

## WATFORD AND WEST HERTS SCOTTISH SOCIETY

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<http://www.watfordscottish.org.uk>

### Facebook page

Watford and West Herts Scottish Society

## **NEWSLETTER FOR MAY 2017**

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – "THE YEAR OF THE DANCING CAT"**

The past year has flown by so quickly it only seems a couple of months since I took over from Duncan as President and yet, as I think of it, we have packed in a lot. Stuart has increased our social media presence and has adopted a dancing cat theme (the internet was created for people to read posts about cats). By 'liking' other societies' pages and posts he has increased our reach when posting about our events and attracted new visitors. If you have Facebook do please visit and 'like' our page <https://www.facebook.com/WatfordScottish/> Our Summer social next month will have a dancing cat theme. Our website appeared to crash last November but it had in fact been taken down by the hosting company by mistake. Thank you to Andy Weiner for getting the website back up and keeping it updated with our events. I have really enjoyed the past year and in approximately reverse order, this is a summary of society activities.

We joined forces with the societies from Harrow, Wembley, Greenford and Hayes to raise funds for charity at the West MACS Charity Ball. This year the event was at Allum Hall with music by Craigellachie and in aid of The Venture Trust.

We had an outstanding Caledonian Ball. It was well attended, we had wonderful music from Marian Anderson, the Chairman of the RSCDS, Helen Russell, attended and presented a quaich to Stuart Kreloff for his silver jubilee as our secretary, Duncan and Zena produced a wonderful spread of food and I was particularly gratified that so many of our members attended including several from our beginners class. The evening was expertly hosted by our MCs Stuart and Rose. The Ball rehearsal was also well attended, even by some who couldn't make the ball itself. Rose, in particular, puts in an extraordinary amount of effort to make this event a success. Her efforts have certainly paid off, Watford holds a good reputation for hosting a Caledonian Ball well worth attending. I hope that increased use of social media promotion and (when we get it) the ability to accept payments online will lessen her workload in future. Many thanks to everyone who helped promote our ball.

Stuart and Rose attended the RSCDS Winter School at Blairgowrie and have kindly been passing on dancing tips and techniques learned there.

Our Burns supper at the Watford Town and Country Club had an attendance of about 45 and the raffle raised £170 for the Watford New Hope Trust. Stuart recorded Donald Wallace addressing the haggis in style which we could then post on Facebook to give a taste of the evening. We experimented a little with the format and had readings from Burns between dances after dinner. I felt this encouraged non-dancers to stay once dancing began, gave those dancing a welcome break and allowed us to enjoy more of Burns's writing.

A delegation also attended the Burns Supper at West Herts Golf Club where we enjoyed a very pleasant meal, demonstrated some dancing and Rose led all those willing in ceilidh dancing. As a society, we are keen to share the joy of Scottish culture by giving dancing demonstrations and helping facilitate ceilidhs so do please tell your friends about us and encourage people to get in touch.

Our New Year walk became a leaflet drop this year for our new beginners/technique class. I am thrilled that this class has been a success. It is always a lovely atmosphere; our beginners have stuck with us and several existing society members have used the classes to return to dancing or simply to improve their technique. All welcome 8-9.30 on Mondays at Nascot Wood School, Recital Hall.

Following on from the wonderful evenings where the Guides joined our Thursday class and Jennie visited the Brownies and Rainbows, several members attended a lively ceilidh at St Mark's Church where the youngsters made up a good proportion of the attendees. Malcolm Ferris-Ley was entertaining as ever as caller.

Ken Martlew and Barbara Manning provided the music for our thoroughly enjoyable Christmas social where David and Judy, as they are throughout the year, were on raffle duty. Thanks to them and all who donated prizes and bought raffle tickets. We welcomed many members from other societies and I would like to host more socials to encourage these people to visit us more often.

In November we introduced the members of the Sunnyside club in Croxley to Scottish Country dancing. This was an enjoyable evening and I hope we will be back there soon. Do speak to a committee member if you know of other clubs or venues where we could also visit. Please also volunteer to come along when we are demonstrating or encouraging others to dance.

In October I hosted the President's afternoon, a great opportunity to chat with members and eat cake. We plan a similar event this year.

Duncan kindly hosted a barbecue and has generously offered to do so again this year. Our Summer Social was my first event as President and we are nearly at the time for this year's also with music from Chris Oxtoby. I am looking forward to another great evening. We will be joined by members of the Monday class and the programme will include several dances suitable for less experienced or out of practice dancers.

Throughout the year the committee works hard. I am grateful to Stuart, Rose, Judy, Jennie, Duncan, Andy, David, Adrian and Alison for their efficiency, dedication and good humour. As I mentioned earlier Stuart has been secretary for over 25 years, doing an excellent job. Thank you to all the members who assist with events, participate, provide food and raffle prizes and give up their time to keep this society active. Thank you to our teachers Ken, Rose, Deborah and our MC team Judy, Stuart, Jennie and Duncan. Adrian is doing a splendid job with the newsletter. Please let him have any news, photos or details of events of interest to our members for inclusion

Do please continue to provide us with pictures and memories as we prepare to celebrate our centenary in 2019. Duncan has agreed to be the point of contact for this. Thank you to everyone for

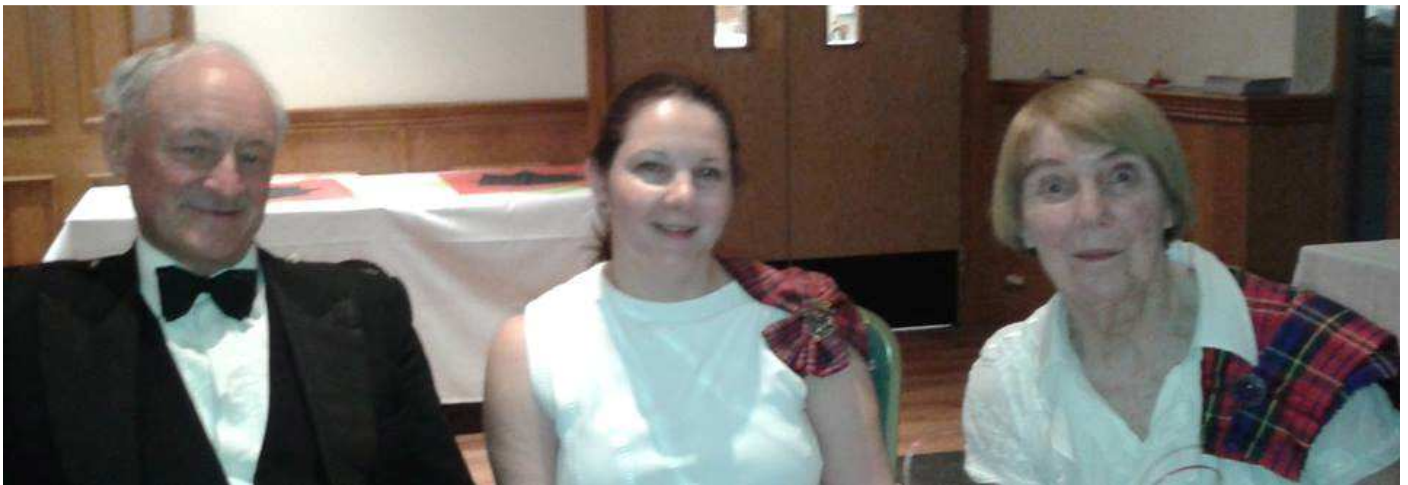
supporting me and the society. Please continue attending classes and events and remember to pay your subs. Thank you to those who make a donation where they are not required to pay subs.

I end the year feeling grateful and optimistic. We face challenges but we are up to them.

Morag Wilshere

### **BURNS NIGHT 2017**

The Society's annual celebration was held at the Watford Town and Country Club on 28 January. Around 45 people attended. The food was delicious, the addresses to the haggis, the immortal memory and the toast to the lassies were stirring and the Ceilidh dancing was delightful but not too strenuous. What more could be asked for? Our President Morag Wilshere at the top table. Don't miss the supper in 2018!



### **BEGINNERS AND IMPROVERS CLASSES IN NASCOT WOOD**

Since the middle of January the club has been running a weekly beginners class in Watford. We wanted to know if there was interest in Scottish dancing in the area, and decided to advertise the class by a leaflet campaign generously funded by Bill Alexander, in the Nascot Wood area. Several club members spent a morning distributing the leaflets and we all waited to see what the outcome would be.

We were most encouraged when an entire set of new dancers appeared on the first evening. Even better to note was the age range - from early twenties to 4 times that!. Since then the pool of people attending has increased and we often now have two sets of dancers per night. The focus is on the essentials of good dancing - phrasing, etiquette, footwork and knowledge of dances and is taught by RSCDS qualified teacher Rose Kreloff, with assistance from other experienced dancers.

We have been absolutely delighted by the enthusiasm and commitment of our dancers, six of whom attended our Caledonian Ball 6 weeks after their first lesson and the group has got to know each other and support each other well. Having the support of some of our Thursday class dancers has been an additional bonus, as has having John and Betty Crowder coming to assist with the music.

We're carrying on until mid June and then starting a new session in September. Come along - it's a lot of fun and we'd love to have you with us!





### **CALEDONIAN BALL, 18 MARCH**

A record 119 participants attended the 2017 Ball. Comments during and after the event made it clear that it had been the best Ball ever. A typical and representative comment came from Ruth Barrett who said *“I just wanted to thank you and everyone from your club who contributed to making the Watford Ball such a fabulous event. Great programme, great music, great company and lovely food - I had a wonderful evening and happily managed to unscramble my brain (well mostly) before I stepped out on to the dance floor”*. A particular highlight was the attendance of Helen Russell, the Chair of the RCSDS, who congratulated Stuart Kreloff on his 25 year record of service as Honorary Secretary of the Society. Everyone enjoyed the wonderful music produced by Marian Anderson and her band. Special thanks are also due to Duncan and Zena McNiven for their outstanding effort in producing wonderful food and drink for the participants.



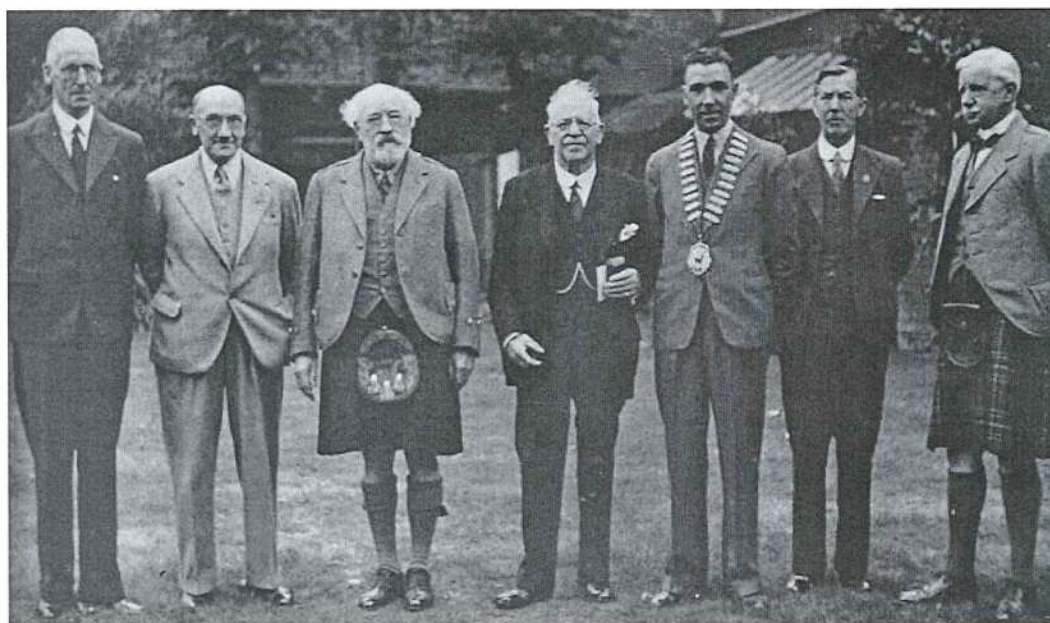




## **2019 CENTENARY**

In preparation for our centenary year, the newsletter will provide some background to the Society's history. Mr William Park Porter founded the society in 1919. Interviewed in 1941, he said "*I thought there was room for a Society to gather together the Scots and their families in and around Watford and I discussed the matter with Mr Ramsey. The result was a talk in my house in Upton Road at which Mr Ramsey, Mr Scully, Mr James Mackie and Mr Scott were present. The outcome was that Mr Scully agreed to act as Secretary pro tem and invitations were sent to all known Scots to meet in Bucks room to further the project. The meeting took place and it was agreed that a "WEST HERTS SCOTTISH SOCIETY" should be established to promote social intercourse among Scots in the district, and to encourage a knowledge of Scottish Literature and Music among members and especially the families of those members. The society went on steadily growing and proved by the interest of the members that it filled a place in the Community*"

Some Presidents from the early days of the Society are shown below



Past Presidents (Left to Right): , Mr N MacLean, 1932 - 1933; Mr Balfour Millar, 1928 - 1929; Mr David Blackley, 1922 - 1923; Mr J Newcater, 1935 - 1936; Mr A Chalmers, 1941 - 1946; Mr R F Jolly 1934 - 1935; Mr J MacFarlane, 1923 - 1924

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

*(i) Annual General Meeting, 25<sup>th</sup> May*

This will be held at the Bushey Centre at 8pm. The agenda, Treasurer's report and the accounts are being circulated along with this newsletter.

*(ii) Midsummer evening dance, 24<sup>th</sup> June*

The Marlow Scottish Country dancing group are holding a midsummer evening dance at Liston Hall, Chapel St., Marlow SL7 1DD starting at 6.45pm. Tickets include a light supper and cost £10. They can be obtained from George Flett on 07769-895-328 or [gflett@clara.co.uk](mailto:gflett@clara.co.uk)

*(iii) Summer dance, 29<sup>th</sup> June*

This will be held at the Bushey Centre at 8pm. There will be 11 dances some written particularly as tributes to our “dancing cat” mascot! There will be live music from Chris Oxtoby and his band. A crib is available at

<http://www.watfordscottish.org.uk/cribs/watford-west-herts-dancingcat-summer-social-dance-29-june-2017v2ttg.pdf>

*(iv) Summer Barbecue, 23<sup>rd</sup> July*

This will be graciously hosted by Zena and Duncan McNiven at 64 Valley Walk, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 3TG.. It will start at 2pm and is open to all members (and anyone who may be interested in the Society). Basic salads, rolls and drinks will be provided but bring anything that you want barbecued or any fancy drinks. RSVP to Duncan on [duncanmcniven@gmail.com](mailto:duncanmcniven@gmail.com)

