North Ayrshire Branch

NEWSLETTER

Message from the Chair

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to our second North Ayrshire Newsletter in advance of the 2026-27 session. We hope this newsletter will help 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 13 years' service, John Coy has stepped down as Branch Treasurer. We weren't able to appoint a new treasurer at the AGM in May. Billy Gray has agreed to undertake the role on a temporary basis until a new volunteer comes forward from our membership.

Quite a few of us are enjoying the Summer Dancing Season in Troon (despite the heat) and also John Johnstone's Thursday classes as well as our own two Ceilidh and Easy Country Dance events.

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.

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- 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 16th September and will run until 2nd December, finishing with a party. Tuesday classes start on 15th September, finishing on 1st December. Sandra Mollison will again teach both classes and live music will feature at each class, once a 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

Anne Robertson, a Member of Glasgow Branch and Secretary of the Teachers' Association Scotland will visit us on 24th February, 2027 to teach the Wednesday class. ***Please all come along and support this special event.***

Dances

The Branch will again hold three Scottish Country Dances in 2026-27 on 30th October, 2026, 8th January, 2027 and 26th February, 2027, all starting at 7.30pm. **All dances in the coming year will be held at the Civic Centre, Glasgow Street, Ardrossan**, following the success of our previous dance there earlier this year. The bands at each will be Ian Muir, Sandy Nixon and our very own Vice-Chair, Shona MacFadyen with her sister Susan. 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 2026 will be at the Portal Leisure Centre in Irvine on Friday, 27th November, 2026 at 10a.m. Matthew McLennan will be playing. We will be seeking volunteers willing to give up their time to go into 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.

Any new volunteers going into schools require a PVG check. Existing members who were disclosure checked in 2025 will not need a new check as their existing disclosure is valid for five years. There is no cost attached to this for new volunteers and the Branch will be able to assist with the submission of applications.

Membership Information

The membership fees for 2026-27 have changed from the previous year and have been agreed as follows:

£35.00 for Single Adult Membership (£5.00 (Branch) + £30.00 RSCDS)
£62.00 for Joint Adult Membership (£10.00 (Branch) + £52.00 RSCDS)

New: Class Fees for members - £3 per class. (There are 12 nights in first term which will cost £36. If this is paid at the start of the term: i.e. with membership or at the first class, a special rate of £30 has been agreed by the Committee.)
Class fees for non-members - £6.00 per class.

Class fees have been reintroduced for members, following a break for several years, as we had received two legacies which have been used, in part, to offset class costs. However, running at a loss of approximately £4,000 per annum is no longer sustainable, which is why the Committee has decided to introduce a modest fee per class in 2026-27.

Half yearly memberships for new members, only, who join between January and June, 2027 will be 50% of the relevant category.

The twice yearly **RSCDS magazine** will be received digitally in 2026-27 at no additional cost as it is a benefit of the membership fee. However, if any member wishes to receive a paper copy, an additional £3 will be payable in 2026-27 and will be payable along with membership fees.

Your membership form for 2026-27 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/Treasurer at 5 Station Rise, Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire PA12 4NA.

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.

Previous Year Highlights
2026 was a successful year for the Branch.

Membership is down by one since last year. At the beginning of the year, the Branch had 53 members in total. Sadly, as most of you know, Solveig McCulloch lost her battle with cancer and passed away towards the end of last year, so we currently stand at 52. Solveig was a member of North Ayrshire Branch for nearly 50 years. In that time, she supported all classes and dances and took her First Teaching Certificate. She is sorely missed.

Both the Wednesday class and the Tuesday class have approximately 24 dancers on their registers. In 2025-26, we had 4 new members who have become part of our dancing family.

In October we had a very successful joint class with our visiting teacher Wilma Brown from Ayr Branch, so much so, that we invited her to return in Spring. Both classes were well attended and enjoyed.

As part of an RSCDS communication and information gathering exercise, in December, the committee had a very positive meeting with ex RSCDS Chairman William Williamson and his wife Linda. We were surprised to learn that we are one of the larger RSCDS Branches and we were commended on our forward thinking.

In November we had our annual Children's Day of Dance. Again, it was a very successful venture. 13 schools attended, down 4 from last year. A total of 228 pupils attended. There were 22 volunteers on the day from North Ayrshire and Kilmarnock and District Branches, without whom it would be impossible to run. Only 4 schools requested help ahead of the event this year, and our thanks go to Elizabeth Howie, Frances Robertson, Billy Strang, Sheila Dodds, Marilyn Thomson, Anna Castelvecchi and May and Jim Holmes, who gave up so much of their time to go into schools and prepare the pupils. Our biggest thanks go to May and Jim Holmes who organise the whole event, which is no mean feat.

May and Jim Holmes also attended the RSCDS AGM as our branch delegates.

Also in November, the Branch nominated our secretary, Billy Gray, for a position on the RSCDS Management Board. Billy was duly elected at the AGM and has since become a member of other committees within the organisation.

Attendance at both our Autumn and Spring dances was down slightly this year. However, both dances were enjoyed by dancers. Our raffles were very generously supported.

The New Year Dance was also a great success with many people commenting on the lovely atmosphere in the hall and giving positive feedback regarding the hall itself.

RSCDS News

This year the AGM of the national RSCDS will be held in Dumfries. Branded as the Autumn Gathering, it will be held from 6th to 8th November, 2026 at the Loreburn Hall. Information about the event can be found on the RSCDS website.

The RSCDS has a new logo and branding which have been designed to, amongst other things, modernise the image of the Society. This is part of three major projects currently taking place, the others being a new more modern, user friendly, website and a new Customer Relation Management (CRM) system which will facilitate better interaction with members. All of these innovations have been funded by means of a legacy.

Contact Details

Contact details for Branch Office Bearers and Committee Members can be found in the 2026/27 syllabus or on the website at: https://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.

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

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

Images from the Year – Largs Ceilidh and Easy Dance, West Kilbride Class, New Year Dance & Spring Dance