

# *Light and Airy*



**Scottish Country Dancers of Winnipeg**  
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## ***Important Dates***

### **Dancing in 2026**

Sunday, February 1 – Challenge Class (7 – 9pm) \*note change of date\*

Sunday, February 15 – Step Dance Class (7 – 8:30pm)

Sunday, February 22 – Challenge Class (7 – 9pm)

Saturday, March 14 – Friends Spring (Ceilidh) Social

Sunday, March 22 – Challenge Class (7 – 9pm)

Thursday, April 2 – last afternoon class

Monday, April 6 – last evening class (Easter Monday)

Saturday, April 18 – Dance Workshop

Monday, May 4 – Wind-Up Social

Thursday, May 21 – 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 ....**

Brrr! Cold weather has returned. Thankfully it didn't deter some 30 brave souls from attending the Robbie Burns Social on January 17/26. It was a great success and enjoyed not only by dancers but by guests who watched and enjoyed the music. Thank you for coming to support your friends or relatives.

My dictionary of Scottish terms says the obvious for a *Burns Supper - a celebration of the birthday of Robert Burns, usually a dinner with speeches and songs*. It doesn't mention dancing, but that is a priority for RSCDS - Winnipeg Branch. Yes, we had a late "dinner" after the dance program was over. Thanks to Don Johnson for the Haggis and others for the food prepared and enjoyed. Special thanks to Ellen and Clare for their usual fine hospitality and also to those who set up and helped clean up.

During the evening, a highlight was the presentation of the Address to the Haggis, one of Robbie Burns famous poems. The procession was led by our own piper John Hayles, who piped the impressively adorned assistants as well as the main event, Don Johnson carrying the Haggis. Thanks to James Sutherland and May Kong Sutherland for the dramatic and engaging recitation of the poem.

The dancing continued with reels, jigs and Strathspey sets. Thanks to Cheryl Durnin for setting up the dance program.

Another fun activity was the table of Library items and goods for sale. Thanks to Debbie Peters and Joan Curle for their dedicated work.

Several of our dancers have been preparing for various demonstration opportunities. On January 25<sup>th</sup> they performed at the Brochan Lom (translation bare porridge) concert. (A male choir that sings Scottish tunes as well as other songs).

The committee of management COM, meets monthly to plan and organize the branch activities. If you have an issue you would like aired at these meetings, please speak to me or to Doug Durnin (Vice-Chair), or Sharyl Eaglesham (Secretary).

Our next social will be in March (14<sup>th</sup>) and our annual workshop in April (18<sup>th</sup>). Watch for news!!

Heather Robbins  
Next COM meeting – February 3

## **Have you heard?**

**Burns Social January 17, 2026**

**What a grand evening!**

There was dancing, poetry, Haggis, and excellent foods. Here are a few photos to show the evening.



In spite of the blustery winter weather, the Branch hosted a festive dance gathering, with 27 people in attendance. We were very pleased to welcome 7 people as guests, two of whom had never seen Scottish dancing before, and they were impressed with what it involves.

Cheryl created a spritely dance program, with lots of our favourites.

James and May organized the Address to the Haggis, and provided suitable attire for the members in the party. A big Thanks to Don Johnson, who pre-orders the two Haggi, picks them up, and cooks the wee Beasties. And brings them, steaming hot to the hall.

The Food Table is always a delight, everyone is so generous, and it all looks so good.

This year, we provided little bags to Take-A-Treat Home. It's hard to taste everything at one go!

Joan and Deb's For Sale Table, and Library are a colourful addition.

Looking forward to the March Social on March 14. Check your calendars!! This social is a **Family Fun Ceilidh Evening** so invite your Friends and Family!

Our research says that most new members come from a personal invitation.

Thank you! See you on the dance floor!

Ellen Graham



## Bring in the Haggis!



Plates are filled...

and we are sated.



## **Brochan Lom concert**



On Sunday January 25, ten branch members performed during the Brochan Lom Scottish Men's Chorus concert.

The RSCDS had been invited to dance during the concert. Cheryl Durnin organized the dances, dancers, and practices so a fine presentation could be included as part of the program.

We rehearsed at the Lyncrest Flying club and are very grateful to May and James for procuring the space for us to practice, *gratis*. My thanks to the dancers who, given the dance notes prior to the first rehearsal, reviewed the notes and came to the first of two rehearsals knowing the dances. In two rehearsals we put together a 15-20 min performance that was very well received by the audience.

I had many compliments after the show and want to add that I am very proud of the dancers who gave of their time and danced so well.

Cheryl



## **From the Classes ...**

### **Monday Class**

From time to time there does arise a dilemma when (usually) a woman dances on the "man's" side of the dance. Here is a poem about such occasions.

Thanks to Hilary Hayles for suggesting this. ed.

## THE LADIES MAN

*"I'm a two-sex Scottish Dancer  
And may seem rather dim  
But I never spend one evening  
As a full time her or him*

*I change my sex from dance to dance,  
My corners always alter  
It's really not surprising I  
Occasionally falter.*

*The old and simple dances  
I can manage very nicely,  
And I can learn a new dance  
And do it most precisely*

*But when it comes to next week  
I don't know if I can,  
For I learnt it as a woman  
And dance it as a man.*

*And so, you men who have the luck  
To stay always the same,  
When female gentlemen go wrong  
Be sparing with your blame.*

*I'll add a postscript to this tale  
One comfort I have got  
When both the women change their sex  
It doesn't show a lot."*

~ Pat Batt (RSCDS London)

However there does occasionally arise the situation where a man is relegated to dance on the "lady's" side. Sometimes by numbers, or by the ladies grabbing all the ladies as partners leaving a couple of men to partner up.

I bow humbly to the talented ladies who are able to dance from either side. -ed

## Thursday Class

### **Our Little Winnipeg Branch in the Dancing World:**

Recently I started a YouTube channel just for showcasing videos of Scottish Country Dancing and Scottish shows done in our local Winnipeg area. As May had videoed the St. Andrew's Day Show that our RSCDS branch had done for the St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg, I decided to put these up on YouTube. I always cross-reference these with hashtags to Scottish Country Dance, dance, dance Scottish and the RSCDS.

Little did I know that these are monitored for their content by both the **Strathspey Server Database** and the **RSCDS Scottish Dance Dictionary** webmasters. To my surprise most of these dances have been uploaded as examples of the specific dance by both sites. Some are the only video versions of that dance. I later uploaded videos from the Winkler show (April 2023) and many of these were also picked up by both sites. Several have been given demonstration quality labeling. Therefore, even in our small branch we can still have an impact on the larger Scottish Country Dance community. Thanks to all the dancers, teachers, Cheryl for organizing these shows and May for videotaping them.

Please note that there are other dances from our Branch that are also on these sites that can also be viewed. These are from performances a few years ago.

The following are links to the various dances.

Scottish Country Dance Data Base

<https://my.strathspey.org/dd/>

Scottish Country Dancing Dictionary (RSCDS)

<https://www.scottish-country-dancing-dictionary.com/>

Dance Videos:

Domino 5	Lassie Wi' the Yellow Coatie	Ha! Ha! The Wooin' O' It
Shiftin' Bobbins	The Barmkin	Heid O' the Brae
Julliet's Reel	The Reel of Six	The Hebridean Weaving Lilt
A Wee Nothin'	The Bow Fiddle Shore	

James Sutherland

### ***Challenge Class***

**DATE CHANGE -**

Please note that the date for the next Challenge Class has been moved from Sunday Jan. 25, 2026 to Sunday February 1, 2026 due to the demonstration with Brochan Lom on Jan 25th.

Cheryl

### ***Step Dance Class***

The first Step Class was held on Sunday January 11. There were 12 in attendance and we worked on a dance for 9 dancers as well as some basic highland steps. We decided to carry on the class once a month for the rest of this dance season. Our next class will be on Sunday February 15.

Cheryl

## Upcoming Events

### 2026 Spring Workshop



**RSCDS Winnipeg**  
**53rd Annual Workshop**  
**Saturday, April 18, 2026**

*A One-Day Celebration of Scottish Country Dance*

**Workshop Schedule & Fees**

- Morning Class + Lunch — \$55
- Afternoon Advanced Class — \$15
- Evening Social Dance — \$10

**Early Registration Bonus:**  
Register by **March 31** for a chance to **win your registration free**.

**Guest Teacher: Alan Twhigg (California)**

Alan has been teaching Scottish Country Dance since the 1980s and has instructed at workshops across North America and in Norway, the Czech Republic, and Russia. He also performs with the Red Thistle Dancers.



**Registration**

Scan the QR code or visit  
[www.rscdswinnipeg.ca/wrkshp26](http://www.rscdswinnipeg.ca/wrkshp26)



## **Library**

The Library will be available at the March Social on March 14.

## **Nearly New Shop**

Add a touch of tartan to our April workshop social. Tartan sashes will be available for \$15.00 at our March social. A sash looks wonderful worn over the shoulder, with or without a rosette. Celebrate Scottish country dance in style.

The photo shows a selection of the tartans which will be available.

Joan Curle



## **Tartan or Plaid Contest**

A donated kilt will be the featured kilt for our contest. The photo shows the kilt for you to work out the name the tartan—send in your guess now or drop your answer in the contest jar at the Spring Social in March. (There are sites on the internet which help you identify kilt names by colour.)

The kilt has a 31 inch waist and if you try it on and like what you see, it will be available for purchase for \$15 at the social.

Joan



## **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.

## **from the editor's desk ...**

The New Year is upon us. We had mild temps for some time but as I write this note the mercury is dropping! The cold temp for our Burns Social on Saturday had me pull on my wind pants under my kilt to travel home!

The snow day cancellation policy is still included and certainly appropriate. We continue to receive snow and with winds to blow it around the visibility is sometimes very poor.

The Burns Social was a great evening with dancing, parading of and address to the Haggis, and yummy foods.

The March Social is a **Family Fun Ceilidh Night!** This social will feature ceilidh dancing and as such there is no programme of dances to publish. In fact, the dances may change depending on how Sheila reads the group. Invite your friends, neighbours, and family!

You can now register for our **Spring Workshop** with guest teacher Alan Twhigg. The workshop is coming up on April 18.

“A picture is worth a thousand words?” This issue of The Light & Airy newsletter is a bit longer than most as I have included some photos of activities which tend to better show the fun.

Doug Durnin, Editor  
[Douglas.Durnin@umr.umanitoba.ca](mailto:Douglas.Durnin@umr.umanitoba.ca)

## **The PUN / FUN Corner:**

**Remember back when we were kids  
and every time it was below zero outside  
they closed the school?  
Yeah, me neither.**

## **Here and There...**

### **Some Out of Town Events**

**July 18 -August 2, 2026 – Medicine Hat, AB -TAC Candidate Courses**

**July 24 - 26 – Medicine Hat, AB -Teachers Conference Weekend (TCW)**

**July 26 – August 2 – Medicine Hat, AB -TAC Summer School**

Planning to travel? 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](http://www.lethbridgescottishcountrydance.org)

[RSCDS Vancouver](#)

[RSCDS Toronto Branch](#)

[RSCDS Ottawa](#)

## ***L&A Submissions***

**Next L&A:** March 2026      Deadline for submissions: February 20.

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](mailto:info@rscdswinnipeg.ca) or to the editor at [Douglas.Durnin@umr.umanitoba.ca](mailto:Douglas.Durnin@umr.umanitoba.ca)

This and past issues of *Light and Airy* are available at: [www.rscdswinnipeg.ca](http://www.rscdswinnipeg.ca)