

# *Light and Airy*



**Scottish Country Dancers of Winnipeg**  
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Volume 56, Number 8

May 2025

## ***Important Dates***

### **Dancing in 2025**

Monday, May 12 – Wind-Up Social

Thursday, May 22 – AGM (7 pm – 9:30)

? Monday, September 8 - Open House & Registration evening, 7:30 – 9:30 ? to be confirmed.

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

## ***A Word from the Chair of COM ....***

The sun is shining as I write my last report as the Chair of the COM for the Winnipeg Branch of the RSCDS for the May edition of the L & A.

The classes are over for the year as of April 10<sup>th</sup>. We certainly enjoyed the parties organized by the Social committee. Many thanks to Ellen and Claire for organizing all the lovely treats!

But there is still dancing planned! The Workshop was on April 26<sup>th</sup> (See report on that later in this issue. - ed.) There is the Spring Social on May 12<sup>th</sup> and then the AGM on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. All events will take place at Churchill Park United Church (CPUC). The Branch will also be involved at the Scottish Pavilion during Folklorama (second week) beginning August 10. James and May Sutherland are organizing

our involvement and volunteers. Then it is almost the end of summer and the RSCDS starts the new season of dancing with an Open House in September!

Thank you to all for the great year of "Fun, Fitness and Friendship". Hopefully, the sun will shine on all our activities.

Pat Clubb

Next COM meeting – May 8

## ***News from COM***

A couple of items from the April COM meeting to take note of:

1. Nominations are still welcome for positions on the incoming COM. **Don't be shy.** Talk to a current COM member to see how you can help direct our Branch!
2. Folklorama! The Scottish Pavilion will be August 10 - 16, 2025 at the Cabota Centre. Check your plans to see when you can volunteer to manage the RSCDS table, dance with visitors, and chat folks up about our wonderful recreational activity.
3. Churchill Park United Church is undergoing organizational changes. They are moving away from a totally church run facility to a Community Centre/Hub in which they will be a member. They plan to enter into an agreement with an established day care organization to be the primary tenant of the facility, and other groups will also utilize the facility. These changes will involve renovations, especially to accommodate the day care. Such work is still off in the future and may affect space availability, but we (RSCDS) have been assured our dance space is available until September 2026.

## ***Have you heard?***

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

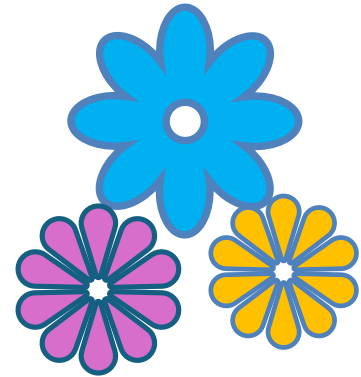
**THE WINNIPEG BRANCH, ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY**  
**will be held**

**Thursday, May 22, 2025**

**CHURCHILL PARK UNITED CHURCH**  
**525 Beresford Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**Starting at 7:30 p.m.**

**Doors open at 7:00 p.m.**



## **Wind-up Social**

**Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM**

### **Programme**

- 1. Warm-up Circle Mixer**      **R 32 C**
- 2. Trip to Crinan**      **J 32 3/4L Collins Coast to Coast**
- 3. Slytherin House**      **S 32 3/4L RSCDS Book 52**
- 4. Currie Mountain**      **R 32 3/4L Pugh: New Brunswick**
- 5. Maxwell's Rant**      **R 32 3/4L RSCDS Book 18**

### **Intermission**

- 6. It's Nae Bother**      **J 32 2/4L RSCDS Graded 2**
- 7. City of Belfast**      **S 32 3/3L RSCDS Book**
- 8. Beeswing**      **R 32 3/4L Goldring Graded 2**
- 9. Sandy O'er the Lea**      **S 32 2/3L MMM**
- 10 Granville Market**      **J 32 3/4L RSCDS Graded 2**

## *Spring Workshop - April 26 - What a Fun Time!!!*

The Winnipeg RSCDS 2025 Workshop was held at CPUC with 29 full attendees and 6 more social evening attendees were registered. After introductions, our guest teacher Rebecca Blackhall-Peters led us in warmups and stretches.



Then it was on to skip change of step, foot work and how to get the hop. The first dance was "Leith Country Dance". Then it was on to strathspey with the dance "Alex Jappy's Pleasure".

Phrasing, phrasing and phrasing. Dancing on the curve. Rebecca emphasized these polishing aspects of our dancing throughout the sessions. "Oh Canada" was next with dolphin reels and tandem reels in a square set. The morning ended with "Waltz of the Bells".

The evening social was led by our teacher Cheryl with a warm up and nine rousing dances. We retired to the lounge for food and socializing afterward.



Thank you for all the hard work of our workshop committee: Breanne, Glen, Ellen with Clair and Donald, Sharron, Cheryl and James.

Cheers,

James Sutherland

Workshop Committee Chair

Of course after the morning of teaching there needed to be relaxation time including a trip to local garden centres, and a glass of wine on the deck before dinner.



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

April seems to be Birthday month in the Winnipeg Branch. Celebrations included cake at both of the last classes. Here is a photo of those in attendance at the Thursday afternoon class.



## **Thursday class ....**

Many of the dances practised in April were for the Workshop Dance. One of these is the strathspey, “MacDonald of the Isles”. The suggested music to accompany this dance is “The Smith’s a Gallant Fireman” and I was stuck by the curious name of this tune. The tune itself goes back to 1791 and is from a time when the village blacksmith was also the local fireman. Maybe he was responsible for mustering the bucket brigade. The tune is also known as “Smiths are Gallant Firemen”.

To the accompaniment of some creepy music, perfect for the occasion, Thursday dancers got to slither their way through the serpentine snake pass, a slippery formation to wrap your head around. The snake pass rears its ugly head in the dance “Slytherin House” devised by Chris Ronald, who must be a Harry Potter fan. The secret charm to mastering the snake pass is to always “stick” with your little group of three dancers.

For those of us who are Moms, spring is a lovely time to have a baby. Two of my children were born in the winter and taking your baby outside for a bit of fresh air is challenging when the outside temperature is -20C. But I had one baby born in the spring and how I looked forward to the daily walk. Out of twenty attendees at our last class, six were spring babies, born in April, and provided a good reason to celebrate with cake!

## **Further info with regards to “Shiftin’ Bobbins”**

The dance “Shiftin’ Bobbins” was on the Workshop Dance Programme and Hilary looked into some background on the dance, the bobbins, jute factories, and personal history to enrich our understanding of the industry and the dance. – ed.

Mary Brooksbank (1897-1978) was born in a slum, and by the age of 12, was working in Dundee's jute mills as a bobbin shifter (removing the full bobbins and replacing with empty bobbins). She sang, wrote songs, and played the violin. Most of her songs were about the life of the working-class mill workers of Dundee. Her most famous composition was The Jute Mill Song, and it is from this song that the phrase “shiftin’ bobbins” was taken. The dance “Shiftin’ Bobbins”, devised by Roy Clowes, is still one of the most popular Scottish country dances, and Cheryl helped us to improve the timing in one of the critical figures in this dance.

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.

Mary Brooksbank

A spot of googling revealed that jute was imported from India and was spun, woven and made into products in Dundee Mills. Jute cloth was much coarser than linen and was used for sacks, bags, ropes, tarpaulins, cheap carpets, etc. Dundee was actually nicknamed “Juteopolis”.

My dad worked for a textile factory his entire career, (Courtaulds). He transferred from a Courtaulds factory in Wales, UK to a Courtaulds factory in Cornwall, Ontario. I worked in the lab for several summers when in university. Then, they were experimenting with spinning stretchy nylon. We had to measure the amount of “stretch” in every bobbin and had to roll every bobbin in some sort of oil - I can’t remember why. But the bobbins of nylon would be sent to Montreal and knitted into the first samples of “pantyhose”. The ladies in the Cornwall lab would be given a pair of pantyhose to try out and we would have to meet for a few minutes with Mr. Shoemaker, the lab director, to discuss our experience with wearing pantyhose.

Hilary

### ***TAC Summer School 2025***

**Early Bird Registration starts  
February 15**

**SUMMER SCHOOL IN  
CANADA!**

**AUGUST 3-10, 2025**

**Bishop's University  
Sherbrooke, Quebec**

**For dancers of all levels  
Partial week attendance options**

**Teaching Staff**  
Rebecca Blackhall-Peters, BC Canada  
Linda Henderson, California USA  
Andrew Nolan, UK  
Cecily Selling, Pennsylvania USA

**Music Director**  
Gary Thomas, California USA

 **REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**  
**tac-rscds.org**  
Scottish Country Dance  
Teachers' Association (Canada)

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

Surprises on last day of classes!

The plan was to enjoy visiting as we munched cookies but Monday evening we also had a Happy Birthday song and cake! The cake said "Happy Birthday Doug" and the song was addressed to me but the cake was shared by all and it was pointed out that several other dancers share April birthdays. Heather, Jane, Sharron, Peter, Doug, Joyce, Sharyl, and Mavis are folks I know of. Perhaps there could be more. We enjoyed another Birthday Cake at the Thursday afternoon class.

Happy Birthday to All!!!

A big Thank You to Hilary for her report on the Thursday class and further research into "Shiftin' Bobbins". And including some family and personal history too.

Doug Durnin, Editor

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

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

**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](http://www.lethbridgescottishcountrydance.org)

[RSCDS Vancouver](#)

[RSCDS Toronto Branch](#)

[RSCDS Ottawa](#)

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

**Next L&A:** June/July 2025 Deadline for submissions: June 16.

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)