



Royal Scottish Country Dance
Carolinas Branch News

Summer 2026 Vol. 16 No. 2



Carolinas Branch Officers



Chair

Caroline (Caz) Freeman

149 Westminster Blvd
Goose Creek, SC 29445
(843) 973-2806

carolineannfreeman@gmail.com

Vice Chair

Diane Langston

5111 W Dolphin St
North Charleston, SC 29405
(843) 557-9528

Langstoncitadeldl@gmail.com



Secretary

Cynthia West

thecarolinasbranch@gmail.com



Treasurer

Shannah Steel

shannah.steel@gmail.com

Please send submissions and advertisements of events for the Autumn Newsletter by August 26, 2026 to the Editors:

Craig & Sherri Davis

carolinasbranchnews@gmail.com



**Looking Back
at the
Carolinas Branch**

YEARS

Carolinas Branch Trivia

The Carolinas Branch began in July 2006
Branch dues were \$5.00

The Branch membership was 78 the first year

Leslie Dent made the first rough draft for a Branch logo

Eilean Yates served as the first Chair. Other Chairs who followed were:
Barbara Youngman
Mary McConnell
Brian Carr
Caroline Freeman

The branch once donated \$300 to help some Scottish dancers and teachers in Japan whose homes and possessions were destroyed in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

The 1st Branch Newsletter was published February 2011. Tom Dillon was the editor. Other editors who followed were:
Shelia South
Craig & Sherri Davis

2026 The Carolinas Branch was proud to have a team compete and dance with grace at the first-ever North American Competition.
(read more in this newsletter in From The Chair's Desk by Caz Freeman)

The 1st Branch-sponsored event was a Tea Dance at the Guilford Grange in Greensboro August 2009 *(pictures on next page)*





[Click here for](#) **More Pictures**



- BLUE BONNETS (JIG)
- SHIFTIN' BOBBINS (REEL)
- THE DUNDEE WHALER (STRATHSPEY)
- THE WHITE HEATHER JIG (JIG)
- THE DRUNKEN SAILOR (REEL)
- LINNEA'S STRATHSPEY (S)
- SUMMER ASSEMBLY (REEL)
- "INTERMISSION"
- MRS. STEWART'S JIG (JIG)
- MAXWELL'S RANT (REEL)
- THE LEA RIG (STRATHSPEY)
- THE BLACK BLACK OIL (REEL)
- THE GOTHENBURG'S WELCOME (JIG)
- MACDONALD OF THE ISLES (S)
- THE HOMECOMING DANCE (REEL)



The 1st Branch-sponsored event August 2009

CAROLINAS BRANCH 20 YEARS OLD!! - THE EARLY DAYS

Contributed By Eileen Yates

The application asking for permission to form a branch was first submitted by Brenda Sleight on the 14th of January, 2006. She received permission from the Society that the current Membership Board had approved the application so we were all set to go.

An organizational meeting of nineteen people was held on Sunday July 6, at Lees MacRae College in Banner Elk prior to Thistle School.

Jimmie Hill (*see story from Jimmie that follows this one*) from Edinburgh was present as guest teacher and he was able to answer questions that were raised as to why we should have a branch. The group decided we should go ahead and planned from there.



*The beginning
July 6, 2006*



One of the requirements in these days was to have enough certificated teachers. North Carolina had four then. They were Mary McConnell, Barbara Youngman, Pat Johnston, and David Burgess. We also had three Prelim. Qualified teachers – Andrew Peterkin, Irene Stancik and Pete Campbell. There were 8 classes meeting in the Carolinas. They were Raleigh, Chapel Hill /Durham, Charleston, Charlotte, Shelby, Greensboro, and Palmetto in Columbia and Haywood Dancers who met in Waynesville.

Eilean Yates was elected as the first chair and held the position for the first 5 years until she decided that it was time for someone new to take the helm. Brenda Sleight was the first Secretary and Caroline Stancik was Treasurer. The dues were set at \$5 and the RSCDS dues were 10 pounds.

Leslie Dent from Greensboro made the first draft for the logo and it was approved. It was decided that the AGM would be held during the weekend of the Loch Norman Games since that was a time and place where there would likely be a good number present from the Carolinas. Due to the wide geographic area served we decided to try to have branch meetings scheduled at Charleston in September, Greensboro in November, Chapel Hill area in February, Loch Norman in April and Thistle School in July. That only happened a few times because we found it was not viable.



This problem of us all living so far apart is an ongoing one. It has been made ever more complicated by the addition of groups from New Orleans, Arkansas, and Richmond. A few years after we formed, they all approached us and asked to join. One of the reasons was that it was cheaper to become a member of RSCDS if they belonged to a Branch rather than as an individual member or being an affiliated group.

The first branch sponsored event was held in August 2009 at the Grange in Greensboro. Admission was \$1 for a whole afternoon of dancing, eating and socializing. It was well attended. Any of us who are still dancing will remember Mary carrying all of her china cups and saucers etc. to the event. It was a lovely occasion.

In 2010 the membership stood at 90 made up of 79 primary and 11 associate members. We have not been able to sustain as high a membership as people have aged out or lost interest in belonging to RSCDS. We all need to remember that without RSCDS in Edinburgh running the whole organization and supplying new books, teachers training and many other things that you do not immediately consider. Without them none of us would have had the years of pleasure dancing and meeting new friends that we have experienced. I consider all my dancing friends as my second family.



The first Carolinas Branch News was published in February 2011 and Tom Dillon was editor. He should be applauded for getting this off the ground because it has gone from strength to strength and it is a valued tool for staying involved and informed within our dance community. The current editors Craig and Sherri Davis are doing a marvelous job nowadays.

In the early days many of us went to Thistle School and met many friends. Betty-Lee and Duard Barnes ran the school for many years but eventually it became too much for them as they were both well into their nineties. There was a core group who decided a summer school was indeed needed and the new Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School was born. As you all know it also runs during the week leading up to the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games but at a new location on the campus of Appalachian State University in Boone. The Carolinas Branch and the Atlanta Branch are sponsors of Blue Ridge each year.

We have come a long way in 20 years and have seen many changes but I am happy to say that there is still a group of us who remember that hot day in July where we started the ball rolling. For the branch to continue to thrive we need new young minds and feet to keep us rolling. We need the newer members to step up and take the reins and give us seniors a little rest. We will all be happy to work with you and share the load but we cannot do it alone.

Happy Dancing!

Eilean Yates





Contributed By Jimmie Hill

It all started in October 2005 when I was invited to teach at the Hamilton Branch weekend. Apart from being taken by John and G'Ina Middleton to see the Niagara Falls, I met two of my country dance heroes - the legendary Scottish musicians, Stan Hamilton and Bobby Brown. Also attending the weekend were a few people from North Carolina, regulars at the Thistle Summer School. They went back home and asked Betty-Lee Barnes to invite me to teach at Thistle 2006. I have great memories of that event, and all the subsequent Thistles at which I taught.



Never having taught at a North American summer school before, I arrived a few days early along with the 'advance party' in order to get over jet lag and find out more about what I had let myself into. I spent my first night in a hotel in central Atlanta and had something to eat at Hooters - something that shocked Bob Messner when I told him the following day. How was I to know Hooters in central Atlanta was not exactly a top-end restaurant! Arriving at Banner Elk; I joined in with the preparations, some of which involved painting the backdrop for the band to try to bring some colour to the large sports hall where the Ball would be held. I had never before met so many enthusiastic Scottish dancers so far from Scotland. But I think they found me a breath of fresh air. I did not conform to the rather stuffy and formal kind of RSCDS teacher who had come out from the UK in the past. Apart from the beautiful surroundings of Banner Elk, the 'dorm experience' and the relentless air conditioning in the dance venues, it was the people I remember most. *(contd. next page)*

“Well Done Carolinas! Here’s To Another 20 Years!”

Of course, there was Betty-Lee and Duard, the Middletons, Bob Messner from Atlanta, and so many more who welcomed me with open arms. I was initiated into the rituals of group preparation for the ceilidh; I was amazed at the generosity of people in the auction but it was the enthusiasm in the classes which I remember most. Not forgetting the food! My first experience of American food - ice cream at breakfast! And of course grits! On the final Saturday Grandfather Mountain was quite an experience. The renowned Gaelic singer Kenna Campbell from the Isle of Skye was there, and people dressed in what they thought was traditional Scottish attire! And clan societies, unheard of in Scotland! All new to this innocent Scot.

There were worries about what would happen to Thistle if Betty-Lee could no longer carry on, and that is where I met Eilean Yates for the first time – a fellow Scot and fellow graduate of Edinburgh University. She sounded me out about forming a Branch of the RSCDS. For 20 years I had lived on the south coast of England I had been instrumental in founding Brighton Branch in 1991. I saw the Branch there grow from 60 at to over 150 in ten years, when Annie and I moved back to Edinburgh. The Branch had encouraged more teachers to take their teaching certificates; there was more country dance activity the branch acted as a service to local affiliated groups and I was convinced that the Carolinas would see similar growth.

I am proud to say that I was a founding member at that first meeting of the Carolinas Branch, and was able to encourage everyone from my own experience. That is now 20 years ago and I have been watching the transition from Thistle to Blue Ridge and the move from Banner Elk to Boone. Although some of the old timers are no longer around, I am always pleased to see photographs from the Carolinas Branch with new people I don't recognize. That is healthy. You have to keep bringing in new dancers and showing them the welcome I got all those years ago.

“Well Done Carolinas! Here's To Another 20 Years!”



**What's Happening
NOW
in the
Carolinas Branch**



From the Chair's Desk

Episode 9



The Carolinas Branch was proud to have a team compete and dance with grace at the first-ever North American Competition. Their dedication, talent, and spirit were truly inspiring, and we are proud of their accomplishments. You can watch their performances of *Montgomerie's Rant* and *Because He Was A Bonnie Lad* from the YouTube links below.

As a branch, we have been honored to provide financial support for this team, as well as for the North American Team that previously competed at the Newcastle Festival. We also continue to support the Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School and Carolinas Branch events.

Supporting these dancers and programs is important because it is one of the key ways we increase awareness, encourage participation, and ensure the continued growth of our community and traditions. To continue this important work, we are seeking someone to take the lead of a Fundraising Committee within the Branch. We have already received offers of donating items to sell, and with the right leadership, we can build even greater support for our dancers and programs.



If you are interested in helping lead fundraising efforts for our branch, we would love to hear from you. Your involvement can make a meaningful difference in sustaining and growing these opportunities for future dancers and events.



Caroline aka Caz



Loch Norman dancers 2026

April 2026 Carolinas Branch AGM

After several years with low attendance, perhaps the big news out of the Carolinas Branch Annual General Meeting, on the Sunday of the Loch Norman High Games, was that we were able to achieve a quorum of 20 people and conduct business.

Caroline “Caz” Freeman will remain chairman of the Branch for the next year, and Shannah Steele will remain treasurer. Two new members were also elected. Diane Langston of Charleston, S.C., will take over the vice chairman’s role from Eilean Yates, and Cynthia West of Knoxville, Tenn., will take from the secretary’s role from Brian Carr. Both Eilean and Brian were thanked for their service.

In weekend reports, it was reported that the Loch Norman Gala, now a project of the Branch, made a profit this year of \$280 dollars. Brian and Arthur Baum put together the program, and Arthur is scheduling 2027 musicians. Brian will reserve Hopewell Presbyterian Church for April 16-17, 2027 for the Loch Norman Gala.

Other business:

We donated \$300 to sponsor the North American Festival in Philadelphia, where our dance team did a good job, and \$500 to the Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School, which will be in July at Appalachian State University in Boone. Shannah Steel reminded members that renewed memberships are due July 1.

Eilean comes off the RSCDS board this year, as she has served for three years. We will be able to test some new dances for Book 55. It was noted that this is the 20th year anniversary of the Carolinas Branch, and there was interest in doing something similar to the Atlanta Branch effort to put together a book or collection of dances. This will be put forth to the executive committee of the officers, and would like to have class representatives

It was announced that Blue Ridge is considering purchasing an accordion from Luke Brady next year, so players traveling from Scotland do not have to ship them. The board will also establish a committee to look into a sound system for the Branch.

Cynthia said that she will plan to help with the Web site, and she noted that spring is a great time to register for the July Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School, if you haven't already done so. All programs are posted on the web site. And there's new merchandise to peruse for 2026. Visit <https://www.blueridgesds.org/>

Attendees at the annual meeting were Brian Carr, Tina Carr, Kate Mathewes, Moira Turner, Irene Stancik, Michelle Wilcox, Caroline Freeman, Andrew Peterkin, Catherine Peterkin, Sam Moffitt, Eilean Yates, Jeff Dunlap, Beth Dunlap, Jory Fleming, Diane Langston, Shannah Steel, Ruth Steel, Grace Mauney, Tom Dillon, Cynthia West.



The Asheville Group is looking for a new location to meet.

We typically meet on Fridays 7:30-9:00pm, but this may change.

**For more information, please contact Kate Mathewes
at**

dancingsct@gmail.com or 828-215-8624

Check us out in our [Facebook Group](#)

Asheville Scottish Country Dancers



Charleston dancers at
World Dance Showcase p/o the North Charleston Arts Fest



Our Teachers:
**Irene Stancik and
Caroline Freeman**

**We meet Mondays 7:00 – 8:30pm
Studio 149
149 Westminster Blvd.
Goose Creek, SC 29445**

**We also meet the first Sunday
of every month
2:30 – 4:00pm *unless there is a conflict*
Northwoods Community Gym
8348 Greenridge Rd.
North Charleston, SC 29406**

For more information, email us at CharlestonRSCDS@gmail.com

or text 843-810-7797

Like us on Facebook [Charleston Scottish Country Dancers](#)



At the St. Patrick's Day Parade

Charleston Scottish Country Dancers



A look back at the Charleston Games dancing



A look back at the Charleston Games dancing



Teacher: Arthur Baum

When: Weekly on Thursdays from 6:00-8:30 pm

**Where: Providence United Methodist Church
2810 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC**

Cost: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students

**New dancers and seasoned dancers are welcome.
If you know of anyone in the Charlotte area who
would be interested, please let them know about
the class.**

***For more information, please email Arthur
arhbaum@gmail.com***

Charlotte Scottish Country Dancers

Pam Stephens is the teacher

As of Sept. 7, 2026, we will be dancing on **Mondays from 7:00-8:30 PM**
and
returning to our old location at the
Triangle Dance Studio, 2603 S. Miami Blvd, Durham NC 27703



For more info, email us at dancescottishdurhamnc@gmail.com or call 917-763-2418

—or—

find us on Facebook [Durham Chapel Hill Scottish Country Dancers](#)

Durham/Chapel Hill Scottish Country Dancers

Valentine's Day Tea Dance

February 14, 2026



Sponsored by Durham/Chapel Hill Dancers



The Durham Chapel Hill SCDS gathered in Chapel Hill to honor our teacher Eilean who stepped down from teaching after dedicating so many years inspiring us with her vast knowledge of Scottish Dance and culture. Former members and new members all had a great time of sharing amusing stories.





A look back at “social distance” dancing!

Esther Leise is our Lead Teacher

**Sam Moffitt & Jacquelyn Trost
are also instructing, as they complete
the RSCDS Core Training for
Instructors (CTI) program**

*Sam has also been teaching several RSCDS
Book 55 trial dances for class comments.*

We meet on Tuesday nights

7:30-8:30pm beginners

7:30-10:00pm members

**The Guilford Grange
4909 Guilford School Road
Greensboro, NC 27410**



For more information email us at gsoscds@gmail.com

or

check out our website www.gsoscds.org

Greensboro Scottish Country Dancers

In the [March 2026 RSCDS Dance Scottish Together E-Newsletter](#) - *A Week to remember Winter School 2026* – you will see Sam Moffitt dancing along with the 130 dancers gathered in wintry Pitlochry for five memorable days of dancing, friendship, and fun at RSCDS Winter School 2026.



Winter School 2026



35th

St. Andrews Dance



A look back at an Emerald dance



Our teacher is Brian Carr

**We continue to meet on Tuesday nights
at St. James Episcopal Church
6:30pm to 8:30pm**

Find us on  acebook

**For more information please
contact:**

Brian Carr gvillesc@yaho.com

Greenville Scottish Country Dancers



BRRRRR



A look back at a COLD day for dancing!



**Our Instructors:
Colleen Walker & Jory Fleming**

**We meet on
Mondays 6:00-8:00pm
at
Eastminster Presbyterian Christian
Life Center
3200 Trenholm Rd,
Columbia, SC 29204**



Our class is volunteering to trial dances for RSCDS Book 55, this is the first time our class has done this and we are enjoying giving our opinions.

For more information contact Michelle Wilcox at 5mmw5a@gmail.com

Palmetto Scottish Country Dancers



A look back at the Palmetto Dancers

COME JOIN US FOR SOME "REEL" FUN



Tuesday nights

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

The Dance Space
6004A W. Broad Street,
Richmond, VA 23230

For more information about
class or an event
please contact:
scdrichmond@gmail.com

Please visit our website for more information at
www.richmondscottishcountrydancers.org

Richmond Scottish Country Dancers

Carolinas Branch Scottish Country Dance Groups

Asheville, NC

Looking for a new location

Fridays 7:30pm-9pm *(may change)*

Kate Mathews

dancingsct@gmail.com

828-215-8624

Charlotte, NC

Providence United Methodist Church

Thursdays 6pm – 8:30pm

Arthur Baum

arhbaum@gmail.com

Greensboro, NC

The Guilford Grange

7:30pm-10pm Tuesdays

Esther Leise *lead teacher*

contact@gsoscds.org

<http://www.gsoscds.org>

Barnwell, SC

Taking a break from classes

Columbia, SC

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

6pm-8pm Mondays

Colleen Walker

5mmw5a@gmail.com

Greenville, SC

St James Episcopal Church

6:30pm-8:30pm Tuesdays

Brian Carr

gvillesc@yahoo.com

Charleston, SC

Studio 149 Mondays 7:00-8:30pm

Northwoods Community Gym

1st Sundays 2:30pm – 4:00pm

Irene Stancik & Caroline Freeman

CharleslestonRSCDS@gmail.com

843-810-7797

Durham/Chapel Hill, NC

Triangle Dance Studio

7pm-8:30pm Mondays

Pam Stephens

dancescottishdurhamnc@gmail.com

917-763-2418

Richmond, VA

The Dance Space

6pm-8pm Tuesdays

Moira Turner

scdrichmond@gmail.com

www.richmondscottishcountrydancers.org

Upcoming Events


Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School
July 5-12, 2026

Appalachian State University
Boone, North Carolina

2026 Teachers



Fred DeMarse



Deb Lees



Joanne Moody

2026 Musicians



Julie Gorka



Mara Shea



Tom Pixton



Scottish Country Dance-at-a-glance

2026

Date	Event	Location	More information
June 6 - 7	Georgia Mountain Scottish Festival & Highland Games	Hiawassee, Georgia.	Contact: sapriest@comcast.net
July 5-11	Blue Ridge Scottish Dance School	Boone, NC	www.blueridgesds.org
July 19 – Aug 16	RSCDS Summer School	St Andrews, Scotland	https://rscds.org/events
July 24-26	TAC Teacher's Conference	Sherbrooke, Quebec	https://tac-rscds.org
July 26 – August 2	TAC Summer School	Sherbrooke, Quebec	https://tac-rscds.org
October 16-18	Stone Mountain Scottish Festival & Highland Games	Atlanta, GA	http://www.smhg.org
November 21	St. Andrew's Day Dance	Greensboro, NC	https://gsoscds.org

Please verify all events / dates before traveling