

Light and Airy



Scottish Country Dancers of Winnipeg
info@rscdswinnipeg.ca www.rscdswinnipeg.ca

Volume 55, Number 3

December 2023

Important Dates

Dancing in 2023

Saturday, December 2 – St. Andrew’s Social

Monday, December 11 – last evening class of 2023

Thursday, December 14 – last afternoon class of 2023 (“make up” due to missed class Nov. 9)

Saturday, December 30 – Seasonal Celebration. CPUC Lounge 7:30 – 9:30

Dancing in 2024

Monday, January 8 – evening classes start 7:30 – 9:30

Thursday, January 11 – afternoon classes start 1:30 – 3:30

Saturday, January 27 – Burns Social

Saturday, March 16 – St. Patrick’s Social

Monday, April 8 – last evening class

Thursday, April 11 – last afternoon class

Saturday, April 20 – Dance Workshop

Saturday, May 6 – Wind-Up Social

Monday, May 13 – AGM

Note: all events are held at Churchill Park United Church (CPUC) 525 Beresford Ave. unless otherwise stated.

A Word from the Chair of COM

Dry streets and warmish weatherit has been a great month so far for walking and being outside after the blast of snow just before Halloween.

Residual ice followed of course and we were all very sorry that Sharron Bettess had an unfortunate up close and painful encounter with that hard reality on November 9th. After surgery for hip replacement and a very short hospitalization Sharron returned home on November 13th and already is tackling stairs and some short walks. We all wish her well and a speedy recovery. She is a very active and resilient individual and we look forward to her return to dancing and many other activities.

In the next month we will see the conclusion of regular classes on December 11 unless there is a makeup class to replace the missed Thursday class, Nov 9 due to snow. There will be a reminder sent out if we do schedule an additional Thursday class, so keep tuned. The November Social is now scheduled for Sat. Dec.2 and we have had some previews in both classes of some very good dances to belatedly celebrate St Andrew's Day.

At the end of December, Saturday, the 30th, we are planning a little gathering to share Christmas goodies, socialization and perhaps Christmas songs in the CPUC Lounge from 7:30-9:30pm. This event is not a dance night as per a usual social, but a get-together to celebrate the season and two of our teachers, Joyce Cormack and Maureen Burnham, for their many contributions to the Branch. Joyce and Maureen are still coming to classes when they can but due to recent health issues have not been able to teach. We hope everyone will come along with some Christmas goodies, any entertainment contributions and perhaps to share some memorable stories of Maureen and Joyce's SCD adventures! There will be more details sent by Sharyl in December to confirm this event.

I think that is all, and look forward to seeing you at the Dec. 2 Social.

Lynn McClure

Next COM meeting – December 7

Have you heard?

Expression of Thanks.

We want to express our deep appreciation for the card that we received after the passing of Bruce's Dad. It was very kind of everyone who took the time to sign it to let us know that we were thought of during this sad time.

Bruce & Sheila Careless

Seasonal Gathering – Saturday December 30th 7:30 – 9:30 pm

Join us in the CPUC Lounge during this *betwixt and between* time, to celebrate the season and two of our teachers, Maureen Burnham and Joyce Cormack for their many contributions to the Branch. Joyce and Maureen are still coming to classes when they can, but due to recent health issues have not been able to teach. More details will be sent in early December.

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR SNOW DAYS

The COM has agreed to the following policy for cancellation of classes, when necessary because of inclement weather conditions:

A decision to cancel that day's class will be made no later than 3:00 pm on Mondays & 9:00 am on Thursdays.

An email will be sent out to all members as soon as possible.

IF THE WEATHER IS NASTY, PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL BEFORE HEADING OUT TO CLASS.

If you do not have access to email, please let your class teacher know and leave a phone number where you can be reached. If in doubt, please call your class teacher. If you cannot contact your teacher, then call the chair of COM.

Note: This policy will also apply to extra or special classes and socials that are not on a class day.

Etiquette in SCD

Recently the SCD Headquarters in Edinburgh published a poster guide entitled "Scottish Country Dance Etiquette". After some discussion at a recent COM meeting we wanted to indicate our support for this document and to reinforce the principles therein.

The four major objectives of these guidelines are to remind us all to:

- 1) Be inclusive, and welcoming to all.
- 2) Show respect towards other dancers, verbally and physically.
- 3) Dance safely so as to lessen risks of injury to others and yourself.
- 4) Respect personal boundaries and look out for each other with kindness.

The document provides specific examples of how these objectives can be met so as to create a safe and comfortable space to dance.

Having danced for many years in different situations and countries where the universal nature of SCD is to have us all "singing from the same song book" you might think that we all observe these as "common sense" guidelines almost automatically.....but alas not always! I think we can all benefit from reminders of how our behaviour or words can be uncomfortable or distressing for those with different backgrounds and experiences.

A quick survey of "etiquette" and it's meanings over the past 150 years refers to qualities of polite conduct and continues by stating that if you practice proper etiquette you are less likely to offend or annoy others and may even charm them. Something we can all aspire to!

PS We will leave a copy of the "Guidelines for SCD Etiquette" with the membership list for class.

Upcoming

St. Andrew's Social postponed! New Date December 2!

December 2 at Churchill Park United Church

Programme

1.	The Wild Geese	32J3	Bk 24
2.	Sandy O'er the Lea	32S2	MMM
3.	Shiftin' Bobbins	32R3	30 Popular Vol 2
4.	Joie de Vivre	32J3	Bk 39
5.	Triple Happiness	32S 3 cpl set	Bk 52
6.	Catch the Wind	32R3	Bk 45
7.	St Andrew's Fair	32J3	5/82
8.	The Lairds' Chain	32J2	Leaflet
9.	The Kissing Bridge	32R3	Bk 47
10.	Reel of the 51st Division	32R3	Bk 13

From the classes

Monday Evening

I feel like we've been making a lot of progress in Monday class, and I think Cheryl must agree because everything seems to have gotten suddenly much more complex. First it was "the Lea Rig" with the petronella figure, which I thought we managed tolerably well. The next week for Hallowe'en we had "Loch Leven Castle", which to this day I can't even figure out from the video, and "Every Witch Way", which some tried to explain as "a reverse schiehallion" while some of us have no clue even what a regular schiehallion is to begin with. Hilarity ensued.

On November 6, amid much confusion on my part, I suddenly realized something that seemed important: a reel of three doesn't pass right - left - right like a chain. Hmm... Armed with this knowledge, I felt pretty confident on November 13 that *this time*, I was going to do it right. And that's when Cheryl introduced... a reel of four. Augh! Help!

And yet strangely, what confused me the most to date was having three couples dance down the set and back up in "Shiftin' Bobbins". Thanks everyone for your patience with us beginners who can't seem to follow the person in front of us in a straight line!

I can't wait to see what fiendish plans Cheryl has for us in December, but we're also looking forward to Sheila's class on the 20th. We do miss our Sharron though. Two shots of happy, one shot of sad. Stay safe on the ice and I hope to see many people at the social!

- Elise

Thursday Afternoon

Note: there will be a class held on Thursday December 14 to make up for the class missed due to a snow event on November 9.

Hello everyone from Thursday afternoon's class. One thing that was a near certainty in the last month was that if your name started with an 'S', you could be at risk of injury or illness! Sharyl had covid, Sharron B broke her hip and Sharon P had pneumonia. Sharyl and Sharon have recovered and are back and Sharron is still recovering nicely but not quite dancing yet. At class yesterday, the 17th, we danced a newbie and an oldie. The newbie, new to most, was 'Wisp of Thistle', a lovely 32-bar strathspey for 4 couples. We had a few struggles but by the end was flowing nicely. Then we tried really hard to keep up with the threads and spools and machinery of a spinning and weaving factory in 'Shiftin' Bobbins'. The title of this dance, Shiftin' Bobbins, is found in [The Jute Mill Song - Song](#) written by Mary Brooksbank of Dundee, who worked in the mills and died in 1980 at the age of 82.

Oh dear me the mills gaein fast,
And the pair wee shifters canna get nae rest;
Shiftin bobbins coorse and fine,
They fairly mak ye wark for your ten and nine.

I get it Mary, I get it!

- Sharon P

Here's another contribution from the Thursday Class. Peter's threat to pick a scribe must have worked! -ed.

The fall dance session got off to a late start for me, since regrettably I missed the entire month of September classes due to various circumstances. It is very good to be dancing again and with such a warm welcome back. Thank you!

Our Thursday afternoon class has been delightful and oh so satisfying! We have the privilege of benefitting from the experience and expertise – and patience – of our two instructors. Peter typically starts us off with a simple routine incorporating a series of basic formations to get our minds in the zone while interacting with each other in a circle. Sharyl leads us in a warmup set to the most compellingly lovely tune, then the two of them take turns at instructing us in the day's selection of jigs, reels and strathspeys. Peter provides clear and practical technical instruction from his expansive knowledge store of the finer details of Scottish Country Dancing. Whenever possible he also engages us in the history and backstory of the dance at hand. I love that! Recently we learned of the late Queen Mother once seeing a Strathspey performed and describing the dance as very like a "wisp of thistle". A compellingly fitting visual picture compared to the more common "thistledown", brilliant! We went on to learn the 'Wisp of Thistle' dance most likely devised from that inspiration. Sharyl is a treasure of a lady who also so capably coaches us in various aspects of posture and form, dance steps and pieces. Admittedly I am inspired by – and aspire to – such light and graceful "wispy" steps as she demonstrates for us week by week! Between the two of them they find formations for us to master and techniques to

perfect, with positions and progressions and details to keep oriented in our minds. Whew! At times we must be set straight so as not to be Wild Geese Shifting Bobbins. And I am quite certain my rendering of the strathspey is at times less inspiringly wispy and more like a prickly thistle than that which impressed the Queen Mother decades ago! But every week I learn something, or improve something or capture an “aha” moment that fits another piece of the SCD puzzle into my head. And always the music is so enjoyable. Team Peter and Sharyl continually inspire us and spur us on to be good students of the dance. Thank you!

Lastly, what also keeps me coming back to our Thursday class is ... you! I very much enjoy getting to know and spending time with my dance companions, and have so appreciated the prevailing inclusive spirit as well as the personal encouragement. You really have become some of my favourite people! As we interact week by week, I am inspired by how participating in Scottish dance continues to benefit a person throughout the chapters of life: by keeping active, engaging one’s mind, learning new things, and the joy of social relationships and interactions. Thank you!

- Claire

From the Library ...

The branch library will be available for browsing at the upcoming social. There are a few cd’s for sale, books related to Scottish country dancing to borrow, and a box of free stuff for you to look through and help yourself. There will also be some donated free records with great dancing or listening music.

One of the books you can borrow is *The Wild Geese*. In this book it refers to the Irish soldiers who left Ireland to join continental armies in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. However, the name is also used for a popular Scottish country dance we like to do. There is an Iona legend that the Celtic Christians sometimes used the wild goose to symbolize the work of the Holy Spirit as well as the traditional image of a dove. Just as we wait for the coming of the wild geese in the spring they waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. There are eight varieties of geese in Scotland. Most varieties migrate except the Canada and white-footed which stay year round.

Congratulations to May Sutherland for her winning entry of a plaid in our last Tartan or Plaid contest.

Can you identify this kilt skirt’s pattern as a tartan or a plaid?

It has a 30 inch waist and a 27 inch drop. It will be for sale at the social for \$15. Also available will be the man’s kilt and a couple of kilt skirts from the last few contests.



Joan

Committee of Management 2023/24

Chair:	Lynn McClure	204-489-7712
Vice-Chair:	Pat Clubb	204-774-2796
Secretary:	Sharyl Eaglesham	204-888-6662
Treasurer:	Sharron Bettess	204-256-2248
Social Secretary	Barbara Lambert	204-256-8738
Asst. Soc. Secretary:	Ellen Graham	1-204-744-2857
Publicity:	May Kong Sutherland	204-995-2388
Membership:	Doug Durnin	204-253-4213
Library:	Joan Curle	204-254-6697
Light & Airy:	Doug Durnin	204-253-4213
Teacher's Rep:	Cheryl Durnin	204-253-4213
Webmaster:	Sheila Careless	204-233-8808

From the editor's desk ...

We have had snow. Then it melted.
Then a bit more snow. It melted and I finished up a
bit of raking – on November 21!
And it snowed again last night!
C'mon Winter make up your mind!



Classes are back in full swing and our first social is still coming soon – December 2. Admission is \$5 for RSCDS members or \$10 for non-members. This was postponed due to a booking conflict at the church.

Best wishes for health and happiness moving into the Holiday Season.

Doug Durnin, Editor
Douglas.Durnin@umr.umanitoba.ca

Here and There...

Time to think ahead to July 2024

Summer School 2024!

Some Out of Town Events

February 10 – 12, 2024 – Edmonton - 51st Annual Workshop and Ball

July 28 – August 4, 2024 – St. Catharines, ON – Summer Dancing in Canada

October 20 – 24, 2024 – Hortonville, Nova Scotia – Scotch on the Rocks music & dance festival

Planning to travel? If you have an internet connection, browse for RSCDS & city for dancing where you are going. For instance, RSCDS Toronto hosts workshops and monthly dances and has links to dancing events all over the world. Almost every city in Canada has an RSCDS group. Many have a Facebook site as well.

Here are links to some branch sites:

[RSCDS Winnipeg Branch](#)

[RSCDS Saskatchewan Branch](#)

[RSCDS Calgary Branch](#)

[RSCDS Edmonton Caledonian Branch](#)

[RSCDS Medicine Hat Branch](#)

www.lethbridgescottishcountrydance.org

[RSCDS Vancouver](#)

[RSCDS Toronto Branch](#)

[RSCDS Ottawa](#)

L&A Submissions

Next L&A: January 2024 Deadline for submissions: December 23.

Members are encouraged to submit articles, pictures or information of interest to Branch members.

Submissions for the *Light and Airy* can be sent to the Branch e-mail address: info@rscdswinnipeg.ca or to the editor at Douglas.Durnin@umr.umanitoba.ca

This and past issues of *Light and Airy* are available at: www.rscdswinnipeg.ca