



Member Handbook

2022-2023

Welcome to the Regina Highland Dancing Association – RHDA

This member handbook has been compiled to provide members with information, suggestions and guidelines relating to Highland dancing.

The RHDA is a Regina based non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to ensuring that opportunities for highland dancing exists in Regina, and that awareness of the Scottish culture is enhanced through dance. The RHDA has a nonprofit Board of Directors that follows an approved Constitution.

The RHDA is a youth-focused organization that provides opportunities for young people to develop physical fitness through participation in Highland Dance, and promotes sportsmanship and personal excellence through instruction, competition, performance, and social interaction.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the RHDA is open to anyone who wants to join. Dancers are encouraged to join a local dance association closest to where they live.

Full members are eligible for subsidies, grants, or scholarships where available, as well as full participation in all RHDA dance outs, workshops and Mosaic.

For further information please refer to the RHDA website and reference the RHDA Constitution or contact the RHDA President or Membership Coordinator. A link to the membership form is on the website.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The RHDA organizes a variety of events for our members such as, a winter Ceilidh (social) to bring all members together in celebration of community, competitions throughout the year, weekend workshops for our dancers to improve their skills, dance outs that are ongoing throughout the season, participation in the Regina Highland Games and dancing at the Scottish Pavilion for Mosaic as well as the Annual General Meeting.

Helpful and Important Websites

Regina Highland Dancing Association

<http://www.rhda.ca>

Join the *Regina Highland Dance* – Facebook Group (www.facebook.com/RHDASask)

Scotdance Saskatchewan

<http://scotdancesask.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/ScotDanceSK>

ScotDance Canada

<http://scotdance.ca>

GOVERNING AND REGULATORY BODIES ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHLAND DANCING

Highland Dancing is a very structured and highly organized group of teachers, judges, organizers, and associations. It is hoped that the flow chart will give you an idea of the breakdown of the various groups from the top (RSOBHD in Scotland) to our local RHDA (in Regina). A brief description of each section of the breakdown follows:

SCOTDANCE CANADA: Is made up of accredited Highland Dance teachers and is a member of RSOBHD. Each province has a provincial ScotDance member group. Our teachers must be members of ScotDance Saskatchewan. ScotDance authorizes dance competitions and represents RSOBHD ensuring that completion rules are followed. ScotDance Saskatchewan members also provide a variety of guidance to RHDA and parents.

Royal Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance (RSOBHD): This Board, the governing body for Highland Dancing, was formed in 1949; one of its main objectives being the standardization of highland dancing throughout the world. The Board was not really established in Western Canada until 1961, at which time the late James L. McKenzie made the first of many trips to Western Canada to share his expertise. RSOBHD is responsible for completion rules and dance steps; they also approve all Championships across the world.

JUDGE'S PANEL: This panel is a very important part of the RSOBHD and consists of teachers who have passed a very rigid exam. Before they can apply for the exam, they must be a member of an examining body of the RSOBHD.

EXAMINING BODIES: The Board consists of 3 examining bodies. They are the Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance (SDTA), the British Association of Teachers of Dancing (BATD) and the United Kingdom Alliance (UKA). Each year these bodies send out examiners all over the world to conduct exams called medal tests. These medal tests range from one-dance exam to Professional exams.

SASKATCHEWAN HIGHLAND DANCING ASSOCIATION: This is the provincial body consisting of five (5) branch members – Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Tisdale, and Cross Borders. The purpose of the Association is to sponsor the annual provincial championships, to vote on issues that affect the province as a whole, to standardize procedures amongst the member associations, and to relay RSOBHD information to its member associations. Each member association has three delegates who sit on the provincial board to carry out the wishes of their association and act as liaisons between the provincial board and the association they represent.

DANCER CLASSIFICATION

Primary: This class is dependent upon age only and pertains to competitors 6 years and under. When reaching seven (7) years, a dancer must move into either a Pre-Premier or Premier category. Once a competitor has competed in a competition in their chosen category, they may not regress to a lower classification. Teachers may recommend primary dancers move up to Beginner before their 7th birthday.

Pre-Premier: The Pre-Premier classification includes the Beginner, Novice and Intermediate categories.

Beginner: A competitor who is seven (7) years of age or older, or a primary who has moved into Beginners, is classified as a "BEGINNER". This status is held until the competitor either a) gains a first, second or third prize in SIX (6) separate Beginner's competitions, or b) until twelve months following the first beginners stamp whichever 'a' or 'b' is the later, after which that competitor is classified as a Novice dancer and is not eligible to enter a Beginner's event.

NOTE: Beginner dancers with PART of the SIX months remaining can continue for one year from the date of the first stamp. Beginners stamp for Highland only (Fling, Sword, Sean Triubhas and reel). Beginner dancers whose SIX months have expired but who have less than six stamps as yet may continue until all stamps are achieved.

Novice: This status is held until the competitor either a) gains a first, second or third prize in SIX (6) separate Novice competitions, or b) until twelve (12) months following the first novice stamp whichever 'a' or 'b' is the later, after which that competitor is classified as an Intermediate dancer and is not eligible to enter a Novice event.

NOTE: Novice dancers with PART of the SIX months remaining can continue for one year from the date of the first stamp. Novice dancers whose SIX months have expired but who have less than six stamps as yet, may continue until all stamps are achieved

Intermediate: This status is held until the competitor either a) gains a first, second or third prize in SIX (6) separate Intermediate competitions, or b) until twelve (12) months following the first intermediate stamp which ever 'a' or 'b' is the later, after which that competitor is classified as a Premier dancer and is not eligible to enter an Intermediate event.

Note: Intermediate dancers who registered or chose for their start date to commence on or after 1st January 2016, will receive stamps for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in all dances. These dancers will have a year in Intermediate from the date of the first stamp or when they received their six stamps (whichever is later). This is the same as for Beginners/Novice.

Premier: A competitor having completed all Pre-Premier categories is classified as a Premier dancer. A dancer may choose at any time to become a Premier dancer but may not thereafter enter a Pre-Premier competition.

Note: It is not essential to obtain all stamps in a classification before moving to the next level; however, once a dancer progresses, they cannot move back. Teachers should be consulted, and their approval obtained before any move is made.

DANCE OUTS

RHDA dancers are frequently asked to perform "dance outs" at senior citizen homes, hospitals, teas, cultural events and Ceilidhs (parties). Dance outs are held to share the gift of highland dance, to promote the Scottish culture, to provide a performance opportunity for dancers, to motivate and excite dancers, to raise money and, most importantly, to have fun!

All dancers are encouraged to do as many dance outs as they can. When attending a dance out, dancers are expected to be in appropriate costume, be well groomed and arrive 10-15 minutes before the performance is to begin. Dancers are expected to be quiet, courteous, and friendly toward the dance-out audience. To reward attendance at dance outs, dancers are presented with recognition of participation in the form of a memento and/or certificate.

In order to perform at Mosaic, dancers must participate in at least three (3) dance-outs or competitions before Mosaic. This rule was put in place to ensure that dancers are participating in dance-outs, and to ensure dancers have performed before an audience before getting to Mosaic. All RHDA members will be notified of upcoming dance outs via email.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops are generally offered a few times per year. They are held the day after the November and March competitions, instructed by the person who is brought in to judge the competition. In addition, a weekend workshop is usually held in the January. These workshops are a great opportunity for extra dance instruction for all dancers at all levels.

COMPETITIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Competitions are held regularly throughout the year and dancers often travel to competitions outside of their home city or province. The majority of competitions can be found on www.eventry.net. All competitive dancers must have a RSOBHD (Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance) card that enables them to dance anywhere worldwide. The card is used for proof of date of birth and dancer classification. Please ask your dance teacher for details and the necessary forms.

CLASSIFICATION OF COMPETITIONS

Local or closed competition – competition open to dancers whose residency is within specific boundaries as defined by the competition organizer.

Open competition – competition in which any dancer may compete, provided they submit the required forms in the time required by the sponsoring association. All RHDA competitions are designated as Open competitions.

Pre-Championship – competition in which dancers who have not won a Championship or Pre-Championship compete. Competitors are judged by only one judge at a time and compete in the Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Truibhas and a designated Reel. *Championship steps are not required.*

Closed Championship – championship in which the competitor must qualify by birth or by having been a resident for six months immediately prior to the event in the designated area as determined by the organizers (e.g., Provincial Championships).

Open Championship – championship in which competitors may live outside the area named in its title (e.g., Queen City Championships).

All Championships must be approved by the RSOBHD. In each dance at a championship, competitors shall dance the steps in the sequence determined by the RSOBHD for the calendar year in which the championship is taking place. Championships must include the Highland Fling, Sword Dance, Seann Truibhas, and a designated Reel. For a class to be deemed a championship there must be six (6) dancers competing on the day of the championships. Any fewer dancers' results in the class not being sanctioned as a "championship."

Some competitions include "special" dances. This means that dancers compete against others in their class for that specific dance, and these results do not count towards the aggregate trophy. One of the reasons these are included is to provide dancers another opportunity to dance. To dance restricted, a competitor must not have won a trophy in a class with six (6) or more dancers in the preceding two (2) years.

In provinces where there are a lot of dancers, competition entries are sometimes divided into a Restricted Premier category.

With regards to the Provincial Selection Championship, in order to qualify for RHDA rep funding dancers will need to accept the following as part of the RHDA rep agreement (this is subject to change at the board's discretion prior to the competition):

- work a minimum of 2 volunteer shifts at the Mosaic Scottish Pavilion
- to practice and prepare diligently until the SDCCS event so that I can perform my best
- dance in the Canadian Championships
- dance a minimum of 2 other days of competitions – this excludes the choreography competition
- participate in all official functions for provincial representatives, including the opening ceremonies and the banquet
- agree to conduct myself in a friendly and cooperative manner befitting an ambassador of our city and to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times

Helpful Hint - What to take to a competition

RSOBHD card and where required, RHDA member card

Costume(s); sock garters or elastics

Safety pins – helpful when required to pin on the competition number to your kilt/costume Hair care needs

Band-Aids, mending kit, sandpaper for shoes if they become slippery, shoe shiner

Dance competitor number if mailed to you in advance (most are provided at the competition registration)

JUDGES AND JUDGING

Judges are chosen from a panel established by the RSOBHD in Scotland. In order to be a judge, candidates must complete a three-part test, be at least twenty-one (21) years of age, and have passed the necessary tests to become members of an examining body associated with the RSOBHD (i.e., Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance [SDTA]). The judge's decision in a competition is final. Deductions and disqualifications of competitors are the discretion of the judge, and no queries or complaints will be entertained. Judges cannot be approached by a dancer, parent, or teacher about any dancer's performance during a competition or the dancer in question runs the risk of being disqualified. Check entry forms for information on appeal processes.

PIPERS AND PIPING

Some competitions utilize the hired services of a piper, whose skills should be respected by competitors and parents. On occasion, piper error may result in difficulty for the dancer. A dancer should not stop dancing unless directed to do so by the judge. The judge may determine that the piping error was significant enough that it impeded the dancer from completing the dance. Any suggestions for changes in tempo will come only from the judge or from a

competition committee member as directed by the judge. Sometimes competition music is provided by recorded music.

SCORING COMPETITORS

The points awarded for placements in each dance are:

1st place: 88 points 2nd place: 56 points

3rd place: 38 points 4th place: 25 points

5th place: 16 points 6th place: 10 points

Should there be a tie for an overall placing in a championship; the tie will be broken by majority of first placings, then by highest dance points. If the Championship points, first placings and dance points are the same, then the placing will be awarded to the dancer with the greater number of prizes in the individual events. The number of placings awarded in each dance is dependent upon the number of competitors doing that dance, and the rules established by the organizing committee for that specific competition.

Formal Appeals of Placing in a Competition

See the entry form for the Competition.

*Competitions in Saskatchewan (subject to change – the ScotDance website maintains up to date information).

October – North Battleford March/April – Quill Lake

October – Lloydminster March – Regina

November – Regina May – Regina Highland Games + Moose Jaw Highland Games

November – Saskatoon May - Saskatoon

February – Saskatoon May – Provincials

MEDAL TESTS

Medal tests are available through an examining body affiliated with the RSOBHD, the SDTA, BATD or UKA. Exams are offered at least once per year and are taken so dancers better understand the theory and practical applications related to highland dance. Dancers graduate through a sequence of exams with emphasis on technique and execution of prescribed steps. Medal tests are required of dancers who wish to ultimately teach and/or judge. The five basic areas of examination are: Highland Dances, National Dances, Jig, Hornpipe and Theory. A dancer may take an exam from one or all of the areas offered, on the advice of their teacher. Upon completion of an exam, dancers obtain written feedback of the exam dances. Successful dancers will, at a later date, receive a certificate for their efforts and the appropriate medal of their exam.

Professional Examinations (to be recognized as a teacher) are also offered by examining bodies. Applicants for an Associate Membership must be at least sixteen (16) years of age at the date of their application and must apply directly to the examining body. Applicants for membership must be at least twenty-one (21) or hold an Associate Membership with two (2) years teaching experience. Applications must be submitted three (3) months in advance of examinations. Applicants for the Judge's examination must hold a full membership (not an Associate) in an examining body. Applications must be received well in advance of the test.

MOSAIC

Mosaic is a yearly festival of cultures organized by the Regina Multicultural Association. It is a three (3) day event held in early June. Each pavilion features traditional foods, displays of arts and crafts, entertainments by musicians and dancers. The Scottish Pavilion at Mosaic is overseen by the RHDA and organized by member volunteer. The RHDA is required to make the Pavilion a success. The MOSAIC committee of the RHDA is responsible for the overall schedule of the entertainment. The RHDA has responsibilities for the highland dance component of the entertainment and provides volunteers to assist in running the pavilion. Mosaic is a highlight of the dance year.

Mosaic Objectives:

The RHDA has 3 objectives for dancing at Mosaic:

- To provide quality highland dance entertainment for pavilion guests
- To showcase RHDA dancers
- To encourage interest in highland dancing

RHDA members, (as per the RHDA Constitution) are eligible to participate in the highland dancing show at Mosaic. In addition, past members and guests can participate in the Massed Fling if they so choose and if space permits.

Helpful Hint: To be eligible to dance at Mosaic each dancer will have had to participate in a set number of 'dance outs' or a combination of 'dance outs' and/or competitions during the dance year – this is subject to change each year.

Mosaic Authority:

The RHDA 'Dance out' Coordinator or Designate organizes, and is responsible for, the dancing at Mosaic. This individual or designate has the authority for all decisions related to highland dancing at the pavilion.

Mosaic Volunteers:

All dancers are required to cover a predetermined set of shifts to dance at Mosaic.

DANCER COSTUMES AND GENERAL APPEARANCE

General Appearance: Dancers should be neatly attired according to the rules laid down by the RSOBHD. Please pay special attention to the length and fit of all costumes. Be certain to consult with your teacher for guidance in this regard.

Hair: Hair must be neatly pulled off the face, in a bun, a French roll or French braids, except for national dances for which the front can be pulled off the face and the rest left down. Dancers should generally avoid having any hair hanging down the back or on the shoulders. The subtle use of barrettes, only where necessary and matching hair colour, is acceptable. Bangs should be pulled back or soft and well sprayed. Dancers with short hair should ensure hair is well sprayed so as it doesn't bounce up and down and distract the judge or audience.

Make-Up: At all ages and levels, a small amount of make-up tastefully applied is quite acceptable and can enhance a dancer's stage appearance. Nail polish is not acceptable, and dancers may lose marks in competition if polish is noticeable.

Jewelry: No jewelry should be worn during performances.

DANCER BEHAVIOR Dance Outs and Competitions

Conduct: refer to RSOBHD or ScotDance Canada Codes of Conduct

Dancers should conduct themselves at all times in a responsible manner. Good manners and "sportsmanship" are expected and required. Parents can play a key role in this by ensuring that they model, encourage, and commend good "sportsmanship" at all times and under all circumstances.

Stage Behavior: For competitions, dancers should assume that they are being judged from the time they begin to walk on stage until they are well out of the judges' and spectators' sight. On stage, they should stand in first position with arms by the side or in first position while their number is being recorded by the judge(s). Upon completion of the dance, he/she should remain in the same position until dismissed by the judge. At dance outs, dancers are expected to show respect for the audience and the environment they are in. *Smiles are encouraged.*

Dancer Injury: If a dancer incurs an injury during a competition such that he/she cannot complete the dance, it is appropriate for the dancer to bow and leave the stage in a manner (that will not distract other dancers).

Sword Displacement: If a dancer displaces his/her sword such that it is impossible to complete the dance, the dancer may bow and leave the stage in as inconspicuous a manner as possible or simply stand in first position behind the sword. In all other instances, it is

recommended that dancers complete their performance and wait to be dismissed by the judge (if in a competition.)

Reel Fill-ins: It is essential that all dancers in the reel complete the entire dance regardless of whether they are being judged or are acting as fill-in. Dancers are required to fill-in upon request unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

Stage Position: Dancers must ensure that they do not cross over in front of another dancer or impede another dancer in any way during a performance (or risk losing marks in a competition). It may be necessary to limit travel on a particular step in order to satisfy this point of courtesy to others.

Award Presentations for Competitions

Dancers must remain in full costume for the presentation of awards. They will be called to the stage area by number and should stand in first position for the presentation. When their number is called, they should step forward to the position of the presenter and acknowledge their presentation by a handshake and a curtsy or bow, and then return to their original position. It is expected that dancers will clap for each other in a respectful, pleasant manner.

PARENTAL ROLE

In order to maximize the enjoyment and success of children as highland dancers, parents are encouraged to:

- Contribute to the activities and operation of the RHDA.
- Encourage your dancer(s) to share their talents with others through dance outs.
- Ensure that competition entry forms are properly and accurately completed and submitted on time.
- Ensure that you have reasonable expectations of your dancer's ability and emotional tolerance.
- Ensure that you arrive at competitions at least half an hour prior to performance time and at least 15 minutes before dancing at other events.
- Ensure that your dancer is dressed in good fitting costumes, shoes and socks. Ensure that shoes are tightly tied, and socks are held up.
- Encourage and model sportsmanship and good manners.
- Encourage concentration and preparation for performance. Dancers not properly warmed up and focused cannot perform at the best of their ability and are more prone to injury.
- Praise the accomplishments and downplay the errors.

Highland Dancing is a fun and rewarding sport with significant contribution to the overall development physically, socially, and emotionally provided that a healthy perspective is maintained.

Highland Dance Costuming Requirements for Competition, Dance Outs and Mosaic

Special Note: Please consult your dance teacher for Highland Outfitters, Seamstresses, Patterns and Hose. Teachers will make recommendations for costume requirements. The following is a brief description set out by the RHDA - Dress Code for Mosaic and all Dance Outs.

Jewelry: No jewelry is to be worn with any dance outfit

Highland: Premier

- **Kilt:** Any tartan is acceptable. The kilt should reach to the top of the knee.
- **Jacket or Vest:** Black or colored velvet. Close fitting at the waist and hips, a row of five Scottish embossed buttons on each side of the front facing and trimmed with silver or gold braid.
- **White Blouse (with vest):** Full sleeves to the elbow with a lace front.
- **White Dickie (with Jacket):** lace front
- **Socks:** Full clan tartan hose to match the kilt.
- **Underwear:** Dark or toning with the kilt, but not white.
- **Hair:** No visible hair adornments. Hair in a bun or french braid off the face and collar. (No regular braids, ponytails, or hair down if past collar)
- **Footwear:** Black Highland dancing slippers.

Highland: Pre-Premier

- **Kilt:** Any Clan, Family or District tartan is acceptable. It should reach to the top of the knee. Jacket or Vest is Optional.
- **White Blouse or Dickie:** Same as Premier above
- **Socks:** Full clan tartan hose to match the kilt, white knee-high length or knee highs colored to matched kilt (such as green kilt, green knee highs).
- **Hair:** Same as Premier above

National - Aboyne

- **Skirt:** Tartan or similar design and should be gathered not circular. Length should be to the knee.
- **White Blouse:** Full sleeves to the elbow with no frills.
- **Underskirt:** White cotton with no adornments. A lace edging is acceptable provided it is cotton no more than 1 inch.
- **Bodice:** Velvet, waist length, laced up the front and scalloped or petal design all the way round; with or without ornamental buttons and narrow braid round the scallops. Color to match the tartan or black.
- **Plaid:** Square or rectangular pleated, fastened to the right shoulder with a Scottish brooch. The plaid should be attached to the waist at the back.
- **Socks:** White without frills, ankle or knee high or natural tights may be worn.
- **Hair:** Hair may be in a bun, french braid or half up-half down.

National - White Dress

- **Dress:** A white dress with a tartan plaid (square or rectangular pleated, fastened to the right shoulder with a Scottish brooch. The plaid should be attached to the waist at the back). The skirt should be worn to the top of the knee and may be circular.
- **Socks, hair, and underwear:** as per the Aboyne above.

Male: National

- **Trews:** Male dancers may wear tartan trews or kilt outfit for National dances

Jig

- **Dress:** White, red or green. White dress may be worn with waistcoat type bodice. One to two inches above the knee.
- **Skirt:** Red or green to be worn with white blouse and bodice; same length as for Nationals.
- **Bodice:** Same shape as for Nationals, either red or green.
- **White Blouse:** To be worn if dress is sleeveless.
- **Cummerbund:** Red or green, may be worn with skirt but not in conjunction with a waistcoat and opposite color to skirt.
- **Apron:** A small white apron with any of the options described above.
- **Underskirt:** Same as Nationals outfit.
- **Socks:** Plain white socks or natural colored tights may be worn.
- **Hair:** A plain ribbon may be worn.
- Hair may be in a bun, french braid, ponytail or half up-half down.
- **Footwear:** Black, red or green Irish Jig shoes.

Male Jig

- **Tail Coat:** red or green
- **Waistcoat:** In red or green in opposite color to that of the coat
- **Trousers:** Knee breeches preferably in brown or khaki corduroy or whipcord, slack below knees as per description in the book
- **Socks:** Long red or green
- **Muffler:** Red or green neckerchief
- **Paddy Hat:** A traditional country Irish hat
- **Shillelagh:** the size and girth should be in relation to the height of the dancer.
- **Footwear:** Black, red or green Irish Jig shoes

Sailors Hornpipe

- **Jumper:** Navy blue or white, shaped to the body with set in sleeves. V neck front opening with double thickness collar attached. The bottom of the jumper should be in line with the fork and the sleeves to extend to the wrist bone.
- **Trousers:** Same material and same color as the jumper. Bell-bottomed style, the circumference of the trouser bottoms to be two or three inches wider than the circumference of the knee. Trouser bottoms to be plain.
- **Cap:** Regulation white with circular crown.
- **Collar:** Navy or blue denim with three white stripes; should be worn with either navy or white suit. Black ribbon, tied in a Bow, may be worn.
- **Socks:** Plain white or navy.

HISTORY OF HIGHLAND DANCING

The highlanders of Scotland have always been held in esteem for their great physical strength and agility. These assets are reflected in the Highland dances, many of which are almost as ancient as the country itself. Early raiders of the Scottish coasts were astonished at the dexterity involved in the dances, especially those involving the use of swords. In 54 BC Tacitus of Rome stated: "they would stick their sword and spear handles in the ground so that the blades pointed upwards and, when satisfied with the arrangement, proceeded to dance in and out of this deadly assortment of obstacles."

The Ghillie Callum or Sword Dance dates back probably to the year 1054. During a battle, Malcolm Canmore, Calum - a - Chinn More, slew one of McBeth's chiefs near Dunsinane. Taking the dead warrior's sword, he formed a cross by arranging his sword over the sword of the dead chief and triumphantly danced over the symbol. In the modern Sword Dance, the top sword is in a direct line, front to back, with the hilt towards the dancer and the center of its blade directly above the center blade of the other sword. A slip in footwork, interpreted as an evil omen, especially before battle, now acts as one of the principal methods of eliminating

contestants in sword dance competitions.

Another popular dance through the centuries is the Highland Fling. Originally the Fling was danced on a warrior's shield so that the complicated dance steps had to be executed in precisely the same location. The Fling is sometimes referred to as the basic dance of all highland dancing, demanding excellent poise and control on the part of the dancer. This is one of the only dances in which the tempo of the music is not varied. In general, the form is such that each step pattern is begun on one side and repeated on the opposite side with the "fling" or turn serving as a break between steps.

The Sean Truibhas or "shedding" dates back to 1745 when the wearing of a kilt was forbidden by King George. This dance originated as protest. The first-four-steps of the dance are very restricted and symbolize -the- restrictions Scots felt when they were required to wear "trews" or trousers. Upon the completion of these steps, the music changes immediately to a faster pace and so does the dance. The last two steps are a combination of very quick and exacting movements that show how unrestricted a dancer is when allowed to again wear the kilt.

Indeed, one of the most physically demanding of all Highland dances is the Sailor's Hornpipe. The intricate steps that indicate the different activities on a ship are fairly self-explanatory. For example, the pulling of cables, rocking back and forth, waving farewell and swabbing the deck are but a few of the activities.

The story of the Irish washerwoman being tormented by a mischievous leprechaun is how the Irish Jig originated and undoubtedly this is the dance that all students look forward to learning with eagerness. This energetic dance depicts the "catch me if you can" attitude of the feisty leprechaun who proceeds to tear the clean laundry off the clothesline quicker than the Irish washerwoman can hang it up.

Many of the Highland dances were the dances of warriors, originated by men and danced by men. During the years following the Rebellion of 1745, the Act of Proscription forbade the use of tartans, bagpipes, national games and music.

Unfortunately, many dances and musical compositions were lost with time. Luckily, a book of notes was discovered in 1938, written in 1841 by Frederick Hill. Mr. Hill had been a student of Scottish dance and had painstakingly recorded steps to countless old and forgotten dances. Amongst the collection was a series of dances written for lassies. Some of which are: The Blue Bonnets, Flora MacDonald's Fancy and Scottish Lilt.

Special Note: Like all volunteer organizations, the RHDA depends on memberships, grants and fundraising for the revenue required to offer services to members and to promote highland dancing. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the RHDA Board of Directors; contact information is located on the RHDA website.