

Tartan Press

Newsletter of The Manitoba Highland Dancers Association

May 2012

Executive

President

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George Hamilton ghamilton@mbhighlanddance.com

Vice-President

Keith Rempel

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Executive Secretary

Jennifer UnRuh

Finance Director

Deanne Magnus

Membership Director

Diana Simpson dianasimpson@mts.net

Competition Coordinator

Zan Sinclair

Competition Director

Annika Pineau

ScotDance Representatives

Kathy Hopper khopper@mbhighlanddance.com

Kathy Ramesar kramesar@mbhighlanddance.com

M.H.D.A. Annual General Meeting

Sunday, May 27, 2012, 7:00 pm

The Creative Stage Emporium
100-189 Henderson Hwy
~ Between "JC Tacos" and "Subway" ~

Anyone wishing to join the executive at this time, please contact George Hamilton ghamilton@mbhighlanddance.com

Nominations for Board Members

One of my responsibilities as the past president of MHDA is to seek out individuals willing to let their name stand for positions on our Executive to be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

I am very pleased that many of our current board are letting their name stand for nomination to be re-elected in the same position.

The following are letting their names stand for the same position:

Craig Oliphant	President
Keith Rempel	Vice President
Lorraine Morrison	Treasurer
Zan Sinclair	Competition Co-Ordinator
Annika Pineau	Competition Director
Dianna Simpson	Membership Director

Jennifer Unruh and Deanne Magnus have decided not to let their names stand for nomination this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their time, work and dedication to MHDA.

We are thus seeking nominations for the positions of Secretary, and Finance Director. We will also ask for nominations for individuals who would like to sit on MHDA's Audit committee.

It is not necessary to hold elections for committee positions but often our AGM is the best opportunity to do that as well. In particular we have been short on a volunteer willing to take on the role of Dance Out Co-ordinator. It is very important that someone comes forward to fill this role so we can continue providing Highland Dance demonstrations which is key to the goals of our organization.

If you are interested in any of these roles or have questions please contact me at ghamilton@mbhighlanddance.com or phone me at 479-6142.

Best Regards
George Hamilton, Past President of MHDA

Volunteer Opportunity

MHDA is in need of new representative sashes for the provincial reps participating in the Canadian Interprovincial championships each year. We are looking for a volunteer to make these in time for this year's ScotDance Canada Championship Series this summer. This task would fulfill the MHDA volunteer requirement for the family for one year. The requirements are:

1. 20 sashes in 2 sizes: 6 short and 14 long.
2. Sashes must be made in Manitoba Tartan Material (preferably a wool blend)
3. Easy maintenance is a must.
4. Design must be pre-approved by the MHDA executive.
5. Cost of materials will be covered by MHDA
6. Photographs of examples can be provided as well as an existing sash.
7. There is also an option of a re-design of the existing Manitoba banner carried by the reps in the opening ceremonies.

Please contact Kathy Ramesar at kathyramesar@gmail.com if you are interested or would like more details.

Tartan Press Submissions

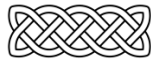
Items to be published in the Tartan Press will be accepted up to two weeks prior to every M.H.D.A. competition. Items may be sent by email to: Lauren Wreggitt lwreggitt@mts.net

Teddy Bear Picnic Dance Out

MHDA will be dancing at the Teddy Bear Picnic on Sunday May 27th at 12:30 p.m. If you are interested in participating please forward your name, age and dance level to: Jillian Taylor-Mancusi at jillian@lctaylor.net

Only One Competition Remaining

The last competition for the season is a two day event on June 9th and 10th "Under the Canopy" at the Forks Market. The pre-premiers have the Mid-Canada Open Competition with Highland dances on the Saturday and National dances on the Sunday. The premier dancers also have two days of dancing with the Mid-Canada Open Championships on Saturday and the first ever Lord Selkirk Premiership on the Sunday. The Lord Selkirk Premiership is named in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Selkirk Settlers in Manitoba. A premiership for those wondering is a new initiative by ScotDance Canada to promote National dances. The premiership will run like a championship with set dances and steps for the dancers and three judges. There were only six Premierships approved for Canada and MHDA is fortunate to be one of the hosting organisations.



Congratulations!



Congratulations to Lauren McCombe for passing With Distinction, her Associate Highland Examination, and her membership with the Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance. Well done!

International Dance Day

April 29, 2012 Assiniboine Park



Maria Charach, Abby Friesen
& Sydney Friesen

Dancers from the Kids In Kilts School of Highland Dance Performance Team showcased traditional and choreographed highland dances at Dancing In The Park, on International Dance Day. Great work girls!



Dance School News

Kids In Kilts School Of Highland Dance

Is proud to present its Spring Recital:

Rhythm of the Dance

7:00, June 5th

At the Irish Club

For more information contact Zoë Wreggitt ~ Director
zoe.wreggitt@gmail.com

Out of Town Results

Donna Cram School

In addition to the results from Donna Cram Dancers in the last newsletter, we also extend congratulations to Ashleigh Halpin and Alex Baros-Novak for their success in Antigonish at SDCCS 2011. We're all looking forward to another exciting Interprov at the West Edmonton Mall in Edmonton in July!

Ashleigh Halpin

Pre-championship 20&O: 8th place Sword

Restricted Premier. 21&O: 7th Fling, 5th Sword

Restricted Premier. 21&O: 4th Jig, 8th Village Maid

Alex Baros-Novak

Pre-Championships : Fling: 8th, ST: 2nd, Reel: 6th

Premier: 3rd Irish Jig.

Update on the Bicentennial

by Phyllis Fraser

Tartan Day - was observed on April 5th at the Manitoba Legislative Building. Dr. Harry Duckworth spoke on the reasons for the clearances in Scotland and the history of the Red River Settlement. With his permission we have reprinted his excellent summation for your information. (last article in the Tartan Press)

Upcoming Events

Manitoba Day Symposium "the Selkirk Settlers Revisited 1812, as seen from 2012" - Wednesday, May 16th from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the Dalnavert Museum Visitors Centre, 61 Carlton St. The Manitoba Historical Society will be hosting a one-day scholarly conference. The arrival of the Selkirk Settlers was an event of far-reaching importance for the development and settlement of western Canada. This is free of charge and includes lunch, but is limited to the first 70 who register. Call the Manitoba Historical Society at 947-0559 to register

Manitoba Museum ~ Red River Settlement Exhibit ~ Another project of the Manitoba Historical Society, this exhibition of documents and artefacts relating to the early years of the Selkirk Settlement, at the Manitoba Museum will open May 12 and will run until the end of September. This exhibition, is in collaboration with the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the Manitoba Museum,

Red River Gathering at The Forks ~ Friday, Aug. 31 – Sunday, Sept. 2, 2012. Friday evening kick off with musical performance by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra who will perform pieces from the Red River Composition from a barge on the Red River. Saturday will feature cultural events of First Nations, Metis and French and Sunday will be the Scottish day starting with the annual parade of pipe bands and associated organizations. Entertainment, highland games, dancing, bagpipes, big name stage show, and culminating in a fireworks display - free of charge to everyone.

"Re-enactment Ceremony" on Tuesday, Sept. 4, 2012 will take place in LaVerendrye Park - depicting the exchange of documents between Miles Macdonnell (on behalf of Lord Selkirk) and the Hudson's Bay Company representatives on Sept. 4, 1812. – hosted by the Manitoba Living History Society - free of charge. This re-enactment ceremony will run continuously from 2 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Reception ~ Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2012 – 5:00 p.m. Reception hosted by the Lieutenant Governor at historic Government House (attendance is limited to the first 120 direct descendants of the original settlers to register, and may include one guest per person) - no cost, but space is limited so please provide us with your name and mailing address and name of your ancestor settler.

Thursday, September 6, 2012 – **City of Selkirk will host Lord and Lady Selkirk** – events TBC. 2:30 p.m. **Rededication ceremony at historic old St. Peter's Dynevor Anglican Church and Cemetery.** A tribute to the memory of Chief Peguis, friend and benefactor to the settlers, credited with saving the settlers from starvation. In 1924, The Lord Selkirk Association of Rupert's Land erected a monument to Chief Peguis in grateful appreciation. Lord Selkirk, Chief Glenn Hudson of Peguis First Nation and Bill Matheson, President of TLSARL will speak and a reception will follow. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Evening event at Lower Fort Garry ~ Friday, September 7, 2012 - Hosted by the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Winnipeg Branch - Journey to the Red River, the Story of the Selkirk Settlers in Dance, Songs and Poetry

Gala dinner to be held at the Winnipeg Convention Centre ~ Saturday, Sept. 8, 2012

Service of Thanksgiving, St. John's Cathedral ~ Sunday, Sept. 9, 2012 at 2:30 p.m. Tour of the cemetery where many of the early settlers are buried will be offered and also light refreshments to follow service.

RED RIVER 200th UPDATE

By George Hamilton

I have had the opportunity of sitting on the Scottish Heritage Council of Manitoba as MHDA's representative and in that role I have become involved with the committee that the Scottish Heritage Council has formed to celebrate the 200th anniversary of when Lord Selkirk took possession of Assiniboia from the Hudson Bay Company and the first Settlers arrived with the intent on creating an Agricultural Settlement.

I wanted to take opportunity in this edition of the Tartan Press to give the MHDA membership some information on the events and celebrations commemorating the bicentenary (1812-2012) of the Red River Settlement and the Lord Selkirk Settlers.

Of course I am very excited because my great great great grandfather was John Sutherland. He came to the settlement as a 7 year old child sent with relatives on the 1815 shipment of settlers. His mother was not able to make her own way to the settlement for another 10 years later. I think that goes a long way to show how difficult life was in Scotland for these people and how much optimism they had about starting a new life here on the Red River. I have in the past thought of the Selkirk History as being something that those of us who are descendants had some kind of ownership of. Being involved in the planning of these celebrations has made me realize how important this history is to all Manitobans. It is everyone's history. Lord Selkirk and his Settlers action were huge building blocks in the foundation of what became Winnipeg and also Manitoba.

However, I am not a historian so I have decided to submit Dr. Harry Duckworth's speech to be printed since he does a much better job of describing the history than I could.

Tartan Day Celebration Speech

by Harry Duckworth,
April 6, 2012, Manitoba Legislative Building

Your Honours, Mr Chairman, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen. I thank the Tartan Day committee for the opportunity to speak to you on the Selkirk or Red River Settlement, whose bicentenary we are commemorating this year.

The history of the Scottish Highlands, in the years after the battle of Culloden, is dominated by a great emigration movement, one of the defining processes in the formation of the British Empire. For generations, the Highland Scots had been small farmers, growing barley and grazing cattle. Their lands were clan property, though the chiefs were in charge in peacetime and in war. But now a different relationship was developing between the clansmen and the chiefs. The violent old ways of the Middle Ages were no more, and would-be warriors were finding a new outlet for their temperaments in the British Army. Military leaders were no longer needed in the Scottish glens, so the chiefs could live in the towns of the south, where they found new activities, and greater comfort. Their sons mastered the pen instead of the claymore, and found employment as lawyers or merchants.

To live in the towns, the chiefs needed a cash income, and they started to think of themselves as the owners of the clan lands. In Edinburgh or Aberdeen, they met southerners who had suggestions as to how the Highland valleys might yield more profit. The most popular idea was to replace the poor and inefficient tenant farmers with a hardy breed of sheep that could graze all over the hills, in all kinds of weather. Bringing this idea to the Highlands eventually led to the forced expulsion of many Highlanders from their ancestral lands—the Highland Clearances.

There were those who saw the writing on the wall long before this, of course. Throughout the 1700s, large numbers of Scots left their homeland to settle in the New World. The Conquest of Canada, in 1759-60, opened up a vast new country for settlement by British subjects, and soon the Scots were flooding in. By the year 1800, most Highlanders would have had friends and relations who could inform them in person, or by letter, of opportunities that awaited them over the sea.

In preparing themselves for emigration, the Scottish Highlanders had one great asset – education. In Scotland, even in the remotest districts, a good education was widely available. Many people could read and write, and many Gaelic speakers could also operate in English. Though the Highlanders might be living in poverty, they were not living in ignorance.

One of the most imaginative promoters of Scottish emigration was Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk. As a boy, he had seen the American privateer, John Paul

Jones, come ashore and plunder the Selkirk mansion by the shores of the Solway Firth. This experience, he later believed, taught Selkirk to distrust Americans in general, and be suspicious of their motives and ambitions. Thomas Douglas and his brothers were caught up in the ideas of the Enlightenment, the new insights that engendered our modern understanding of human rights and social responsibilities. He travelled widely, and he learned and remembered. All six of his older brothers died before their father, and in 1799, Thomas Douglas succeeded to the title of Earl of Selkirk, and to a substantial fortune that would allow him to follow his dreams.

Selkirk knew that the Highlands were no longer supporting their population, and that things would get only worse. For most, new homes would have to be found elsewhere. In 1803, using his own resources, he brought a group of Scottish colonists to Prince Edward Island. This project was a success. The next year, he took another group of Scots to Baldoon, in Upper Canada. The land there was poor for farming, and only a few settlers remained there for long.

For his last and most ambitious venture, Selkirk turned his eyes much farther west, to the Red River of the North. As far as the British authorities were concerned, Red River was already the property of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose title was based on the old grant of Rupert's Land from the King of England, in the year 1670. Selkirk bought shares in the Hudson's Bay Company, to gain the influence he needed for his scheme. In the spring of 1811, for a total price of 10 shillings, the Company sold him some 116,000 square miles, to be called Assiniboia. Here, an agricultural settlement was to be placed. Much of it was magnificent land.

That summer, Lord Selkirk sent an advance party out from Scotland, by way of Hudson Bay, with orders to go to the Forks of the Red and the Assiniboine, and prepare for the arrival of the first real party of settlers, who would come the following year. The commander of the advance party was Miles Macdonell, who would have the title Governor of Assiniboia. The ships arrived very late in Hudson Bay, and the advance party could not get to Red River before the onset of winter. Instead, they remained in a winter camp near York Factory, proceeding south the next summer, after the rivers were open. The advance party did not get to Red River till the end of August. On September 4, 1812, at a site just north of the present St Boniface Hospital, Macdonell assembled his men and a few local fur traders, and read out his credentials, declaring that he was taking possession of Assiniboia on behalf of Lord Selkirk.

Meanwhile, the first group of actual settlers had reached York Factory on schedule, and by mid-October they were also at Red River. Very little had been done to prepare for their arrival, but Macdonell did his best. He sowed some winter wheat – this was the first wheat sowed in western Canada – and took the whole party south to Pembina for the winter. There, arrangements were made with the Métis buffalo hunting community to provide food. The winter was a shock for the settlers, who had never encountered such cold, but they got through it, and in the summer of 1813 they were back at the Forks, ploughing land, sowing crops, and putting up buildings. Selkirk sent a further group of settlers

out from Scotland that year, and a third group in 1814. In the second winter, the settlement still could not provide for itself, and everyone moved back to Pembina again. It was only with the season of 1814 that the colony became reasonably self-sufficient, from a combination of its own crops and the produce of the hunt.

The farm lots were long and narrow, each with a frontage on the Red River, and all on the west side. The southern boundary of the group was just south of the present Bannerman Avenue, and the tract ran north to the place where the old Kildonan stone church was later built, and then beyond to the present boundary of the City of Winnipeg. The lines of the streets in this part of Winnipeg, running slightly north of west, preserve the layout of the lots as they were surveyed by Peter Fidler, the Hudson's Bay Company surveyor, in 1817, and as they remain to the present day. In this part of Winnipeg, some of the modern streets, such as Bannerman, Polson, and Matheson, preserve the names of some of the settlers.

Apart from the natural dangers, and the difficulties of an unfamiliar climate, the main challenge that the Selkirk Settlers had to face was from their fellow Scots. Assiniboia was far from uninhabited in 1812. There was a large population of First Nations people – Assiniboines, Crees, and Ojibwes. There were a couple of hundred so-called “freemen”, retired fur trade voyageurs or clerks, all with native wives. Greatest in terms of their influence, though few in number, were the actual fur traders. There were a few Hudson's Bay Company posts hereabouts, but the strong presence was that of the North West Company, a mighty enterprise controlled by Scots. The Nor'westers' main interest in the Red River district was not in furs, but in pemmican, the fuel on which the canoe brigades ran. Much of the pemmican came from what Miles Macdonell was now calling Assiniboia, and a confrontation was inevitable when Macdonell, worried about how he was going to continue to feed his colonists, proclaimed that no foodstuffs were to be exported from Assiniboia. The North West Company, already suspicious of Lord Selkirk's motives, saw this “Pemmican Proclamation” as a direct attack on their business enterprise.

This was in 1814. At once the North West Company set to work to undermine the colony. First they told the colonists that Indians were coming to destroy them. This was seen to be false, and one particular native leader, the chief Peguis, showed himself as the settlers' friend. The North West Company then warned that the Métis, mixed-blood children of fur trade fathers and native wives, were going to attack the colony. This was more believable – many Métis were employed by the Nor'westers, or had family ties to them. A campaign of harassment began, and the Nor'westers accompanied this with an offer to transport the settlers to Upper Canada, where new lands would be found to settle on. By midsummer of 1815 about two-thirds of the colonists had accepted this offer, while a pretext was found to make a prisoner of Governor Macdonell. Something like 110 individuals were taken down to Canada. Those colonists who did not defect left their farms for the safety of Jack

River, at the north end of Lake Winnipeg; and the Nor'westers burned their buildings behind them.

So it seemed, near the end of the summer of 1815, that Lord Selkirk's experiment had failed, and that the colony had indeed been destroyed. Then, at Jack River where the remnants had retreated, a Hudson's Bay Company trader named Colin Robertson persuaded the settlers to return to Red River. Strengthening their resolve, a further party of new settlers, fresh from Scotland, now made their appearance. Most of these had been displaced from their homes in Kildonan by the most notorious of the Highland Clearances, that inflicted by the Countess of Sutherland, and all they wanted was a place to lay their heads. A new Governor, Robert Semple, was with them, a replacement for the captured Miles Macdonell. The whole group returned to Red River, rebuilt the houses, and settled down for the winter, to the astonishment of the Nor'westers. A Canadian freeman, Jean Baptiste Lagimodière, set off overland to Montreal, to inform Lord Selkirk that, against all odds, the colony had been reestablished.

Selkirk now decided that some kind of military force was needed to protect his settlers at Red River. He hired a number of demobilized soldiers, and set off in the spring of 1816, to reach his colony by way of the Great Lakes canoe route. At Sault Ste Marie, terrible news reached him from Red River. On June 19, 1816, a brigade carrying pemmican for the North West Company, under the command of a young Métis clerk, Cuthbert Grant, was passing overland behind the settlement. Robert Semple, accompanied by some colonists and Hudson's Bay servants, had gone out to confront them at a place called Seven Oaks. Everyone on both sides had a gun, and once the first shot was fired, the superior marksmanship of Grant's horsemen had its inevitable effect. Within a few minutes, Semple and 20 of his companions lay dead or dying. In later life, Cuthbert Grant admitted that he would have gone on to overrun the rest of the colony, and kill more people. But the Ojibwe leader Chief Peguis, who had already shown himself a friend to the colonists, stepped in, prevented further bloodshed, and saw to it that the bodies were buried in a common grave. It was the news of this bloody episode that reached Lord Selkirk on his way up from Montreal.

Selkirk pressed on to Fort William, the North West Company's great depot, captured it, arrested several of the partners, and found in their documents much evidence that the Company had planned the destruction of his colony. He wintered at the Fort, and in the spring continued on to Red River. There, he met the settlers, assuring them that they were safe now. Some of his mercenaries were settled on farm lots. Selkirk was a handsome man of sincerity and charm, and the few weeks he spent at Red River were remembered by the settlers for the rest of their lives. He then returned to Canada, where he became embroiled in legal struggles with the North West Company. By the time he got back to Britain, he was in the grip of tuberculosis, and he died in the south of France in 1820, and is buried there. Much of his fortune was gone, but he died knowing that the Red River Settlement would be a success.

The settlers still had much to contend with – cold winters, unsuccessful crops, grasshoppers, and in 1826, the greatest flood ever recorded here. A sudden, late breakup of the Red River brought huge chunks of ice down upon the settlement's houses, sweeping everything away. But the houses were quickly rebuilt, and life went on. The settlers knew where they were now, what the country would demand and what it could give, and what they had to do to make their community a success. With each year, more and more children were born for whom the environment was not strange, but simply the world they knew. No more new settlers came direct from Scotland after 1815, but the colony was a centre to which fur traders could retire, and occasional settlers could come from Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company provided basic government services, including a system of land titles, and some resources for religion and education.

The founding of the Selkirk Settlement in 1812, whose bicentenary we mark this year, was an important step in the development of western Canada. By planting here a colony of British subjects, Selkirk made it unlikely that the expansionist United States would simply continue north and west, and annex all of Rupert's Land. The boy of seven, who had been frightened by John Paul Jones, showed as a man a vision that was well beyond the average British colonial administrator. As for the settlers, they proved that a farm economy, which can support a large population, was possible in what is now the Canadian West. This knowledge encouraged Canada to purchase Rupert's Land, make the west a part of our country in 1870, and open the land to settlement by millions of European immigrants in the generations to come.

