



Cheshire Chat

February 2026



Belated Happy New Year and Welcome to those new members who have joined the Branch since the last Newsletter.

The main events during the Autumn Term were the October Nice & Easy Dance and our Day School in November, which this year was for Advanced Dancers. We were delighted to welcome Faye McNeil as our teacher – Faye hails from the Wirral but has for some years lived and danced in Edinburgh. The music was, once again, provided by Andrew Lyon. Both events were a great success.



Autumn Gathering & AGM Weekend

7th – 8th November 2025

This year saw the return of the Autumn Gathering to the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow. The City was celebrating 850 years since becoming a Burgh and this was evident by buildings being lit up at night and the lovely frieze made by local school children on display at the AGM.



The dance programme for the Friday night was chosen by the San Francisco Branch, and we danced to the music of Susan MacFadyen and her Scottish Country Dance Band. The first dance was 'The Shetland Shepherdess', and I just happened to be standing next to her in the line up! Caroline Nicol is a Shetlander, shepherding in Norway, whom the deviser met during a visit to Oslo.

On Saturday morning we were up bright and early for an opportunity to meet with the Board Members. I was particularly interested to talk about the new RSCDS Strategy and how Branches might become involved. We were advised that guidance and a Toolkit will be available on the new Website which should be up and running in the New Year.

The 96th AGM was held during the afternoon and Chairman, Gary Coull, gave an inspirational address and later presented Scrolls of Honour to:



- Rosalind McKie – (Hunter Valley Branch NSW and in abstentia)
- Allana Creighton – Perth Branch (Allanna has for many years organised the Autumn Gathering)
- Jim Lindsay – proposed by the Membership Services Committee. Jim is a hugely popular Band Leader and the applause indicated what a worthy recipient he was thought to be.

The Ball on Saturday night was preceded by a Reception and a marvellous display of dancing by the Youth Demonstration Team. Some of the dances were from Book 54 and choreography was by none other than Faye McNeil! We then had another great evening of dancing to Marian Anderson and her band. The programme was chosen by the Dundee Branch, currently celebrating their Centenary.

The 2026 Autumn Gathering will take place from the 6th – 7th November with the venue still to be confirmed.

The New Year Dance on the 10th January was, once again, well attended and dancers enjoyed both the music of Ian Slater, as well as the Mulled Wine and Mince Pies!

During the last few months a small group of us have been busy making sure that the dances from the 40th Anniversary Book can be seen on the Strathspey Server. There are about 7 dances left to video and, in addition to our teachers who have supervised the process, we are grateful to Christine Grove who has captured us on film.

The Angela Rippon Day of Dance Ceilidh

Since appearing on Strictly Come Dancing Angela Rippon has been determined to try and show the nation that dancing is good for you! The RSCDS have also recently been publicising the



health benefits of Scottish Country Dancing and so this year we have joined Angela's Campaign and are holding a Ceilidh on the afternoon of Sunday, March 8th. Music will be provided by Chris & Julie Dewhurst and both Trish & Liz will call the dances. We hope that members will come and support this event and also bring along any non-dancing friends! Please let me know if you are able to display a poster anywhere locally. This initiative is being financed from the Barbara White legacy.

Outreach Dancing



In the last few weeks a small team of members have helped the Tarvin Girl Guides to celebrate Burn's Night and granted the wish of a lady at Iddenshall Hall Care Home who wanted to hear some Scottish music. Thanks to Trish, Andrew, Brenda, Maxine, Brian, Chris & Olga for giving up some time to attend these events. Not only do they make a difference to people in the local community, but they help to spread the word about the pleasure of Scottish Country Dancing.

And now some Dates for your Diary:

- Saturday 7th March – Workshop for Improvers
- Sunday 8th March – Angela Rippon Day of Dance Ceilidh
- Wednesday 25th March – End of Term Social
- Saturday 28th March – Wyche Ball
- Friday 24th April – Visitors Evening
- Wednesday 13th May – AGM
- Wednesday 3rd June – End of Summer Term Social
- Wednesday 10th June – First of Six Summer Socials
- Saturday 11th July - White Rose Festival

I think that brings us up to date with all the news.

Anne MacDonald

C. Anne MacDonald