



Orange County Ceilidh



Newsletter of the Orange County Branch of the RSCDS

Volume 43, No. 6 November/December 2025

Visit our website at www.rscds-oc.org

“For naught can cheer the heart sae weel, As can a canty Highland reel” — Robert Fergusson

Greetings from the Chair

Happy Autumn, everyone! We started our dancing season with a very successful Interbranch Dance on September 27th. The SO-CALedonians Scottish Dance Band has grown to seven musicians and they provided some great tune sets for our dancing. You can see videos of some of the dances on the SO-CALedonians YouTube channel. We also had two farewells — a toast (with Diet Squirt) to the memory of Aase Hansen, and an au revoir gift and dance for Pete and Line Anderson (see article on page 3). The Miscellany Sale coordinated by Anthea Macdonald brought in a healthy \$730, which allowed the dance to show a profit, which will help offset some costs for the Catalina Workshop (which, by the way, already has over 100 reservations! The workshop is capped at 120 dancers and the ball at 150, so if you haven't gotten your reservation in yet, better do it soon. Info can be found on page 7.)

On December 13th, the Orange County Branch will be holding our annual Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball. If you have ever wondered who Andrew Rankine was or why our ball is dedicated to him, see the article on page 4 by Connie Walker. This year we will be again welcoming Flindrikin to play for us and will have the additional pleasure of including their cellist, Carol Vines. No reservations are necessary, so just show up ready to dance and eat.

Reservations for the Burns Ball & Supper to be held on January 24th will open soon, so be on the lookout for flyers in class or on our website. Meanwhile, keep dancing and

keep smiling!

Terri Speakman, Chair



We were very happy to see former branch teachers Bob Patterson and Renee Boblette at the Interbranch Dance.



Orange County Classes

TUESDAY

Columbus Tustin Recreation Center
17522 Beneta Way, Tustin
Intermediate: 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Pat Zschoche: swisslassie@hotmail.com

WEDNESDAY

Columbus Tustin Recreation Center
17522 Beneta Way, Tustin
Basics: 7:00 – 8:15 p.m.
Beginner: 8:15-9:30 p.m.
Connie Walker: samanthasem@yahoo.com

FRIDAY

Columbus Tustin Recreation Center
17522 Beneta Way, Tustin
Experienced: 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Connie Walker: samanthasem@yahoo.com
Pat Zschoche: swisslassie@hotmail.com

Note: Classes require enrollment through Tustin Parks and Recreation (www.tustinca.org)

The Next Big Event

Andrew Rankine Memorial

*Christmas Ball
December 13, 2025*

7:00 p.m.

*Tustin Senior Center
Music by Flindrikin*

Calendar of Events

(see branch website rscds-oc.org for flyers of upcoming dances)

HERE

October 2025

No Branch Dance

November 2025

- 8 Branch Beginner Dance, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, recorded music

December 2025

- 13 Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, music by Flindrikin

January 2026

- 24 Burns Supper and Ball, 4:30 p.m., Torrance Woman's Club; music by Andy Imbrie and Caroline McCaskey

February 2026

- 14 Branch Dance, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, recorded music

THERE

October 2025

- 18 SGV Branch Fall Festival Dance, 4:00 p.m., St. James Episcopal Church, South Pasadena, recorded music

- 25 LA Branch Halloween Dance, 7:00 p.m., First Christian Church, Studio City, recorded music

November 2025

- 15 SGV Branch Souper Supper & Dance, 4:00 p.m., St. James Episcopal Church, South Pasadena, recorded music
- 29 L.A. Branch St. Andrews Ball, South Bay Masonic Center, El Segundo; 6:30 p.m., music by Patti Cobb, Thomas Dewey and Caroline McCaskey

December 2025

- 31 L.A. Branch Hogmanay Dance, El Segundo Woman's Club, 5:00 p.m., recorded music

May 2026

- 1-3 Catalina Workshop and Ball. Teachers Jeanne Moody & Gary Coull, Music by Thistle House. Information & registration form at www.scottishdancecatalinaworkshop.com

ELSEWHERE

October 31-November 2

San Francisco Branch Asilomar Weekend



Minutes of the COM of August 24, 2025

Meeting Highlights:

- **Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Dues payable to Scotland will increase by £1 next year.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Current balance in the checking account is \$11,796, of which the Scholarship Fund balance is \$2298.
- **Membership:** 2025-2026 membership is 28 members and 35 associate members.
- There was discussion about whether to participate in the Tustin Tiller Days due to the unsafe circumstances of the stage last year.
- It was decided to keep the bank account at Bank of Montreal due to the unresponsive nature of US Bank about our application to open an account with them.
- The Orange County Branch will be in charge of the next Burns Ball on January 24, 2026. The Burns Committee will meet soon.
- Orange County is working on sponsoring a Basic Teaching Skills workshop. Materials from two experienced teachers of BTS were obtained at TAC.
- At the Interbranch Dance on September 27th, the branch will honor Pete and Line Anderson for their many years of contributions to the branch.
- Plans were made for the Christmas Ball on December 13th. It was voted to add Flindrikin's cellist Carol Vines to the budget.
- The dance schedule for 2026 was decided. We will again hold eight dances and will move the February beginner dance to May.
- Based on experiences at Summer School, we will more often have "walk and talk" before each dance rather than just briefing the dances.

The next Committee of Management meeting will be held on November 30, 2025. Copies of the full minutes of the meeting are available from Recording Secretary Randi Kraemer.



Au Revoir, Not Goodbye!

At the recent southern California Interbranch Dance, September 27, 2025, the Orange Country Branch said a sad “Au revoir” to two of our long-time members, Pete and Anne-Line Anderson, who, after so many years of dancing with us (since 1983 – the very beginning!), have finalized their move to northern Washington State. Although we have known for some time that the move was planned, all of a sudden it is upon us!

As a tribute to their years of involvement with the Branch – serving on the Committee of Management, attending as many classes as were offered, dancing all over Southern California and elsewhere, the members of the Orange County Branch wanted to present a special gift to Pete and Line to let them know how very much we cherish them. They were presented with a beautiful lap blanket illustrated with photos of good dancing times through the years. And of course there was cake!

But there was another gift to them that only the OC dancers could provide. It turns out that when Pete and Line were married on October 5, 1985, a special dance was devised for them by Frank Cannonito, another founding member of the Branch. The dance, entitled “The McUffda Strathspey”, was written for the newly wedded couple in honor of their wedding and a special tune was composed for the dance by Alasdair Fraser. The tune, called “Russell Court”, was dedicated by Alasdair to Frank and Jan Cannonito for their support and general encouragement over the years. Russell Court was the street where Jan and Frank lived, so it all ties nicely together! The Orange County dancers, coached by Pat Zschoche, practiced in secret to be

able to present “The McUffda Strathspey” to Pete and Line in thanks for their friendship and the wonderful memories they have given us.

To my knowledge the dance has never been on an annual program (no one in the Branch can remember the last time it was danced). Nor has the tune ever been recorded. I found it in the book “The Plighted Troth”, which celebrated the marriages of several couples in the first three years of the Orange County Branch. The SO-CALedonians Scottish Dance Band was happy to put together a tune set for the dance, including the tune composed by A.B. Fraser. So, I am happy to provide the following YouTube link so that you can watch the OC dancers presenting the dance. The tune “Russell Court” can be heard in the final repetition of the dance.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QXx9qvXt2A&list=RD6QXx9qvXt2A&start_radio=1 (or search YouTube for McUffda Strathspey).

A couple of side notes – the dance features a figure called “Norwegian Advance and Retire”, a figure that must have been thought up by Frank Cannonito

specifically for this dance. And the word “McUffda” was Pete’s personalized California license plate, taken from the Scottish “Mc” and the Norwegian expression “Uffda” meaning “Oh heck!” or a reasonable facsimile. Make of that whatever you wish!

Although you are starting a new beginning, Pete and Line, it is truly “Au Revoir”, not goodbye. We will miss you! Until we see you again!

Connie Walker



ANDREW RANKINE

The Man, not a Myth, but a Legend

Every year about this time, the Orange County RSCDS Branch begins to look forward to our annual Christmas Ball. It is an event that our Branch has hosted since December 1983, which was the first year of our existence. This Christmas dance is called The Andrew Rankine Memorial. Being a relatively new dancer (I had my first SCD class in 2011), I had no idea who Andrew Rankine was, or why the Branch would memorialize him, and I finally got curious.

When Bob Harmon retired from teaching, and I inherited his massive CD collection, I was the lucky recipient of eight CD recordings by Andrew Rankine and his Band (a couple of them transferred from vinyl albums) including one recorded with Ron Gonnella – my favorite fiddle player from the 60's and 70's (a story for another time) – and three CD recordings by various artists in memory of Andrew Rankine. So, who was this guy?

Andrew Rankine, born in 1930, grew up in Menstrie, Scotland and began to play the accordion at the age of 16. He was very taken with the “Jimmy Shand sound” and spent many hours of practice mastering those special techniques needed to play the distinctive Scottish dance style that was popular at the time. In a short time, he had formed his own band with two accordions, piano, bass, drums and fiddle. He developed a lively style of playing that became very popular all over Scotland. Work was steady until around 1960 when rock 'n' roll arrived and Scottish bands found gigs harder to line up. So, Andrew took a job as a sales representative with Selmers, a musical instrument manufacturer and distributor in the United Kingdom. For his job, he relocated to Leicester and began to play all sorts of music at the Leicester Beirkeller (or beer cellar), a popular local pub. We're talking Latin American, Continental, up-beat and down-beat, chart successes, old standards and classics from all over the globe. This is quite a talented guy!



In 1980, some musician friends of his persuaded him to return to the Scottish scene again. Apparently, he was a bit reluctant, but gave in and soon was playing for the radio and for concerts and was recording albums for Scottish Dancing. According to a para-

graph in the Nov/Dec 1983 issue of the Orange County Newsletter (not yet called *The Ceilidh*), “He was at the forefront in the development of a new approach to Country Dance music, which had gathered momentum in the 1950's. Through the introduction of new harmonies and by making greater use of the second accordion, an extra dimension was added to the music.”

In addition to his amazing talent as a musician, Andrew Rankine was a prolific composer of tunes – both for dancing and listening. Many of his compositions continue to be used in contemporary tune sets for dancing.

There are 50 of his tunes listed on the Strathspey Server, SCDDb. And that's just the ones used in the dance recordings listed in the data base.

In 1980, Andrew and his wife Marge decided to start a new life in Southern California. They established the Scottish Heritage Center near the Queen Mary in Long Beach to serve the growing community of relocated Scots who had brought their culture, dance and music to the SoCal region. The first Christmas Dance hosted by the newly formed Orange County Branch in December 1983 featured the live music of Andrew Rankine. From that moment on, Andrew was an integral part of the Southern California Scottish Country Dance scene. It was quite the thing to have such a renowned musician playing for our dancing pleasure! He played for numerous dances, and made a particular point of being available for the newly established annual Christmas Dance in December 1984. He graciously composed tunes to celebrate several weddings that took place between Orange County dancers in the first three years of the Branch, which were published in the book “The Plighted Troth”, and for David Tague's dance to honor Dorothy Craik, “The Calican Scot”. He occasionally played for local classes, to their teacher's delight.

Andrew Rankine was scheduled to play for the third Christmas Dance on December 14, 1985, but sadly passed away of a heart attack at the age of 55 four

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days before that dance. It was a devastating day for Scottish dancers and musicians, both here and abroad. The Orange County Branch decided to establish a Memorial Scholarship Fund in Andrew Rankine's honor, to be used to support Scottish Country Dance musicians. And the annual Orange County Christmas Ball was named to honor his memory.

This December it will be 40 years since Andrew Rankine left us for the great Scottish Dance Band in the sky, but his legacy lives on and we should remember it. He had a lasting impact on how the dance music is interpreted and played. And although Scottish Country Dance, and its associated music, has evolved, grown and adapted to new times and tastes, musician/composers like Andrew Rankine have given us a fabulous foundation which we will always cherish. Southern California was so very lucky to have him here for that short while. "He was a happy man, an easy man to take a wee drop of the good stuff with and chat about this and that. His easy, happy ways crested and burst out through his music. This is his legacy to all of us." (Frank Cannonito, Jan/Feb 1986, *Orange County Ceilidh*). He sounds like my kind of guy – I wish I'd known him.

If you are interested, there is a lovely memorial to Andrew Rankine that was written in April 1986 and is stored on the "Box and Fiddle Archive" website: <https://boxandfiddlearchive.weebly.com/andrew-rankine.html>

Connie Walker

Scenes from the 36th Annual Interbranch Dance



A toast to Aase Hansen



Lughnasadh or Lammas: Which is it?

*It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie:
The time flew by wi' tentless heed,
Till 'tween the late and early;
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed,
To see me thro' the barley.*

*Chorus:
Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,
An' corn rig are bonnie;
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs with Annie.*

Robert Burns

How many times have we heard this song and danced the reel “Corn Rigs”? To what was Robert Burns referring when he stated, “it was upon a Lammas night?” Did he mean the Christian feast of “loaf mass”, or the Celtic fourth fire feast of the year, or was he using poetic license to generally cover the month of August?

Often the words *Lughnasadh* (Loo-nah-sah) and *Lammas* are used interchangeably. Actually, however, they are two different festivals of different origin. Lughnasadh, deeply rooted in ancient Celtic tradition, refers to the Celtic deity of craftsmanship and sun god Lugh. “Nasadh” means an assembly. At Lughnasadh time a community of people unites and celebrates the first fruits of the harvest, giving thanks for continued fertility and abundance.

Once again, an agricultural-based society bows to its ties with nature, the passing of the seasons, and all elements that work together to create this harvest. It is a time of appreciation and gratitude for what has been received and anticipation for the remaining harvests.

As the agricultural year shifts from growing to harvesting and night and day are no longer equal in time, Lughnasadh marks its time roughly halfway between the summer solstice and the autumnal equinox. The name reflects on craftsman god Lugh and a funeral feast and sport competition honoring his mother in Irish mythology. She died of exhaustion from clearing Irish fields for agriculture. “*Lúnasa* is also the name for the month of August in modern Irish, or *Lúnastad*

in Scottish Gaelic.” First, grains — wheat, barley, corn — are sacrificed, ensuring the continuation of the harvest cycles and highlighting the link between life and death. A wake for the end of summer, perhaps.

Since this is one of four fire festivals of the Celtic Calendar, bonfires are an important part in the ritual. This represents purification and the power of the sun as ashes are spread in the fields to bless them. The time for hand-fasting and trial marriages is also at hand. If it works for a year and a day, we’ll get married!

Competitive contests of physical prowess and horse races were held. Music, dance, and storytelling also played a part. Time was leading up to a new year so new laws were proclaimed and past legal disputes were settled. Later, it became the last of the four divisions of the legal year: Renewal of contracts and leases, workers hired or dismissed, loans due. Along with the merry-making and sports activity, Lughnasadh was thought of as a time of personal reflection of past actions, deeds, and words; gains and losses over the year identified and evaluated.

In Ireland and Scotland these feasts and festivals continued through Medieval times and even into the 20th century. County Meath and County Kildare are noted in medieval literature as holding Lughnasadh gatherings. Of course, Scotland’s crofting community observed this important Celtic feast when it was time to return their beasts from the sheilings and summer pastures. There was superstition involved, and the wives would make *mulachag imich* or “removal cheese” for this ritual. The “spirit of the harvest” lived in the grain ahead as it was reaped, and great care was taken not to offend that spirit.

Celebrations have evolved into annual fairs. One example is the St. Peter’s Fair of August 1 used by Ellis Peters in her Brother Cadfael mystery novel set in 12th century Shrewsbury. Fair goers were drawn to hiring workers for the new year and purchasing livestock, especially horses. “Full of fun and festivity, Lughnasadh is still primarily a celebration to honor a Celtic god who works tirelessly in service to the land.”

As Christianity spread, it often swallowed some of the native observances. Lammas is just one example. This festival of grain honors the soil, the fruits of the harvest and associated spirits. Anglo-Saxon England celebrated the day of the first harvest when newly harvested wheat became a baked loaf and was presented and blessed in church, often used for the Eucharist. The very name “Lammas” derives from the Old English



November Branch Beginner Dance

November 8, 2024 5 Dancing 7:00 p.m., recorded music
Tustin Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin
Cost: \$15 Members; \$18 Non-Members

SPECIAL BEGINNER SECTION

Gay Gordons	R	B	Collins Pocket Refl
The Dhooon	J	B	Hamilton/SCD Child
The Flying Scotsman	J	B	Thurston/Collins
The Ferryboat	R	B	Let's All Dance
The Bob of Fettercairn	R	B	Book 6
Marmalade Sandwich	R	B	Brockbank/Badger's

EXPERIENCED SECTION

St Andrews Fair (New)	J	B	Goldring/5 SCD 1982
Smiling Lila	R	I	Bartlett
The House Keys of Lisbon	S	A	Landon/Woodhall V4
The Ship in Full Sail	J	A	Forbes/Craigievar 2
First Love	S	B	Baker/Let's All Dance 2
The Sailor (New)	R	B	Book 24

The Barmkin	R	B	Goldring/RSCDS Gr 2
Sandy's Scotch Broth (New)	S	I	Sibley/Katannuta
Inverneill House (New)	R	A	Book 35
Postie's Jig	J	B	RSCDS 30 Pop V2
The Cranberry Tart	J	I	RSCDS 30 Pop

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*bláfmarss*, meaning "loaf mass". This refers to the "loaf" brought for "mass" to celebrate the harvest fruits and give thanks for the crop's abundance.

While Lammas is traditionally a Christian holy day, it is feted the same date as the Gaelic festival Lughnasadh, August 1. It has been suggested that the Anglo-Saxons adopted it from the Celtic Britons. This feast focuses on the blessings of the first bread and not the veneration of a deity.

Celebrations are not limited to Celtic Ireland and Scotland. Lughnasadh in some parts of Wales includes contests of strength and skill as they pertain to animal husbandry rather than farming. In farmlands the entire community forms a reaping party and works together toward the yield. It is a time of fellowship, marked by appreciation and rewards from another season of hard work. Feasting and games derive from ancient fertility rites, and special dishes are prepared for consumption.

"Both Lughnasadh and Lammas offer rich traditions and practices that celebrate the abundance of the earth and importance of community." Those are principles important to any civilization and show that our ancient ancestors were not as primitive as we sometimes think. Music and dance were also part of their festivities.

*Orange County Ceilidh*

*Karen Kerman*

## Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball

**December 13, 2025**, Doors open 6:30 p.m., Grand  
March 7:00 p.m., Buffet supper at first intermission  
Tustin Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin  
Live music by Flindrikin  
Cost: \$45 Dancers; \$30 Non-dancers

### GRAND MARCH

|                      |   |   |                      |
|----------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| St Andrew's Fair     | J | B | Goldring/5 SCD 1982  |
| Smiling Lila         | R | I | Bartlett             |
| Vintage Simon        | J | A | Book 47              |
| The Falkirk Lass     | S | B | Book 53              |
| Quarries' Jig (New)  | J | I | Book 36              |
| Bauldy Bain's Fiddle | R | I | Dickson/Lothian Coll |

|                        |   |   |                     |
|------------------------|---|---|---------------------|
| Bill Clement MBE (New) | J | I | Book 47             |
| Sandy's Scotch Broth   | S | I | Sibley/Katannuta    |
| Mary Erskine (New)     | R | B | Goldring/RSCDS Gr 2 |
| Inverneill House       | R | A | Book 35             |
| The Braes of Tulliemet | S | B | Book 7              |
| Best Set in the Hall   | J | I | Book 46             |

|                    |   |   |                      |
|--------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| Lamb Skinnet (New) | J | B | Book 14              |
| Tuolumne Tournee   | S | A | Saturensky/50 Yrs LA |
| The Barmkin        | R | B | Goldring/RSCDS Gr 2  |
| The Gentleman      | S | I | Book 35              |
| Capelthwaite       | R | I | Sigg/SF Coll Vol 2   |

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The Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego and
San Gabriel Valley Branches of the RSCDS present

Catalina Island Weekend Workshop & Ball May 1-3, 2026



Weekend price of \$295.00 includes Friday night dinner and Ceilidh, Saturday and Sunday morning workshops, optional ball review and Saturday night plated dinner and ball in the beautiful historic Casino Ballroom if reserved by January 31, 2026. Other pricing options available. **You are responsible for booking your own hotel and ferry ride to the island.** For all the detailed information and helpful hints, go to the website below or scan this QR code.



Teachers: Jeanne Moody of San Diego, California
and Gary Coull of Aberdeenshire, Scotland
Musicians: Renowned East Coast band Thistle House



Ball Program (scan the QR codes below for cues & videos):

Looking for a Partner	B	J	Haynes, Carnforth 6
The Aviator	I	J	RSCDS Book 52
Longborough Lanterns	B	S	Shaner, Delaware Gold
Capelthwaite	I	R	Sigg, SF Collection 2
The Dream Catcher	A	S	RSCDS Book 45
Mairi's Wedding	I	R	Cosh, 22 SCD
The Bees of Maggie Knockater	I	J	Drewry, Canadian Book
The Braes of Tulliemet	B	S	RSCDS Book 7
J.B. Milne	I	R	Foss, Angus Fitchet
Ian Powrie's Farewell to			
Auchterarder	A	J	RSCDS 30 Pop V2
The Gentleman	I	S	RSCDS Book 35
The Black Leather Jig	I	R	Selling, Delaware Silver
Mrs. Stewart's Jig	B	J	RSCDS Book 35
The Library of Birmingham	A	S	RSCDS Book 49
The Montgomeries' Rant	I	R	RSCDS Book 10
Vintage Simon	A	J	RSCDS Book 47
John McAlpin	I	S	Foss, Galloway Album
Bauldy Bain's Fiddle	I	R	Dickson, Lothian Coll.



All important information and the registration form can be found at
www.scottishdancecatalinaworkshop.com
Cues and videos available at <https://my.strathspey.org/dd/list/59849/>



OC BRANCH SCHOLARSHIPS

Revised 2020

The Branch has established a scholarship fund to encourage the development of Scottish Country Dancing teachers, dancers, and musicians in Orange County, and to provide opportunities for Southern California Scottish Country Dancing dancers to experience high quality live music both as listeners and as dancers.

To be eligible for a dance scholarship, the applicant must be a current member or associate member of the Orange County Branch and be presently attending class regularly for at least one year. Preference will be given to applicants interested in pursuing teacher training.

To be eligible for a musician scholarship, the applicant must be a resident of Southern California, have demonstrated an interest in playing Scottish Country Dancing music, and should play an instrument relevant to Scottish Country Dancing, such as accordion, fiddle, keyboard, piano, recorder, etc.



Applications are available on the branch website and at branch dance classes. Applicants must provide information on how the funds will be used and will need to provide documentation of attendance. Requests must be received at least 30 days before the funds are needed. Awards will be limited to a total of \$500 a year. Requests and awards will be confidential. Scholarships will be granted without attention to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, nationality, ancestry, age, or place of origin.

The dance scholarship is in honor of Orange County Branch founding member and long-time dancer Dorothy Craik. The musician scholarship is in honor of Andrew Rankine, a noted accordionist, composer and renowned Scottish Country Dancing band leader.



If you are interested in applying, send your application to Scholarship Committee, c/o RSCDS-Orange County Branch, 8361 Castilian Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 or email to chair Terri Speakman at tjspeakman@verizon.net.

If not deliverable, return to:

The Orange County Branch of the
Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
8361 Castilian Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646

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Thanks to all contributors!

**THE ORANGE COUNTY CEILIDH IS
PUBLISHED 6 TIMES PER YEAR.**

Deadline for the January/February *Ceilidh* is
December 1, 2025.