



RSCDS Wirral Branch Classes

Prenton - Tuesday evenings

Teacher - David Haynes

St Stephen's Church Hall, Prenton Lane,
Birkenhead, CH42 8LA

Social Class: 7.00 - 9.00 pm

West Kirby - Wednesday evenings

Teachers - Helen Trattles and Hilary Letts

West Kirby United Reformed Church Hall,
Meols Drive, West Kirby (near to Aldi),
CH48 5DA

Beginners Class 7.00 - 8.00pm

Intermediate Class 8.00 - 8.30pm

General Class: 8.00 - 9.45 pm

Class Fees & Subscriptions

Class Fees for the Spring Term will be:

Beginners & Intermediate Class: £20

General **OR** Social Class: £40.00

Each additional class per week: £ 3.00

Occasional visitors: £5.00 per class (maximum three classes per term), no maximum for the summer term, as other societies do not dance then.

To ensure financial stability, it is vital that class fees are paid promptly, in advance, or at the first class of the term.

Members can pay by cheque - made payable to **RSCDS Wirral Branch** or by bank transfer to **The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society RSCDS - WIRRAL BRANCH**

Sort Code 20-50-36; Account No 10768391

Class Dates

Spring Term 2025 (12 weeks)

Start: Tuesday 14th January 2025

Wednesday 15th January 2025

End: Tuesday 8th April 2025

Wednesday 9th April 2025

NO CLASSES 18TH & 19TH FEBRUARY

Dates for your diary

Visitors' Night - Tuesday 11th February
2025, 7-9.30pm, Prenton

Summer Dance - Saturday 7th June
2025, 2-5pm, Prenton



Wishing everyone a very
happy Christmas and a
healthy 2025 with plenty
of dancing.

Beginners/ Intermediate Class

As the end of term approaches, we hope you have found the classes on Wednesdays enjoyable and useful. We have been pleased that so many of you have been coming along, learning more and improving every week.

This term we have introduced the 'Intermediate' session which has been great, giving the opportunity for us to dance each dance eight times through in full sets.

Our teaching this term has been in preparation for the Christmas Dance and we are looking forward to seeing many of you there.

Next term we are planning to prepare for Visitors' Night on 11th February, learning new formations and dances each week.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and look forward to dancing with you in the New Year.

Helen and Hilary



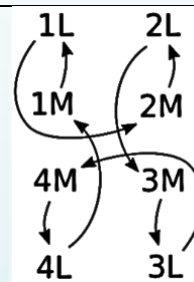
Settling into a new job.....

It is now nearly six months since I have taken over the responsibilities of Wirral RSCDS Branch Treasurer from Maxine, a very hard act to follow. Despite being officially elected at the AGM in May, it took a little while and a number of phone calls and forms being submitted (and re-submitted) for the access to the Branch bank account and new mandates to be sorted. I must admit to some genuine nervousness about the Treasurer role as finance in the voluntary sector is a very new area for me but thanks to some excellent tuition and support from Maxine, I am starting to feel I actually know what I am doing and realise it isn't too daunting. The Autumn term was the trickiest to get my head round with so many different payments of class fees, branch and HQ subscriptions to manage. Thankfully all the hard work that Peter and Celia Harvey do in managing the petty cash account and all the membership records makes the Treasurer job so much easier.

I have also enjoyed being the newest recruit to Wirral Branch committee. The meetings are interesting but also good fun and all the members are welcoming, supportive and willing to share and explain anything that is unfamiliar. I have gained a new understanding and appreciation of all that is involved in the successful running of the branch and a bit more about the role of RSCDS Head Office. If anyone is interested and thinking about joining the committee in the future, I would highly recommend it.

Sue Powell

A Week at RSCDS Summer School



It was with great excitement and some nervousness that I set off on a Sunday morning in August to travel to St Andrews for a whole week of dancing.

Armed with the advice of Wirral Branch members: 'rest in the afternoons' 'go to the walk throughs as there are none at the evening dances' 'get to the dining room early' 'massage your feet' and carrying a lovely shoe bag made by Liz, I found the registration desk at University Hall; claimed my name badge 'to be worn at all times' and made my way to a college room, and collapsed onto the bed. Phew!

Going into the Dining Room that first evening I was a nervous newbie, but Andrew and Anne from the Tuesday class are regulars at St Andrews, and there they were and waved me over to their table. It was lovely to see them and catch up. I am grateful for their fun, friendship, (and gossip) throughout the week!

Monday came and our classes got going in earnest. Each morning started promptly at 9.30 with our teacher and a musician, yes, live music for every class! I was in a class of 14 less experienced dancers and so a lot of time was spent on technique and style; building to a little 32 bar dance before lunch to show off our newly learnt skills, similar in format to our Wednesday classes, but more demanding.

We were of very mixed ability for the 3-hour session. Our teachers Ann and Pat were great, with the highest of standards, very supportive and very patient on occasion, I think I heard 'get me to the Gin' once. By Friday everyone had relaxed, we were all much more confident, honing our skills, and smiling our way through dances and enjoying ourselves. Other classes had 50 or more so we were extremely fortunate to have such close attention.

The evening dances were a different kettle of fish...expectations were high. They were spectacular, a full band, the long sets, the swinging kilts, the balcony view, no walk through, less friendly faces helping out the newbies. I found it hard some of the time, (that awful feeling that comes with turning left, not right, and messing up the figure for everyone); but when I didn't make mistakes, I felt such a sense of achievement and pleasure that it cancelled out miserable moments.

But I loved it all, every minute of that week. I love to learn, my default is not getting things right first or even second time, so having this very immersive experience was fantastic and to be with a couple of hundred people who all love Scottish country dancing was brilliant. We had a lot of fun as a class group and I have made new dancing friends from all over the country. I recommend it, it is good for the dancing soul.

However, none of this would have come about if Sue had not persuaded me along to St Stephen's one evening, where I discovered Scottish Country Dancing and it was pretty much love at first sight. I learnt so much, and still do, from David, Helen, and Hilary and all the other experienced dancers at our Branch. So, thank-you all.

I plan to go to St Andrews again next year, the early bird tickets are on sale soon....

Deborah Williams

OUR EDINBURGH EXPEDITION



Monday 5th August

You may think it strange, given that I'm a lifelong Scottish country dancer, that I'd not been to Scotland since I was a teenager 50 years ago. My husband has always been reluctant to go, insisting that it's too cold. Unfortunately his suspicions seemed to be confirmed as our motorhome battled its way north on the M74 in August in lashing rain and roaring winds! However, we arrived at our Edinburgh caravan site to find it warm with sunny spells, if still somewhat windy.

Tuesday 6th August

The good weather continued for our walking tour of Edinburgh in the morning and our visit to the castle in the afternoon. My step count for the day was 15,400, much of it up and down hills of course, so it wasn't surprising we had aching legs and sore feet by the time we returned to our camp site!

A good form of entertainment since we arrived has been 'Spot the Dance Title'; a few I spotted on our first day –

Cramond Bridge (Cramond Bridge is not far from the caravan site)

The Luckenbooth Brooch (we saw Luckenbooth's Restaurant in Edinburgh)

Reel of the Royal Scots (there is a museum of the Royal Scots at the castle)

We saw an amazing boy piper busking, not older than around 9, who played better than many adults I have heard! Our walking tour guide told us that busking is a bit of a rite of passage for Edinburgh children learning to play the bagpipes.

Wednesday 7th August

A blustery and cool, but thankfully dry, day for our morning visit to the Royal Yacht Britannia, and our afternoon at the Royal Botanic Gardens. The yacht was a case of 'upstairs, downstairs'; ensuite bathrooms for the Royal Family but the 150 junior ratings on board shared 9 showers!!

There was a slight hiccup with our return coach transfer to the caravan site at the end of the afternoon, when the wheelchair lift on the coach got jammed against the edge of the pavement and wouldn't budge! A mechanic was sent for and an hour later we were able to return to base.



Thursday 8th August

A cool and cloudy but dry morning, so we walked the couple of miles from our caravan site to Cramond village along the promenade. Some of you may know that I am interested in Roman history and culture, so we were surprised and delighted to find the remains of a Roman fort in the village! We had some lunch in the Cramond Inn, which is a 'digital detox' pub – no phones, tablets or laptops allowed! It was a bit of a salutary lesson in realising how reliant we have become on our phones to help us fill spaces of time, such as waiting for food orders to arrive.

After a bit of downtime back at the site we were taken by bus into the city where we had dinner with our fellow tourers at the Edinburgh Grand Hotel, before going to the castle for the highlight of our trip, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. I have watched the tattoo on the telly each year for as long as I remember, and my daughter, now 33, remembers as a child watching it with me and me saying "One day I will go to that", so this was a 'Bucket List' occasion for me. It did not disappoint. The weather, with very low cloud hanging over the parade ground and some drizzle, tried to spoil it but didn't succeed. What a spectacle! And every bit as slick as it looks on the telly. The dancing was wonderful, of course; how I wish I could still dance with their energy! But I feared for their ankles and the state of their shoes. Two shows a night for 3 weeks on tarmac! The atmosphere was great, with people in the audience from all over the world, and the setting at the castle added to the drama. A fabulous end to a perfect 3 days. And my husband was, after all, captivated by Edinburgh, so I suspect we will be back!



Carol Otsa

**Intermediate Day School with David Queen and
Andrew Lyon (Musician)**

**RSCDS Cheshire Branch – Saturday 16th November
2024**



We started the day by focussing on our steps including skip change and strathspey travelling steps. We were asked to listen to the music to discern the difference between jig and reel time. We practiced our “point” positioning and how we used our legs to create beautiful movements. The steps were then put into various formations including the bourrel, various reels, allemande, promenade and allemande right. Finally, we practiced them in selected dances which included, The Rakish Highlandman, A Belfast Welcome, My Friend Joe, The Jerico Jig and the Manchester Gay Gordons. David Queen devised and wrote the music for two of the dances, A Belfast Welcome and The Manchester Gay Gordons.

We enjoyed practising the details of the steps and formations and listening to the rhythm speed of reel and jig time. Along with remembering to count, we were reminded of our posture, taking hands correctly, making eye contact and smiling. Scottish dancing is a sociable activity and we were encouraged to acknowledge our partner(s) at every opportunity.

By the end of the day, we had learnt new things and improved on others. All in all, it was a very interesting, instructive and satisfying experience. David is an excellent teacher who commands the room whilst engaging with everyone. He creates a safe, non-threatening and welcome space in which to learn. Andrew Lyon complemented David by providing a perfect musical accompaniment for our dances.



We would like to thank everyone at Cheshire RSCDS for making the day a success, with special thanks to Andrew and Anne.

Deborah, Pat and Alison



Report of the 2024 Autumn Gathering & AGM Weekend

The 2024 Autumn Gathering Weekend was, this year, held at the Meadow Bank Stadium in Edinburgh from the 1st – 3rd November.

The weekend began for us on the Thursday evening with the opportunity to join the RSCDS Edinburgh Branch Advanced Class. Apart from two dancers from South Wales we were the only people to take up this offer. We had a pleasant evening, dancing some dances from the weekend programme and one from the Edinburgh Branch 100th Anniversary Book, which was launched during the weekend.

On Friday we attended a wonderful concert, organised by the Edinburgh Branch, and held in the Canongate Kirk. The musicians were Muriel Johnstone and Peter Shand (piano) and Pete Clark and Tim Macdonald (fiddle). This was a wonderful hour listening to these talented musicians playing some favourites and some lesser known tunes, many being associated with Edinburgh itself. The Canongate Kirk is the Kirk of Holyrood House where the Royal Family worship when in Edinburgh. I also learnt that it is the Kirk where the Reverend Robert Walker (The Skating Minister) was the Minister. [\(20+\) Facebook](#)

Immediately after the concert we rushed across the City to the RSCDS HQ, where an Open Afternoon had been put on to enable visitors to see the offices owned by the Society and view some of the archive material. To many dancers the famous address is associated with the dances– 12 Coates Crescent and EH3 7AF.

We then had a quick turn around before attending the Evening Dance – a busy programme which had been arranged by the International Branch, with music by the Gordon Shand Scottish Country Dance Band.

On Saturday we attended the AGM during the afternoon (reported separately).

The Saturday evening Ball programme was devised by the Edinburgh Branch of the RSCDS and we danced to the music of Jim Lindsay and his Scottish Dance Band. The Ball was preceded by a demonstration from the Edinburgh Demonstration Team of some of the dances from their Centenary Publication.

For those who still had energy (Andrew!) there was a class on the Sunday morning and the Class Teacher was Faye McNeill (nee Mather) – some of you will remember her from her days dancing with the Wirral Branch.

The 2025 Autumn Gathering will take place in Glasgow (venue to be confirmed) from the 7th – 9th November.

C. Anne MacDonald 25.11.24

From the Chair

Many thanks to Andrew and Anne who were our proxies at the AGM in Edinburgh this year. The Committee sent in, ahead of the AGM, our votes for the various elections to committees. At the AGM there were some procedural motions and one motion to increase the annual subscription to £29 with other membership subscriptions based pro-rata on that amount. The Committee supported the increase.

The Chief Operating Officer of the RSCDS had sent out a video which was an overview of RSCDS expenses and income for Branch officers to view in advance of the AGM. This outlined the quite serious position the RSCDS is in with important decisions ahead about how best to secure its financial future.

As a follow up to the video I attended one of a series of Zoom meetings in October with the Chief Operating Officer, Jon Berridge. I came away from the meeting with a very positive sense of how committed Jon Berridge is to communicating with Branches. He is keen that we all share what belonging to the RSCDS means to us as dancers at all levels and what belonging to the RSCDS means to Branch Officers taking responsibility for making sure our own Branch thrives.

Hilary



RSCDS Membership

We are delighted to welcome eight beginners who are now members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. The RSCDS membership of our group is now 36 individual members, 2 couples and 2 associated members (i.e. members of another group who dance with us too).

It has been very encouraging to see some of our beginners moving up into our improvers group and hopefully others will follow soon.

We are delighted that eight of our group will be joining us for our dance and will have an opportunity to get to know and dance with other members of our group.

Thank you

Peter Harvey (Membership Secretary)