



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 2026 (11 weeks)

Start: Tuesday 6th January 2026

Wednesday 7th January 2026

End: Tuesday 24th March 2026

Wednesday 25th March 2025

NO CLASSES 17TH & 18TH FEBRUARY

Dates for your diary

Visitors' Night – Tuesday 10th February 2026, 7-9.30pm, Prenton



Wishing everyone a very
happy Christmas and a
healthy 2026 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



Check out the RSCDS Website

I wonder how many members have spent time exploring the information and dance resources available on the main RSCDS website which is a membership benefit that we can all take advantage of. If like me you sometimes find yourself wasting time scrolling through some mindless rubbish on the internet, I would recommend the RSCDS website as a far more interesting browsing experience. If you are new to Scottish dancing, as I was, you can find out all sorts of things but there is even information for experienced dancers and resources for teachers

Go to rscds.org and click on Learn or follow the link from our branch site.

Information is extensive but well organised and accessible. Some of the things you find include a basic beginners guide to steps, foot positions and descriptions of common terminology, which isn't always obvious to newbies. For example, what is top and bottom? Which corners are which?

There is a very useful and comprehensive section on formations with short individual videos to illustrate each one.

I was especially interested in the section on Scottish dance music which describes the three principal rhythm types, jig, reel and strathspey, (plus march and waltz time). There is information on the origins of the tune genres and each section includes snippets of typical examples so you can start to hear and understand the different rhythms, structures and sequences and how they fit the dance.

Would definitely recommend a look at the RSCDS site and unlike many websites no annoying adverts or pop ups!

Sue Powell

Report of the Autumn Gathering & AGM Weekend

7th – 8th November 2025



This year saw the return of the Autumn Gathering to the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow. The City is celebrating 850 years since becoming a Burgh and this was evident by buildings being lit up at night and the lovely frieze made by local school children and on display at our AGM.



The dance programme for the Friday night was chosen by the San Francisco Branch and we danced to the music of Susan MacFadyen and her Scottish Country Dance Band. The first dance was 'The Shetland Shepherdess', and I just happened to be standing next to her in the line up! Caroline Nicol is a Shetlander, shepherding in Norway, whom the deviser met during a visit to Oslo.

On Saturday morning we were up bright and early for an opportunity to meet with the Board Members. I was particularly interested to talk about the new RSCDS Strategy and how Branches might become involved. We were advised that guidance and a Toolkit will be available on the new Website which should be up and running in the New Year.

The 96th AGM was held during the afternoon and President, Gary Coull, gave an inspirational address.



Youth Services Committee Election Results:

- Ilona Brown & Julia Turi were elected for a 3year term of office.

Motion 8.1 – Membership Subscription

Motion text:

The Management Board propose that for the year from 1st July 2026:

- *The basic full annual subscription increases to £30 per annum*
- *Joint membership for a couple increases to £52 (£26 per person) per annum*
- *All other membership subscriptions based pro-rata on the basic full annual subscription amount*

Voting outcome (delegates and proxies):

- **For: 173 Against: 35 Abstentions: 3** The motion was carried.

Next Steps

The Board will now focus on implementing these decisions and continuing its work on the Society's strategic plan.

Your Voting Delegates (see pic Rt)



The meeting concluded, as usual, with the presentation of Scrolls of Honour to members who have been nominated by their Branches.

This year President Gary presented scrolls to:

- Rosalind McKie – (Hunter Valley Branch NSW, *in absentia*)
- Allana Creighton – Perth Branch (Allana has for many years organised the Autumn Gathering)
- Jim Lindsay – proposed by the Membership Services Committee. Jim is a hugely popular Band Leader and the applause indicated what a worthy recipient he was thought to be.

The Ball on Saturday night was preceded by a Reception and a marvellous display of dancing by the Youth Demonstration Team. Some of the dances were from Book 54 and choreography was by none other than Faye McNeill! We then had another great evening of dancing to Marian Anderson and her band. The programme was chosen by the Dundee Branch currently celebrating their Centenary.

The 2026 Autumn Gathering will take place from the 6th – 7th November with the venue still to be confirmed.

C. Anne MacDonald 13.11.25

Cheshire Branch Advanced Day School

On Saturday 22nd November, Hilary and I attended the Advanced Day School in Tarporley, organised by Cheshire Branch. There was a special connection for us as the teacher taking the course was Faye O'Neil (formerly Mather) who learned to dance here in Wirral as a child, taught by Margaret Kay. Margaret would have been very proud of her protégé as Faye is not only a beautiful dancer, but an excellent teacher!



(Faye is back row second from the left, Margaret Kay next then Liz Farquhar and Diana Dainton) The photo was taken in 2007 at Leeds' Festival)

We all 'upped our game' especially when Faye reminded us that we were falling into the common trap of performing steps beautifully in step practice but then not transferring our improvements into our dancing when we were doing an entire dance.



We tackled some little-known dances that demanded real concentration to achieve slight variations on formations we know well.

A good example was the Ruby Hornpipe where we had to do an inverted allemande followed by setting on the right foot only and six slip steps to the left before turning partner with the right hand. (It works but you do have to keep thinking) <https://youtu.be/rwWAjFBxdJ8?si=KYT7SYqUULp6y1ol>

Faye challenged us with good humour, patience and a smile and we dancers responded with our very best efforts.



By the end of the course we were tired, but inspired, by this lovely young woman. She is certainly a rising star in RSCDS, having taught at St Andrew's Summer School and heading off to Ottawa next year to teach there.

We feel proud because she is one of our own and is a member of our Branch albeit from a distance as she now lives in Edinburgh.

Our thanks to Anne and Andrew who organised the day.

Helen T

St Andrew's Day Dance, 29th November 2025



Forty dancers gathered at St Stephen's on the 29th November, for an afternoon programme of dancing to celebrate St Andrew's Day and the coming of Christmas. Guests came from Tarporley, Chester Cally, and Northwich branches, as well as Liverpool and Llanfairfechan (Bangor branch). It was lovely to see the hall filling up and a hum of anticipation, cribs in evidence!

We are fortunate in Wirral branch to have a strong group of enthusiastic beginners and the programme reflected this. All dances were walked through. One Thistle dances featured in the early stages, not only to support our beginners but also to warm up the more experienced. It was agreed that the programme had a lovely mix of reels, jigs and strathspeys and enjoyed by all; with Forty and Counting, later in the programme, coming in for special mention. This lovely reel is unforgiving if a mistake is made, recovery barely an option...and it looked great from where I was sitting!



Come the interval the tea room was buzzing and the Cranachan with shortcake very much enjoyed.

Back to the dancing and due to an earlier short power cut the second half was back-to -back dancing in order to complete the programme. Phew!

It was a lovely afternoon and great to welcome so many guests. I spoke to some at the end and they all agreed that an afternoon dance is a welcome innovation, especially in the Winter when people are travelling so far.

Of course, not one step would have been taken without our teachers and programme devisers Helen and Hilary, and our MC, David. Heartfelt thanks from us all, to them.

The committee and friends are a great team, whether it's selling the tickets, sorting electrics, preparing the refreshments or humping tables-it all came together really well, so thanks to everyone involved, and we look forward to the 2026 dances.

Deborah W