



DANCING MATTERS

RSCDS BELFAST BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Issue 14: June 2026 *"Let us read, and let us dance; these two amusements will never do any harm to the world." ~ Voltaire*

Chairman's Message

Hello fellow Dancers,

The Branch has just had their 80th AGM and it is my delightful pleasure to welcome you to this latest edition of Dancing Matters as your Chairperson.

I feel very humbled when I look at the roll call of amazing, talented people who have held this position over the last 80 years. I will endeavour to do my best to carry on their legacy and serve you well.

You will find details of all your Committee Members in this issue as well as our hard working and dedicated Class Representatives, who work furiously to keep the halls booked, fees collected and members up to date with the events that are happening within the branch throughout the year.

We were all saddened by the loss of our friend and charismatic teacher Elma McCausland. She played an irreplaceable role in our Branch and was loved and respected worldwide.

We also said a sad farewell to Michael Burke and Brian Campbell.

Our heartfelt condolences to their families.

Our 80th Centenary year has been full of wonderful events. You have danced, laughed, eaten and enjoyed them all. The celebrations are all well covered in photographs and reports in this issue.

Our next big occasion will be the ceremonial planting of our Oak Tree "Oakley" at Dundela, on 25th September with a Ceilidh to celebrate.

We still have our St Andrew's Ball in The Whitla Hall on Saturday 28th November to look forward to and a nice n' easy dance at Ballycairn to enjoy on the evening of Friday 27th November.

I look forward to seeing all your smiling faces, prettiest frocks and smartest Kilts there.

I would like say a special word of thanks to Carol Campbell, who quietly and efficiently collects, collates and beautifully presents Dancing Matters.

Finally, my grateful thanks and appreciation must go to Linda Harley, Past Chairman, who has steered us so well over the past 4 years and given us the legacy of two memorable occasions to celebrate our 80th Anniversary.

The afternoon tea, enjoyed by so many with fun and laughter at Malone House.

The weekend school at The Europa Hotel, where we learned new dancing and musical skills and enjoyed the fun of dancing with friends from far and wide.

We wish Linda well in her upcoming post as Treasurer for the Society after the Autumn Gathering in Dumfries at the beginning of November.

Liz



AROUND THE CLASSES



Knockbreda

It's been another fun filled and enjoyable year though sadly I have come to the end of my amazing 3 years as Class Representative. It has been an honour and pleasure to work with Lucy Mulholland and be able to represent the class at Branch level. I am delighted to be handing over to Patrick Brunskill who, I know, will be a marvellous representative for the class.

We have had a wonderful mix of regulars and new faces in the class this year. Weekly attendance has been strong, with an average of 28 dancers showing up every week, ready to kick up their heels!

Burns Night

Our Burns Night was a blast! Over 80 dancers crowded the hall to enjoy a night of lively dancing, fun and all the tradition that comes with celebrating Scotland's most famous poet.



From Piping In and Addressing the Haggis, watching The Sword Dance being exquisitely performed and listening

to poems, songs and stories about The Bard, we had a truly special time.



A big thanks to Lucy for her fun and interesting programme of dances and music. Although this year we were unable to have live band music throughout the evening our resident musicians kept the atmosphere electric for a selection of dances with recorded music used for the other dances as needed.



Thank you to all the class members who provided a delicious supper and came along to make it such a memorable evening.



Thanks – refreshments, band and teacher!

No class is complete without a good cuppa and, of course, the all important biscuits. Huge thanks to Margaret Gill and her helpers, Bill and Ellen, for ensuring we've got a delicious spread to enjoy during the break. Whether it's a cheeky biscuit or a comforting brew, Margaret's tea corner has become an essential part of the class vibe.

A big shout out for our incredible live music crew – Ronnie, Anne, John, Rebecca and Charlotte. Your music every week brings the dance floor to life and we all appreciate the atmosphere you create.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our amazing teacher, Lucy Mulholland. Thank you for your energy, patience and enthusiasm, your classes are always an excellent mix of learning, laughter and (occasionally) a bit of a cheeky challenge. We are so lucky to have you guiding us through every Reel, Jig and Strathspey.

Looking ahead, Knockbreda classes restart on Saturday 6 September at 7.30pm.

Liz Malone

Castlereagh

At the beginning of March, we welcomed Gwen to the class and we hope that she will return again in September.

The highlight of the spring term at Castlereagh was our Shamrock and Thistle Ceilidh in March. It was lovely to see lots of visitors arriving. Colin provided a lively programme of dances. He was also the caller for the evening. Everyone was able to join in, have fun and really enjoy themselves.



A big thank you to the Knockbreda Band who worked hard to prepare the music which sounded great and certainly got everyone moving. The ladies of Castlereagh class provided a lovely supper. Overall, it was such a great evening of fun and friendship.



Classes continued after Easter to the end of April. Colin continued to teach us and provide practice for upcoming dance events. On our last evening Julie arrived with two

large cakes from her daughter's school which we all enjoyed. They were so good.



My three years as class representative is ending and I am delighted that Jessica White has agreed to take over this role. I would like to thank the lovely Castlereagh class members for all their help, support and kindness. You are a wonderful team. Thank you and see you all in September. Classes restart Monday 21 September at 7.45pm.

Zanne Pinkerton

Dundela

We began the spring term on Thursday 8th January. Unfortunately, a week or two after the term started the heating boiler for the hall broke down but we soldiered on - putting on layers, (and in some cases gloves), with a quick cup of tea and a treat to keep us warm at the interval – we got through it!!

On a class note, we have had some members who have been ill and Mercia had a fall while on holiday. Sadly, Leslie's wife passed away unexpectedly on 3 March. Several Branch members went to the funeral and Leslie passed on his thanks for all who attended.

We had two people who had never done Scottish Country Dancing before come to our class during the last two weeks of term. Colin who had recently joined St Mark's Dundela and had attended a church ceilidh taken by John to celebrate St Patrick's day, came to the classes and the last skills class of the year too. Eleanor had attended Castlereagh ceilidh and decided to come along to Dundela class for our last 2 nights. Eleanor really enjoyed it, so she also went to the Friday night dance and a Saturday class at our recent weekend school. We hope to welcome both of them back to class in September.

Our last night for the 2025-26 season was 26 March when we enjoyed a class party with fun dancing and a delicious supper, thanks to everyone for a great Spring term. Classes begin 3 September at 7.30pm.

Rosemary Gordon

Lisburn

Another great year of dancing came to a close in Lisburn on Tuesday 28 April. Our programme was made up of favourite dances suggested by class members which we all enjoyed along with a cup of tea and biscuits.

Our party night was on 14 April. Linda had prepared a fun programme and we had a lovely supper. The evening was made even more special as we enjoyed the company of 10 visitors.

Looking back over the year we had a few difficult times to contend with. Some of our dancers had major health issues although it was great to see them at class when they were able. We were very sad that we lost our class member, former teacher and dear friend Elma but we are so glad that she was well enough to attend the 90th birthday celebration we had for her, she was even well enough to enjoy a dance that evening. We were also sorry when our teacher Linda lost her father and were pleased that she returned straight away to teaching, in fact she had full attendance, never missed a class all year.

We currently have 22 members and usually have 16/18 attend every week. We met a former member at a demonstration in Derryvolgie Church recently and as a result of that she attended the afternoon tea and hopes to join the class in September. We also had a lady attend a couple of classes in April and hope she will return in September too.

Thanks to Anne Graham for completing the North Coast 500 sponsored bike ride. Lisburn class contributed £280. Anne has raised in total £463, a brilliant sum, well done Anne!

Many of our class members plan to attend the busy programme of events over the summer and we hope to resume classes on Tuesday 15 September 2026.

Esme Stewart

Malone

Malone class concluded its 2025/2026 season in March. We had enjoyed five evenings of dancing since the beginning of the new year meeting fortnightly as usual.

The annual Malone class dinner was enjoyed by all in attendance. As always, we were delighted to welcome many visitors from other classes. This year we held a ballot to support fund raising for the 80th anniversary

celebrations, the total raised was £220. Thanks to our members who donated items and of course to those who bought tickets to win a surprise! Little did we know that in our midst Daphne and John had a plan up their sleeves to treat us to an exceptional rendition of the "Oh John no!" classic. A truly memorable evening.

As I sign off as Malone class representative I want to thank Daphne for her wonderful teaching. I also send my thanks to all the members for their support through my three years and their faithfulness to the class. I am delighted to report that Ann Armstrong has agreed to become the Malone Class representative.

The class resumes on Wednesday 16 September.

Onward and upward.

Valerie Kirk

Day Class

The fortnightly Day Class was, as usual, a big success. We enjoyed much fun, fitness, friendship and, just to keep us 'on our toes', many challenges too. This was all down to the expert instruction of our excellent teacher Evelyn who always delivers a wide variety of dances.

We were also very grateful for the marvellous teaching of John Campbell who stepped in to take a class in the absence of Evelyn.

Numbers were good. Regrettably for various reasons there were past members who could not return. However, with three new members joining we now have a very healthy membership of 20.

Unfortunately, due to adverse weather conditions earlier this year, a class had to be postponed. On the upside however, we continued until Tuesday 31st March and ended by celebrating with our class party.

It always brings a little sadness when the dancing class season is coming to an end. Although the classes may be over, we still have lots to look forward to including Open Nights and many very special events throughout this exciting 80th anniversary year of the Belfast Branch.

Classes resume on Tuesday 8 September at 10.30am.

Brenda Brown

Advanced Class

Advanced Class has continued being enjoyed by all who attended for another term. We commence in October and continue monthly until April and would welcome

members of any class who would like to come along on the second Wednesday morning of the month.

Advanced in this case doesn't refer to age at all, it is for all dancers who know the steps and formations that make up dances and therefore the teacher doesn't need to explain as precisely as they do in mixed ability classes and we are able to have more dancing!

Each month we have a different teacher and if you join you will be notified of the date of the next class and who will be taking that class so you can decide whether you will be able to attend. If you have any questions please ask your teacher or myself and we would be glad to answer as well as we can.

Classes resume 14 October at 10.30am.

Jeanette Chambers

Skills Class

The Basic Skills class was set up some 10 years ago in order to supplement the general classes where it is not always possible to spend as much time as teachers might wish to coach new or less experienced dancers. It was specifically designed to be for beginners but also any member wishing to improve their knowledge and to practise the skills and technique of Scottish country dancing steps, formations and the conventions of dancing together.

The focus is on dancing rather than dances though always providing opportunities for putting the learning into practice in specially chosen dances which adds to the fun of the class. There is always time and opportunity for questions which are welcomed and a great sense of helping each other learn.

Tea breaks of course are much enjoyed also and another opportunity for dancers from different classes to chat together.

The class runs monthly from October to April and we are so very fortunate to have had Evelyn Redmond teaching that class since it started. Evelyn's excellence in her own dancing ability, experience and extensive knowledge of Scottish country dancing has made the class a popular go-to for relative beginners and also for more experienced dancers alike. Each month Evelyn has coped with tutoring dancers with a range of abilities and experience.

The overwhelming response has been that many things we do have become much clearer and our

understanding of why we do them in certain ways, has informed not just newer dancers but also those who have been dancing for some considerable time.

An added bonus for this class is that we have had a "live musician" now for some time – aka John Campbell our multi -talented Treasurer who brings his accordion along and plays for much of the class. Evelyn now gets a musical response to "ready and..." without having to press any buttons!

The class for the last year has had an average attendance of 20 members and has welcomed some new dancers who also have recently joined other classes.

The class has become to be known as "The Skills" class reflecting the wide range of learning that takes place and the range of ability of members who keep coming, learning more about Scottish country dancing and having fun together while doing so.

Why not come and enjoy it for yourself next year! All levels of experience are welcome.

Classes resume 10 October at 10.00am.

Aileen Patterson/Rosemary Gordon

The Branch wishes to acknowledge that the class has benefitted from some support funding from the Ulster Scots Agency.

80th Anniversary events update

Afternoon tea

On 18 April, a beautiful sunny afternoon for the first of our 80th anniversary celebrations, about 60 people were greeted by a piper to the Harberton Room at Malone House. The guests were a mixture of current members and those no longer dancing.



The buzz of chatter in the room was electric, as folk reminisced, reconnected and perused the archive material on display.



On the table at each place setting was a souvenir welcoming everyone, as well as names and dates of those people who served as Branch chairman.



A photographer took group shots of past chairs, secretaries and treasurers, as well as other groupings from different classes.



A delicious selection of sweet and savoury snacks was enjoyed by all.



Guest of Honour William Williamson (the RSCDS past chair) entertained the room with some stories and songs.



One guest had even taken a taxi to and from Annahilt in order to be able to attend. Feedback from all was extremely positive, with a desire to continue hosting a “seniors” get together on a regular basis.

“This was such a wonderful afternoon – thank you!”

Linda Harley and Carol Campbell

A selection of other photographs taken at the afternoon tea are on page 18

Weekend school

Over 22-23 May, a weekend school was held in Belfast's iconic Europa Hotel, comprising a Nice 'n Easy dance on the Friday night, dance classes with Janet Johnston on the Saturday morning, a musician's workshop with Ian Muir on the Saturday afternoon, and a drinks reception, celebration cake, and dancing on the Saturday evening. Ian and his band provided the music throughout the weekend.

Our guest of honour for the weekend was RSCDS Chair-elect, Dr Sebastian Wanless accompanied by his lovely wife Tamara. Both were making a return visit to Belfast having attended our 2024 weekend school and our 75th anniversary celebrations in 2022 (covid delayed event!).

The hotel's proximity to Belfast Grand Central was much appreciated by those visiting from outside Belfast, and even locals were surprised to discover the exhibition centre, on the hotel's ground floor, with its fantastic large wooden floor.

138 different individuals attended, some just for one night's dancing, some for the whole weekend package.



Visitors came from Canada, Germany, Belgium, Scotland, England, Dublin, to help us celebrate at our 80th anniversary weekend school and commented on the warm friendly welcome they received.

Those not attending the musician's workshop on Saturday afternoon enjoyed their time visiting the many other attractions that Belfast has to offer, and quite a few extended their stay by a day or two either side of the weekend.

"This was our first visit to Belfast, and what a wonderful time we have had seeing all the sights!"

Friday evening dance

At the registration desk ticket secretary Anne Graham and Gwynne Donnell, gave those attending a pack which included their name badge, a welcome letter and the schedule for the weekend. And so, the fun weekend was ready to begin!!

The accessible programme on the Friday night set the friendly, relaxed atmosphere, beginning with a round the room dance, 'A Highland Welcome'. Other dances on the programme included 'Isaac's Dance', 'Cardwell Bay', 'Giant's Causeway', 'A Belfast Welcome', finishing with a spirited rendition of 'The Reel of the 51st'.



For both evenings the A3 sized dance programmes designed by Rosi Greer, had been professionally printed and copies were displayed at vantage points around the room.

The dance programme was suitable for all, especially some of the newer beginner branch members and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone on the dance floor.



At the programme interval welcome hot and cold drinks, traybakes and shortbread were provided to refuel the dancers for a second half of great dances and wonderful tunes played by the band.





The thrill of the live music from Ian Muir and his band was fabulous and added so much to the atmosphere and enjoyment throughout the weekend!!



Fresh scones with or without cream and strawberries, accompanied by coffee, tea, cold drinks were available between the two classes and were warmly appreciated by those attending the classes.



"I loved the locally devised dances on the programme, especially the one by young Isaac – great to celebrate local talent!"



Belfast branch newbies really appreciated Janet's skilful and empathetic teaching, and everyone left with a smile on their face and new skills to try, whether as a teacher or a dancer.



Helen Mark MBE, radio and TV broadcaster, was on hand to record some interviews with a wide range of folk including two of our young dancers, Charlotte and Rebecca.

Classes

Janet's classes on Saturday morning, with music provided by Ian Muir, consisted of one to challenge more experienced dancers, and then a general class suitable for all.



"You know a dance class is going to exercise your feet and leg muscles, but Janet's classes also exercise your smile and laughter muscles!"

Musicians' Workshop

The musicians' workshop on Saturday afternoon saw 10 participants from local bands (Risín Stour, Alastair Scott) as well as other local players, and a fiddle player from Brussels, who had made arrangements to borrow an instrument locally.

Ian took the group through some of the finer details about playing for Scottish Country Dance, particularly the opening and closing chords, as well as other details to consider such as speed when playing for dancing, or compiling a set of tunes. The afternoon finished with all 3 members of the band taking to the stage, and playing along with the course attendees.

"What an experience – Ian is such a talented musician, and so generous with his teaching!"

Saturday evening celebrations

Saturday evening started with a drink's reception, welcome speech from our Honorary President, Elizabeth Cameron, RSCDS message of congratulations from Sebastian and cutting of the delicious anniversary cake.



Dancers then assembled for a Grand March to begin the dancing.



"I'd never participated in a Grand March before – what a fabulous way to start the evening!" (Visitor from Harrogate)

Dances included '80 not out' and 'Anniversary Reel', as well as the extremely popular strathspey "City of Belfast", devised by branch vice-president Lucy Mulholland.



A personalised souvenir crib in a beautiful voile bag was given to those attending the Saturday evening dance, a great reminder of the event.



The calling of dances for each evening was split between four local teachers, ensuring that they were also able to get on the floor for a dance.



Hamilton and Clydesdale Branch, who travelled in great numbers to our weekend school, presented the Belfast Branch with a quaich to mark our 80th anniversary.



Such an unexpected and beautiful gift from their dancers who, over the years have become great friends, warmly welcoming us on several occasions to their annual weekend school in Pitlochry.

Fund raising

A raffle was held during the interval as fundraising for 80th Anniversary celebrations. Special mention and thanks to Anne Graham who sourced the prizes and her team who were responsible for selling the ballot tickets on both evenings. The ballot raised £470 for our 80th Anniversary celebrations.

A 2027 calendar which details 12 dances with special significance to the Branch each paired with an artistic styled photograph, has been commissioned and printed to commemorate our 80th anniversary. Lucy and Aileen worked with a small local business to create the content and layout for the calendar. Hot off the printer the calendars made their way to the weekend school and were eagerly bought by visitors and Branch members. (If you did not make it to the weekend school the calendars will be on sale at summer dances, through Class Representatives and St Andrew's weekend.)

"This has been an amazing weekend – very special"

The dancing finished with 'The Reel of the Royal Scots', and the important thank you speeches from our Honorary Vice President, Lucy. The evening ended with 'Auld lang Sang' and the traditional polka style dancing around the dance floor by those with a little more energy left to expend!

NVTV were on hand during the whole of Saturday's activities to record material for a documentary on Scottish dancing in Belfast.

On the Sunday morning there were thank you hugs and congratulations galore, as attendees either set off for home, or out to see some more of the local attractions such as St George's Market or Hillsborough Castle.

"When are you doing this again – I'll be back!" (Visitor from Canada)

Thanks to the hardworking committee and those who attended the weekend school events for helping make special memories on our 80th anniversary year.

Linda Harley and Carol Campbell

More photographs of the weekend school on page 19

Quick Fire Questions

Liz Malone

Chairman, RSCDS Belfast Branch

Favourite place

Anywhere on our Wonderful planet, shared with family and friends.

Food heaven

Roast lamb, Roast potatoes, Cauliflower cheese, Mint Jelly and lashings of gravy.

Food hell

Liver

Favourite dances

City of Belfast (S) and A Trip to Bavaria (R).

What's your tartan?

Wallace is my Mother's family tartan.



Wallace tartan



Dress Stewart tartan

But I love to wear The Dress Stewart Sash and Cairngorm, my Mother bought for me over 50 years ago.

Cairngorm

A cairngorm brooch is a traditional piece of Scottish jewellery, featuring a large Cairngorm Stone, a variety of Smoky Quartz native to the Cairngorm Mountains in Bonnie Scotland.

Pet - Bonnie



She is a cross between a Westie and a Lhasa Apso, (pet dog of The Tibetan Prayer monks).

Life motto

Smile and the world smiles with you.

A smile costs nothing but gives much.

It enriches those who receive without making poorer those who give.

It takes but a moment, but the memory of it can last forever.

Some people are too tired or troubled to give you a smile.

Give them one of yours, as none needs a Smile as much as he who has no more to give.

Fund raising thank you – Anne Graham

I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to everyone who sponsored me on my NC 500 Virtual Bike Ride to help raise funds towards our 80th Anniversary events, it was all very much appreciated. The Challenge was completed on my Exercise Bike, it took me a 123 days to do the 500 miles and the total money raised was an amazing £500, an extra special little Thank You to Patrick who rounded it up very nicely.



Demonstrations Update

January 2026 - Lisburn City Library

In January we were invited to perform in Lisburn City Library by Heather McConaughy who had herself been a Scottish dancer with Lucy Mulholland but had not danced for many years.



There was a small but enthusiastic audience who were enthralled with the Reels, Jigs and Strathspeys we performed and more than happy to get up and join in.



March 2026 – Derryvolgie Parish Church, Lisburn and Ballywalter Church

At the beginning of March we provided a demonstration for the Mother's Union group at Derryvolgie Parish Church. After a beautiful supper some of the ladies enthusiastically joined us in dancing some dances including The Barmkin and Abbotsford Lassies, it was a lovely evening. A former member of Lisburn class was at the event; she thoroughly enjoyed dancing again and was considering going to the Afternoon Tea at Malone House as well as a return to the Lisburn class too.

Ballywalter

Our final Performance this Season, was in Ballywalter church; to celebrate their Special Anniversary. This was

mainly a Stage performance and was received with rapturous cheering and clapping. There was a small area at the front of the stage which we were able to use for a restricted push and pull. There was no lack of enthusiastic volunteers and could have turned into quite a Ceilidh, if there had been more time and space.

Looking Ahead

I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all the Class teachers who are vigilant in spotting potential demo team dancers. Your dedication to nurturing talent and encouraging participation has been, and continues to be, vital to the success of our Demonstration team.

We look forward to resuming in September with our practice sessions in Dundela, led by Evelyn Redmond after the Skills class.

Liz Malone

Demonstrations Secretary

Out and about

We enjoyed dancing at events and parties throughout the Spring term with our dancing friends in Portadown, Ballymena, Desertcreat, Dublin and Ballylessen.

Great dancing fun, some live music and the hand of friendship – thank you to all!

Congratulations to Ballymena on 40 years of dancing



Afternoon tea delights at Desertcreat



Dublin dance



Brian Carchrie Campbell

22 July 1944 – 25 May 2026

Ne obliviscaris

Brian danced in Portrush Branch as a teenager, became a life member of the Society and later also a member of Belfast Branch. Brian proudly achieved his teaching certificate at St Andrews at the age of 21. He taught and danced at Queens University where he gained his BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering, going on to become both a Chartered Civil and Structural Engineer, running his own business. He was widely recognised as highly expert in conservation work in the restoration of historical sites and buildings, which to him was a passion as was his love of dancing.

Through dancing he met his dear wife Mary in Portrush Branch, when she came to study for her Master's degree at the University in Coleraine. In due course Brian and Mary also introduced their sons to the joy of Scottish country dance. The youngest, Peter, devised our popular "Rainbow's End" while dancing as a child. The music for this was composed and recorded by Marian Anderson with the lead tune being "Brian Campbell's Reel". These were published in our 70th Anniversary Book of Dances/CD.

As in his work, as a dancer he had an eye for precision and a desire always to achieve the best in whatever he undertook. Brian was a delight to watch and dance with and for many years was a key member of Portrush, Belfast and Ballymena demonstration teams. He served on RSCDS Council as a Portrush Branch delegate under the former system of management and subsequently was a delegate to the AGMs for several years as Belfast Branch Treasurer, a role which he also conducted with great attention to detail. He contributed much to the success of the celebration of our 60th Anniversary and Ball held in Belfast City Hall in 2006.

Sadly in 2008 Brian had a stroke while undergoing treatment for cancer and his dancing days seemed to be over, but Brian's sheer determination defied doctors who said he might never walk again. In fact, he did and even got back to dancing, which for him was so much part of his life. Left with only the use of his left arm and no speech he still managed to dance and also guide others through even complicated formations both on and off the dancefloor.

More recently Brian had been less active and not able to get out as much, but he did get to Mary's 80th birthday party in January with the assistance of his family.

Many of us will have fond memories of Brian as a dancer and friend. A large number of dancers attended the Service of Thanksgiving for his life, at which some might have been amazed to learn of the very many achievements in his life and the work to which he was also dedicated.

The Branch has lost a good friend and has many happy memories of Brian; dedicated dancer par excellence. We send our warmest wishes and sympathies in their loss to Brian's devoted family; his wife Mary, their sons Michael, Duncan and Peter and Brian's brother Denis, now resident in England and still dancing there.



Brian with Mary at the 60th Anniversary Ball in the City Hall, 2006

Michael Burke

A former member of the Branch, Michael died in September following a long period of ill health.

Michael was a member of the demonstration team and also attended summer school with his family, wife Kathryn, daughter Jane and son Douglas. Kathryn is a former teacher, chairman and past secretary of the Branch.

We extend our sincere sympathies to all of the family circle.

BELFAST BRANCH EIGHTETH ANNIVERSARY THEMED PUZZLE – kindly created by Patricia Sides

I have cobbled together words and phrases from Belfast and Eighty themed dances in the following tribute to our anniversary. Find the right words to fit in the right places below it. The words Belfast and Eighty have already been filled in for you along with the first letters of each word. Note words from one of the dance titles are within this introductory paragraph.

Lads and Lassies of Belfast. A very warm welcome to our Belfast Hooley themed Puzzle to celebrate Belfast Branch's special anniversary. As you know, Belfast Branch was founded eighty years ago this year. We may not be celebrating in a Castle or the City Hall but we are celebrating in very suitable venues within the city of Belfast, not outside it.

Patrick put together a great display of photos taken over the years at the special Afternoon Tea at Malone House, with star guest William Williamson – not quite an Almanac of the history of the Branch but just as good. By the time you read this we will have had a great time at our Weekend School in the Europa Hotel.

We are really looking forward to the Tree Planting Ceremony on Friday 25th September at St Mark's Parish Church, Holywood Road, Belfast, and then the St Andrew's weekend on 27-28th November. Friday night's Nice 'n Easy Social Dance will be in Ballycairn Church Hall and the 80th Anniversary St Andrew's Ball is in the Whitla Hall at Queen's University, Belfast.

As well as dancers we have musicians. We may not have any Hornpipe players but we are blessed with members who play a variety of instruments from piano accordions and fiddles to bagpipes and drums.

I'm sure all our members – both direct and affiliated, join me in saying to Belfast Branch hearty congratulations on being eighty years young. You are all diamonds for supporting the Branch, its classes and events all these years.

Here's to eighty more years and beyond dancing forward.

DANCES WITH BELFAST IN THE TITLE

Belfast C _ _ _ _ _

C _ _ _ _ _ Belfast

Belfast C _ _ _ H _ _ _

A Belfast W _ _ _ _ _ _ _

T _ _ Belfast H _ _ _ _ _

L _ _ _ _ _ o _ Belfast

T _ _ Belfast A _ _ _ _ _

T _ _ Belfast H _ _ _ _ _ _

A D _ _ _ _ _ F _ _ Belfast

T _ _ _ _ _ t _ Belfast

DANCES THAT INCLUDE EIGHTY IN THE TITLE

Eighty Y _ _ _ _ _ D _ _ _ _ _ F _ _ _ _ _

Eighty N _ _ O _ _

Eighty Y _ _ _ _ A _ _

Eighty Y _ _ _ _ Y _ _ _ _

Answers on page 20

TEAAMISU (or 80 NOT Tiramisu)

SPECIAL NEW DESSERT dedicated to our 80TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Because I don't like coffee or alcohol, I felt I was missing out every time family members had Tiramisu. That led me to create this alternative, very yummy, version. So, I thought, as the Royals have had special dishes created for some of their celebrations eg Victoria Sponge, Coronation Chicken and the Jubilee Trifle, and we are a Royal society, why not dedicate this new dessert to our 80th anniversary. Patricia Sides

Teaamisu (or 80 NOT Tiramisu) (Serves 6) Dish size 7" x 5" (18 cm x 12.5 cm)

INGREDIENTS	DAIRY-FREE/VEGAN/EGG FREE	GLUTEN-FREE
1 Chai teabag	N/A	N/A
1 packet of sponge fingers	DF: The sponge fingers are dairy-free anyway. Vegan/egg free – use vegan fruit loaf or rich tea fingers as alternative to	Gluten-free Madeleines (available in Tesco's and Sainsbury's) Or Gluten-free sponge fingers

	sponge, 4 fingers deep instead of 2.	(available online eg Amazon)
1 Tub Mascarpone	1 tub Vegan Philadelphia	N/A
1 tub Whipping or double cream	1 tub Plant based double-cream (either Elmlea or Coconut work)	N/A
2/3 teaspoons cocoa powder mixed with 2/3 teaspoons mixed spice.	N/A	N/A

METHOD

1. Place the chai teabag in a bowl and add boiling water; as soon as it reaches a nice strong colour remove the teabag so it doesn't get stewed. Allow to cool.
2. While the tea is cooling whip the cream cheese and cream together until thick enough to make a figure of 8.
3. Dip the sponge or rich tea fingers in the Chai Tea one at a time and place a layer of sponge fingers on the bottom of your dish, 2 fingers deep.
4. Cover with cream mixture
5. Top the cream mixture with cocoa and mixed spice mixed together.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 for a second layer of sponge and cream mixture.
7. Chill in the fridge overnight and serve. Enjoy!

Dip half the sponges in coffee mixed with Brandy, Rum or Baillies instead and layer them on one half of the dish; Layer the tea dipped sponges in the other half of the dish. The same cream mixture can go over it all. (Top Tip: if, like me, someone in your house likes the original you can make Tiramisu in one half of your dish and Teaamisu in the other half of the dish.) You can line the dish with greaseproof paper with a divide of paper in the middle - not only would that prevent the blend of flavours but it would be more obvious where the Teaamisu ends and the Tiramisu begins. I used a knife to draw TI on the Tiramisu side (in the cocoa/mixed spice mixture) and TE on the Teaamisu side to help me remember which was which.



Emoji puzzle

Can you use the emoji pictures to work out the names of the 16 dances?

(Source: RSCDS Young Dancers and Ruth Clarke for sharing this + the answers!!!)



Answers on page 20

Welcome to the new members of the Branch

Spring term 2026

- Karen McEwan – Day class

Dates for Your Diary

Class start dates

Advanced	14 October
Castlereagh	21 September
Day class	8 September
Dundela	3 September
Knockbreda	6 September
Lisburn	15 September
Malone	16 September
Skills	10 October

RSCDS AGM/AUTUMN GATHERING

- 6-7 November 2026
- Dumfries, Dumfries and Galloway
- Belfast Branch nominated to create programme for Saturday evening dance

2026 BRANCH EVENTS

Summer dances – Ballycairn starting 7.30pm

- 10 June
- 8 July
- 12 August

Oak tree planting ceremony and ceilidh

Friday 25 September

- St Mark's Dundela, Holywood Road, Belfast
- Tree planting 6.30pm
- Ceilidh 7pm, Church Hall

80th Anniversary St Andrew's Weekend

Friday 27 November - Nice n' Easy Dance

- Ballycairn Church Hall
- Music Ian Robertson
- Light supper

Saturday November 28 – Musicians' Course

- Ian Robertson will lead the course
- Other details TBC

Saturday November 28 - St Andrew's Ball

- Whitla Hall, Belfast
- Music Ian Robertson Band
- Fork supper

Details for most events including cribs are on the Branch website - www.rscdsbelfast.org

Committee Members 2026-27

At the AGM on 27 May the following members of the Branch agreed to serve on the Committee.

- Elizabeth Cameron, Honorary President
- Lucy Mulholland, Honorary Vice President
- Chairman – Liz Malone
- Treasurer – John Campbell
- Secretary – Aileen Patterson

Class Representatives

- Advanced – Jeanette Chambers
- Castlereagh – Jessica White
- Day Class – Brenda Brown
- Dundela – Rosemary Gordon
- Knockbreda – Patrick Brunskill
- Lisburn – Esme Stewart
- Malone – Ann Graham

Elected Representatives

- Eileen Allen
- Carol Campbell
- Gwynne Donnell
- Anne Graham
- Barbara Wilson

Do feel free to chat with any of them about any suggestions or concerns you may have.

Afternoon tea photographs



President, Vice president, Chairman and Chair-elect



Past and current treasurers



Past and current secretaries



Past and current ticket secretaries

Hon. President:	Mrs Elizabeth Cameron MBE
Hon. Vice President:	Mrs Lucy Mulholland
Branch Chairmen:	
Mr William Fergusson	1946-57
Mr W.J. Renfrew	1957-58
Mr J.A.E. Hill	1958-63
Miss H. Hall	1963-67
Miss B.K. Lawlor	1967-70
Mr P.M. Fergusson	1970-78
Mrs M. Gordon	1978-81
Miss M.F.N. Beattie	1981-84
Mrs M.E.M. Smith	1984-87
Mrs M.C. Donaldson	1987-89
Miss M.F.N. Beattie	1989-91
Dr L. Dickson	1991-92
Mrs M.E.M. Smith	1992-93
Mrs M.E. Cameron	1993-96
Mrs Lucy Mulholland	1996-99
Mrs Katherine Burke	1999-02
Mrs Ruth Barnes	2002-05
Mr Ronnie Barnes	2005-08
Mrs Helene Beattie	2008-11
Mr Michael Glendinning	2011-14
Mrs Aileen Patterson	2014-18
Mrs Evelyn Redmond	2018-22
Mrs Linda Harley	2022-26
Mrs Liz Malone	2026-

Inside souvenir booklet – welcome message and list of people who served as Chairman of Belfast Branch



Reminiscing about good times at Malone class



Great memories shared



Good to see you again



Lots to catch up on



What a lovely afternoon!



Big smiles all afternoon at Malone House

Weekend school fun, fitness and friendship



ANSWERS

Words from the dances highlighted

I have cobbled together words and phrases from Belfast and Eighty themed dances in the following tribute to our anniversary. Find the right words to fit in the right places below it. The words Belfast and Eighty have already been filled in for you along with the first letters of each word. Note words from one of the dance titles are within this introductory paragraph.

Lads and Lassies of Belfast. A very warm welcome to our Belfast Hooley themed Puzzle to celebrate Belfast Branch's special anniversary. As you know, Belfast Branch was founded eighty years ago this year. We may not be celebrating in a Castle or the City Hall but we are celebrating in very suitable venues within the city of Belfast not outside it.

Patrick put together a great display of photos taken over the years at the special Afternoon Tea at Malone House, with star guest William Williamson – not quite an Almanac of the history of the Branch but just as good. By the time you read this we will have had a great time at our Weekend School in the Europa Hotel.

We are really looking forward to the Tree Planting Ceremony on Friday 25th September at St Mark's Parish Church, Holywood Road, Belfast, and then the St Andrew's weekend on 27-28th November. Friday night's Nice 'n Easy Social Dance will be in Ballycairn Church Hall and the 80th Anniversary St Andrew's Ball is in the Whitla Hall at Queen's University, Belfast.

As well as dancers we have musicians. We may not have any Hornpipe players but we are blessed with members who play a variety of instruments from piano accordions and fiddles to bagpipes and drums.

I'm sure all our members – both direct and affiliated, join me in saying to Belfast Branch Hearty Congratulations on being Eighty years young. You are all diamonds for supporting the Branch, its classes and events all these years.

Here's to Eighty more years and beyond dancing forward.

DANCES WITH BELFAST IN THE TITLE

Belfast Castle
City of Belfast
Belfast City Hall
A Belfast Welcome
The Belfast Hooley
Lassies of Belfast
The Belfast Almanac
The Belfast Hornpipe
A Diamond for Belfast
Tribute to Belfast

DANCES WITH EIGHTY IN THE TITLE

Eighty Years Dancing Forward
Eighty Not Out
Eighty Years Ago
Eighty Years Young

Emoji quiz answers

1. Starry eyed lassie
2. Machine without horses
3. Minister on the loch
4. Light and airy
5. Sugar Candie
6. Music makars
7. Prince of orange
8. Chased lovers
9. City lights
10. Catch the wind
11. Red house
12. Dream catcher
13. The gentleman
14. Golden wedding
15. Happy meeting
16. Wild geese