



*Sollus
Highland
Dancers*

CELEBRATING FIFTEEN YEARS

The Sollus Centre, Bready
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LOTTERY FUNDED

FOREWARD

By Dance Teacher Georgina Kee McCarter



As a dancer and dance teacher for Sollus Highland Dancers it has been an amazing and busy 15 years. I have so many highlights and I hope this booklet springs up some memories, or maybe some inspiration for the future for you.

We have an amazing team here at Sollus and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved, and I really do mean everyone. We would not be the team that we are today if it wasn't for the dancers, the committee, the families and the supporters we have.....I feel so lucky and honoured to be a part of this team. So here's to another 15, 20 or 30 years!

"Let's go Team Sollus"



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History of the Sollus Highland Dancers

Sollus Highland Dancers have been running for Fifteen Years now.

The Group first started in 2001 with less than 20 dancers in the Old Orange Hall in Bready with a dance teacher called Mr Iain Westhead who was from Scotland but based locally at the time. The



group then brought in Mischa Dodds as their dance teacher in 2002, Mischa continued to travel over from Scotland regularly until 2011 when Georgina Kee McCarter took over as the fulltime teacher after graduating with a First Class Degree in Dance.

Over the years the group has hosted various other guest teachers offering master classes for all the dancers, these guest tutors are often top class judges and Champion Dancers. Their input is hugely beneficial to competing dancers.

Sollus Highland Dancers are still based in the same venue but in 2008. They moved into a brand new building, The Sollus Centre, which replaced the old Orange Hall. This new



building allowed the group to grow and continue dance practice in a large modern hall suitable for all a dancer could want or need.

The hall has progressed to include mirrors and practice bars for the dancers to make the most of their classes. Sollus School of Highland Dance cannot be said to stay still, they continue to strive to give dancers the opportunity to grow and succeed at their own pace.



Dancers regularly travel far and wide to compete in Dance Competitions where they often return home with medals and Trophies. These include

venues the length and breadth of Scotland, Highland and Choreography competitions in Blackpool, they have even competed in Disneyland Paris in both Highland and Choreography



Competitions and came home with prized medals and trophies in their cases. Sollus organise their own annual Competition in conjunction with the Maiden

City Festival which has grown from humble beginnings, having less than 50 dance entries to now having over 130.



Dancers have been known to travel from all over the world to attend the Sollus Competition.

They have organised and successfully competed in both the Ulster and European Competitions held in the area which attract dancers from far and wide.



Sollus dancers have taken part in several Tattoos including Germany, France and Belgium.

Georgina along with a few other dancers have performed in the Edinburgh Tattoo from 2005 to 2008 and in 2011 a group of 18 dancers called West Ulster Total Dance successfully auditioned and danced in all 22 shows of the Edinburgh Tattoo. They



even had a film crew follow them and had a television programme made about their adventure. The links don't end there, Greta Campbell, or Granny as she is more affectionately known, made costumes for the 2008 Edinburgh Tattoo.

Opportunities Through Dance

Highland Dancing has led many Sollus dancers to perform in a wide variety of venues and even countries, almost too many to mention.



Dancers regularly perform at local events such as school fetes, church concerts, charity fundraisers etc. They have also been invited to dance at some more unusual venues, some examples include dancing for Cruise Ships docked in the



Foyle, entertaining Caravan Clubs, Oktoberfest, The International Horseshow in the Odyssey Belfast in 2006 and 2007, the



Olympic Torch Event to mark its journey through the UK in 2012, The Queen's Jubilee Celebrations in 2012, the Annual Halloween parades in Londonderry, the Clippers arriving at the Foyle Maritime Festival, dancing at Stormont.





Recent highlights have to include being part of the Disney Land Paris parade in 2014 where 113 Dancers and their families travelled to Dublin Airport and then flew on to Paris for a few days of fun and adventure. We can't forget the latest expedition and the furthest away yet, when over 30 dancers travelled for hours and hours to take part in the New York Tartan

Parade in 2017, a special memory for all.

Sollus are involved in organising many events that dancers can all take part in such as the Annual Burns Nights, Christmas Lights Switch On and Christmas concerts, Dance Summer schools and not forgetting our very own Walled City Tattoos over the last number of years. There is always something happening that everyone can take part in, no matter what level of dancing they are at, after all, it is **#TeamSollus**



Sollus School of Highland Dance has grown considerably since 2001, from humble beginnings to currently having well over 150 dancers attending weekly or even twice weekly practice in the Sollus Centre and elsewhere.



Sollus believe in challenging dancers to be their best, this includes taking them through dance exams, from the very junior level right to the top. These exams are recognised and well

thought of in dancing circles but also in educational environments, senior dancers have benefited from having dance exams when applying for educational courses, university and when applying for jobs.

Dance proves to be a great talking point wherever it takes you.





Georgina was the first dancer to get her teaching qualifications with Sollus and has worked hard with some of the senior dancers to help them become the dance teachers of the future.



In 2015 three dancers, Claire, Naomi and Rachel, took their UKA Highland Provisional teaching exams and shortly after took their Highland Associate Teaching exams, they now teach their own classes part time whilst studying at university.



In 2016 Jill went through her dance teaching exams with a judge who travelled over from Scotland to adjudicate, and now works alongside Georgina with Sollus and other dance classes and schools in the local area.



At a recent event in The Guildhall, some of the 300+ dancers that sat exams recently were presented with certificates of varying levels by the Mayor, Mrs Hilary McClintock.

Four of the senior dancers, Emily, Emma, Jessica and Sophie, received their Provisional Highland Dance qualifications and will no doubt go on to sit their Associate exam soon. Sollus works as a team, teachers, dancers, parents and Committee members all play their part in the success of the group.



James and Mandy put in a lot of time helping run the group and of course not forgetting Granny Greta who must have lost count of the number of uniforms she has adjusted to fit each dancer perfectly, costumes she has created and kilts she has made.

She has even recently passed on some of her knowledge and skill to a few willing pupils who have been taken through the process of kilt making and who can now hopefully begin to use their new skills to benefit the group in the future.



Sollus would like to say a big Thank You to Greta for all her hard work and dedication.

Sometimes Sollus just wants to have fun so we have events were everyone can enjoy themselves. We have sponsored walks to help keep the group going, barbecue days were parents cook yummy



hotdogs and burgers for hungry dancers and their family, and lots of fun days where we let our hair down and join together as one big family.

Occasionally if we are planning a big trip we have fund raising days which end up being great days for dancers, their families and friends to come together and see what we can do.



Our latest adventure to New York meant we had to raise some funds but as usual, everyone came together and made a real effort so dancers could walk down Sixth Avenue.



Sollus School of Highland Dance never stands still or rests on its laurels, the whole team are always up for a new challenge, a new adventure, definitely a team to be proud of being in.



What the Dancers say-

"Dancing in the Edinburgh Tattoo was the best experience I have had so far in my life. I spent most of my university interview talking about it!"



"I was so nervous dancing in Stormont for so many important people but I was so proud of myself!"

"Competing at Disney Land Paris was just unreal"





"The New York Tartan Parade was an experience like no other – dancing down 6th Avenue felt like a dream and we were so glad to be part of it"

"When sitting my exams I was nervous but excited too. I was so happy when I passed."



"I really enjoyed my First Dance Class, everybody was so friendly"

What the Parents Say -

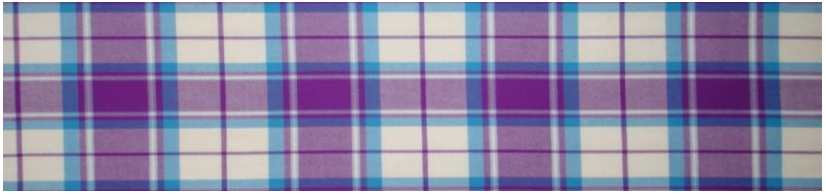
*Being part of
the Sollus
Christmas
Concert was
just so
unbelievable"*



*"Dressing
up and
taking part
in the
Halloween
Parade was
great fun"*

*"Celebrating William
& Kate's Wedding
with Sollus was a
special day to
remember"*





SOLLUS HIGHLAND DANCERS



*Sollus
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MEMBERS INFORMATION



Incudes:

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Our vision/aims/being a part of Team Sollus

Sollus Highland Dancers are a dance school based in The Sollus Centre, Bready. The group was founded in 2001 with the aim to provide young people with top class Highland Dance tuition.

We believe that our young people can represent their community and their culture in a positive manner that can be reflected to the wider community through a variety of performances and educational workshops. We encourage all members to attend many different events and to learn about other cultures and other people, we also encourage our members to become dance teachers in the future so that they can also pass on their skills and knowledge to future generations of dancers. We welcome everyone to become a part of our team and encourage everyone to include his or her friends and families to come together and celebrate our rich a vibrant history and culture.

Sollus Highland Dancers believe that our members are a positive and inspirational representation of what Northern Ireland has to offer. Our mission statement is to:

‘Have pride in your own culture and respect for others’

Classes / where to find information

We host classes in a variety of local community centres and schools on different days and at different times so there should be a class to suit everyone.

We also host a range of events and competitions annually which provide all our dancers with an opportunity to take part.



For more detailed information on the group or for up to date information on events please visit:

- Facebook 'Sollus Highland Dancers'
- Call us at The Sollus Centre – 02871841892
- Or email us – sollusdance@hotmail.com

If you are interested in joining a class please contact us if you would like a registration form or if you have any more question

Competitions/Performances

Sollus welcome all dancers to initially perform at open dance classes where we invite parents into see the dancer's progress. Following this, dancers can advance to perform at various community or local events. Many of our dancers then continue to perform on international stages and at high profile events.

Many Highland dancers want to compete when ready to do so and this opportunity is available to any dancer who wishes to do so. There are many competitions throughout the year at home in Northern Ireland and further afield (all forms and information on this are available from our tutors).



Dancers are also offered the opportunity to take dance exams starting from the very new dancers up to qualifications that allow you to teach Highland Dance.

What you need to know to compete:

Dancers who are under 7 years old can compete in the Primary section and need to know:

- Pas de Basque
- Pas de Basque & Highcuts
- Fling
- Swords

Dancers who are 7 years old or over can start competing in the Beginners category, for this section you need to know:

Highland Dances:

- Fling
- Swords
- Seann Truibhas
- Reel

National Dances:

- Flora
- Lilt

As you progress up through the divisions there are other Highland dances to learn such as the Irish Jig and the Sailor's Hornpipe and other National dances such as the Highland Laddie, Barracks Johnnie, Blue Bonnets, Village Maid, Earl of Erroll etc.

Before you start to compete:

To become a competitive dancer you must register with The Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing (SOBHD) where for a small administration fee you will receive your photographic dancer's ID card. To do so your teacher and the dancers parent/guardian must complete an application, your tutor will only complete this form once you have shown that you know your dances and are fully prepared.

Once a competitive dancer you can work your way up through the competitive divisions:

- Primary
- Beginners
- Novice
- Intermediate
- Premier (Pre-Championship then Championship)



Uniforms/getting kitted out

Sollus Highland Dancers always strive to help and support its members in any way; this includes providing the information of where to source uniforms and costumes.

A detailed dress code set by the SOBHD is available on our website or at:

<http://www.sobhd.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Dress-Code.pdf>

Please note strict regulations about hair, jewellery etc. when competing.

Here is a brief outline of the basics:

Black dance Shoes

Socks (can be plain white or can purchase tartan socks to match your kilt)

Garters (white elastic to hold up socks)

Dance Pants (p.e pants/big pants - black)

White Blouse

All of these items can be purchased through Sollus Highland Dancers at the Sollus Centre. You can use alternative online sources however just check with your tutor before purchasing to ensure that what your buying is accurate.

Highland Uniforms

As discussed above you may want to become a competitive dancer.



To compete you will need a uniform, starting with a Highland Uniform which comprises of Kilt, Socks (either plain white or tartan to match kilt,) white blouse, waistcoat or jacket, (Hat for boys.)



National Costume

You will also need a national costume e.g. A white dress with plaid or an Aboyne Costume, Tartan Trews for boys, again available from The Sollus Centre or from any other Highland Dance supplier. (Once again, before ordering consult with your tutor to make sure that what you are ordering is exactly what you need and is in accordance to the rules outlined by the SOBHD.)



Other Costumes

As you progress up the competitive divisions, there are further uniforms you may need, depending on which dances a competition chooses to include.

Irish Jig

Green or red skirt or dress with white blouse and white apron and special jig shoes



Hornpipe

Navy blue or white sailor suit worn with white sailor hat, white ankle socks and black leather dance shoes



These traditional dance uniforms will be used in other performances so are not just for competition.



We also hold a stock of various themed costumes that dancers sometimes wear for performances.

There is always something available for everyone to wear, no matter how long you have been dancing.



Dance Competition Gear Bag Checklist

<u>Highland</u>	<u>National</u>	<u>Jig</u>	<u>Hornpipe</u>	<u>Don't Forget...</u>
Shoes	Shoes	Jig Shoes	Shoes	Safety pins
Socks	White ankle Socks/tights	White ankle Socks/tights	White Socks	Registration card
Garters	Underskirt	Underskirt	Trousers	Competition number
Dance pants	Dance pants	Dance pants	Jacket	Hair bobbles
Kilt And Braces (if required)	Dress / waistcoat, blouse & skirt	Dress / waistcoat, blouse & skirt	Hat	Hair slides
Blouse	Plaid	Apron		Bun & hair net
Waistcoat or Jacket	Brooch			Hair spray

****Don't forget to bring drinks and snacks for energy during the competition, preferably nothing sticky or messy but just in case, bring some wet wipes.**

How to join Sollus School of Highland Dance

If you would like to be part of this great Group, this is a sample of the registration form we ask dancers and parents/guardians to complete, the form can be obtained from The Sollus Centre, Bready.

Registration Form



*Sollus
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All dancers should fill in a new registration form for dance classes annually when commencing in September so that we have current information for each dancer

- *Please ensure that you clearly include a relevant email address and mobile number **These should be updated if and when they change***
- *All dancers and parents should join the 'Sollus HD Parents and Information Group' Facebook page – this is where all information will be communicated.*
- *All Sollus owned costumes should be signed for and kept in good condition. Should the dancer grow out of the costume or leave the group, costumes should be returned immediately*

---Either fill in and cut out the next page and bring it into the Sollus Centre or call in for a registration form---



Dancers Name: _____

Age: _____ **D.O.B:** _____

Address:

Email: _____

Contact Tel 1: _____ **Name:** _____

Tel 2: _____ **Name:** _____

Please list any allergies/conditions:

- *I give permission for my child to have their photo taken at any dance related events*
- *I allow any images to be used in the media and through the 'Sollus Highland Dancers' social media pages*
- *I agree to keep any costumes / Sollus belongings in good condition and return them when appropriate or on leaving the group*

Signed: _____
(parent/guardian)



“Why not come and join us, have some fun and make new friends”



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sollus School of Highland Dance would like to thank:

- **Awards For All for their help with publishing this booklet and with events throughout the year**
- **Everyone that is part of #TeamSollus, the dancers, parents, Committee and all the volunteers who help on the sidelines and in the background. We have only included a snap shot of what Team Sollus do in this publication, there is so much more**
- **The Sollus Centre, Bready and all the other venues we use for classes**
- **Our team of costume makers, tea makers, chefs, taxis and all those who support our Group in any way**
- **The organisers of the many local events that invite our Group along to perform, giving them the confidence and experience they need to continue dancing**

