



Orange County Ceilidh



Newsletter of the Orange County Branch of the RSCDS

Volume 44, No. 6 November/December 2026

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

Welcome to the new dancing year. We have just held the very successful 37th Annual Interbranch Dance featuring the music of our local band, the SO-CALedonians. I especially enjoyed dancing to their rendition of *The Black Leather Jig*. As usual, Anthea Macdonald chaired a very successful miscellany sale to provide funding for future Interbranch activities.



Looking forward, members of the Orange County Branch will be performing at the Tustin Tiller Days on October 4th and hope to have space for some audience participation dances. Since our classes take place in Tustin, this is an important recruitment opportunity.

I hope you will be able to join us for our annual Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball on December 12. No reservation is necessary – just show up in your holiday finery and dancing shoes. A buffet supper will be provided by members of the branch during the first break.

Soon, there will be information forthcoming about the Burns Supper and Ball, hosted by the Los Angeles, Orange County and San Gabriel Valley Branches. It will be held on January 23rd at the Torrance Woman's Club and the musicians will be Patti Cobb and Audrey Jaber. Look for a flyer at upcoming events to get your reservation in.

I am very sad to report the passing of two important branch members. Long-time teacher, lifetime member, and jack-of-all-trades, Bob Harmon, passed away recently. You can read a tribute to Bob on page 3. And we have just learned that former branch member and favorite local piper John Cahill passed away in August.

You may have noticed that you are receiving this November newsletter in September; this is because I will be traveling the entire month of October and wanted to be sure you had all the info about upcoming events in plenty of time.

Terri Speakman, Chair

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/Beginner: 7:30-9:30 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 12, 2026

Tustin Area
Senior Center

Music by Flindrikin

Calendar of Events

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

HERE

October 2026

No Branch Dance

November 2026

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

December 2026

12 Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball & Supper, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Area Senior Center, Music by Flindrikin

January 2027

23 Burns Supper and Ball, Torrance Woman's Club, 4:30 p.m., Music by Patti Cobb and Audrey Jaber

February 2027

13 Branch Dance, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Area Senior Center, recorded music

THERE

October 2026

18 SGV Branch Welcome Dance, 4:00 p.m., South Pasadena War Memorial, recorded music

24 LA Branch Halloween Dance, 7:30 p.m., First Christian Church, Studio City, recorded music

November 2026

28 LA Branch Jack Rennie Memorial and Branch 60th Anniversary Ball, The Sanctuary, 600 E. 5th St., Long Beach. Reception 4:30 p.m., Buffet Dinner 5:30 p.m., Grand March 6:30 p.m. Music by Susie Petrov, KeyReel Raskolenko, and Andy Imbrie.

December 2026

31 LA Branch Hogmanay Dance, El Segundo Woman's Club, 4:30 p.m., recorded music

ELSEWHERE

Oct 30-Nov 1 Asilomar Workshop and Ball, Pacific Grove, CA; hosted by the San Francisco Branch, registration at rscds-sf.org/Asilomar

November 2026

6-7 RSCDS Autumn Gathering and AGM, Dumfries, Scotland

Minutes of the COM of August 30, 2026

Meeting Highlights:

- **Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Thank you notes were sent acknowledging donations received in honor of Shirley Saturensky's 100th birthday.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Current balance in the checking account is \$13,327 of which the Scholarship Fund balance is \$2592.
- **Membership:** 2026-2027 membership is 25 members and 35 associate members.
- Dance dates for calendar year 2027 were decided. Randi will submit request to the City of Tustin.
- We will potentially participate in the Tustin Tiller Days October 3 or 4.
- Edie Archibald has designed a banner for the branch to display at Asilomar. It was voted to reimburse her for the cost of the fabric.
- Randi and Connie Walker have completed all the paperwork and payments needed for past raffle permits.
- Orange County is providing beverages for the Interbranch Dance on September 26.
- Preliminary plans for the Christmas Ball were discussed, will be finalized at next meeting.
- Recent donations will be used to reimburse branch teachers for dance/music purchases.
- Next year's membership form will have an option for members to purchase paper copy of *Scottish Country Dancer* as part of the branch membership.

The next Committee of Management meeting will be held on November 15, 2026. Copies of the full minutes of the meeting are available from Recording Secretary Randi Kraemer.



Orange County Ceilidh

Flowers of the Forest

Beloved former branch teacher, photographer and jack-of-all-trades Bob Harmon passed away recently at the age of 96. Janet Olsen has written a warm remembrance:

Bob Harmon was a very private person, reticent to talk about his life away from Scottish country dancing and highly averse to the limelight. He would never even admit his age. If anyone inquired, he would ask them their age and then say, "I'm older than that." Rather than a biographical sketch, this will be more of a personal remembrance in appreciation for all Bob contributed to increasing my deep love and enjoyment of dancing.

Bob and Jan began dancing in Bob Patterson and Renee Boblette's class in 1986 or 1987. Evidently it took some prodding to get him to buy his first pair of ghillies. And the rest, as they say, was history.

I got to know Bob and Jan while attending her Monday night class. Jan was outgoing and gregarious. Bob was quiet and reserved. He stayed on the sidelines, never interfering in or intruding on her teaching. However, Jan would occasionally become aware that Bob felt something was amiss. She would stop and say with some amusement, "I believe my spouse has something that he wishes to impart".

After Jan passed away in the summer of 2001, Bob reluctantly agreed to take over her class. The SCD community became his surrogate family, especially after his granddaughters moved to Texas. Most of us are aware of many of Bob's contributions to the Orange County Branch and Scottish country dancing in Southern California. He composed and



Bob and Jan Harmon, Dianne Wilson and Linda Boucher, 1988

Orange County Ceilidh

printed the flyers for all our dances, as well as our cue books and directories. He provided the music for all our branch dances and was always available as backup for the other branches. His camera was ever present to document our activities. He purchased and brought the sound equipment to every dance.

Bob could no longer dance because of foot problems, but for many years he chauffeured me, Shirley Saturensky, and Dianne Wilson (or as he called us, "my ladies") and others to every dance from San Diego to Thousand Oaks. He would watch and take notes and pictures while we danced.

I loved Bob's Monday night class. Fun and laughter were frequent accompaniments. He also graciously provided Pat Zschoche and Connie Walker with a place to hone their teaching skills as they pursued certification. Bob also had a distinctly humorous bent. My

favorite nights were when he brought forth what he called his "weird dances." Guaranteed to flummox us, he mightily enjoyed watching us struggle. My happiest memory of Bob is of him sitting



up in the front of the room, next to the music and laughing so hard he had tears in his eyes as our efforts descended into chaos. And often at dances, if a particular one was not going well, I would look over at him, and he would grin and give me a big thumbs down.

It was very difficult to find ways to show Bob our appreciation for all that he did and all that he was because he so maddeningly avoided the spotlight. I deeply hope that he was somehow aware of all he meant to us. I was so happy to hear that he was still talking about us up until the end. Bob truly was a treasure.

Janet Olsen

37th Annual Interbranch Dance



That Magical First Dance

How did you get started in Scottish Country Dancing? When you started, did you think you'd still be doing it after all these years? For me it's been an amazing journey. I can't believe it all started eleven years ago when I got 3-day tickets for the Scottish Festival on the Queen Mary in February of 2015 for my daughter and me. I had never been to a Scottish festival before, and I didn't have a clue what it was going to be like. Unfortunately, my daughter wasn't feeling well, so I went Friday night and Saturday on my own.

On Friday night they kicked off the event with a "Rock Yer Kilt" concert. They had Scottish bands performing in different rooms on the ship. The live music was fantastic!!! I was wandering in and out of the rooms, trying to decide which music I liked the best. That was no easy task, so I continued rotating through the rooms all evening. It was supposed to end at midnight, but with the encore, it ended up going on until 12:30 a.m. As I prepared to drive home, I looked at the time, and I was surprised that it was almost 1:30 a.m. I felt like a teenager heading home late after partying all night!

On Saturday, I returned and found many more new adventures. For the first time ever I watched the piping and drumming competition. The bagpipe music and watching those drummers twirl their drumsticks was pretty fascinating. Then it was on to watching the Highland games. Another amazing first-time event! Then off to browse through all the merchandise vendors, and next all the food and drinks. Eventually, I went inside to watch (never seen by me) Highland dancing. I was blown away, especially watching the "wee" ones perform! Next, I listened to the Celtic harps performance, followed by honing my dart throwing skills. I don't remember all of the activities except that I had a great time and was sure I'd be back on Sunday.

On Sunday my daughter was feeling better and was able to come to the festival with me. I had so much fun showing her all the things I had discovered on Saturday, but we had looked over the schedule, and we both wanted to see the Scottish Country Dancing. At the time I thought Scottish Country dancing and Highland dancing were the almost the same...one was for children and the other for adults. I was such a newbie!

We watched the Scottish Country dancing performance and thought they were great. We had no idea they were going to ask us to participate in some dances. Pat Zschoche's son, Bill, invited my daughter to join him, but she was eating some snacks, so she convinced him to take me instead. I was a little scared at first, knowing I couldn't perform all the moves that the dancers had just done, but Bill assured me it would be easy, and that they would walk us through it first. So, off I went - my first Scottish Country dance! I had so much fun. After a few dances, I told Bill that he had to bring my daughter up to try it out. Fortunately, she was

finished with her snacks, and she gave it a go. She loved it too.

When we got home, my daughter went online to find out information about the closest class to us. (We must have missed the table with the flyers). She was working on her doctorate, so she didn't have time to go to the class. Instead she sent me to check it out. I went to Bob Harmon's Monday night class in Orange. The beginner's class in Tustin was on a break for a few weeks, so they told me I could come for the first hour of class until the beginner's class started up. It was so much fun, and

the people were all so nice. When the beginner's class started, I asked if there was any way I could attend both classes. I really liked the people I had met in the Monday night class, and I was sad that I wouldn't see them anymore. They said I could attend both classes if I wanted (continuing just to do the first hour of class on Mondays). I was shocked (but happy) when I went to the Wednesday night class and found many of the same people from the Monday class were there!

I can't believe that was eleven years ago. I love the way Facebook keeps track of events and randomly shows them to you, asking if you would like to share them. This picture popped up on Facebook on August 29, 2026. It made me smile. I tease Bill that it's all his fault that I got started in Scottish Country dancing. I think of this first experience often. I love when I get to do the demonstration performances now because I wonder if that will be the magical moment for someone new to find the joy of Scottish Country dancing and its wonderful community of dancers like it was for me.

Connie Learn



Duns and Duns Law

“It has been said that Scotland retained her religious freedom not by Canon Law, not by Civil Law, but by Duns Law.” [<https://town-trail.abeartforduns.org/trail/duns-law/>]

If we take this literally, it means the conical summit, one-half mile north of border-town Duns, determined Scotland’s religious fate as the Covenanters stood against troops of King Charles I in 1639. However, there is an earlier story connected to this rocky hill.

The old lowland Scots word ‘law’ comes from the Old English word *blām*, and means a mound, burial mound, or hill.

Duns Law is crowned by a prominent Iron-Age hillfort, subsequently used by the Romans and Covenanters. Within this hillfort remains the foundations of more recent military earthworks constructed by General Alexander Leslie in 1638, during the first Bishop’s War.

Although the town dates back to the 1000s, the earliest written record of Duns is prior to 1179 when Hugo de Duns witnessed a charter of a grant to neighboring Kelso Abbey. Robert of Douns signed the Ragman Roll in 1296.

An early settlement established itself on the slopes of Duns Law, close to original Duns Castle, built in 1320 by Robert the Bruce’s nephew, Thomas Randolph, 1st Earl of Moray. The original pele tower, razed several times as the town burned at least three times within 14 years—1544, 1545, 1558-- has changed ownership and appearance multiple times over the centuries. Needless to say, Duns suffered greatly.

Being in the southeastern Border territory, Duns was subject to frequent attacks and border raids from the English, and this led to its reputation as the determiner of Scottish religious freedom. Duns Park saw victory for the Scots as Berwick was retaken in 1318, but the town was overrun again when Earl of Cumberland invaded and camped at Duns. Townspeople used rattles to scare off this army, leading to the town motto, “*Duns Dings A!*” James IV of Scotland mustered his army here prior to the disastrous Battle of Flodden. More cross-border raiding and feuding ruined the town, and by 1588, townsfolk had relocated to the foot of Duns Law. The original location became known as Bruntons—a corruption of burnt-town.

By 1639 and the First Bishop’s War, Duns was a mustering point for a Covenanters army under General Leslie. Opposing armies (Leslie and King Charles I) did not engage, and the Pacification of Berwick was signed. The Scottish army occupied the hill, fortified it, and reputedly raised the standard of the National Covenant on the Covenanters’ Stone. Oliver Cromwell placed a garrison in the town in September 1650.

Passing through several owners since the 1300s, Duns Castle was sold to the Hay family in 1768 and has remained in the family ever since. The original keep was incorporated into the building as it expanded into an L-shaped structure. It was remodeled twice in the 1700s and transformed into a Gothic Castle 1818-1822.

The town of Duns, created a Burgh of Barony in 1749, holds a market every Wednesday and a week-long annual fair. It served an increasingly prosperous local agricultural community in the 18th and 19th centuries, and now has the largest shopping facilities in a radius of 15 miles. Located in the Merse—the highly fertile lowland area between the Lammermuir and Cheviot Mountain ranges—it attracted many rich merchants. At least six notable country estates appear in the surrounding countryside. It also served as the county town of Berwickshire, hosting the Sheriff’s Court and County Commissioners Meetings. These duties were shared with the town of Greenlaw and then given entirely to Greenlaw until 1903 when Duns again was declared the county town.

The Scottish Country Dance “Lads o’ Dunse,” on the Orange County dance program this year, was devised by John W. Mitchell. It is a 32-bar jig which has no apparent connection to the town. No historical or explanatory notes about the dance were found. We do know that it was published in Mitchell’s *Whetherly Book #8* in 1980. This is a challenging dance with a couple of unfamiliar execution of figures, but with practice, we will master it. We’ll have more about John Mitchell in the next issue of the *Ceilidh*.

Karen Kerman

Orange County Ceilidh



November Branch Beginner Dance

November 14, 2026, 7:00 p.m., recorded music
Tustin Area Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin
Cost: \$15 Members; \$18 Non-Members

SPECIAL BEGINNER SECTION

Festival Interceltique	R B	Brockbank/Mag 05-09
Thread the Needle	R B	Keppie/Halliburton 10
Gay Gordons Two Step	M B	Collins Book
The Dashing White Sergeant	R B	RSCDS Book 3
Bridge of Athlone	J B	RSCDS Dance Trad
The Ferryboat	R B	Hunt/Let's All Dance

EXPERIENCED SECTION

Mary Erskine	R B	Goldring/RSCDS Gr 2
Tulloch Gorm	S I	RSCDS Book 8
Lads o' Dunse (New)	J A	Mitchell/Whetherly 8
Invercauld's Reel	S B	RSCDS Book 11
The Falls of Rogie (New)	R I	Attwood/Alexander 1

Burns Night	J B	McOwen/Boston 50
Inverneill House	R A	RSCDS Book 35
Sandy's Scotch Broth	S I	Sibley/Katannuta
The Yorkshire Rose (New)	J B	RSCDS Book 54
Smiling Lila	R I	Bartlett



Andrew Rankine Memorial Christmas Ball

December 12, 2026, Doors open 6:30 p.m., Grand
March 7:00 p.m., Buffet supper at first intermission
Tustin Area Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin
Live music by Flindrikin
Cost: \$45 Dancers; \$30 Non-dancers

GRAND MARCH

Ecclefechan Feline (New)	J B	McMurtry/Petit Chat
The Falls of Rogie	R I	Attwood/Alexander 1
Inch of Perth (New)	S B/1	RSCDS Book 11
Inverneill House	R A/2	RSCDS Book 35
City Lights	J I/2	RSCDS Book 52

Best Set in the Hall	J I/3	RSCDS Book 46
Davy Nick Nack	R B	Campbell/Glasgow Assy
Broadway (New)	S A	Ronald/Big Apple
The Duke of Atholl's Reel	J B/1	RSCDS Book 16
Katherine Hamilton (New)	S I	Nealley/Del Val Gold
Starry Night	R I	Harmon/50 Yrs LA

The Barmkin	R B/1	Goldring/Graded 2
Tulloch Gorm	S I/2	RSCDS Book 8
Lads o' Dunse	J A	Mitchell/Whetherly 8
The Falkirk Lass	S B/2	RSCDS Book 53
The Black Leather Jig	R I	Selling/Del Val 25th

* B=Beginner, I=Intermediate, A=Advanced;

1=Suitable for everyone, 2=An experienced partner would be helpful, 3=For more confident dancers



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, 2026.