



Orange County Ceilidh



Newsletter of the Orange County Branch of the RSCDS

Volume 43, No. 5 September/October 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

Welcome to the beginning of a new dance year! You will find the Orange County branch's list of dances for the year on page 6. We will kick off the year with our annual Interbranch dance featuring the music of the SO-CAledonians and the always memorable Miscellany Sale. You don't want to miss this great event.



This summer saw a number of dancers attending workshops and summer schools. David and Flora Morgan were at the Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School, the Bertani clan was at St. Andrews (congratulations to Dawn on passing her Level 2 and 3 exams) and Linda Silber, Pat Zschoche, Connie Walker and I attended TAC Summer School. After 25 years of dancing, this was my first opportunity to dance for a whole week and it was fabulous. There were great teachers — Andrew Nolan from Edinburgh, Cecily Selling from Delaware Valley and Rebecca Blackhall-Peters from B.C, as well as a plethora of excellent teachers of the special afternoon classes. The musicians were well known to us: Flindrikin (including their cellist Carol), plus Alastair MacDonald and Karen Stevens, an accordion player and fiddler from Montreal and an excellent scholarship student fiddler. Everyone was very friendly and welcoming and I was surprised at the number of Canadian dancers who had only about a year of dancing experience. I wouldn't have been brave enough!

Following the Interbranch Dance we will have a slate of special dances in addition to our monthly parties coming up including the LA Branch St. Andrews' Ball and our Christmas Ball. So I hope everyone can get to class and learn the dances to participate in all the dancing ahead.

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: 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
Interbranch
Dance
September 27, 2025
7:30 p.m.
Tustin Senior Center
Music by the
SO-CAledonians

Calendar of Events

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

HERE

August 2025

No Branch Dance

September 2025

- 13 Branch Dance, 7:00 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, recorded music
- 27 Interbranch Dance, 7:30 p.m., Tustin Senior Center, music by the SO-CALedonians + Miscellany Sale

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

THERE

August 2025

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

September 2025

- 20 SGV Branch Interbranch Review, 2:00 p.m., St. James Episcopal Church, So. Pasadena, recorded music

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; music by Patti Cobb, Thomas Dewey and Caroline McCaskey

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 2025

- 3-5 Seattle Branch Fort Worden Workshop, Port Townsend, WA

October 31-November 2

- 2 San Francisco Branch Asilomar Weekend

Minutes of the AGM of June 14, 2025

Meeting Highlights:

- The minutes of the 2024 AGM were approved and the Year in Review was read aloud.
- Treasurer's Report:** As of May 31, the balance in the checking account was \$10,580 which includes the Scholarship Fund of \$2298; the net profit for the year was \$566.
- Membership:** 2024-2025 membership was 29 adults and 36 associate members.
- Elections were held and the following people were elected to serve for the 2025-26 year:

Chair	Terri Speakman
Vice-Chair	Karen Kerman
Treasurer	Connie Walker
Corresponding Secretary	Edie Archibald
Recording Secretary	Randi Kraemer
Members at Large	Steve Bryan, Connie Learn, Norm McCallum, Flora Morgan, Pat Zschoche
- A Branch Award was presented to Norm McCallum for his many years of service to the branch.
- Branch teachers were thanked for their hard work and presented with a token of appreciation.
- Committee members and branch members were thanked for their help in running our events.



Norm McCallum receiving a much-deserved Branch Award

La Sylphide – A Scottish Ballet

(or, some musings on whether Scottish
Country Dances influenced ballet)

But first, a brief history of a connection between an 1820s French novel with the unbelievable title of **Trilby, or, The Fairy of Argyll** and what is now called Scottish Country Dancing and ballet.

A number of years ago, I saw the ballet “La Sylphide” on TV. It was introduced by a former member of the Royal Danish Ballet who had joined the American Ballet Theater. “La Sylphide” was first performed in 1836 and is famous for being the first major romantic ballet and for its choreography and costumes. It tells the story of James, a Scottish farmer, who falls in love with an ethereal forest spirit called a Sylph. Unfortunately for James and his bride-to-be, plus the Sylph and a witch, it all ends sadly. In the ballet, James dances his part wearing the kilt and plaid.

“La Sylphide” is one of the oldest ballets in existence and two versions had been written. The first version was created by Filippo Taglioni and was performed at the Paris Opera in 1832. Marie Taglioni, the composer’s daughter, is credited with being the first ballerina to dance *en pointe*.

The 1836 version of “La Sylphide” was written by Antoine Bournonville, a Danish ballet dancer and choreographer living in Paris. Bournonville later took his version to Denmark where it became a permanent part of the repertoire of the Royal Danish Ballet.

“La Sylphide” was set in Scotland for its exoticism and romanticism as well as being inspired by

an 1822 novel by Frenchman Charles Nodier titled **Trilby, or, The Fairy of Argyll**. Nodier’s novel, also set in Scotland, tells the story of a married woman falling in love with a household spirit. This story not only inspired “La Sylphide” but also inspired a ballet called “Trilby” and the opera “Mountain Spirit”.

Interestingly, I think it was the same TV broadcast which explained that ballet dancing in France was not

done *en pointe* until Mary Queen of Scots arrived in France with her court to marry the Dauphin of France. Mary’s retinue consisted of many Scottish courtiers who brought reels, jigs and strathspeys from Scotland and introduced them to the French court and showed them how to dance on their toes.

In spite of being created in 1836, “La Sylphide” is still very popular and is performed around the world. Bournonville’s “La Sylphide” was the first ballet to give equal roles to women dancers.

For some reason Scottish culture in the 1800s inspired other cultural works such as Mendelssohn’s “Symphony No.3”, known as “the Scottish”, 1824; his concert overture “Fingals Cave”; and Bruch’s “Scottish Fantasy” in E flat major for violin, 1880. And I have always thought of Berlioz’ 1830 “Symphonie Fantastique” as being influenced by things Scottish.

In conclusion, except for the comment by the Danish dancer on TV, I have never heard or read anything else that attributes Scottish country dancing to influencing French ballet, though I am still hoping.

Norm McCallum



Orange County Ceilidh



Purifying Protective Fire

Beltane, best known as the fertility festival, ushering in the sun's summer warmth and nature's abundance, focuses on fire, fertility, and protection. May 1 also marks the transition from the cooler, darker winter to the warmer, lighter summer. Beltane eve (April 30) is the last night that the "Wild Hunt" of Samhain (winter) rides free.

As one of the four major ancient Celtic festivals, alongside Samhain (start of winter), Imbolc (beginning of spring), and Lughnasadh/Lammas (start of harvest), Beltane features bonfires and rituals of purification. "Originally held during the spring equinox," Scottish author James Napier writes, "Beltane eventually moved to a date halfway between the vernal equinox and the summer solstice."

This yearly cycle of seasons was a serious consideration to a pastoral and agricultural people like the ancient Celts, as herds of cattle and other domestic animals were driven to summer pastures at this time. Performed rituals protected these precious commodities as they journeyed to higher feeding grounds.

Often, two bonfires were lit, and cattle were driven between them as protection from diseases. Humans also used the bonfire as a purifier and healer as they jumped over the embers or walked around it. It was a great time for courtship, marriages, handfasting, and renewal of human fertility. Myriah Williams, a scholar of Celtic studies at University of California, Berkeley, writes, "To leap the bonfire was to take the flame inside yourself. The flame of light, life and sun would bring new life. Couples who wanted to conceive would leap the Beltane fire."

As a sign of community rebirth, household fires were extinguished on Beltane eve, and then all rekindled from the central celebratory bonfire. Naturally, all was accompanied by much feasting and merriment.

Again, according to Myriah Williams, Beltane originated in Ireland and Scotland. However, exact

roots are uncertain. As a fire ritual, it is mentioned in early 9th century Irish literature, *Sanas Cormaic* (Cormac's Glossary). The entry for "Belltaine" derives it from "biltene" or "lucky fire". Another entry defines it as "fire of Bel", a Celtic deity, who symbolizes light and growth to come. There is also an attempt to link Celtic with Biblical, connecting Baal, the Phoenician deity associated with the sun and fertility, with Belenus, the Celtic god. Medieval Scottish literature—Maitland Manuscripts of 15th and 16th century Scots poetry—describes "Plebis to the Play", a Beltane celebration in the town of Peebles.

A multitude of spellings for this festival has evolved, depending on which Celtic country you are in. In Old Irish the name is usually *Beltaine* or *Bealltaine* whereas modern Irish uses the name *Lá Bealtaine* (day of Beltane). Scottish Gaelic calls the festival *Latha Bealltainn* or *Bealltuinn*. Of course, it has been anglicized as *Beltane*, *Beltain*, *Belrairie*, and *Beltany*. Place names—mainly in Ireland—that contain the word

Bealtaine indicate locations where Beltane festivities were held. *Beltany* (see photo) is an anglicized example.

The word Beltane is suggested to derive from proto-Celtic *belo-te(p)niā*, meaning "bright fire". *Belo* could relate to the word *bale* (as in bale-fire) meaning white, bright or shining, although popular belief more often associates it as a composite of the word for fire, *tene*.

Some historical customs associated with Beltane

survived into modern times only to be incorporated into new ways of celebrating. Dancing around the bonfires grew into twining ribbons and greenery around a Maypole. Morris dancing and images of the green man were common. Women washed their faces in the early

morning dew to renew their youthfulness. Sometimes, processions headed by the May Queen and Green Man paraded through villages, all ending in feasts and fun.



Beltany stone circle



Beltane Festival May Queen and Green Man

Foods cooked at the bonfire and distributed within the community usually featured lamb. Also included were ale, root vegetables, curds, and some sort of soft or sweet food. Common in Perthshire was the *bannoch Bealltainn* or *Beltane bannock*, an oatmeal cake with nine knobs on it. Each person broke off a knob and threw it over the shoulder as an offering to the spirits to protect their livestock. Here also a caudle made from eggs, butter, oatmeal and milk was prepared to be consumed after the protection ritual.

Houses and out-buildings, especially doors and windows, were decorated with greenery and yellow and white flowers. Especially effective against the invasion of *aos sí* (fairies) was the flowering hawthorn. Small crosses, fashioned from rowan wood, also repelled these spirits. Cows and milking or butter-making equipment needed special attention to prevent theft by the fairies and were often bedecked with garlands of flowering thorn trees.

With the spread of Christianity, Beltane celebrations faded, and Oliver Cromwell, with the coming of the Commonwealth (1649-1660), outlawed the festivities. Charles II,

“the merry monarch”, reinstated the rituals after the Stuart kings resumed the monarchy.

As a festival, Beltane never regained that stature in the 20th century. However, some of its customs continued as part of cultural events. That is “... reinventions rather than revivals”. (Myriah Williams) Peebles, a Scottish border town, revels with a week-long fair annually in June, crowning a local girl Beltane

Queen. Edinburgh’s annual Beltane Fire Festival draws many visitors to its night (April 30) of fire displays, dancing, and storytelling on Calton Hill.

We may know it better as May Day, rallying for workers’ rights, dancing around the Maypole, or honoring the Virgin Mary (Lady’s Day), but May 1 still represents the joy of nature’s renewal and the warmth and abundance of summer. As stated on The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) website (<https://www.cpre.org.uk>), “Take some time to enjoy the begin-

ning of warmer weather in a green space near you.” Reflect on its importance in past and present times.

Karen Kerman



Hawthorn tree



Orange County Ceilidh



2025–2026 LIST OF DANCES

Orange County Branch

Note: Dances which are new for the 2024-2025 year are listed in **bold** face

level source

JIGS

Alan J Smith	B Book 45
Burns Night	B McOwen/ Boston 50th
Fair Enough	B Book 51
Gloria's Wee Jig	B McMurtry/Devil'sQuandary
Lamb Skinnet	B Book 14
Postie's Jig	B Clowes/30 Popular Vol 2
St Andrews Fair	B Goldring/5 SCD 1982

Best Set in the Hall	I Book 46
Bill Clement MBE	I Book 47
City Lights	I Book 52
The Cranberry Tart	I Glasspool/30 Popular
Fugal Fergus	I Foss/3 by H Foss
Maitland to Manchester	I Wallace & Thomas/ San Andreas

Quarries' Jig	I Book 36
Waverley	I Book 15

The Aird of Coigach	A Bayly/Imp Bk V1-3
The Ship in Full Sail	A Forbes/Craigievar 2
Vintage Simon	A Book 47

REELS

The Barmkin	B Goldring/RSCDS Gr 2
Crom Allt	B Golding/ RSCDS Gr 3
Davy Nick Nack	B Campbell/Glasgow Assy
Hedwig's Reel	B Phillips/ RSCDS Gr 2
Mary Erskine	B Goldring/RSCDS Gr 2
The Pawling Porch	B Brunken/Moments
The Sailor	B Book 24
Waipu Wanderers	B West/Whangarei Book

Beth Wilson's Delight	I Mitchell/Whetherly 3
The Black Leather Jig	I Selling/Del Val Silver
Blooms of Bon Accord	I Drewry/Deeside 2
Broadford Bay	I Grant/RSCDS Leaflet
Da Rain Dancin'	I Wallace/30 Popular
Glastonbury Tor	I Book 47
Smiling Lila	I Bartlett
Starry Night	I Harmon/Celebrating 50
Toast To the Mousies	I Book 53
Elsbeth Gray's Reel	A Book 53
Inverneill House	A Book 35
The One O'Clock Canon	A Book 47

STRATHSPEYS

Bedrule	B Book 33
Dear David	B Fogg/Emigrant Scot
The Dundee Whaler	B Clowes/Ormskirk 1
The Falkirk Lass	B Book 53
First Love	B Baker/Let's All Dance Too
Invercauld's Reel	B Book 11
Midsummer Moon	B Moody, Salute to SD
Sandy O'er the Lea	B MMM
Aberdeenshire Meets Argentina	I Stott/Argentine Coll.
Ardnahoe	I Robertson
The Compliment	I Goldring/22 Dances
La Famiglia Graziani	I Landon/Woodhall V3
Porchester Hall	I Meyer/London Jubilee
Sandy's Scotch Broth	I Sibley/Katannuta
Tulloch Gorm	I Book 8
The House Keys of Lisbon	A Landon
Something in the Air	A Book 53
Tuolumne Tournee	A Saturensky/Celebrating 50

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 Mongomerie's 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.



Cues

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/>



Videos

September Branch Dance

September 13, 2025, Dancing 7:00 p.m., recorded music
Tustin Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin
Cost: \$15 Members; \$18 Non-Members

Postie's Jig (New)	J	B	RSCDS 30 Pop V 2
Starry Night	R	I	Harmon/50 Yrs LA
Ardnahoe	S	I	Robertson
The Ship in Full Sail	J	A	Forbes/Craigievar 2
First Love (New)	S	B	Baker/Let's All Dance
Smiling Lila	R	I	Bartlett
Maitland to Manchester	J	I	Thomas/Wallace, San Andreas Coll.
Midsummer Moon	S	B	Moody/Salute to SD
Best Set in the Hall	J	I	Book 46
Tuolumne Tournee	S	A	Saturensky/50 Yrs LA
The Barmkin (New)	R	B	RSCDS Graded 2
Waverley/Fugal Fergus	J	I	Book 15
Burns Night	J	B	McOwen, Boston 50
Elsbeth Gray's Reel (New)	R	A	Book 53
Porchester Hall	S	I	Meyer, London Jubilee
Hedwig's Reel	R	B	RSCDS Graded 2
The Black Leather Jig (New)	R	I	Selling/Delaware Silver

36th Annual Interbranch Dance

September 27, 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Tustin Senior Center, 200 C Street, Tustin
Music by The SO-CAledonians
Cost: \$25 members; \$30 non-members; \$10 non-dancers

Looking for a Partner	J	B	Haynes/Carnforth
Toast to the Mousies	R	I	RSCDS Bk 53
The Gentleman	S	I	RSCDS Bk 35
Ian Powrie's Farewell to Auchterarder	J	A	RSCDS 30 Pop V2
Ardnahoe	S	B	Robertson
The Montgomerie's Rant	R	I	RSCDS Bk 10
The Bees of Maggie Knocketer	J	I	RSCDS 30 Pop V2
The Reel of the Royal Scots	R	B	RSCDS Leaflet
Sugar Candie	S	I	RSCDS Bk 26
The Cranberry Tart	J	I	RSCDS 30 Pop V2
The Dream Catcher	S	A	RSCDS Bk 45
The Black Leather Jig	R	I	Selling/Delaware Silver
Mrs Stewart's Jig	J	B	RSCDS Bk 35
Capelthwaite	R	I	Sigg/SF Collection 2
John McAlpin	S	I	Foss/Mag Dances 05-09
Vintage Simon	J	A	RSCDS Bk 47
Bauldy Bain's Fiddle	R	I	Dickson/Lothian

Orange County Ceilidh

November Branch Beginner Dance

November 8, 2024 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



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 November/December *Ceilidh* is
October 1, 2025.