very capable Education and Training Coordinator after three years in that position.

Thank you all for your hard work and support.

Debbie Roxburgh

Vice-President's Report

I was appointed to this position at the AGM January 2024. I continued with the Treasurer's role firstly dealing with the Bank to enable the incoming treasurer to have signing authority as part of the handover. Unfortunately personal circumstances prevented the incoming treasurer from continuing in the role after April. Therefore the committee requested my continuation for the remainder of the year.

A further update to the Summer School guidelines was completed. The changes will take effect after the Wellington Summer School.

Future Summer Schools are a concern for the committee as we have been unable to find an organizer for the 2026/2027 school. We are planning a discussion session at the Wellington School and would consider any fresh ideas or thoughts on the future of the Summer Schools.

I am extremely thankful for the support from Debbie and Joy this year while I have juggled two roles.

Lesley Nicol

Treasurer's Report

At the time of writing the Accounts have yet to be audited, they are complete but may require a couple of small adjustments.

This has been a more stable and normal year for dancing in Regions around New Zealand.

It is pleasing to see an increase in Membership numbers. More members are taking up the email options which are offered at a lower fee, this is reflected as a reduction in income of Branch fees.

The adult single fee (not email) remains this year at \$55.00.

Financial Membership Numbers	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Adult Joint	54	47	42	33	32	27
Adult Joint Email	152	154	163	172	141	154
Adult Single	146	127	106	97	75	66
Adult Single Email	357	375	376	406	382	410
NZ Branch Life	7	8	8	8	8	6
RSCDS Life	5	5	6	5	4	4
RSCDS Life Email	6	6	5	5	4	4
RSCDS Life Family	3	2	1			
Young Adult (18-24)	1	2	2	1	1	1
Young Adult Email (18-24)	5	6	7	5	6	6
Totals	736	732	716	732	653	678

The Nelson Summer School welcomed 35 first time attendees to a total of 123 registrations. The numbers included 63 residents, 43 commuters and 9 teacher preparation students. Very efficient running of the School ensured a small profit of \$4,667.

Scholarships were awarded in 3 categories – Teacher training, Dancing Under 5 years, Dancing over 6 years.

The very successful Teachers Workshop held over Easter led by Graham Donald an overseas examiner was so well supported by NZ and Australian attendees that all costs were covered.

The President has attended a few Regions functions this year and has made use of the Presidents Travel Budget.

Lesley Nicol (Acting Treasurer)

Communications, Publicity and Membership Coordinator's Report

This year has been one of consolidation in my role. It has also been a year with many family potholes, so I have been very appreciative of the patience shown by my fellow Branch Committee members.

I am pleased to have been integral in making a submission to the Society E&T Committee on behalf on the NZ Branch regarding application of Recognition of Prior Learning principles to RSCDS teaching qualifications (particularly the in-house qualifications of Core Training for Instructors and Dance Achievement Award). Our submission was well received and will feed in to the E&T Committee's own work towards this. My thanks to Dr Jenny Ross for her support and guidance in creating this submission.

The membership renewal was achieved with far less panic than last year, and I'm pleased to say NZ Branch membership levels are staying steady at 676.

I am once again indebted to Désirée Patterson for her dedication to producing the Kiwi News three times per year, as well as the NZ Scottish Country Dancer magazine. Even when my world has been chaotic, Désirée has kept the Comms ship steady – thank you Désirée!

I love our SCD community in Aotearoa – we are a passionate lot who embrace our dancing with enthusiasm ... and a little #8 wire thinking. Long may it continue!

Cheers, Su 😊

Su Marshall

Education and Training Coordinator's Report

Teacher Development

9 participants (2x Aust, 7x NZ) took part in the Teacher Preparation class at Nelson 2023/24 Summer School.

A well-attended and (from all reports) highly successful Teachers Workshop was run at Easter 2024. 68 participants were put through their paces by Graham Donald. The feedback responses after the weekend will be incredibly useful in honing thoughts for the next one – thank you to all who took the time to answer the survey. The Branch Committee has resolved to support such a gathering regularly, preferably every 3 years – to align with each E&T Coordinator's term of office.

At Canterbury's request, a 'How-To lead a club' day was organised and run on August 31. Jeanette Watson led 16 participants from the South Island (and the lower North) through teaching and planning exercises and discussion. The Branch Committee is keen to run similar sessions for other Regions or adjacent regions. Region organisation and venue would be matched with Branch-funded tutor travel, for a day course. Regions are encouraged to express interest to the Branch for support for in this course or the standard Basic Teaching Skills course.

Planning is underway for a tutors and mentors class at the Christchurch 2025/26 Summer School. This will be offered as an afternoon class (probably 3 afternoons, with some prior online learning). Tutor TBC. Further details will be available in 2025.

Examinations

Unit 1 candidates have presented for both the March (2 candidates) and October (6 candidates) exams. A great 'pipeline' of new teachers coming through, but with potential Unit 2/3 candidates likely to number up to 15 for 2025/26, some additional planning and discussion with the exam tutor will be needed by the incoming Coordinator.

8 candidates will be participating in the exam class at the Wellington 2024/25 Summer School – 7x Unit 5 (1x resit, 1x Australian, 5x NZ new) and 1x Unit 3 resit. Well done to the candidates for persevering with this Covid-interrupted journey.

Core Training for Instructors

The Branch has provided feedback to the RSCDS on this new initiative (launched Oct 21), but we still see no progress in getting information on who from New Zealand is doing the course, and who has passed. The Branch has recently provided feedback on using Recognised Prior Learning for those who have gained their CTI qualification, when moving to the full Teachers Certificate course.

The CTI scheme offers a different pathway for people interested in teaching at club level and who do not have the time or footwork to go through all the steps leading to full certification as a teacher. The concept of a less formal and less intensive training course is a good one, but there continue to be some further improvements to make. Further information on the course is available on the RSCDS website.

I encourage other eligible teachers to look at doing the CTI Trainer qualification, so that NZ Branch can offer those dancers interested in taking the CTI qualification a Trainer without any "time-difference" issues.

The Branch now pays candidates' exam fees from the Bernice Kelly Bequest – including for CTI and CTI Trainer courses.

Bernice Kelly Bequest

The Branch Committee is asking for feedback from the membership on the use of the Bernice Kelly Bequest, for discussion at the AGM this year.

My personal view is that it should be used to encourage the Branch to try new or extra funding initiatives, rather than funding the costs which should be 'business as usual' for the Branch (venue, tutor and musician costs for mid-year weekend, etc).

The Bequest was targeted for funding for the Teachers Workshop, which was so successful it didn't need the additional funding. The How-To session was funded to the amount equivalent to tutor travel of \$300. As mentioned above, all exam fees are now paid for by the Branch out this Bequest. As a one-off, each current exam (Unit 3/5) candidate has been provided with a contribution to expenses (\$100), for the mid-year weekend.

I would encourage the incoming Coordinator to develop a scheme for spending, rather than the ad hoc 'how can we spend something of this money' thoughts I've been working with.

Music

Lynne Scott, the Branch Music Advisor, continues her great work to encourage musicians to play for Scottish Country Dancing, and personal mentoring activities at Upper Hutt and Capital City clubs, advising on programmes, providing suitable music, arranging and supervising rehearsals and supporting performances.

Lynne has written articles for the Wellington Region newsletter, Kiwi News and NZ Scottish Country Dancer, topics included a summary of 2023 activities, a review of the Nelson Summer School Musicians Course, and a look at the instruments used in NZ's dance bands.

Lynne has taught an introductory Musicians Workshop in Wellington, and a Workshop for less experienced dancers on the way music fits into SCD. A Matariki Weekend Workshop for SCD musicians focused on mentoring issues, and culminated in a well-attended Tea Dance in Levin. She has consulted with the E&T Coordinator and organizing committee on the Musicians Class for Wellington Summer School, the Exam Musician and international musicians for Wellington Summer School, and the 2024 Teachers' Workshop. Lynne arranged for the supply of all required keyboards for the Summer School.

An interesting extension of playing for SCD was a foray into fiddle+cello, for the Wellington Region Early Dances Day. A common combination before accordions became popular, this gave the dancers a feel for dancing in the "early days".

Lynne is available to consult on tunes being sought, instruments, amplification, or any other music-related question you may have.

Finally

Thank you to all the teachers, candidates, interested others, and Branch Committee members for my (memorable) 3-year term. I hope you have all got something out of the work I've put into kick-starting Education & Training after the Covid pause. My

best wishes to the incoming Coordinator – just do what you can do, and don't open your mouth unless you are happy to follow through! Remember that 'We could...' and 'Why doesn't someone....' are phrases that just get you into trouble.

Jeanette Watson

Information Technology Coordinator's Report

As the first new IT Coordinator in at least 5 years, it took a bit to get my head around how things were done. However, now that I have my feet on the ground I have achieved a few things:

- The website now has a New Zealand feel about it. The stock Scotland photos in the header of each page have gone and been replaced with bright New Zealand photos. Photos on some of the sub-pages have been changed too. The youth pages are a work in progress while I wait for approved photos of our junior members.
- There have been back-end changes to the contact forms to comply with industry best practise. These changes will make it easier to update each time a recipient changes since they are now using their domain addresses (.e. secretary@dancescottish.org.nz).
- Supporting other coordinators requirements for website updates, especially within the youth space.
- Updated the scholarship online forms to match the new paper forms as per requirements.
- Some of the website's sub-pages have been modified to be more mobile friendly. I am still working my way through the list, however, the one that is the most beneficial was the calendar page, which is now accessible on a mobile device.
- Monitoring of spam emails. We get hit by hundreds of spam emails a week by robots scanning websites for addresses; most of these get blocked at server level, however, some still get through. Sadly, this is the way of the future.

Fiona McCutcheon

Youth Coordinator's Report

During this year my focus has been on establishing and maintaining communication with those groups where young people are dancing. Registered Junior Associate Member (JAM) numbers are very slowly increasing with a few clubs also having registered. Unfortunately a few groups are still in recess but it has been wonderful to see some new groups getting underway. There are a small number of clubs which have a few young dancers attending their regular club nights, with some of them registering as JAMs.

The registration form for JAMs has been updated. We are encouraging Junior JAMs (those up to 12 years old) to also become Junior Members of the RSCDS. This category was introduced in the latter part of 2023 and is free for them. On

registration, they will receive a Junior Handbook that allows them to track their dancing journey. We now have a process in place for ordering these.

The Summer School Scholarship application form for JAMs has also been updated. This awards a scholarship to two applicants to attend the full school. Two scholarships have recently been established to encourage younger dancers to attend Summer Schools. One is for a Young Adult Member of the Branch (aged 18 to 24 years) and the second is a Family Scholarship.

Two issues of Jigs And More have been produced so far this year with a further issue currently being prepared. It has been pleasing to have input from groups around the country as it helps to make the content relevant to our young dancers.

At the Teachers' Workshop over Easter there was considerable interest in discussions relating to working with junior groups with teachers experienced in this field sharing some of their knowledge and experiences.

The "Working with young people" document has been reviewed and considered suitable for our purpose at this time.

Medal Tests remain on hold at the moment, but if groups are interested in looking at these, and have sufficient numbers, these could be undertaken. I am currently working to summarise records of candidates who have sat and passed these tests along with records of when and where previous Medal Tests have been held.

The commitment and support of many teachers and individual dancers who work with our young people often goes unnoticed. My personal thanks to you all, as without your commitment and dedication their involvement is not guaranteed.

Jeanette Lauder

Shopkeeper's Report

This year has been quite busy for the shop with a steady stream of email requests for books and CDs throughout the year.

The shop began the year with a visit to Kaiwaka in Northland for the Labour Weekend school, which was very successful and a lot of fun. As usual, the shop attended Summer School, this year in Stoke, just outside Nelson. Next it was to the Easter weekend in Wellington for the Teachers' Workshop, and then to Kings' Birthday weekend school in Raglan, organised by the Waikato/Bay of Plenty region, rounded out the events for the year.

The main trading for the year again came from sales of Book 53 and CDs from the RSCDS in celebration of the 100th anniversary.

The shop is looking forward to Summer School in Wellington and having the opportunity to display the range of stock to teachers and dancers.

Sue Pearson