

Light and Airy



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

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December 2024

Important Dates

Dancing in 2024

Sunday, December 1 – challenge class (time 7:00 pm at CPUC)

Thursday, December 5 – last afternoon class

Monday, December 9 – last evening class

Dancing in 2025

Monday, January 6 – evening classes start 7:30 – 9:30 at CPUC

Thursday, January 9 – afternoon classes start 1:30 – 3:30 at CPUC

Saturday, January 18 – Burns Social – 7:30

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

A Word from the Chair of COM

Dance classes are well attended! And a good time is had by all!

The new members have received the "Welcome" package prepared by Sheila Careless. Packages will also be prepared and given to our nearly-new members who joined the Branch last year.

We had our dancing shoes on for the St. Andrew's / Dance Around the World Social! We joined branches all around the world dancing for the event which featured a programme of dances from South Africa, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, Scotland, the United States and Antarctica. The Social Committee organized a special selection of delicious treats with an “around the world” theme.

Thanks for all your hard work on behalf of the Branch and the dancers.

Pat Clubb

Next COM meeting – December 4 (via Zoom)

Have you heard?

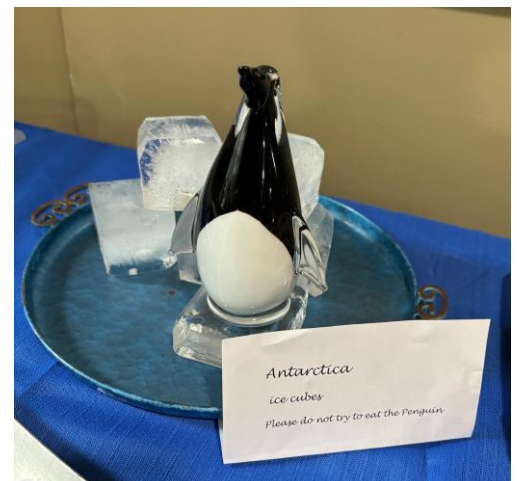
St. Andrew's & Dance Around the World Social - November 23



Sheila came prepared with a display of flags of countries to match where our dances were from. We circled the globe with our Dance Around the World – literally!



Our Social Conveners were into the theme of the evening with inviting folks to bring foods from around the world – including ice cubes and sea salt from Antarctica!





Here are the brave travellers enjoying the ambitious “holiday” adventure!
- ed.

From the Classes ...

If the weather outside is frightful,
And the roadways all are snow full,

♪ There's really no place to be,

Just stay home with your cozy tea. ♪



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.

Monday Evening

We're making great progress in the Monday class. Our newest dance friends are remarkably determined and level-headed in the midst of reels, knots, allemandes and all the other confusing things, so we can get a lot done every week.

We're certainly enjoying the challenges Sheila sets us; *Cape Town Wedding* especially has been exercising our brains, and *St. Andrew's Fair* exercises our cardio. We also challenged Sheila though, like the day nineteen of us came to class and there was simply no mathematical way to fit everyone into sets. I think someone should devise a dance for nineteen dancers just in case that happens again.

Sharyl has also been teaching us and drilling our pas de Basque. Apparently some of us are doing some kind of Irish step instead...??? I have no idea how that happened. But hey, we have a travel theme for the social, surely a little fusion is in order? We're all looking forward to being Antarctica bound and enjoying Ellen's cuisine of ice cubes and sea salt, and each other's good company.

See you in the set!

- Elise

Thursday Afternoon

Thursday afternoon dancers have been “dance angels” for James and Sharyl, our teacher candidates. We have been behaving ourselves – no spitballs yet - and I haven't noticed anyone passing notes in class. James led the class through the dance *Currie Mountain* providing a detailed explanation for the figures of this dance. Although many Thursday attendees have been dancing for years, a reminder of the finer details is valuable. Speaking for myself, I will remember his suggestion for the figure “Right Hands Across” - start out dancing along the arc of the circle before gracefully joining hands, as opposed to “grab and go” which gets the job done but lacks finesse. When Sharyl took on the class, she provided a neat memory aid for the rondel: arches on 1, meet on 2, cross on 3, etc. It works, and was a good review for the dance *Silver Tassie*, which often appears on a Burns night program.

Have you danced the Bramble Scramble before? It is a brain teaser but good fun for the first dance of Halloween. Moving right along with the Halloween theme, was Cheryl imagining soaring on her broomstick with her choice of “Catch the Wind”? Or maybe Romaine Butterfield, the dance deviser, was pondering the weather conditions for growing her lettuce? Either way, “Catch the Wind” was a wonderful dance that flowed well.

Riggs of Corn was another brain teaser from Cheryl. *Corn Rigs* is a dance well known by most of the Thursday regulars, but *Riggs of Corn* embellishes the basic formations of *Corn Rigs* with the second couple joining in too. This writer was muddled by the first 8 bars, but a succinct tip whispered by my partner, Donald, helped to embed the loopy formation in my brain.

A couple of other beautiful and pleasing dances covered in the last few weeks were Triple Happiness involving the knot, and Susanne's Strathspey which starts with the first two couples facing on diagonals – a bit different from most dances.

A thank you to all the teachers for including many of the dances from the St Andrew's dance list.

- Hilary Hayles

Challenge Class

The first Challenge Class was well attended on Sunday evening October 27.

Dancers worked on phrasing, covering, rights and lefts for 3 couples as they were "Dancing in Autumn". Also reviewed "The Knot" as we prepared for the "Cape Town Wedding".

The next Challenge Class will be held on Sunday December 1 from 7-9 pm. At Churchill Park United Church. Cost is \$5.00/person to offset the cost of the hall.

If interest in these challenge classes continues, they will be offered in the new year through the dancing term.

- Cheryl Durnin

From the Library ...

The Library had a great display of items at the St. Andrew's Social on November 23 and will again be available for browsing at the Burns Social on January 18.
Sorry, no tartan contest this month.

- Joan

*The only way to keep your health is to
eat what you don't want,
drink what you don't like, and
do what you'd rather not.*

- Mark Twain

Historical note.

We often hear of Miss Milligan and Mrs. Stewart in the founding of the RSCDS, but the involvement of Michael Diack is not mentioned. J. Michael Diack played a pivotal role in the formation of what became the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS). Here is some history of the origin of the RSCDS which you may not be aware of. This is taken from a leaflet called *The Diack Dances*.
- ed.

Biography of J. Michael Diack.

In the vibrant tapestry of Scottish culture, John Michael Diack (1869-1946), born in Glasgow, emerges as a central figure whose contributions have resonated through generations. As Superintendent of music teaching in Glasgow, Diack laid the groundwork for musical excellence in the region. His passion for music saw him founding the Glasgow Bach Choir, where his innovative arrangements of Scottish songs and nursery rhymes delighted audiences and enriched Scotland's musical repertoire.

Diack's expertise extended beyond performance; he was a revered educator and author, producing books on singing technique and vocal exercises. His most celebrated endeavour in Scotland was the publishing and arranging of the "Scottish Orpheus" songbook, a cornerstone collection of Scottish songs. His tenure as a professor of singing at the Athenaeum – now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – cemented his legacy as a beacon of musical education and excellence.

Perhaps one of Michael Diack's most enduring legacies is his pivotal role in the founding of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS). In 1923, Diack organised a historic meeting at the Athenaeum with luminaries such as Ysobel Stewart and Jean Milligan. This gathering sparked the formation of the RSCDS, a society that has been instrumental in preserving and celebrating Scottish country dancing as a vital part of Scotland's cultural identity. As a director of Paterson's Publishers, Diack's decision to produce the Society's first books at Paterson's expense was a testament to his dedication and foresight, ensuring the Society's success in its early years. His arrangement of the music for these publications further solidified his position as the inaugural Music Director of the RSCDS.



William (left), Gary (right) with Michael Diack's great grandson, John Hutchinson.

From the editor's desk ...

The dance season is moving along and the first social (St. Andrew's) is nigh. There was a great variety of dances and wonderful foods to sample. Soon we'll be wrapping up the first term. My how the time has flown by.

Winnipeg missed the first major snowstorm of the winter (Nov. 19) but not by much. Perhaps less than 60 km! Thus it seemed appropriate to include our class cancellation policy in the L&A to let dancers know the protocol for future weather events.

I have a few dance events in the Out of Town Events list. Looks like two are on the same weekend! Isn't that the way it goes?!

Hope all have a wonderful Holiday Season and Happy Hogmanay!
We'll see each other back dancing in the New Year!

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



Here and There...

Some Out of Town Events

December 7, 2024 – St. Paul, Minn. - Twin Cities 28th Annual Fàilte Ball

February 14 – 16, 2025 – Hawaii - Aloha Winter Weekend

February 14, 2025 – Edmonton – 53rd Annual Workshop Weekend and Ball

August 3 – 10, 2025 – Sherbrooke, Quebec – 2025 TAC Weekend and Summer School

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 2025 Deadline for submissions: December 17.

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