



rscds

NORTH AYRSHIRE

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2025



Message from the Chair

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to our first North Ayrshire Newsletter, a venture initiated by our new Secretary, Billy Gray. With this newsletter, we hope to keep all our members in touch with the life of North Ayrshire Branch by e.g. sharing current branch activities, branch history, photos, reports, etc.

After 10 years' service, Deirdre Wright retired from her post as Branch Secretary. Happy retirement Deirdre, but remember...keep dancing!

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Billy Gray, our new secretary, and Shona McFadyen, our new Vice Chairperson. I'm sure both will be a valuable asset to the branch and look forward to working with them.

This year sees a big birthday arrive for our Branch President, Margaret

Ballantine, who will be 90 on 24th July. I'm sure you would all like to join me in wishing Margaret a very happy birthday.

At present, quite a few of us are enjoying the Summer Dancing Season in Troon (despite the heat) and also John Johnstone's Thursday classes.

Whatever you're doing this summer, I do hope you are having a lovely time and making the most of the weather. I look forward to seeing you all when classes resume in September.

- **Sandra**



Our Purpose

As a local branch of the RSCDS our purpose is to:

- Advance the education of the public in North Ayrshire in traditional Scottish Country Dancing.
- Preserve and further the practice of traditional Scottish Dances.
- Provide instruction in the dancing of Scottish Country Dances.
- Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of Scottish Country Dancing and Music and show the health benefits of same for all ages.

The Year Ahead

Classes

Classes will again be held at St. John's Church in Stevenston on a Wednesday evening at 7.30pm and at the Village Hall in West Kilbride on a Tuesday afternoon at 2pm. Wednesday classes start on 17th September and will run until 3rd December, finishing with a party. Tuesday classes start on 16th September, finishing on 2nd December. Sandra Mollison will again teach both classes and live music will feature at each class, once per month.

If you have any friends or know anyone interested in Scottish Country Dancing, please invite them to come along and join in the fun and friendship at either class.

Visiting Teacher

Wilma Brown from Ayr Branch will visit us on 12th November, 2025 to teach the Wednesday class.

Please all come along and support this special event.

Dances

The Branch will hold three dances in 2025-26 on 24th October, 2025, 9th January, 2026 and 27th February,

2026, all starting at 7.30pm. The October and February dances will be held in St Mathew's Academy, Saltcoats and the January dance will be at the Civic Centre, Ardrossan. The bands at each will be David Oswald, Sandy Nixon and Ewan Galloway, respectively. Ticket prices are £12 for dancers and £8 for non-dancers. Refreshments will be provided. *Hope to see you there!*

Children's Day of Dance

The Children's Day of Dance in 2025 will be at the Portal Leisure Centre in Irvine on Friday, 28th November, 2025 at 10a.m. Matthew McLennan will be playing. Again, we will be seeking volunteers willing to give up their time to go to participating primary schools and assist in teaching the dances to the children. This is a very rewarding task particularly when you see the sheer enjoyment of the participants on the day.

This year to comply with changes in the law it will be necessary for all volunteers to comply with disclosure requirements and to request a PVG check. There will be no cost attached to this for volunteers and the Branch will be able to assist with the submission of applications.

The Year Ahead (Continued)

New Book

A new book of dances, Book 54, was released by the RSCDS on 15th July, 2025. This contains 18 dances. Copies can be purchased from RSCDS headquarters in Edinburgh or through the website: www.rscds.org.

We'll be trying some of these at the classes so better start reading up!



Previous Year Highlights

A Children's Day of Dance was held in November, 2024 in the Portal, Irvine. Members of the Branch visited nine schools to provide tuition prior to the event itself. Primary school children from 17 schools in North Ayrshire participated. 276 children attended the event. Society dances were demonstrated by Fairlie, Hayocks, Beith and Mayfield Primary Schools.

The Branch now has a membership of 53 and the two classes have roles of around 24 people each and have welcomed new participants during the year.

The audited accounts for 2024/2025 show that our activities resulted in a loss of £4,523.96, however, this was expected in light of decisions made by Trustees following receipt of significant donations in recent years. At the end of the year, branch finances stood at £20,270.91.

AGM Changes

At the Branch AGM on 29th May, 2025, Shona McFadyen was elected as Vice-Chair for 2025-26 and Billy Gray was elected Secretary. Further details for both can be found in the syllabus or on the website: www.narscds.org.uk



Member Focus: Margaret Ballantine, Branch President

Our branch President, Margaret Ballantine, celebrated her 90th birthday in July of this year. I am sure you will want to join with the Office Bearers and the Committee in wishing Margaret a very happy birthday as she celebrates this milestone event. Margaret was presented with a beautiful basket of flowers on behalf of the Branch.

Margaret Ballantine was born in Glasgow and moved to Dunrobin near Airdrie as a small child, before moving to Ardrossan in 1941 with her parents. Margaret has lived in Ardrossan ever since. As a youngster, Margaret attended Winton and Eglinton Primary Schools and Ardrossan Academy. On leaving school, as many did in the area, Margaret went to work at ICI in Stevenston and was employed as a Comptometrist in the wages department.

Margaret married her husband Ian in 1960 and had two sons, Mark and David. Her family has grown through the addition of two granddaughters.

During her career, Margaret also worked at Prestwick Airport and Hunterston, worked in Bill Gibb's

stationery shop in Hamilton Street in Saltcoats and finished her working life with a 10-year stint in the Saltcoats Branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland in Chapelwell Street.

Margaret started Scottish Country Dancing in 1961 in the Shell Club in Ardrossan and also danced at the British Legion Hall in Saltcoats, which was located just off of Sydney Street. Taking a break to raise her family, Margaret then joined the dance class at St Cuthbert Church where she remained until the class disbanded a few years ago. Margaret took her teaching certificate through the RSCDS in 1984 and went on to teach the St Cuthbert's class for many years.

Margaret became involved in the North Ayrshire Branch of the RSCDS through Betty Fulton who persuaded her to join the Committee. Over the years she has served as both Secretary and Chair and now as President. Whilst not now able to dance herself, Margaret still regularly attends classes and committee meetings enjoying the fun, friendship and camaraderie of Scottish Country Dancing.

Membership Information

The membership fees for 2025-26 agreed at the AGM are as follows:

- £33.00 for Single Adult Membership (£4.00 + £29.00)
- £54.00 for Joint Adult Membership (£8.00 + £46.00)
- £17.00 for Youth Membership (aged 12 – 17 years)
- £27.00 for Young Adult Membership (£4.00 + £23.00) (aged 18 – 24 years)

Class fees for non-members - £5.00 per class.

Half yearly memberships for new members only who join between January and June, 2026 will be 50% of the relevant category

Your membership form for 2025-26 has been issued with this newsletter.

We would request that you complete this and return it with the appropriate fee. As in previous years you can pay your fees using cash or by cheque. Cash payments should be made at early classes. Cheque payments can be made at classes or posted to the Secretary.

For the first time you can pay by bank transfer if that is easier for you, details of how to do so are provided in the Membership Application Form. Remember, though, if paying by bank transfer that we also need to receive your form back by email to secretary@narscds.org.uk

If paying by bank transfer remember to include an identifying reference when you make your payment.

Contact Information

Contact details for Branch Office Bearers and Committee Members can be found in the 2025/26 syllabus or on the website at: www.narscds.org.uk

If you haven't given us your email address yet, please do so as it will allow us to keep in touch regularly with you. Both classes have Whatsapp Groups. Let us know if you want to join one or both of these.

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Headquarters: www.rscds.org
Ayr Branch: www.ayr-rscds.com
Kilmarnock Branch: www.rscdskilmarnock.org
Glasgow Branch: www.rscdsglasgow.org

Details for other classes held in North Ayrshire can be found on the website:
www.narscds.org.uk