

Midwinter frolicking



The midwinter celebrations are one of three major events the Johnsonville Scottish Country Dancing Club organises each year. PHOTO: Supplied

By Julia Czerwonatis

The Johnsonville Scottish Country Dancing Club celebrated midwinter with a joyous Viking feast and Scottish dance earlier this month.

“Our midwinter celebrations are aimed at cheering people up in the cold months,” member Kristin Downey said.

“It’s about getting our people together and strengthening the bonds within the club.”

Over 40 dancers and their family members with mighty Viking helmets and swaying Celtic garments joined the celebrations at St John’s Hall sharing mulled wine and a hearty dinner.

The Scottish Country Dancing

Club was established in Johnsonville 60 years ago and is somewhat different from Highland dancing, as Kristin explained.

“Highland dancing is competitive and mostly performed solo, whereas Scottish country dancing is a non-competitive social activity,” she said.

With about 10 clubs, the Scottish country dancing community is well presented in Wellington.

“The fortunes of the community rise and fall, of course, but everybody sees a rise in membership at the moment,” Kristin said.

With increasing membership, the Johnsonville club has the financial backup to put on live music for their club nights on occasion.

“Traditionally it’s accordion, fiddle, and keyboard. Live music is a lot more fun than dancing to records,” Kristin explained.

At the beginning of each year, the Johnsonville Scottish Country Dancing Club runs a beginners course and gives newcomers the chance to join the club. From March until November the dancers meet for sessions on Saturday nights.

Kristin and her husband Rod have been dancing with clubs around the world.

“It’s not only popular in Scotland and New Zealand but many countries. I started it in Singapore in 1985 when I lived there. Whenever Rod and I go travelling, we take our dancing shoes with us.”