



Betty Lee Barnes with Sandy Jones, president of the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, and the Agnes MacRae Morton Award, presented during the games in July. See report in the news roundup below. Photo by Brian Youngman.

Carolinas Branch News

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Autumn, 2017

Welcome to the third newsletter of 2017. Our new dance year is just getting under way, and we have high hopes for it. Included here is more about the new attraction of Pelorus Jack, briefs on various summer school, a report on Mary's summer travels and news of a special award. The next newsletter will come out in the new year after the holidays. Deadline for copy is February 1, 2018. Please send PICTURES! And write LETTERS!

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To access the Website for the Carolinas Branch, visit:

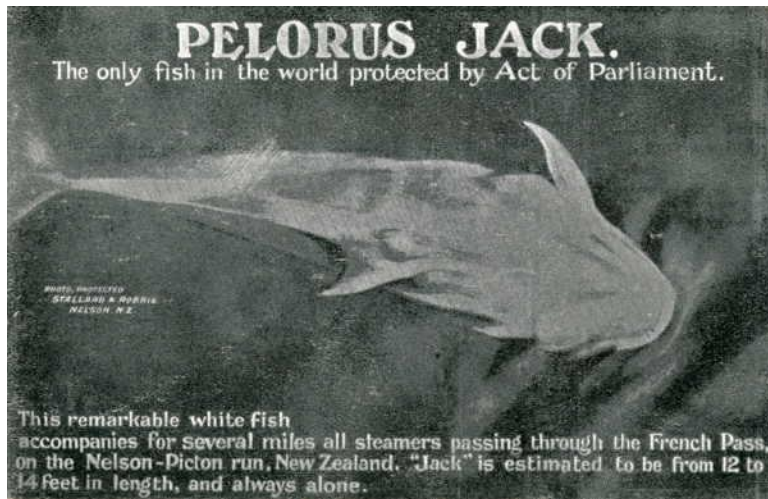
www.rscdscarolinasbranch.org

Dolphin Reels Swim into the Mainstream

By Tom Dillon

I was dancing with an English dance group not too long ago, and was surprised to find that one of our dances contained a dolphin reel. No one knew why the reel had that name, except that the in-and-out reel pattern sort of resembled the way a dolphin swims, and some people wanted to call it an “alternating tandem reel” – too many words, to my mind. But the incident demonstrated one more figure that has transcended Scottish dance to become part of the wider dance community.

You’ll find dolphin reels in many places beyond our “Pelorus Jack” dance today. A few are the contra dance “Just Skylarking,” by Rhodri Davies; the 2009 English dance “The Potter’s Wheel,” by Brooke Friendly and Chris Sackett; and in “Elements of English Country Dance,” an online instruction manual, of all things.



It’s clear that dolphin reels have hit the big time, if you will, and because of that, it seemed a good time to review some of the history that led to the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society republishing instructions for “Pelorus Jack” in its Book 41. It comes originally from Barry Skelton’s book of “Dolphin Dances,” published in 1993.

So here is a 1966 article about Pelorus Jack that Antony

Francis George Alpers, editor of the Caxton Press in Christchurch, published in “An Encyclopedia of New Zealand.” Perhaps it will answer some questions, if you’re ever in conversation with an English dancer wondering about dolphin reels:

“This was the name given to a dolphin which from 1888 to 1912 used to meet and escort ships over a certain stretch of water across Admiralty Bay, north of the French Pass (used by ships travelling between Wellington and Nelson). So regular was the dolphin in its habits that on 26 September 1904 it was protected by Order in Council under the Sea Fisheries Act and remained so until its disappearance. It is thought to have been the first individual sea creature protected in this way by any country.

“Pelorus Jack, whose sex was never determined, was identified from photographs, probably correctly, as a Risso’s dolphin (*Grampus griseus*), a species not common in New Zealand waters. It was his habit to meet the steamers near Cape Francis and travel with them

(playing about the bow and in some accounts rubbing against the plates) as far as Collinet Point near French Pass; or likewise in the opposite direction. In spite of his name he did not frequent nearby Pelorus Sound, and local residents assert that he never went through French Pass.

“After his protection, wide publicity made Pelorus Jack world famous; postcards based on photographs were much used, and many tourists, including the author Frank T. Bullen, made the trip to Nelson specially to see him, without being disappointed. A short movie film exists. He was often with the ship as long as 20 minutes (the time to cross Admiralty Bay) and was said by local residents to prefer the faster ships.

“George Webber, a sheep farmer of French Pass, in boyhood met the steamers twice weekly to exchange mailbags and on occasion had to push Pelorus Jack away from his dinghy with an oar to avoid capsize due to rubbing. Webber's accounts, corroborated by many others, establish that the dolphin continued in its habits for 24 years. Since this approximates to the normal life span of a dolphin, Pelorus Jack (or Pelorus Jill) was probably an infant in 1888, possibly an infant bereaved before weaning, which might explain in part the unusual behaviour pattern. Eyewitness accounts stating that Pelorus Jack “rubbed against the ship” must be regarded as doubtful. Others, referring to “motionless swimming”, are precise descriptions of a dolphin riding the invisible “pressure wave” which is formed below the surface by a ship's forward motion, and suggest that Pelorus Jack, like innumerable other dolphins, was enjoying getting a ride from ships that passed through his home range, the regularity being due to the frequency of ships in that area.

“The officially accepted identification of Pelorus Jack was made by D. C. Bates, who also instigated the formal protection. After several false reports of his disappearance (one of which was contradicted by a “Personal” item in the *Weekly Press*, 9 October 1912) Pelorus Jack was last definitely seen about November-December 1912. A song, “Pelorous Jack,” was widely sung by schoolchildren 20 years later, and for many years a brand of chocolate fish was known as “Pelorus Jack.”

And finally, one more report about the legend, from research by a B. Gunning in Australia in 2001. The moral is obvious:

“It is said that a sailor on board a ship called *The Penguin* shot at the dolphin, to the outrage of the rest of the crew. Pelorus Jack departed, bleeding, but resumed piloting soon afterwards. And it is also said that thereafter he could recognise *The Penguin* and never again piloted her. The story has been re-told in a recent book, “*The Wreck of The Penguin*,” by Bruce Collins (2000). There is likely to be much embellishment in this tale, but it is almost certainly true that on one occasion a shot was fired at Pelorus Jack from an unidentified ship, thereby provoking the efforts to protect him by law. Moreover, it is tragically true that on 12th February 1909, after successfully negotiating the swirling current of French Pass, on a passage from Nelson to Wellington, *The Penguin* was shipwrecked in a great storm in Cook Strait, with loss of 72 lives.”



Pete Campbell, left, and David Quarrie (of “Quarrie’s Jig”) in David’s “Blue Belle.”

Chairman’s Letter: A Circle of Friends

Summer is a great time for travel! And this past summer has surely been an exceptional one for husband, Pete Campbell, and I.

Most of our travel adventures include some kind of Scottish Country Dance event, but not this year. After planning the Great American Road Trip to include a family reunion in Alberta, Canada, another opportunity came to travel to Europe. This was to accompany the Folk Circle Dancers from Berea, KY, on their trip to Denmark. So off we went on both adventures, flying to Denmark the day after our last Scottish class in Greensboro.

Over two months of travel include too many tales of wonder to include here. But one thing I have to include. That is the bit about our Scottish Country Dance Society of friends. There is something about the challenge of the dances, the dancing as teams, which help create strong friendships even when miles separate us. With Avril and David Quarrie (Quarries’ Jig) our friendship began because I was lucky enough to have them in the same class at St. Andrew’s when we took our Teacher’s Candidate class and exams together. They have now retired to Freidenbeck, Germany. After Denmark, we were able to be with them at their beautiful newly

built modern home. That included rides in David's TriKing motor car (see picture), which he built, and travel into Hamburg by ferry the day before the G20 meeting. We had lots of fun and laughs over white wine spritzers at an outdoor café. Back in North America on the drive home from the West, we were able to visit with Elaine Brunken at her beautiful home in Kansas City on the night of eclipse day. And then to see Nashville dancers, Donna and Bill Bissell, as we continued home.

Scottish Country Dancing is a worldwide community with a shared experience. It just makes the world a better place to wander! I hope it continues to add to your life adventure even if your travels take you just to the next class or dance.

Happy dancing!

Mary McConnell

How to contact the officers

Here are names and addresses for the Carolinas Branch officers:

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Bits and pieces

■ This year's Thistle School at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, N.C., saw our founder, **Betty Lee Barnes**, receive the Agnes MacRae Morton Award from the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The award is named for one of the founders of the games in 1956 and was presented on the field during the day on Saturday of the games. Many Thistle dancers were on

the dance stage at the time and trooped up to the viewing stand on the field to see Betty Lee get the award. It was a high point of the week for all of us.

Betty Lee and her husband, Duard, founded Thistle School in 1980 with Ted and Marilyn Blaschke of Atlanta. It has been held yearly since then, with the exception of the sabbatical year of 1993. This was a good year, though an earlier electrical fire at Lees-McRae's Williams Gymnasium meant the Gala had to take place (for the second year in a row) at the old gym.

■ September's **Post-Games Dance after the Charleston, S.C., Games** will be the last time this dance will be held in September, organizer Irene Stancik says. The games are planning to move to November next year, which will necessitate a change in the date of the dance. This year's event will be at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 16 in the Felix Davis Community Center, Park Circle, North Charleston. Contact information is in the calendar below.

■ Looking ahead a bit, the February **Valentine's Dance** in North Carolina's Triangle will take place at the Chapel in the Pines just south of Chapel Hill. That's the same church that has played host to an end-of-the-year dance for the Chapel Hill beginners' class the last two years. The dance is scheduled for Feb. 17, 2018, and contact information is in the calendar below. It will be in the new Fellowship Hall, which should mean no pews to move.

■ Thanks to Richmond and Greensboro dancers who evaluated dances submitted for the upcoming **RSCDS Book 52**. The evaluations were consolidated and submitted to Headquarters by the August 31 deadline. When the book is published, we will discover if any of our favorites made it in.

■ For a handy **Membership Form** to join or renew your membership in RSCDS and the Carolinas branch, go to the Branch Website (at the top of this newsletter) and click on Membership Application. Dues are \$40 for single memberships, \$66 for two adults at the same address, \$33 for young adults age 18 to 24, and \$5 for associate members from another branch. Send forms and dues by June 30 to Brian Youngman, 702 Newport Circle, Cary, N.C. 27511.

■ We hope that everyone in the branch is receiving the newsletter. If you're not, you will have to get this notice second-hand, of course, but we still hope you will respond. If you're not getting the newsletter, please let either the editor or branch secretary know. **If you don't have email**, telephone the editor (see the number at the top) and let him know. We'll be glad to print out copies and send them to you by U.S. mail.

2017-18 Calendar

September 16	Charleston, S.C. Games & Dance	North Charleston, S.C. (843) 810-7797 or charlestonrscds@gmail.com
September 15-17	Timber Ridge Scottish Weekend	Highview, W. Virginia (301) 622-5945 or www.scottishweekend.org
September 22-24	Fandango (ECD weekend)	Decatur, Ga. www.ecdatlanta.org
October 14-15	Jeannie Carmichael Ball	Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. www.rscdsnewyork.org

October 20-22	Stone Mountain Games/Dances	Stone Mountain, Ga. www.rscds-atlanta.org or www.smhg.org
October 27-28	Reel Scottish Weekend	Charlotte, N.C. (704) 814-9647 or JPRES79334@aol.com
November 3-5	Conference Weekend/AGM	Perth, Scotland www.rscds.org or moira.thomson@rscds.org
November 10-12	Argyle Weekend	Alexandria, Va. www.rscds-greaterdc.org
November 17-19	Asilomar Weekend	Pacific Grove, Calif. www.asilomar.rscds-sf.org
November 18	34rd annual St. Andrews Ball	Greensboro, N.C. (336) 282-6507 or www.gsoscids.org
December 2	John Drewry Night	Brooklyn, N.Y. www.rscdsnewyork.org
December 9	Christmas Dance	Richmond, Va. (804) 678-8927 or www.richmondscottishcountrydancers.org
February 17, 2018	Valentine's Dance	Chapel Hill, N.C. (919) 467-3390 or culzean20002@gmail.com
February 18-23	RSCDS Winter School	Pitlochry, Scotland www.rscds.org or moira.thomson@rscds.org
March 17, 2018	St. Patrick's Day Dance	Richmond, Va. (804) 678-8927 or www.richmondscottishcountrydancers.org
April 21-22, 2018	Loch Norman Highland Games	Huntersville, N.C. www.lochnorman.com
July 8-13, 2018	Thistle School XXXVIII	Banner Elk, N.C. www.thistleschool.com
July 12-15, 2018	Grandfather Mountain Games	Linville, N.C. www.gmhg.org

*Web sites and phone numbers are those available to the editor at the time of publication.

