



Eilean Yates with the special Carolinas Branch Award presented by Mary McConnell during the Scottish Ball at Loch Norman on April 8. Read the story below. Brian Youngman photo.

# Carolinas Branch News

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Spring-Summer, 2017

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2017. We have just reorganized for the next two years, and more information is below. There's also the second part of our Connections series about dance history – did you realize we're the kings of the triple minor? And if you're thinking about summer school, this is the year; it's cheaper than ever. The next newsletter will come out in the early fall after Thistle School and Summer School. Deadline for copy is September 1, 2017. Please send PICTURES! And write LETTERS!

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To access the Website for the Carolinas Branch, visit:  
[www.rscdscarolinasbranch.org](http://www.rscdscarolinasbranch.org)

## McConnell leads larger branch another two years

Mary McConnell of Greensboro, N.C., was elected to head the Carolinas Branch for another two years during the Annual General Meeting April 9 at the Loch Norman Highland Games. Karen Becker of Fishersville, Va., was elected secretary, replacing Joi Heath, while Eilean Yates of Chapel Hill, N.C., will remain vice-president and Brian Youngman of Cary, N.C., will remain as treasurer. The votes were unanimous with 63 ballots cast. Contact information for all these people is available in the officers' listing below.

The big news from the annual meeting was that our branch is growing. We're now 88 members up from 60 last year, with seven associate members and three young adult branch members. The increase is primarily due to the addition of dancers from Richmond, Williamsburg and surrounding areas of Virginia. More information is in Mary's message below.

## Chairman's AGM message: We're growing



Founded in July 2006 at Thistle School in Banner Elk, NC, we have now been established for almost eleven years. This past year there was no Branch sponsored dance. However, we have seen a few more new classes get started by Branch members (in addition to the fairly new classes in Mooresville and Charlotte) in Aberdeen, N.C., Staunton, Va., and Chapel Hill, N.C. There may be some others that I don't know about. If any of you have information about new classes, let me know.

We are very happy that we were able last night to recognize Eilean Yates with the Carolinas Branch Award. She has been our first Branch President, who continues to serve, and who has done much to support dance events in addition to diligence in the early years of the Branch.

This year we welcome some 24 new Branch members from the neighboring state of Virginia. Most of these came from the Richmond area. That brings our total to 88 full members, 7 associate members and a total of 95 members. Three of those are young adult members, two of whom have been sponsored by the Greensboro class.

We are also a large Branch geographically as well. And that creates some difficulties. We need to communicate via the internet besides the opportunities we have to dance together. Those opportunities generally require some travel. Some dance groups within the Branch are much further apart than others. It is difficult to have an annual dance that serves everyone fairly. I proposed in our newsletter that we have an easy mechanism for local groups to organize dances and workshops by applying for Branch co-sponsorship funds. The Committee of Management (the Officers) can approve the request and send a check. This would be an equitable use of our assets and encourage classes to rent halls and pay musicians for quality dances. This plan was discussed by the members present at this AGM. Lacking a quorum, we did not make a final decision as on the process.

We have responded to the request from Headquarters to try out some of the new dances proposed for Book 52. I recently got a packet of 8 dances, via the internet, and the link has been shared with some of the Branch groups. The evaluations need to be completed by the end of August, and preferably by the end of June, as frequency of classes slows down during the summer.

We are fortunate to have dancers and musicians freely contribute their time and talents to make events possible. Besides those serving on the Committee of Management, Tom Dillon has been doing the newsletter for some years now, and although he enjoys doing it at present, he hopes that someone will step forward soon to take it up.

A reminder that the payment of dues is now June 30 each year, to better coincide with the fiscal year of the RSCDS and clarify who is a member if they intend on attending Summer School.

Visit the RSCDS website. Read the Annual Report. Contact information on dance groups worldwide is available on the website. In the past year our local Greensboro group was visited by two lovely dancers from Peebles in Scotland. That's how they found us while they were visiting the US. And the same information is available to you when you are travelling. The RSCDS tartan fabric is available in the shop. Dance books can be purchased as eEditions. Recorded music for the books can also be downloaded from the internet. There is now a Dancing Achievement Award for adults as well as Medal Tests for children. The RSCDS Annual Report includes Five Strategic Aims for the next 4 years and our Branch is in concert with all these aims.

Being a Branch gives us mechanisms to support dance classes with materials as well as networking. And it also gives us a way to recognize those who have done so much for us all with their organizational skills and enthusiasm for the dance with a Branch Award.

Happy dancing!

*Mary McConnell*

## Connections: A Dance History (Part 2)

What follows are excerpts from an essay written in 2012 by Colin Hume, an English dance master. It's from his website and is used by permission. This is Part 2 of two parts. Thanks to Mary McConnell for the submission.

Now let's move on to Scottish dancing, which is the bastion of triple minor dances — though the dancers and most of the teachers don't realize that!

A lot of Scottish dances were originally triple minor; many of them were simply 18th century English dances with a Scottish title. The style of Scottish Country Dancing now is very different from the style of English Folk Dancing now, and the Scottish style is actually closer to the way they danced in the 18th century. I'd read that Miss Jean Milligan (the Cecil Sharp of Scottish dancing) switched to four couple sets early in the 20th century as an efficient teaching technique, but Joan F. Flett and Thomas M. Flett in their authoritative book *Traditional Dancing in Scotland* (1964) say on page 232:

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the sets for Country Dances usually consisted of ten or twelve couples, and in one or two places in the Borders and Angus such 'long' sets were still in use at the beginning of the period covered by living memory. In most places, however, relatively short sets have been used for as far back as living memory extends; thus in Angus and Perthshire the number of couples in a set was usually five, in the West Highlands it was anything from four to seven, and elsewhere in Scotland it was almost invariably four.

The Fletts found that there were four main types of social dance in Scotland in earliest living memory (which would have been the beginning of the 20th century):

- **Reels:** Setting steps on the spot alternating with a travelling figure such as “Foursome Reel” also known as “Scotch Reel” or “Highland Reel” — Dorset Four-Hand Reel would be a perfect example except that Dorset is the other end of the British Isles!
- **Country Dances:** To the older people this meant “longways for as many as will”, such as “Petronella”, “Rory O'More” and “Flowers of Edinburgh”. They were introduced to Scotland by the upper classes by 1775-1800 in the lowlands and adjacent highlands, but not accepted until 1880 in the Western Isles.
- **Square Dances:** This meant Quadrilles, which I'll be coming to later, such as “La Russe.” They came directly from Paris in 1816. There were about twelve in circulation by the mid-nineteenth century, but these gradually dropped down to three: the First Set of Quadrilles (just called **The** Quadrilles), The Lancers (about 1817) and The Caledonians (between 1820 and 1830).
- **Circle dances:** This is what became ballroom dancing: couple dances such as Waltz, which came from the continent about 1810, though it wasn't until the Polka arrived in 1844 that circle dances achieved real popularity.

The Reels were the only native Scottish dances; all the rest were imports, and even in 1964 (when the Fletts' book was published) old people in the Outer Hebrides spoke of everything but Reels as "modern dances". There were also dances which were not true reels but were in the same style, such as the "Eightsome Reel" composed between 1870 and 1880.

Here's an interesting quote from page 6, especially for RSCDS devotees:

Nowadays we have come to think of Reels and Country Dances as 'National Dances,' and they are regarded as being on a different plane from ordinary ballroom dances. But for the proper understanding of the history of social dancing in Scotland, it is essential to realize that, for as far back as living memory extends, Reels and Country Dances were regarded as being on exactly the same footing as Square and Circle Dances. Moreover, in common with all the other social dances which were in current use, Reels and Country Dances were taught by professional dancing-teachers in the normal course of their classes.

It is essential to realize also just how thoroughly the teachings of professional dancing-teachers permeated the structure of social dancing in Scotland, for before 1914 most young people in Scotland attended dancing classes at some time or other.

So let's look at one of these "imported" Country Dances.

### **Duke of Perth**

Also known as "Brown's Reel", "Pease Strae" and "Keep the Country, Bonnie Lassie." That's because dances were known by the names of the tunes rather than the other way round, so one set of figures could be set to several tunes. The first publication, around 1797, was in Boag's "Collection of favourite reels and Strathspeys." There's no punctuation, and the description rivals Playford or Johnson for terseness:

First Couple Swing the Right hand and cast off one Couple: Swing the Left hand round Swing the Corners and your Partner each time Set Corners and turn lead out sides.

So again we have turning corners and partner; again "lead out sides." Other printed versions replace the "lead out sides" by reels of three, and the Fletts say that virtually all the dancing teachers taught it that way, so that's how we'll do it. They say that the sequence "set and turn corners and reel of three" is undoubtedly a Scottish contribution to the Country Dance, and it occurs in a high proportion of the Country Dances performed in Scotland during the eighteenth century. And some versions do all the turns with arm holds rather than hand holds, which makes a lot of sense to me since all four corner-partner turns are done in 8 bars as in Bonny Breast Knot. That's how all the dancing masters mentioned by the Fletts taught it, and that's how we're going to dance it now again for three couples in a four-couple set.

- A1:** Ones right-arm turn, cast to second place, left-arm turn to finish in middle facing first corner.
- A2:** Right-arm turn first corner; ones left-arm turn. Same with second corner, to finish facing first corner.
- B1:** Set to first corner; right-arm turn. Same with second (right arm again), to finish facing first corner.
- B2:** Reels of three (up and down) with your two corners: start passing first corner **left** shoulder, ones finish in second place improper and link right arms to begin the next turn of the dance

A modern example of a Scottish dance using this figure in an original way is “**Black Mountain Reel**” by Derek Haynes, which is a 5-couple longways set. This works like two 3-couple sets glued together, and once the active couples are in 2nd and 4th place the couple in 3rd place finds they have people coming at them from both directions for the “contra corners” figure. That's exactly what you get in modern contra dances that have been condensed from triple minor to duple minor — yet another **connection!**

## How to contact the officers

Here are names and addresses for the Carolinas Branch officers:

### **Chair**

Mary McConnell  
3715 Bontura Drive  
Greensboro, N.C. 27455  
(336) 282-6507 or [marymccconnell@bellsouth.net](mailto:marymccconnell@bellsouth.net)

### **Vice-chair**

Eilean Yates  
3000 Galloway Ridge Road, Apt. E211  
Pittsboro, N.C. 27312  
(704) 466-9757 or [edgyates@gmail.com](mailto:edgyates@gmail.com)

### **Secretary**

Karen Becker  
38 Highland Avenue  
Fishersville, Va. 22939  
(540) 941-3494 or [krn.bckr21@gmail.com](mailto:krn.bckr21@gmail.com)

### **Treasurer**

Brian Youngman  
702 Newport Circle  
Cary, N.C. 27511  
(919) 467-3390 or [bayoungman@att.net](mailto:bayoungman@att.net)

## Bits and pieces



Dancing on the sand at St. Andrews, site of the annual RSCDS Summer School.

■ **A note from Moira Thompson in Edinburgh:** Since last year's fall in Sterling against major currencies, Summer School has fallen in price, in real terms. In 2016, a place at Summer School, staying in University Hall, would have cost you \$927; the same place this year is priced at \$812. There will never be a better time to come!

The dates are: Week 1: 16 - 23 July; Week 2: 23 - 30 July; Week 3: 30 July - 6 August; Week 4: 6 - 13 August. We will be offering Elementary in week 2 only and Social Dancing Skills in week 4 only. Week 3 is Young Dancers week, with dancers aged 12 – 15 joining in classes and those aged 8 – 11 attending a special Junior Summer School. Week 3 is of course open to dancers of all ages. DAA ( Advanced) will be offered in week 3. You can use this link to access the booking form; or see the calendar. You must be registered on the website, to book. <https://www.rscds.org/article/summer-school-2017>

■ **A couple of additions to the calendar.** The **Montpelier Gathering** will take place at 2 p.m. June 3 at the Montpelier Center for the Arts, 17205 Mountain Road in Montpelier, Va., with Elke Baker on fiddle and Liz Donaldson on piano. And the new Chapel Hill, N.C., class will repeat its **End-of-the-Season Dance** at 2 p.m. June 10 at Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church, 314 Great Ridge Parkway, Chapel Hill, with Mara Shea on fiddle and Dean Herington on keyboards. More info and contact phone numbers and emails are in the calendar below.

■ September's **Post-Games Dance after the Charleston, S.C., Games** will be the last time this dance will be held in September, organizer Irene Stancik says. The games are planning to move to November next year, which will necessitate a change in the date of the dance. This year's event will be at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 15 in the Felix Davis Community Center, Park Circle, North Charleston. Contact information is in the calendar below.

■ For a handy **Membership Form** to join or renew your membership in RSCDS and the Carolinas branch, go to the Branch Website (at the top of this newsletter) and click on Membership Application. Dues are \$40 for single memberships, \$66 for two adults at the same address, \$33 for young adults age 18 to 24, and \$5 for associate members from another branch. Send forms and dues by June 30 to Brian Youngman, 702 Newport Circle, Cary, N.C. 27511.

■ We hope that everyone in the branch is receiving the newsletter. If you're not, you will have to get this notice second-hand, of course, but we still hope you will respond. If you're not getting the newsletter, please let either the editor or branch secretary know. **If you don't have email**, telephone the editor (see the number at the top) and let him know. We'll be glad to print out copies and send them to you by U.S. mail.

## 2017 Calendar

April 20	John Middleton Ball	Hamilton, Ontario (905) 522 2151 or <a href="mailto:jiceilidh@sympatico.ca">jiceilidh@sympatico.ca</a>
April 28-30	Spring Fling 2017	Bonn, Germany <a href="http://www.rscds.org/events">www.rscds.org/events</a> or <a href="http://www.springfling2017.de">www.springfling2017.de</a>
May 12-14	Highland Ball Weekend	Weston and Melrose, Mass. <a href="http://www.rscdsboston.org">www.rscdsboston.org</a>
May 13	Bethabara Highland Games *	Winston-Salem, N.C. (336) 924-8191 or <a href="http://www.bethabarapark.org">www.bethabarapark.org</a>
May 19-21	54 <sup>th</sup> Pawling Weekend	Hopewell Junction, N.Y. (917) 912-3372 or <a href="http://www.rscdsnewyork.org">www.rscdsnewyork.org</a>
June 3	Montpelier Gathering	Montpelier, Va. <a href="http://www.richmondscottishcountrydancers.org">www.richmondscottishcountrydancers.org</a> or <a href="http://www.cscd.avenue.org">www.cscd.avenue.org</a>
June 10	End of Season Dance	Chapel Hill, N.C. (919) 929-7164 or (704) 466-9757 or <a href="mailto:edgyates@gmail.com">edgyates@gmail.com</a> or <a href="mailto:pamvictor1@att.net">pamvictor1@att.net</a>
June 10-11	Blairsville Highland Games*	Blairsville, Ga. <a href="http://www.rscds-atlanta.org">www.rscds-atlanta.org</a>
June 23-24	Capital Weekend	Kensington, Md. (301) 564-0097 or <a href="http://www.rscds-greaterdc.org">www.rscds-greaterdc.org</a>
July 2-7	Thistle School XXXVI	Banner Elk, N.C. <a href="http://www.thistleschool.com">www.thistleschool.com</a>
July 3-7	English-Scottish Sessions	Plymouth, Mass. (518) 316-1234 or <a href="http://www.rscdsboston.org">www.rscdsboston.org</a>
July 6-19	Grandfather Mtn. Games	Linville, N.C. <a href="http://www.gmhg.org">www.gmhg.org</a>
July 7-10, 10-15	Pinewoods Scottish Sessions	Plymouth, Mass. (518) 316-1234 or <a href="http://www.rscdsboston.org">www.rscdsboston.org</a>



July 16-August 13	RSCDS Summer School	St. Andrews, Scotland <a href="mailto:info@rscds.org">info@rscds.org</a> or <a href="http://www.rscds.org">www.rscds.org</a>
July 21-30	TAC Summer School	Vancouver, British Columbia <a href="http://www.dancescottish.ca">www.dancescottish.ca</a>
September 15	Charleston, S.C. Games Dance	North Charleston, S.C. (843) 810-7797 or <a href="mailto:charlestonrscds@gmail.com">charlestonrscds@gmail.com</a>
September 15-17	Timber Ridge Scottish Weekend	Highview, W. Virginia (301) 622-5945 or <a href="http://www.scottishweekend.org">www.scottishweekend.org</a>
October 20-22	Stone Mountain Games/Dances	Atlanta, Ga. <a href="http://www.rscds-atlanta.org">www.rscds-atlanta.org</a> or <a href="http://www.smhg.org">www.smhg.org</a>
November 18	34rd annual St. Andrews Ball	Greensboro, N.C. (336) 282-6507 or <a href="http://www.gsoscids.org">www.gsoscids.org</a>

\*Dancing only on the field.

\*\*Web sites and phone numbers are those available to the editor at the time of publication.