

Island Fling



October 2025

Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society

c/o 3290 Woodburn Avenue

Victoria BC V8P 5B9

Affiliated with the RSCDS, Edinburgh, Scotland

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Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the next newsletter is **December 16th**. Please submit material to Ray Fischer at ray@fischerperry.com.

In This Issue: Step dance class, the Harvest Social.

Have something you'd like to share with the rest of the club? Send me a note!

President's Comments, October 18th 2025:

Happy Autumn!

This evening is the Harvest Social. It seems a great way of honouring and celebrating the harvest season and the arrival of fall. What better way to spend a dark wet evening than being with friends and dancing to lively music (followed by a wonderful array of good food)?

The next two socials will be held in the afternoon. That way you can enjoy those dark wet nights with a good book and cup of tea in front of the fire instead of driving in the rain.

The September Open House was a huge success!! A record number of attendees and new faces. Sheila reports a good many of those people have returned to take the basic classes on Tuesday nights. Welcome to you all.

Our current project is finding a way to improve the sound system that the teachers use to relay their wealth of information to the classes. There has been extensive research gone into this endeavour, and I am sure we will all benefit from the result. My thanks to those involved.

I look forward to seeing you at dancing.

Respectfully,

Kathryn Knowles

Teachers' Corner

Dancers will notice that we are testing out new microphone equipment for classes- the mic we have now is about 25 years old. The club executive has approved upgrading our equipment, and we want to ensure that we spend the budget wisely, so we are trying out different systems. Thank you for your patience. Thank you also to Mary Ross and Deg who are lending their expertise to this initiative.

We have a great basic class this year and appreciate the experienced dancers who have come out to assist. Here are some tips for Beginning Dancers:

1. Relax. Everyone was a beginner at one time.
2. Don't panic. If you make a mistake, smile and go on to the next figure. It is more important to be ready for the next figure.
3. Change partners after each dance; it is custom for women to ask men as often as men ask women.
4. If unsure about the dance, find an experienced partner; they'll help point you in the right direction, if you get confused.
5. The social programs will advise on the difficulty of the dance.
6. Don't rush away from your partner or the set after the dance. Take the time to thank them calmly.
7. Don't look at the floor. Eye contact is an important part of Scottish country dancing and experienced dancers will assist you with their eyes and hand gestures rather than talking.
8. Remember the first rule, Relax and Enjoy!

[I'm good at recovering from mistakes because I've made so many of them — *ed.*]

Step Dancing:

The step dance class is continuing through October at 6:30 pm on Thursdays. We have about 10 members and are learning new steps each week so no need to feel behind if you want to join us now. There is a cost of \$10 per class.

Demonstration Team:

Fall is a good time to join the team as we learn a new routine for the year. New and returning members are most welcome. We practice about two Tuesday evenings per month. The class meets at Dan's Hall, 1335 Roy Road at 7:30 pm.

Submitted by Joan Axford, joanaaxford@gmail.com, 250-415-2540



The demonstration team at work ↑
We get to refine the covering and timing until it looks very nice — *ed.*

The step dance class learning new steps and dances ↓



Local Scottish Country Dance Events

Dates for 2025/2026 Socials, all at City Light Church Hall.

The cost is \$25 for socials with live music, and \$15 for other socials.

St. Andrew's Social	Nov. 15, 2025 at 2:00PM
Christmas Social	Dec. 13, 2025 at 2:00PM
New Year's Eve supper and dance	starting at 6:00PM
Burns' Social	Jan. 31, 2026 at 7:30PM
Valentine's Social	Feb. 21, 2026 at 2:00PM
Spring Fling	March 21, 2026 at 7:30PM

Workshop & Ball April 11th, 2026

Out-of-Town Scottish Country Dance Events

Vancouver (for full calendar see [here](#))

Nov 11th [Lady Aberdeen Tea Dance](#)

Nov 29th [St. Andrew's Ball](#)

Dec 13th [Glenayre Christmas Dance](#)

Dec 29th [Betwixt and Between Dance](#)

Seattle (for full calendar see [here](#))

Nov 8th [November Tea Dance](#)

Dec 18th [December Ceilidh](#)

Portland (for full calendar see [here](#))

Mar 21, 2026 [Portland Workshop & Ball](#)

Calgary (for full calendar see [here](#))

Dec 31st [Calgary Hogmanay Dance](#)



Save the Date!

The Vancouver Island
Scottish Country Dance Society
invites you to their

49th Anniversary Workshop and Ball
in beautiful
Victoria, British Columbia
at the **Edelweiss Club**,
Saturday April 11th, 2026

Sharon Barker will be teaching.
Mary Ross and Friends will be the musicians

Further details to come

26 Years Ago

From the November 1999 edition of the Island Fling. It's as true today as it was then, and I might resemble some of these characteristics (feet and hips) – *ed*.

JUST FOR FUN

How to determine the level of a dancer. Forwarded from John Erskine, taken from Strathspey Server.

Beginner: Can get self through dance MOST of the time. Really needs good, helpful partner. Should stay out of dances in which partner is not in a place to help. Technique: Looks at feet.

Intermediate: Can get self through dances. Helps partner. Occasionally recognizes that there are other dancers in the set (other than the one that he/she is dancing with). Technique: Panics frequently. Woman can dance on man's side in a few dances. Woman wants man to dance with most of the time. Either sex: Books dances with partner in whom dancer is confident.

Newly Advanced: Has great footwork and knows it. Impatient with dancers who don't 'get it' right away. Occasionally dances solo even though in four couple set. Technique: Needs to relax while dancing. Books entire set for challenging dances.

Experienced Advanced: Looks for beginners if the dance is an easy one. Laughs when makes mistake, but is in the right within a bar of music. Looks at dance program and knows all but two or three dances. Technique: Has been dancing a lon-n-ng time. Is usually heard complaining about feet, knees, hips, or back. Fussy about the type of floor for dancing. Uses good footwork when it matters to other dancers (sometimes with a grimace). 5

Harvest Social

Thirty-four enthusiastic dancers braved the rainy wet weather and enjoyed an evening of great dancing. Sarah Kell and Anita Matthur created an exciting program and shared the briefing. Joan Axford did a great job of trying out different sound systems that she rented from Long & McQuade. The plan is to purchase a new sound system for the club with the Night of Lights fundraiser money.

It was wonderful to have a few of the new beginners join us and they did very well.

There was a short break after nine dances, and the refreshments were at the end of the Social which was a trial to see if more dancers would stay to the end.

It was a no host Social and there were two full tables of food brought from dancers and a great selection of goodies that we all enjoyed.

The evening ended at 10:30 and a good time was had by all.

- Lori Morrison



Photos: David Morrival

Class Descriptions – September 2025

Information about the different classes:

Scottish Country Dancing is lots of fun and sometimes challenging. Our classes are set up in levels so that dancers can learn at an appropriate pace. It is important for our dancers to encourage newcomers to the class and for new dancers to be ready to join the class. Therefore, if you are considering joining a new level class, please speak with your current teacher and the teacher in the class you would like to attend. Here are some tips on the formations you should be ready to dance at each level:

- For the Experienced Social, you should know the basic and intermediate formations without a reminder
- For the Daytime Social class, you should have danced the basic formations and be ready to put them into a dance
- For the Intermediate class, you should know the basic formations without a reminder

Basic Formations: Advance and retire, Hands round, Hands across, leading and dancing down and up, Rights and lefts. Casting, Back to back, Pousette, Allemande, figures of 8, know your corners, Promenade, Figure 8, Grand chain, Ladies' chain and simple reels of three and four

Intermediate Formations: The Rondel, The Knot, Reels of 3 on opposite side and own side, Corners pass and turn, Double triangles, Rights and lefts for 3 couples, Pousette right round (Strathspey pousette), Half pousette, Set to corners and partner (Hello-good bye), Set and link, Set and link for 3 couples, Set and rotate, Men's chain, Reels of 3 and 4 (side, across, diagonal)

For all classes the hall rental begins 15 minutes before class to allow for set up and getting your shoes on.

Experienced Social - Mondays 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Teacher: Bob Anderson.

Experienced social for dancers with a good knowledge of the basic and intermediate formations and who wish to dance more challenging dances and formations.

Daytime Social - Tuesdays 1:15 – 3:15 pm, Teachers: Louise McGillivray, Gordon Robinson and Anita Mathur

This is the class for those who prefer a daytime class. We learn/review formations, work on phrasing, covering, handing and the “teamwork” in Scottish Country dancing. We do old and new favourites, and dances from upcoming socials. A friendly group that would love to have you join them, regularly or occasionally!

Basic Class - Tuesdays 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Teacher: Sheila McCall.

In the Basic class you will learn the five steps used in Scottish Country Dancing. You will learn basic formations and become familiar with the concept of sets, progression and teamwork while you experience the joy of moving to lively Scottish music. You don't need to come with a partner, just come and join us for fun evenings as you learn.

NEW! Step Dance Class! Thursdays 6:30 - 7:15. Teacher: Joan Axford.

This type of dance is a combination of highland and Scottish country dance steps and is open to both men and women. The classes are being offered at cost of the hall rental, so the more dancers who attend the lower the cost per person but expect about \$10 per class.

Intermediate Class - Thursdays 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Teachers: Gael Forster and Joan Axford

For dancers who know the basic formations and want to expand their repertoire, this class will teach a range of formations, work on phrasing, handling and learn a mix of traditional favourites and newer dances at the basic and intermediate levels. For more experienced dancers, this will be an opportunity to review dance formations in a social dance setting. Dances from upcoming social programs will also be included.

Demonstration Team – Teacher: Joan Axford

VISCDS also offers a demonstration team to perform at community events as part of the ethnic culture in Victoria. The team dances at seniors' residences and centres, the Highland Games, Burns celebrations, Folkloria, Greekfest, etc. It is an opportunity to share our dance and music, and to encourage others to join our group. Each year, the team learns a new routine. You do not have to be an expert dancer. The team is always welcoming new members. If you like being part of a team and attending community events, this could be for you. The team meets on Tuesday at 7:30 pm about twice a month. For more information, please call or text Joan Axford at 250-415-2540 or e-mail at joanaaxford@gmail.com.