

# THE RANT



No. 182

November 2020

## Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

### Hunter Valley Branch (Inc.)

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New Hunter Valley Website: <https://www.rscds.org.au/hunter-valley.html>

Arthur's Scottish Country Dance Links <http://users.tpg.com.au/juliasm/Scottish-Country.html>

Please send reports, articles, photographs, flyers etc. for inclusion in the March 2021 Rant to [hvrant@gmail.com](mailto:hvrant@gmail.com) no later than 15 February 2021.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

While this Calendar of Events is as up to date as possible at the end of October, some further events may unfortunately have to be changed or cancelled due to social distancing regulations and the restrictions for the halls we hire for dancing. Please check on the HV Coming Events page ([Link](#)) and Arthur's Scottish Dance Links page ([Link](#)) for changing information.

(Ψ Most current program or event details in this RANT)

### 2020

November	6-8	HV	Riverwood Downs Weekend - <b>Cancelled</b>
November	28	HV	St Andrew's Social - <b>Cancelled</b>
December	4	HV	End of year get-together at Warner's Bay Foreshore: Bring your chair and picnic. From 6pm, dancing from 7pm.
Dec-Jan	28-5	NZ	New Zealand Summer School - <b>Cancelled</b>

### 2021

January, Tues	5-26	HV	Dancing on the Foreshore from 7pm
January	27	HV	First Gosford class for 2021
February	5	HV	First Colleges class for 2021
February	15	HV	Closing date for March 2021 RANT articles etc.
March	1	HV	First Strath Hunter class for 2021
March	19	HV	Colleges Opening Social
March	27	HV	Ψ Welcome Social at Dora Creek
November	5-7	HV	Ψ Riverwood Downs Weekend

### Summer and Winter Schools

- 2021 Canberra Winter School Cancelled
- 2022 Brisbane Winter School postponed until 2024
- 2022 Perth Winter School at Muresk will be from 25 September to 2 October 2022
- 2023 Sydney Winter School



## BRANCH NEWS

### Secretary's Report

Unfortunately, we are still not able to dance as we are used to doing. Some RSCD clubs have commenced but have only the one set of dancers. Other forms of dancing have also begun, dancing with the same partner all evening as well as socially distancing from others, which is a bit difficult in SCD!

The Committee has decided to cancel the St Andrews' Social for 2020 as the Adamstown Hall will only allow 20 people inside. It is hoped that next year will allow us to resume dancing, commencing with the usual "Dancing on the Foreshore" at Warner's Bay each Tuesday in January. With luck, classes should commence at their usual time in 2021.

By now you will have received the email version of the 2020 AGM and following the instructions, a new Committee will have been elected. The results of the election will be emailed to you after the voting has completed. It has been a pleasure to meet regularly with Ros, Marney, Kathryn, Sandra and Simone to discuss RSCD matters and to plan future events. I wish the new Committee all the best as we move forward in these difficult times.

Allyn Douglass



### **Basic Teaching Skills Course - (Sometimes known as Unit 0)**

This unit is designed for people who would like a little basic knowledge of teaching so they can fill in for an absent teacher but don't want to do the full examination course. There are no exams or tests in the course. If you have attended and taken part in the course you will receive the certificate.

The RSCDS website has a long list of possible topics to be covered (see below) and I will cover all of them but some will be very briefly covered whilst others will be covered in depth. I will concentrate on building up the skills of how to understand the written instructions for a dance and then how to teach it to a class. And then I'll cover how to structure an evening's program and also some of the skills in running a class. These are the key skills for running a class on a short-term basis.

The course will probably be held at the Dora Creek hall and be run over two Saturdays and you will spend some of the time listening to me and some of the time practising your teaching. I think you will find it an interesting and challenging course.

There is no cost for the course. Please let me know if you're intending to come and what Saturdays you are free in January and February. Phone 49261840. Email [rosmckie@gmail.com](mailto:rosmckie@gmail.com)

Ros McKie

#### The official suggested syllabus from the RSCDS web site

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. The needs of your class   | 9. Working with a musician  |
| 2. Dance analysis  | 10. Warm up and cool down   |
| 3. Lesson Planning   | 11. How to break down the basic steps<br>for teaching to beginners  |
| 4. Class Management  | 12. Guidance on teaching basic<br>formations.                       |
| 5. Use of Voice, particularly in<br>rhythmic counting and coaching | 13. How to build up the elements of a<br>dance and put it together. |
| 6. How to re-cap   | 14. Self-evaluation   |
| 7. MC skills   |   |
| 8. Selection of music  |   |



### **Full teacher training course**

Ros will also offer the full teacher training course which is quite a heavy commitment with three exams - theory, your own dancing, and a teaching segment. The exams will probably be held in November 2021. Let her know if you are interested - [rosmckie@gmail.com](mailto:rosmckie@gmail.com)



### **Farewell to Jan McCudden**

Jan McCudden, a long-term member and teacher of Gosford Class, Hunter Valley Branch, and Sydney Branch is moving to Queensland. She will be greatly missed.

She started Scottish Country Dancing at the Gosford Class with teacher Cath Bonner. Her background in Highland Dancing meant that she made rapid progress and she joined a small group of dancers who were interested in teaching and they made the first group in the Hunter Valley to go through under the new Teaching Syllabus.



As she lived in Gosford she taught at the Gosford Class and helped organize many things for them. She taught Branch Classes and ran Branch functions such as the Welcome Social and the Ball. She was also a member of Sydney Branch and taught classes for them.

Sydney dancers were lucky to find that Jan was a regular commuter. Having family commitments in Sydney meant that Jan was available to teach in the city and Scots on The Rocks were pleased that Jan not only danced there but volunteered to teach the class and more than dozen courses for new dancers since 2006. Many of Sydney's newer dances have Jan to thank for getting them hooked on SCD.

She has also taught at the Killara class for the last few years.

She served on the Hunter Valley Branch Committee and was a valuable member of the committee for the last Winter School run by HV. She is the Treasurer for ATA Committee (Australian Teachers' Alliance which is currently being run by HV).

Jan will be greatly missed but she has promised to make trips back to attend Branch functions.

Ros McKie



## ARTICLES

### Program for the RSCDS “Dance Scottish – A Summer Celebration”

In July, RSCDS Headquarters in Edinburgh asked Ros McKie if she could produce a half hour program for broadcast in their “Dance Scottish – A Summer Celebration” week, featuring the Hunter Valley Branch as representatives for Australia. Ros conceived and produced a really great program assisted by Arthur Kingsland who did the filming and computer work, Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt who played music and Angus McGregor who partnered Ros in the teaching of a dance that I had written.

The video, which was shown on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July, is available on the RSCDS Dance Scottish At Home website and can be viewed and downloaded here ([Link](#)). Please be aware that the video file is extremely large and can be viewed or downloaded on a computer with an unlimited download plan but is not suitable for use via a mobile phone with a limited plan as it may ‘eat up’ all your allocation for the month! The program provided by the Teachers’ Association of Canada is shown before the HV program, which starts at around 58 minutes into the video. Alternatively, see Arthur’s Scottish Country Dance Links page ([Link](#)) which provides links to separate sections of our program in the Summer Celebration section.

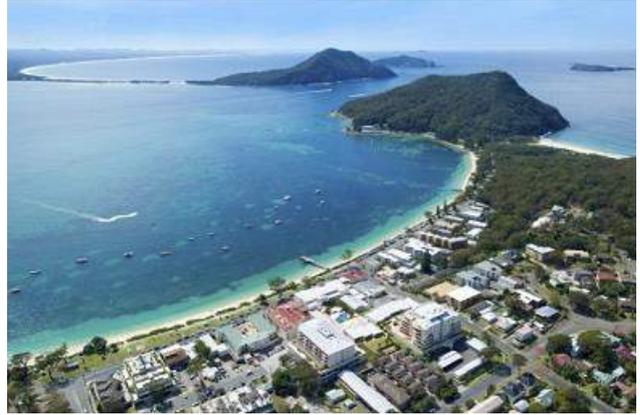
The first video section is about Australian Winter Schools from 1976 to 2019 and Ros describes these with the aid of photographs.



Attendees at the first Australian Winter School, which was hosted by the Hunter Valley Branch at Tocal in 1976.



The committee for the 2018 Winter School:  
Fran Bucello, Kathryn Bourke, Ros McKie,  
Marney Wilson and Jan McCudden



The Hunter Valley Branch Winter School in  
2018 was held at Shoal Bay, north of  
Newcastle.

The second section was provided by Chris and Catherine who played wonderful music for us in their home. Some of Catherine's artworks can (just about) be seen on the wall behind her piano and one of Angus Fitchet is reproduced here. Chris and Catherine's web site can be accessed here ([Link](#)) and their Facebook page here ([Link](#)); they are working on a new CD which will hopefully be available later this year.

The tunes Chris and Catherine played were:

First set, from "Castle of Mey", a track on their forthcoming new dance album:

Prince Charlie, The Marquis of Tullybardine, Rannie MacLellan, Father John Angus Rankin

Second set, also from that dance album, two tunes composed by Angus Fitchet:

Angus Fitchet's Compliments to Ian Powrie, Golden Harvest

Third set: J.B. Reel, The Shepherdess, J.B. Reel

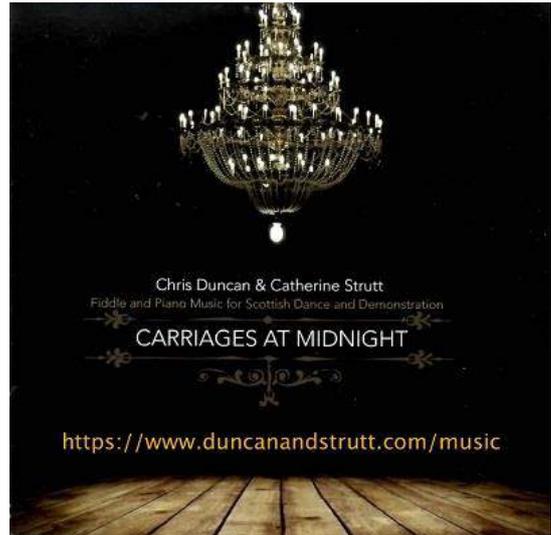


Chris Duncan and Catherine Strutt



Artwork of Angus Fitchet

The third section shows Ros teaching a dance that I have written, called "Let's Get This Sorted". Ros is partnered by Angus and accompanied by six chairs; three of the chairs have kilts placed on them and three have pretty skirts! They are dancing at Marney's place. We have used a lovely Strathspey for the dance from Chris and Catherine's Carriages at Midnight CD, track Dr. Neil S. McLeod.



The dance is mainly very easy but with unusual orientation which may prove a bit challenging! I have specified Strathspey music for the dance (because I love it and it provides more "thinking time") but Reels or Jigs or a combination of two music types could be used; see the crib and diagram here ([Link](#)) and the dance description here ([Link](#)). Have fun dancing it 😊

A huge thankyou to Ros, Arthur, Chris, Catherine, Angus and Marney!

Julia Smith



### Comments on the Program

One of the features of the programs the RSCDS put out was that the dancers who signed in could chat on line and comment on what was going happening on the screen.

Once Chris and Catherine started playing the comments came thick and fast - up to 10 comments a minute. All of them were complimentary of course! Some of them were –

- *Such lively music!*
- *Swingin' music! Brilliant to hear such a range.*
- *I challenge anyone not to tap your feet to that!*
- *Fabulous music!*
- *Superb music from both piano and fiddle!*
- *Thank you lovely music. Best regards from Buenos Aires!*
- *Fantastic music*
- *Wow. So great!*
- *I'm loving this!*
- *Amazing music!*
- *Wonderful music!! Oh my goodness! Have to get up and dance a bit!!*
- *Great music from Oz!*

There were several requests for information about their CDs and there was an enthusiastic follower who gave the name of their latest CD.

When the section on the dance started there was a pause for a while and then the comments started. Some were to do with the idea of presenting the dance by the use of suitably decorated chairs (with Covid 19 restrictions I could only have one dancer to help me; the rest had to be presented by chairs)–

- *I really appreciate the “ladies” chairs...with the mens side a different top...WELL DONE!*
- *Love the dressed chairs and how nicely they move!*
- *Great chairography*

Some were to do with the dance itself

- *Perfect dance*
- *When we finally get dancing again, I'll teach that dance!*
- *Thank you all, lovely presentation and a dance we should all enjoy.*

At the end of our section there were several complimentary comments. Typical was -

*What an absolutely fantastic presentation! Thank you to all of the participants who made this happen.*

but I really liked the one from a Scottish dancer in New Zealand who was watching it very early in the morning –

*Many thanks. I am at work and a passing security person popped in while I was dancing the Strathspey as he is required to query “any unusual behaviour”!*

Ros McKie



### John Drewry Dance Collection

John Drewry is probably the most prolific and most popular deviser of SCD dances. He published books and leaflets from the 1960s onwards and when he died in 2014 he left the copyright of his dances to the TAC (Teachers' Association of Canada). TAC's first action was to create a comprehensive list of all dances written by him. Their second action will be to prepare all of the dances in digital format. As you can imagine, this is a huge undertaking with more than 800 dances on the list, so it will take some time. It will be available to all dancers, not just TAC members.

You can read updates about it on the TAC website [tac-rscds.org](http://tac-rscds.org) ([Link](#)). In **Latest News** click on **Index of John Drewry's Dances**.

If you have any questions about this project, or would like to share some information with them, contact them at [drewry@tac-rscds.org](mailto:drewry@tac-rscds.org).

Ros McKie



## TAC Summer Plans

### Introduction by Ros McKie:

The RSCDS had asked the organisers of the various Winter and Summer Schools around the world to give a half hour presentation on their school. The account of our Hunter Valley presentation is above. On the same night there was a presentation from TAC (Teachers' Association of Canada) on their Summer School which was to be held in Calgary and should have been in operation at that very time. Part of the presentation was a poem spoken by Elinor Vandergrift and it's printed below with her permission.

Our best laid plans gang aft agley.  
 COVID19 got in the way  
 For us to return to Calgary  
 For Summer School of TAC

We'll read reports, take in the news  
 From leaders all who shared our views.  
 Virtual High Fives across the room  
 Our meeting now will be via Zoom.

Soon we hope we'll dance again  
 Feeling our lives are safe and sane -  
 For now we'll jig to CD bands -  
 Remembering too to "WASH OUR HANDS"

Elinor M. Vandegrift, Seattle, July 2020

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### Gosford Picnic Get Together

With no dancing going on Dianna suggested we have a picnic get together in order to catch up with each other. So, on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 23 of us met up at Shelly Beach on the Central Coast.



As there were more than 20 of us, we set up two tables with sanitizer on each and formed two groups to meet NSW Covid 19 rules. Everyone bought their own food, drink, chairs etc. and, as people arrived, they chose which group to sit in. During the afternoon, we swapped groups a bit so that everyone got a chance to have a chat.



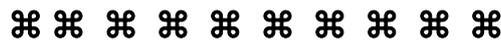
The spot chosen looked out over the ocean and we were lucky enough to catch sight of some whales playing not too far out from the shore. We had both shade and sunshine as well so a great spot to enjoy our lunch.

It was a wonderful stress free afternoon with lots of talking about what we had all been up to during the year. All agreed we cannot wait to get back to dancing as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, Gosford Dancers have been enjoying grandchildren, gardening, walking, reading, learning to use zoom or other media to keep in touch with family and friends and travelling around NSW.



Here's hoping for a successful vaccine next year so that we can get our dancing shoes on again.

Keep well everyone,  
Sue Mackenzie



## Riverwood Downs – 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Well, as you've all heard by now, the Riverwood weekend for 2020 has been cancelled due to the Corona virus pandemic.

We were very sad to have to do this. It's the first time in over 30 years that there hasn't been a Scottish dancing weekend at Riverwood Downs on the first weekend in November.

However, we are still hoping to be able to run the weekend again in 2021.

If so, the dates will be as above – 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> November 2021.



And Chris and Catherine will be playing again, so let's hope it can run!!

Watch this space!!

Marney Wilson – *email-* [Riverwoodweekend@yahoo.com](mailto:Riverwoodweekend@yahoo.com)

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## Memories of Riverwood Downs since 2009



**2010 Marcia and Helene**  
Helene was in charge of catering until 2019

This year will be the first time since 2009 that I have not been getting organized for my annual trip to Riverwood Downs for a weekend of dancing, socializing and eating. Just another one of the casualties of the Coronavirus. The Colleges Branch has organized this weekend for 35 years – this would have been the 36th Riverwood Downs weekend.



**2012 Heather and Brian Yare**  
Brian organised the weekend for many many years

I started dancing in 2009 and was encouraged to come along to Riverwood weekend. It is an excellent way to experience socials for beginners as it is a relaxing weekend with no dress code and no pressure. I had a great time learning more about Scottish Country Dancing as well as meeting people from other branches and making new friends.



**2013 Julia, our current Rant editor and her partner Arthur**

In 2013 I began getting interested in photographing the dancing which added another interest to the weekend. It is interesting to see the variety of dancers that have attended the weekend over the years I have been taking photos.



**2014 Attendees from the first Riverwood Downs weekend**

In 2014 there was a double celebration with Friday night being Halloween and it being the 30<sup>th</sup> Riverwood Downs weekend. I was in charge of decorations which I

had great fun in putting together before the weekend. With many willing helpers we were able to decorate on Friday for Halloween and then on Saturday to celebrate 30 years of Riverwood Downs weekends.



**2014 Chris and Catherine play for our Halloween Social**

Chris and Catherine provided fantastic live music for the weekend which we enjoyed so much that they now come up every other year.



**2015 Ivor and Richard preparing the BBQ for Friday**

In 2016 and 2018 we had the added bonus of fireworks put on by Riverwood Downs on the Saturday night. We stopped dancing for half an

hour to enjoy the show and then trooped back to the hall to continue where we left off.



**2016 Ros and Jeanette, two of our teachers for that weekend**

Over the years, I have really enjoyed that weekend in November. It has been great to meet dancers from all over Australia and overseas, get taught interesting dances by different teachers every year, relax with a drink in the evening as no worry about driving, and enjoy the wonderful music and dancing at the evening socials.

Thank you Colleges for organizing our Riverwood Downs weekend every year and here's hoping it will go ahead next year.

Sue Mackenzie



**Our current caterers and general "fix it" team, Linda and Rob**



**2019 Dancing in the Bunkhouse**



**Our current organizer, Marney with one of our teachers, Simone**

## RSCDS Hunter Valley

### WELCOME Easy Dance Social

Dora Creek Community Hall

2 Doree Place, Dora Creek

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021 from 1:30 to 4:30

Dancing commences at 2pm

Walk throughs for all dances

Devised by Ros McKie



#### ~ Program ~

1. The Fairy Ring	J32	Circle	Ian Boyd Happy to Meet You
2. The Dunedin Festival Dance	R32	Round the Room	Dunedin 4
3. 12 Coates Crescent	S4x32	4c set	RSCDS Bk 40
4. New Year Jig	J8x32	3c/4c set	Maureen Robson RSCDS Bk 51
5. The Highlandman's Umbrella	R4x32	Sq.Set	A.Holden Glasgow Diamond Jubilee
6. The Silver Grey	S3x32	3c set	Roy Goldring G&S Dances 2
7. Fair Enough	J4x32	4c set	Liza Halpenny RSCDS Bk51
8. The Piper and The Penguin	R88	Sq.Set	Roy Goldring Scotia Suite
9. Friendships	S4x32	4c set	Jennie Miller RSCDS Graded 3
10. St Andrew's Fair	J8x32	3c/4c set	Roy Goldring 5 SCDs
11. The Deil Amang the Tailors	R8x32	3c/4c set	RSCDS Bk14

**There is no charge but please bring a small plate for afternoon tea**

Enquiries to Allyn Douglass at [hvrscds@gmail.com](mailto:hvrscds@gmail.com) or 0422747965

