

Ardbrae Dancers of Ottawa

Annual General Meeting

14 May 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:20pm by the chair, Guy Quesnel.

32 Ardbrae members were in attendance, and a quorum was declared.

1. Minutes of the 2010 Annual General Meeting

Chairman Guy Quesnel asked for comments and questions on the Minutes of the 2010 AGM. There being no questions, Guy moved that the minutes be accepted. Seconded by Elaine Hoag. Carried unanimously.

Elizabeth Gammell remarked that e-mailing a draft of last year's minutes to the membership soon after the meeting had been useful, and Elaine said that this would be done again, within a week of the AGM, so that members can submit comments and corrections.

2. Business arising from the 2010 Minutes

There was no business arising from the 2010 Minutes.

3. Chair's report

Chairman Guy Quesnel reported that 2010/11 had been a year of extremes—all of them positive.

- We had the most successful Introductory Class attendance in decades owing to an especially comprehensive publicity campaign.
- We had the largest council in many years, and it has been a pleasure to serve with so many helpful and supportive people.
- Even outside council, there has been a level of volunteer support and effort that is unparalleled in recent years. The preparations for socials, the annual ball, etc., have gone very smoothly.

All in all it's been an exciting year.

Ardbrae membership increased from 60 to 68 from the previous to the current season. This is a 13% growth over last year, the largest growth rate in many years, primarily to due to the success of our publicity team.

Ardbrae has three classes: Beginner and Intermediate classes on Mondays and an Experienced class on Wednesdays.

The Monday classes ran smoothly except for one major chronic issue. The Monday night Glashan class experienced 7 extra cancellations along with the 5 normal cancellations that are due to statutory holidays and regular school interruptions (Thanksgiving, Family Day, Easter Monday, March Break and Education Week). This level of disruption was unprecedented. The previous worst year was 2 years ago when we had 5 extra cancelled classes. However, we will continue to use Glashan because it offers almost unique suitability for the running of simultaneous classes. Almost every cancellation was made up by switching to Churchill. This

venue was problematic for Mondays given that on several nights the Main Hall was only available from 8:15pm onwards and the smaller upstairs room has a hard floor. Nevertheless, its saving grace was that attendees only had to remember one alternate Monday location. Guy thanked the Monday Convenor Brian Beavan for keeping everyone straight on these interruptions and Elaine Hoag for sending out e-mail reminders each week.

The Wednesday Experienced class venue remains problem free. We had explored switching the Wednesday class to Churchill for cost reduction and a slightly better floor. However, it turned out to be more expensive owing to the added cost of keeping a caretaker on site past the normal hours. Additional problems included a 15 minute delay from the normal starting time and reluctance on the part of some class members to the change of venue.

On behalf of the membership, Guy thanked all five teachers for their dedication and the different strengths they bring to Ardbrae.

Ardbrae hosted the Beginner's Ball in May 2010. Seventy-four dancers attended and Ardbrae cleared a larger than usual profit of \$406 owing to the careful money management of the organizing committee lead by Craig and Jody.

Party attendance in 2010/11 was roughly the same as last year, which was itself a marked improvement over 2008/09 (48% better). The success of our parties relies on the contributions of many members, including the teachers, social convenors, and web master.

The 2011 Ardbrae Ball weekend was a great success. Attendance this year was up 16% over last year and we incurred only a \$167 loss, placing the 2011 Ball financially midway between the significant losses of the previous 2 years and the great successes of 2007 and 2008. Ardbrae is into its sixth year of continuous improvement to rein in costs while striving to provide an elegant and intimate evening. This year Ardbrae tried a new caterer in an attempt to further cut costs and experience food from a different source. Working with the new caterer proved to be a mixed success and it serves as a valuable learning experience for future years.

The website continues to be maintained by Craig Williams and Guy thanked Craig for filling this role. He also thanked Elizabeth Gammell for her work as OCDSB liaison.

By far the area within Ardbrae that has shown greatest improvement has been publicity. Randal Ware led a well motivated and capable team of Elaine Hoag, Helen Atkinson and Brian Beaven, with significant contributions from Craig and Jody Williams and others such as Ellen Katic and Diane Munier. Their work led to the largest group of new potential dancers at an introductory class in living memory. Randall and Elaine have comprehensively documented their work and conducted a follow-up poll of the Intro class attendees to help us improve next year, while Brian submitted a full report of his publicity card distribution activities. Their work will pave the way for future successful recruitment campaigns.

At the conclusion of his message, Guy asked if there were any questions from the floor. There were no questions.

4. Treasurer's report

Treasurer Anne Taylor briefly reviewed the financial report, noting that Ardbrae had enjoyed a modest profit in 2010/11, chiefly because of increases in membership numbers and ball attendance.

We currently have 68 members. Of the \$85 which each member pays, \$20 represents the Ardbrae membership fee, while \$65 is the class fee.

Noting the \$166.46 paid for insurance, Ann Cochrane asked if insurance was a problem. About 5 years ago, it had become a problem because city-run venues and school boards required that groups renting their facilities be insured. Fortunately, the Montreal Branch spearheaded an effort to obtain suitable insurance for all SCD groups in Canada, and the process of obtaining suitable insurance is now simple and affordable.

Anne Taylor then noted that our ball had lost only \$167.18 in 2011. To help members understand the costs, she broke down the “Ball Venue” expense of \$4,151.43 as follows: Glebe Community Centre rental \$918.45; Catering \$3,047.98; Liquor permit \$75; two bartenders \$110. Greg Morrow asked if these costs could be separately reported in future, to make comparison between years easier. In fact, it would be very useful if, at the 2012 AGM, this breakdown could also be provided retrospectively, so that we could compare costs for each item from 2005 to the present. Anne replied that this would be easy to do.

Susan Peacock-Hacking asked if the caterer had charged a specific price per plate for the buffet. Anne noted that the per plate price charged was \$24.95.

There being no further questions, Anne thanked Ed Gardiner for auditing the report and moved that it be accepted. Seconded by Karin Hughes. Carried unanimously.

5. Vice Chair’s report

Vice Chair Helen Atkinson discussed two highlights of her term.

- She attended the “Conference of Chairs of SCD Groups” held in Toronto on 9 April 2011. Conference attendees discussed new ideas for recruiting members, explored issues surrounding music and teachers, investigated ways to cooperate better when scheduling events, and shared problems and success stories. A second such conference will be held in October 2011. The session was useful and has already resulted in one new publicity initiative at Ardbrae. Helen had attractive business cards printed up for members to distribute to friends, co-workers or family interested in trying Scottish Country Dancing. The cards include essential information on our classes along with our website and e-mail addresses and space for each members’ own contact info.

Elizabeth Gammell asked for more details on the Conference, and Helen promised to e-mail the documentation to her.

- Because the Ottawa Branch organized the Beginners’ Ball in 2010, Helen (along with beginner Jennifer Tanner) attended organizational meetings and acted as liaison between the Branch and Ardbrae. The Beginners’ Ball was a great success and Ardbrae beginners acquitted themselves admirably on the dance floor.

6. Secretary’s report

Secretary Elaine Hoag encouraged members to join the RSCDS as Headquarters members. The cost of an

individual membership for 2010/11 is £25. Ardbrae slightly subsidizes this fee by charging members \$30.

Elaine notified members that, over the summer, our current Archivist Brian Beaven will be transferring the Ardbrae archives to her. Elaine has more storage space than Brian does and has time to organize the material, weed unnecessary duplicates and fill in gaps in the archival record. During the coming year, she will be approaching members to help fill in those gaps, particularly in regard to photographs.

On behalf of all of council, and in her capacity as Past Chair, Elaine concluded her report by thanking outgoing Chairman Guy Quesnel for his work over the past two years. The Ball is now on a firmer financial footing due to his efforts and the membership is steadily increasing. Despite many extra Monday cancellations at Glashan in 2010/11, substitute space was always found, and Ardbrae kept dancing! Guy maintained a good working relationship with the Branch. His dedication to Ardbrae is unquestionable and it has been a pleasure to serve with him on council.

The membership applauded Guy for his work as Chairman.

7. Other business

- **Sendai SCD relief fund:** Helen Atkinson reminded members that Ardbrae was accepting donations for the relief of a small number of Scottish Country Dancers seriously affected by the earthquake in Sendai, Japan. The money will be forwarded to the Teachers' Association of Canada which has organized a Canada-wide effort to collect funds for this cause.
- **Bobby Brown:** Helen also urged members to sign a condolence card for the family of Bobby Brown. Bobby Brown died on May 3rd after a 10 week struggle with cancer. His memorial service will be held on May 15th. For decades, Bobby and his band played at our annual Ball, and his inspiring music will be greatly missed.
- **Monday dance space:** In recent discussions with the Glashan School principal, Elizabeth Gammell discovered that cancellations on Mondays will continue to be problematic as long as Glashan has a volleyball team. At least in 2010/11, we were notified ahead of time regarding every cancellation (this was not always the case in 2009/10). Elizabeth reminded members of the thorough (and fruitless) search that she had recently conducted to find a suitable substitute space for Monday classes in a school or community building. Guy added that he had conducted a similar search of dance studios over the summer of 2010 and had found wonderful spaces offering good floors and multiple rooms, but that all were fully booked. Elizabeth asked members to notify any member of the Executive if they know of any space that offers two good-sized room with acceptable floors, vacant on Monday evenings, at a reasonable cost, and with decent access via car/public transit and acceptable parking.

8. Report of the Nominating Committee

This year, the nominating committee was composed of Anne Cochrane (chair), Ed Gardiner and Elaine Hoag. Some positions are "appointed" by council; others require election by the membership. Appointed positions for 2010/11 are;

Past-chair: Guy Quesnel
Social convenor: Greg Reynolds
Monday class convenor: Mona Carveth
Wednesday class convenor: Ed Gardiner
Web master: Craig Williams
School booking coordinator: Elizabeth Gammell
News-sheet editor/e-mail announcements: Elaine Hoag

Elected positions are:

Chair: Helen Atkinson
Vice chair: Marianne McLean
Treasurer: Anne Taylor
Secretary: Elaine Hoag
Publicity: Edith Troup and Helen Atkinson
Members at large: Diane Quane, Ann Cochrane, and Sandra Wood

9. Nominations from the Floor

Ann asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none.

10. Election of Officers and Council

There being no nominations from the floor, Anne asked members for a vote on the slate as a whole. All members voted in favour.

Guy thanked the Nominating Committee for its diligence in finding new recruits, and thanked all the members who had agreed to volunteer to serve Ardbrae over the coming year. He also recognized the excellent work of those who had given up their positions: Randall Ware (Publicity), Brian Beaven (Monday class convenor), Joselyn Morley (membert at large), and Deborah Connors and Margaret Isaac (social convenors).

Presentation of thank you cards and re-imbusement cheques to the teachers followed, in recognition of their work over the past year.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business, Guy moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Deborah Connors. The meeting was adjourned at 8pm.