



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

General Class: 8.00 – 9.45 pm

Class Fees & Subscriptions

Class Fees for the Spring Term will be:

Beginners 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.

Wirral Branch Membership is £3 for the year 2023-2024.

To ensure financial stability, it is vital that Branch Membership and 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

RSCDS HQ Subscriptions 2023/24

Single £26, subsidised cost **£16**

Couple £42, subsidised cost **£22**

Class Dates

Spring Term 2024 (11 weeks)

Start: Tuesday 9th January 2024

Wednesday 10th January 2024

End: Tuesday 19th March 2024

Wednesday 20th March 2024



Wishing everyone a very happy
Christmas and a healthy 2024
with plenty of dancing.



Autumn Gathering and AGM Weekend 2023

On Friday, 3rd November we drove up to Glasgow for the RSCDS Autumn Gathering and 94th AGM. After the previous day's incessant rain, it was a joy to have a few dry days and the Autumn colours were beautiful. We had an interesting Guest House near to the Kelvin Art Gallery and University and just a short walk to the Kelvin Hall – the venue for all of the weekend activities.

The Friday evening dance was most enjoyable – all dances that we knew and music was provided by Ewan Galloway and his Scottish Dance Band. Prior to the start of the dancing we were treated to a demonstration by the Glasgow Branch Demonstration Team. They danced several of the dances from their new book and these had been beautifully choreographed so that they flowed seamlessly from one to another.

On Saturday morning we attended a 9.30 session called **'Meet the Board'**. This comprised of having a cup of coffee and wandering round chatting informally. Although we did get chance to talk to the Chairman Elect, Gary Coull, I felt this session was disappointing. It lacked any structure and might have benefited from us being divided into groups with Board members circulating between us.

The **AGM** was held at 2pm on the afternoon of the 4th November. The Management Board were piped in by Alastair Brown to one of my favourite tunes (MacDonald of Sleat) and Greetings from one or two personalities (Kirsty Wark, Arabella Weir, Gary Innes) were flashed up on the screen. Chairperson, William Williamson, welcomed the delegates and announced that, although we still do not have news with regard to a Royal Patron, greetings had been received from the King.

William thanked the members and, in particular, the members of Branch Committees and the staff at 12 Coates Crescent for their support during the Centenary Year.

It was reported that we still have a significant budget deficit, but that the return of events such as the Autumn Gathering, Winter and Summer School had helped to improve the situation.

Motions:

The proposal to increase the full annual subscription to £28.00 from 17.24 (with other subscriptions based pro-rata on this amount) was carried, following some discussion from members of Branches in the South of England, who were against the proposal (For:178, Against: 64 and no Abstentions).

Other motions all related to minor changes to the Articles of Association and Amendments to the wording of RSCDS Rules & Procedures. Most of these related to tidying up of words etc (eg changing Chairman to Chair throughout both documents).

One point of interest was that under the 'Governance Structure of Branches' it was noted that the wording 'Each Branch is entitled' has been changed to 'Each Branch is obliged'. This is to clarify that appointing Delegates is not an entitlement, but an obligation. All of the above motions were carried with little debate.

Management Board Elections: – these have been reported to you by Andrew, who was your Proxy Voting Delegate.

Next year's meeting will be held on Saturday, 2nd November 2024 in Edinburgh.

On Saturday evening the music for the Ball was provided by Luke Brady's Scottish Dance Band and, although slightly more challenging, the programme contained many popular dances. Again, there was a wonderful display of dancing from the Youth Demonstration Team prior to the start of the Ball (one of the dancers being Faye, who many of you will remember from her days dancing with you in the Wirral).

Autumn Gathering and AGM Weekend 2023 continued

On Sunday morning we were once again in the Kelvin Hall at 9.30 for a session on *Ideas and Best Practice for Branches in Encouraging Membership*. This was a panel session and 5 representatives from thriving Branches were invited to share with us their different approaches to attracting and retaining new members. One Branch talked about their Ceilidh Class and another about After School Classes in local Schools. This was a lively session with much discussion from members in the room. The session was recorded and will be made available to Branches who were unable to attend the Autumn Gathering Weekend.

There were also dancing classes after the meetings on both the Saturday and Sunday morning, but I am afraid that after late nights and early mornings we did not have the energy to attend these sessions!

Anne MacDonald

Chair RSCDS Cheshire Branch

9.11.23

Day School with David Queen

On Saturday 18th November Helen, Val and I went along to the day school organised by Cheshire RSCDS. The focus was formations and figures. Led by David Queen the day was enjoyable and demanding. The day began with coffee and a chance to catch up and meet with dancers from other groups. David started with a thorough warm up and we quickly got into 'learning' mode. The morning class was two hours. We worked through a set of dances with various formations beginning with a circulating allemande.

At lunchtime we were well looked after by members of Cheshire RSCDS.

The afternoon was another class of two hours, more figures, more learning, more striving to do our best.

Day Schools, and this was no different, are a challenge physically and mentally. There is a great deal of satisfaction to be had from being challenged. Although all the dancers at the day school were experienced, we all gained insights and inspiration to improve our own practice. With everyone there keen to get as much as possible out of the class there was always a sense of achievement individually and collectively. It was an energetic and enjoyable day.

Hilary, Helen and Val.

Beginners Class - Autumn Term

This term we have welcomed nine new dancers to our newly formed Beginners Class. We are delighted with their progress in learning steps, formations and the new 'language' of Scottish Country Dancing.

We would like to thank our more experienced dancers for their enthusiasm and willingness to encourage and support our new dancers.

We have been learning the 'one thistle' dances from the Christmas Dance programme which include figures of eight, reels, reflection reels together with many more basic formations and were pleased to see several of them at the dance.

Thanks to all our members who make our classes fun while striving with enthusiasm to develop their own skills in Scottish Country Dancing.

Here are some comments from our beginners:

- Wonderful Class, lovely people, excellent teachers, FUN!
- Really welcoming environment for a newcomer without dancing experience. Lovely way to switch off at the end of a busy day.
- It has been a pleasure coming here. Everyone has been so helpful and kind.
- Wonderful to be able to attend both classes - the one reinforces the other with wonderful teaching. (Intermediate/Improver)
- Enjoying and learning so much. It is fun with great social interaction.

Hilary and Helen

40 years and counting – a celebration

I must confess to feeling pretty anxious about my first ever Christmas dance and to be honest, by the end of the evening thought some of those nervous butterflies had been justified! Away from the comfort blanket of our regular classes with plentiful walk throughs, calling of steps and super supportive teachers and fellow dancers, this did feel a bit of a different (although still enjoyable) experience.



Fascinating to chat to visitors and hear about their branches and dancing histories although the fact that so many seem to be struggling to survive made me even more grateful for our branch and delighted that so many of our new and enthusiastic members came along and had such a great time.

A memorable evening to celebrate both the centenary of RSCDS and the 40th anniversary of Wirral Branch, we enjoyed a delicious buffet and cake enhanced by the fun of spotting familiar faces in the slide show of photos from the past. As always, thanks to the hard work of the committee and teachers who make it all possible.



Hope to make it to the 50th anniversary and beyond

Sue Powell

Must even Scottish country dancers panic because they're not woke enough?



“An event at which men in skirts dance the Gay Gordons is hardly in need of reform.”

Huge news from the world of Scottish dancing: the RSCDS (the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, don't you know) has issued a new etiquette guide aimed at making its hobby more buzz-word alert – inclusive. Reelers are encourage to “dance on both sides”, which means not simply assuming you're dancing the male part if you're quite hairy and wearing a kilt; women, meanwhile, are encouraged to say “no” and refuse their consent if they don't fancy stripping the willow just now. To protect feelings, feedback shouldn't be given on any dancer's ability (or lack of), mistakes shouldn't be pointed out and “sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist or racist language” is forbidden, which is all very well – but someone might need to come up with a new name for the Gay Gordons.....

As Gary Coull, chairman-elect of the RSCDS, remarked on the new etiquette guide, “Scottish country dancing has always been inclusive and it's one of the few forms of social dancing where you don't need to turn up with a partner.” In which case why tamper with it? Must every single organisation the length and breadth of the country panic, these days, that they are not quite woke enough.



Some thoughts from David Haynes for next year!