

***When did you start dancing with Johnsonville Scottish Country Dance Club?***

I joined up with a friend at the beginning of 1991. We were tossing up between square dancing and Scottish dancing, but Scottish won out. At that time the club had access to a second room at Johnsonville School, and tutor Barbara Kent generously gave her time and expertise to teach the newbies before supper, and then we joined in with the more experienced dancers once we'd revived ourselves with tea and a bite to eat.

***How did you get into Scottish country dancing?***

I first started Scottish country dancing when Rod and I lived in Singapore, somewhere between 1983-85 (I can't quite remember exactly when). I was looking for an activity. Since I had always loved dancing of any sort, and things Scottish – the pipes, the music, the song and dance – it was a natural choice. The group there was quite small, mostly made up of British expats, and at the time I joined they were practising to compete as a team at a Scottish gathering of some sort in Jakarta. We moved to New Zealand in 1986, but it wasn't until after our sons were born that I was motivated to get out of the house and start dancing again. Once I began, I was hooked.

***What do you most enjoy about SCD?***

When I started, I just loved the sheer joy of dancing, of working hard physically, of learning new things and how to do them well. We went to summer school in Wanganui when our children were small, we were so lucky that Wanganui club organised a creche at that summer school. Learning with other people who felt the same about dancing, and from people who knew so much more than me, was exhilarating. Now I'm a bit older, and a bit less physically able, I can't aspire to that same performance level, but every now and again I still get that feeling. And I still love to dance, and to be part of the music and the laughter and the spirit that is Scottish country dancing.

***Tell us a bit about any Scottish connections you may have.***

My father was a Macdonald, and his mother was a Macfarlane, and I've also recently discovered that there is a Stewart on my mother's side. My father used to sing Scottish songs on long trips in the car, so I think I was imbued with a love of Scottish music and culture from childhood (even though my dad couldn't really hold a tune). There was also a father and son in my hometown in country Queensland who played the bagpipes. The pipes have always drawn me in.

***What sorts of activities have you been involved with at the club over the years?***

When we first started dancing, we went to a lot of club annual dances. They were an amazing spectacle in those days with 20 sets on the floor, and everyone dressing up – men in kilts and women in white dresses and tartan sashes. I can still picture in my mind Newlands College hall crowded with what seemed like a sea of tartan dancers. On the service side, I was acting secretary in my early years at club, more recently I have served as secretary for 3 years, treasurer for 3 years and now president since 2009.

***What club activity stands out for you?***

The club community spirit shines through for me, and it seems to grow stronger every year with things like the bunting bee, the club ceilidh, and the midwinter dinner giving us the chance to spend time together off the dance floor and get to know each other better.

***Tell us something about your life outside of Scottish country dancing.***

Now that my sons are out in the world, and I have retired from many years as an administrator at VUW, I join Rod when he travels overseas for work, help out with reading at J'ville school, enjoy yoga and pilates, and am slowly building up my cycling stamina.