

## History of LSCDC Weekend Workshops

If the world had unfolded as we expected a year ago, members of the **Lethbridge Scottish Country Dance Club** (LSCDC) would now be excitedly gearing up for the Club's 25th Weekend Dance and Music Workshop and Ball, planned for April 2021. Instead, in a 9 November 2020 email, LSCDC President Cheryl Reynolds announced that the Executive had reluctantly decided to postpone that Workshop to 2022 due to uncertainty with the Covid-19 situation. The unprecedented postponement caused the Club's teachers, Fiona Miller and Gail Michener, to reflect on the history of the past 24 Workshops hosted by the Lethbridge Scottish Country Dance Club. Because we discovered there are many aspects to that history, we will split the information into two essays, the second one to follow in a later newsletter.

### **Workshop History 1** *Written by Gail Michener with input from Fiona Miller January 2021*

Scottish Country Dancing (SCD) came to Lethbridge in 1981 from the combined efforts of SCD teacher Sandy Bain and interested participant Kathy Green who had encountered SCD as a student in USA. They planned for evening dance classes at the University of Lethbridge Fitness Centre starting in September, but before then Sandy was reassigned by his employer to another city, potentially leaving the incipient group with no qualified teacher. Fortuitously, newly married couple, Fiona and David Miller, emigrated from Glasgow in July 1981 for David to take up his new post as a physiotherapist at the Lethbridge Municipal Hospital. Both were, and still are, SCD dancers. More importantly, Fiona had obtained her SCD teaching credentials in 1978 and could immediately replace Sandy as the new group's teacher.

Although Sandy Bain did not have the opportunity to teach regular classes in Lethbridge, he was invited to return and teach at the 1985 LSCDC Weekend Workshop.

The fledgling Club was ready to host its first SCD Workshop in the 1982-83 dance year. The chosen timing was April 1983, after which it became traditional for LSCDC Workshops to be held in early spring, usually within the first 2 weeks of April (19 workshops), occasionally in late March (3 times), and in mid-April once. The variable timing of Easter precluded a set timing of, say, the first weekend in April, but when feasible the Club tried to include Fiona's birth date of 4 April in the Workshop Weekend!

The first 11 LSCDC Weekend Workshops were held annually from 1983 through 1993 after which the next 13 Workshops were hosted biennially in spring of odd-numbered years from 1995 through 2019, alternating with the Red Deer SCD group.

From the outset in 1983, the Weekend Dance Workshop encompassed 3 days, with a Friday evening ceilidh, Saturday day-time dance classes followed by an evening Banquet and Ball, finishing with a combined class on Sunday morning. Conventionally, three levels of dance classes taught by three invited teachers were held on Saturday morning and early afternoon, with two exceptions. Two classes were held at the first Workshop in 1983, one taught by a teacher from Winnipeg and the other by local teacher Fiona, pregnant with daughter Emma Claire at the time. In 1995 unusually low registration led to consolidation from three to two dance classes with two invited teachers at the twelfth Workshop.

Over the 24 Workshops, 54 individuals have been invited to teach dance classes, of which most (43) were invited once, a few (9) two or three times, and Robert McOwen and Ruth Jappy were guest teachers on four occasions each. Although many of the guest teachers have been Scottish immigrants

or of Scottish heritage, only two were invited directly from Scotland. The other guest teachers have come from Canada (32) or the USA (20).

Effective 1999, a Saturday music class taught by a guest musician teacher was added to the Weekend Workshop. Seven musicians have been invited once and the other two, Barbara McOwen and Muriel Johnstone, twice each. The majority of guest musicians have come from the USA (6), with two from Canada, and Muriel from USA in 2003 and from Canada in 2009 before she returned to Scotland permanently. Though the guest musicians' chosen instrument has most commonly been fiddle (6), followed by keyboard (4) and accordion (1), music classes have been open to players with any instrumentation, including recorder, guitar, and bagpipe chanter.

Many modifications have occurred in the structure and organization of LSCDC Weekend Workshops over the intervening 40 years, and these will be covered in the second history essay. Let's finish now with some information on the Saturday night Ball programme.

In the early years through to 1987, the Ball was comprised of 21 dances, then 18 dances through to 2007, further reduced to 16 dances for the past 6 Workshops. Two factors account for these changes: increasing average age of dancers and an appreciation that musicians have a much greater demand placed on them than the dancers. Unlike dancers, musicians cannot opt out of performing a particular dance and they have no repetitions in which they are not participating. With the shorter programme, musicians are much more willing to encore a popular dance. Thus, our 16-dance programme is a happy confluence of preferences for dancers and musicians alike.

The LSCDC has been fortunate to have musicians play for all but the first two Balls, which used recorded music in 1983 and 1984. Our Ball musicians have come from British Columbia (Schiehallion; Alex Jappy Trio), Manitoba (Ken Natrass and Ron Krug Duo), Alberta (Christine Baker Watson; GlenMorin), and Scotland (Jim Lindsay & Muriel Johnstone Duo).

Fiona attended all 24 LSCDC Weekend Workshops, and Gail missed only the 1983 Workshop because she did not discover SCD until spring of 1984.



LSCDC dancers at 24<sup>th</sup> LSCDC Weekend Dance and Music Workshop 2019

**Find the SCD terms**  
*Designed by Fiona Miller*  
*with input from Gail Michener*

Search in the puzzle for the **25 SCD terms** listed below.  
 Terms can be horizontal (read either left-to-right or right-to-left) or  
 vertical (read top-to-bottom or bottom-to-top).  
 Some letters may be used more than once; some letters may not be needed.  
 Ignore spaces between words within a term.

U E R I T E R D N A E C N A V D A  
 E R N I B A L L E N O R T E P Q K  
 D I D O U B L E T R I A N G L E S  
 A G B H D B Y E P S H T A R T S J  
 N H A U J O C I R C L E F U W A K  
 E T L P G U O S R E N R O C L D S  
 M H A U J R N C A S T O F F E N T  
 O A N T H R N I A H C S E I D A L  
 R N C S L E K P R O P M I L N O T  
 P D E A L L E M A N D E O M O Z A  
 Z S I C I N W O D D A E L Y R S R  
 J A N J P E E R H T F O L E E R G  
 D C L B O W A N D C U R T S E Y E  
 T R I R I G H T S A N D L E F T S  
 O O N T H G I E F O E R U G I F T  
 N S E T A N D C A S T O U R N E E  
 K S A K E T T E S S U O P D Q J T

*The following 25 Scottish Country Dance terms appear in the above puzzle.*

advance and retire	allemande	balance in line	bourrel
bow and curtsy	cast off	cast up	circle
corners	double triangles	figure of eight	knot
ladies chain	lead down	petronella	poussette
promenade	reel of three	right hands across	rights and lefts
rondel	set and cast	strathspey	targe
			tournee