

Westerton Scottish Country Dance Club

Introduction

The Westerton SCDC was formed in 1931 by a group of enthusiastic dancers from the area. The dance Mrs Rae of Westerton (32 Strathspey for 3 couple set, music The Silver Star) was devised by Marion McIntosh in October 2006 for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Club by Janet Rae.

The dance notes state "Janet Rae attended one of Miss Milligan's classes and persuaded her with a few of her stalwarts to set up the club. It was only a wooden hall at that time, and so many people turned up that half of them had to dance outside in the street".

Picture of the Hall opposite shows a playlet performed by local children for soldiers during the war.



The book 'A Garden Suburb for Glasgow' by Maureen Whitelaw, about the development of the Westerton community, has an interesting page on our Club *Take your partners please*. This provides comments on that first evening and pictures of the later Diamond Jubilee, (see full text on the next page).



The Club still meets in Westerton area.

Over the years we have enjoyed the instruction of a number of notable teachers, including Marion McIntosh.

Our present teacher is usually Walter Proven who maintains the tradition of providing helpful and clear teaching while ensuring the enjoyable social aspect of our evenings.

We meet weekly on a Wednesday evening from 7.30 to 9.30 September to April.

The Club is a Linked Group of RSCDS Glasgow Branch, but an independent organisation.



Club organisation

Aim: The aim of the club is to meet and enjoy Scottish Country Dancing.

The income and all monies and funds of the club shall be used solely for furthering the objects of the club and for no other purpose.

The management of the Club is invested in the Committee which is elected by the members at the AGM. The Committee usually consist of a Chair, Treasurer and ordinary Committee members.

AGM: The AGM is held once a year, when the audited accounts are received.

Subscriptions: The year is divided into two blocks, September to December and January to April. Members pay a subscription for each block. Dancers who come irregularly may pay a fee on a weekly basis for those evenings they attend.

Dissolution: Should the Club be dissolved, and after all debts, claims, obligations and expenses have been paid and met, any surplus shall be donated to charities connected with Scottish Country Dancing as decided by the members.

October 2022

TAKE YOUR PARTNERS PLEASE

In the autumn of 1931 two local residents, Mr and Mrs Rae attended a demonstration of country dancing in the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross. The evening was so entertaining that Mrs Rae was convinced that a Country Dance Society would be very popular in Westerton. Wasting no time she hired the Village Hall, arranged for a demonstration team and printed the tickets herself despite her family thinking she was crazy. She had the last laugh when all the tickets, which cost 10/- sold quickly. Half of the money was to cover expenses while the other half was handed over to the Hall Committee so the piano could be overhauled.

On the appointed evening the demonstration was provided by a group of country dance teachers under the direction of Miss Milligan who was also a tutor of Dancing at the Jordanhill Training College. They were very warmly received and after the first dance had been completed members of the audience were invited to try it out for themselves. Much to Miss Milligan's surprise everyone got up to dance so they had to be divided into two groups for a trial run. Thus the evening progressed with the villagers trying every dance that was demonstrated. When the display was over some villagers helped Mrs Rae ask all those present if they would be interested in forming a Country Dance Society. Around forty people pledged their support for the venture which was the maximum number that that could be comfortably accommodated in the Hall. In later years this was increased to sixty with more on the waiting list. Two of the demonstrators, Miss Gordon and Miss Calder agreed to teach the new Society. The classes ran from October till March. There was usually a Christmas Dance for members and friends with another at the close of the session. James Bryans' Band provided the music on these occasions.

At the outbreak of the World War II there was a lull in tuition as the two teachers had been evacuated with their school classes but the dancing classes were soon in full swing again when they returned.

In 1952 the Society celebrated its 21st anniversary with a Dance in the Bearsden Burgh Hall attended by 130 devotees who had a very enjoyable evening. The two teachers who had been with the Society for all that time were presented with Iona brooches from the class. The only sad note was that Mrs Rae had died just before the event so she was unable to share the jubilee of the club she had worked so hard to create.

The Country Dance Society is still going strong having celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1991 with two of its early members participating.

Diamond Jubilee cake baked by Mr Paton



Miss Young, one of the original members, cutting the Diamond Jubilee cake at the celebration Dance in Milngavie Town Hall. Mrs Manderson, the President of the club, is by her side.



'A Garden Suburb for Glasgow' by Maureen Whitelaw