

# Reel Time

Newsletter of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, New Haven Branch

Summer 2008

## Class Schedules

*Greater Hartford Scottish Country Dance Class*  
Grace Episcopal Church on the Green, Windsor CT.  
Tuesday 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Contact Barbara Austen 203-630-9749 or Karen Pestana 860-298-8311. **Classes begin Sept. 2.**

*Middletown Scottish Country Dancers* First Church of Christ Congregational, 190 Court Street, Middletown CT. Wednesday 7:00 to 9:30 pm. Contact Joyce Chase 203-238-0694 or Lucile Blanchard 860-347-0278. **Classes begin Sept. 3.**

*Kilts & Ghillies Scottish Country Dancers* Millennium School of Irish Dance, 12 Old Mill Road, Georgetown, CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 10:00 pm. Contact Peter Price, 203-675-9587. **Classes begin Sept. 16.**

*Mystic Scottish Country Dancers* St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 310 Fort Hill Road, Groton, CT. Friday 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Contact Ruth Walsh 860-536-6265 or [www.mysticsscottishdancers.com](http://www.mysticsscottishdancers.com). **Classes begin Sept. 5.**

*New Haven Branch Scottish Country Dance Class*  
New Haven Medical Society, 364 Whitney Ave., New Haven, CT. Tuesday 7:30 to 10:00 pm. Contact Dick Platt 203-878-6094 or Leslie Kearney 203-281-6591. **Classes begin Sept. 9.**

*Woodbridge Scottish Country Dancers* First Church of Christ Congregational, 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, CT. Friday 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Contact Donna Ives 203-393-3713 or Mollie Keller 203-375-2840. **Classes begin Sept. 19.**

**Peter Price's Class** Second **Monday** of the month, 8:00 pm, New Haven Friends Meeting House, 225 East Grand Ave., New Haven. First class, **September 8**. Fall dates: Oct. 13, Nov. 10, Dec. 8.

## Upcoming Events

**New Hampshire Highlands** Friday-Sunday, Aug. 22-24, 2008. \$165. Teachers: Norah Link, Robert McOwen, Andrea Taylor-Blenis. St. Methodios Faith & Heritage Center, Contoocook, NH. Call Morven Troost, 207-967-3813 or write Laurie Stevens at [laurie@poshtravel.com](mailto:laurie@poshtravel.com)

**Celts and Currachs** Saturday, Aug. 23, 2008, 10:00 am - 7:00 pm. Waterfront Park, 111 Union Street, New London, CT. The food booth run by the Branch is our chief fundraising event. For more information, see [www.newlondonmainstreet.org](http://www.newlondonmainstreet.org)

**Dance Scottish Week** On Saturday, Sept. 13, 2008, the New Haven Branch plans to hold a special dance event in Middletown to celebrate Dance Scottish Week, Sept. 12-20, 2008. Stay tuned for time and place.

**Nutmeg Workshop** Saturday, Sept. 27, 2008. 12 noon to 9:00 pm. \$40. Incarnation Center, Ivoryton, CT. Mel and Ellie Briscoe, teachers. Music by *Local Hero*, Norb Spencer and Susie Petrov. For more, Lucile Blanchard, 860-347-0278 or [lblanchard@wesleyan.edu](mailto:lblanchard@wesleyan.edu). See [www.rscdsnewhaven.org](http://www.rscdsnewhaven.org) for registration form.

**St. Andrews Scottish Festival**, Saturday, Oct. 4, 2008, 9:00 - 5:00 pm. Goshen Fairgrounds, Rt. 63, Goshen, CT. Piping, clan tents, sheepherding, vendors, Highland dancing. See [www.sasct.org](http://www.sasct.org) for more.

**21st Scotland Highland Games**, Sunday, Oct. 12, 2008, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Waldo Homestead, Scotland, CT. See [www.scotlandgames.org](http://www.scotlandgames.org) for more information.

**Mystic Fall Ceilidh** Friday, October 17, 2008, 7:00-11:00 pm. Groton Inn & Suites, Groton, CT. See [www.mysticsscottishdancers.com](http://www.mysticsscottishdancers.com) for more.

**Middletown Fall Party** Saturday, Oct. 25, 2008. First Church, Middletown. 7:30 to 10:00 pm, \$10. Music by Norb Spencer and friends. Call Lucile Blanchard, 860-347-0278 for more information.

**Jeannie Carmichael Ball**, Saturday, Nov. 8, 2008 Thayer Hotel, West Point, NY. Ball \$70, Brunch \$25 Music by Music Makars, See [www.rscdsnewyork.org](http://www.rscdsnewyork.org)

**Mystic Burns Night** Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009 Groton Inn & Suites, Groton, CT

**New Haven Branch Highland Ball** Saturday, March 7, 2009. Save the date.

Check [www.intercityscot.org](http://www.intercityscot.org) for similar events.

## Alasdair Fraser Concert

On May 16th, the North Madison Congregational Church held a concert with Alasdair Fraser, the award-winning Scottish fiddler, and Natalie Haas, a versatile young cellist. You had to be there to experience the interplay of these two musicians as they performed a wide selection of Celtic music, everything from the familiar tunes we dance to, to some wild and marvelous pieces. Alasdair is the ultimate performer, never letting our interest lag for a minute, talking and gesturing when

he isn't playing. His Valley of the Moon fiddle camp has become the world-wide standard for fiddle players, and we could see why. At the very end of the concert, he announced that a group of Scottish country dancers would dance *Mrs. McLeod of Raasay*. Ten of our dancers trooped up to the area between the seats and the raised platform, shooing away the children who had gathered on the floor to watch the musicians. They performed a very spirited reel. (see below) Everyone hung around afterward for the ice cream sundaes the church serves at these Fire in the Kitchen concerts which feature folk artists of all kinds. For more information on future programs, check [www.northmadisoncc.org](http://www.northmadisoncc.org)



### Challenge Class 3

On June 9, twelve dancers met on a hot night at the Green Street Arts Center for the third challenge class this spring with Leslie Kearney teaching. Luckily, Green Street is air-conditioned so we were comfortable in our 3-couple sets. Leslie focused on several figures – the "frayed" knot in the strathspey *Suzy Celebrates*, La Barette which is a tricky way of progressing, and the Targe. And she worked hard to get us to do *Tempest in a Teacup* in which the Targe provides the Tempest. She'd tried it on us a couple of years ago with little success. We did manage to get it right this time, a 64-bar reel where the second half is reversed and everything is done the opposite of how it was done before – ladies' chain done by the men (but not the official men's chain), reels done in upside down, and the Targe done in the other direction. We danced it six times through with only occasional reminder yelps ("reel," "ladies' chain reversed") and were very pleased with ourselves.

### And a Merry Norb's Day it was!!!

On June 3rd the Windsor Class held their end-of-year party with a special tribute to our favorite accordionist, Norb Spencer. We had a terrific turnout of dancers from all over the state. Many thanks to all of you who traveled out of your way to join us. Thank you, also, to Mardene Hof for sharing with us how Norb came to play for the greater Hartford dance class years ago. It was certainly the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Barbara Austen put together a terrific program including, of course, *The Accordion Player*, which was our intermission segue into the presentation of an accordion

ornament, a faux magazine cover tribute and a big round of applause for Norb and the rest of the CCSCO (Central Connecticut Scottish Chamber Orchestra).

## SQUEEZE PLAY



June 3, 2008

In This Issue:

For He's a Jolly Good Bellow-ist!!  
The Norb Spencer Story –  
Reading Between the Lines

Accordions in Space?  
ET concertina found at Roswell –  
The Truth is Out There!

Motor Trend Car of the Year  
The Honda Accordion –  
33 mpg (mpg per gallon)



Looking forward to September already for another fun year of dancing in Windsor. We have several newer dancers who are doing just great and we hope they will come back in the Fall and bring more friends along to join the fun.

For the Windsor class - *Karen Pestana*

### Pawling – 2008

Some Connecticut dancers (Joyce Chase, Catriona MacAuslan, Ellie Toy and Lucile Blanchard) arrived at Pawling late the night of Friday, May 16th after going to the Alasdair Fraser concert. So we missed the Friday night dance, but were up and ready for classes the next morning. We greeted the other Connecticut dancers, Bob Cole, Dick and Ena Baxter and Ken Way, at breakfast. The teachers this year were Jean Martin, Bill Zobel and Muriel Johnstone, all of them excellent, with Bobby Brown's *Scottish Accent* for the music. Bill Zobel made a point in class of telling the men they should dance in their kilts not trousers, because you move differently. Ball practice after lunch was helpful for many, especially walking through *Fugal Fergus* and *Seton's Ceilidh Band*, the evening's most challenging dances. By late afternoon, rain fell which put a damper on the sherry party, held in the canteen instead of out at the pavilion by the lake.



However, it takes more than rain to dampen our spirits and the dinner, the Grand March and the Ball went really well. The assortment of food provided for the break was amazing, especially the chocolate fountain. The Ceilidh afterward, arranged by Kachina Allen, was great entertainment – songs both lyrical and funny, jokes,

a gymnastics display, a story made entirely from dance titles, lively music. After the Sunday morning classes, a joint Champagne class was held with all three teachers. One of Wendy's marvelous Ball posters was auctioned off, with Ellie the lucky winner. And finally a toast to Fergie and Susan on their 50th wedding anniversary. It was raining again, but everyone had a fine time.

### Summerdance XIX

On Saturday, June 21st, our adventure in New York began with the sight of two mermaids in Grand Central Station. Truly! Two slender women in full costume – net tops with blue starfish in crucial locations, green scale sheaths around their hips and legs and a forked blue tail out behind them. They were going to the Mermaid Parade on Coney Island. So we Scottish dancers, in white dresses with tartan sashes, didn't feel unusual at all. The big excitement this year at Summerdance was having live music to dance to. Callum Pasqua came with Susie Petrov and young Macdougall who plays all kinds of pipes and a mandolin. It makes such a difference having real music. Every time the pipes kick in we get a huge boost, dancing higher and harder. The program was full of old favorites like *Roaring Jelly*, *The Lea Rig*, *Mrs. Stewart's Jig*. Tourists came and shot pictures, thinking we'd just flown in from Scotland for the occasion. Summerdance is a fundraiser by the New York Branch for UNICEF and at the break, Fergie gave the UNICEF representative a check for \$1800 which is just terrific.

For those of you new to the RSCDS, Summerdance was first held in 1989. The following year, Fergie wrote Queen Elizabeth asking if they could dedicate the 1990 Summerdance to her in honor of her birthday. She graciously gave her permission. So this event has a long honorable history.

For the second half, we danced *Collichur*, *Waverley*, *Mrs. Macleod* and *Sauchie Haugh*, and many more, ending with *Reel of the Royal Scots* at four o'clock on the nose. Unfortunately we couldn't go to O'Neill's Pub this year where they give us the second floor with its dancing space. So the piper piped us along 2nd Avenue, past café tables on the sidewalk where people smiled and waved, to another pub where we filled all the table in the back. Although we missed having a chance to dance more after our supper, the company was cheerful and friendly as always, making it a very special day in the Big Apple.

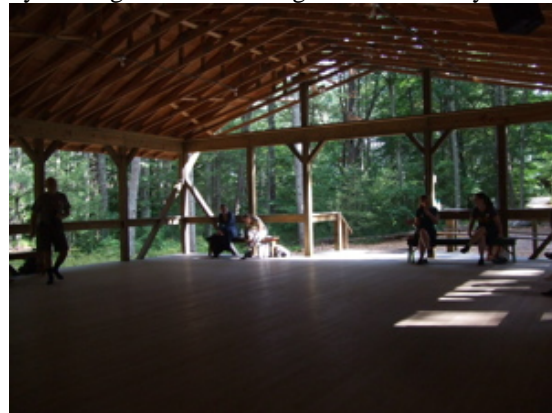
### Pinewoods 2008

This year three members of the Mystic Scottish Country Dancers (Dave Lees, Everett Munro, Minna DeGaetano) attended the Pinewoods Scottish Dance session. Everett had not attended Pinewoods for several years, but he had left his mark. We discovered this when he and I found our assigned cottage (Cottey House). You have only to look at a map to see that Cottey House is as far away from everything on the campsite as you can be and still remain on camp property. Located in the outskirts of 'The Highlands', Everett and I enjoyed a private beach and a view of the 'clothing optional' beach nearby.

We even had an experimental composting toilet, but the least said about that the better. Minna was located at 'The Square' which is as far from Cottey House as possible.

The theme for the sessions was 'On Her Majesty's Secret Strathspey', a combination of James Bond, the 60's and other things that should have stayed in the 60's. Naturally there was a dance every night and after the first dance there was a 'Come as your favorite cocktail' social party. Not as weird as it sounds. We got to meet Bloody Mary, Shirley Temple, Rob Roy and Harvey Wallbanger.

The two days of dance practice in Session I were an incredible experience. Classes are provided for everything from beginner to ninja level. Dance lessons all day in the outdoor wooden pavilions were wonderful practice for the evening dances. Saturday evening ended with a 'Diamonds are Forever' Highland Ball followed by a Ceilidh for those that still had energy left. That was the night that I discovered the Minna had an inexhaustible supply. She caught me sneaking away to rest at one point and dragged me back for a reel. The high octane refreshments undoubtedly helped a lot. It was on the long trip through the woods that I discovered that Everett was afraid of the dark. So I entertained him by shutting off my flashlight and screaming indiscriminately.



Our session ended with a visit from James Bond, Austin Powers and several hard to describe characters. For entertainment, a duet by Fidel Castro and Sonny Bono. It was fortunate there was an ample supply of gin and tonic to keep everything in perspective. At the evening's dance, the addition of bagpipes playing for the last set positively energized everyone. It was incredible. The sound of the pipes got every dancer, no matter how tired, to throw everything they had into that last set. Of course we weren't so tired that we didn't hang out singing and sampling fine ales until the sun came up. And so ended the 2008 Pinewoods session for Everett and me.

*David Lees*

Confessions of a Pinewoods Junkie

*n.b. I suspect that I was requested to write a more qualitative and less descriptive account of my experience at the Pinewoods Scottish weekend. Readers uninterested in the more literary version of one girl's first Pinewoods experience will find a table below.*

Dancing has given me the opportunity to become part of a community that I always believed to be full of

creative and unique people, rallied around a fantastic cultural expression. This idea, growing in me since my first failed attempt at hello-goodbye setting, came to fruition at Pinewoods where I successfully accomplished the *spurtle*, a tricky maneuver that I suspect would have been easier with spray paint and a crowbar. The following impressions are the most valuable I have to relate.

The dancing, the camaraderie, and - oh yes indeed! - the dining. Every single moment at Pinewoods was further proof of how excellent a choice I made when I poked my head into the First Congregational Church in Middletown, instead of turning tail and going out for coffee instead. Six months later, I found myself in the middle of a forest, perspiring as though in Dante's *Inferno*, with more than geography between me and anything that did not concern my strathspey setting step. Pinewoods allowed me to become completely one with the notion of being a dancer. I made the 'danciness' of the place my mantra. Being able to observe so many excellent dancers on so many occasions was as educational as taking every opportunity that I could to dance. It was exciting to know how far I had come and to see how far there is to go; I guess it is a lifelong commitment after all!

But I can say with certainty that the ultimate Pinewoods experience can only be achieved if one starts off on the wrong foot. Well, on a shoeless foot, anyway. If I had remembered my ghillies, I would not have met so many warm and wonderful people so quickly – and to them, I would have been just another dancer, instead of a shoeless beggar. I would not have become the recipient of so much kindness and generosity. And I would not owe Bonnie a new pair of shoes.

Sarah-Jane Ripa

#### Pinewoods, Year One

Sleeping	17
Eating, drinking, being merry	16
DANCING	27
Playing music	6
Taking a break	.5
Total hours logged:	66.5



Ev, Sarah-Jane Ripa, Dave, Minna

#### **Trip to Scotland and the Culloden Battlefield**

Richard and I recently returned from a trip to Scotland. On July 17th I headed off alone for a program (part of my sabbatical) at The Abbey on Iona. For a week I lived alongside the Iona Community and 49 other guests. We all were assigned chores. As part of the breakfast crew, I became the "toastmistress," making toast for 60 people every day. This took half an hour, but since they didn't mind cold toast, they were well pleased! Two hours a day were spent on worship in The Abbey, a few more hours with our program leader, and optional hikes around the island with lots of places to explore. I would be happy to share my reflections with anyone. It is a great place to visit, on a spiritual or secular basis.

Then I traveled to Edinburgh where Richard had just arrived. His mother (aged 90) and brother had gone directly to the Orkneys. We took the train to Inverness, then a taxi to the airport, stopping at Culloden long enough for us to locate "our" stone. It's in the third row from the top, so it wasn't hard to find. The lower end of the walk is still a work in progress.

On to Orkney with several days visiting relatives and exploring some new places such as Shapinsay Island. We flew back to Edinburgh, where the three youngest of us attended the Military Tattoo on Saturday night, which concluded with fireworks over Edinburgh Castle. Quite an experience!

Donna Ives



Official New Haven Branch paving stone at Culloden

#### **Thought for the Day**

"If only one subject were required in school, it should be some form of dance – from nursery school through a Ph.D. I can't say that a dancer is the Ultimate Athlete. I am quite certain, however, that the Ultimate Athlete is a dancer. No formal study of the Energy Body is needed for you to join the dance. All that is required is to ask yourself: Am I dancing?"

from "The Ultimate Athlete" by George Burr Leonard

**CELTS & CURRACHS**  
**Saturday, August 23, 2008**  
**10 AM to 7 PM**

Waterfront Park, 111 Union Street, New London, CT

The region's premier Celtic festival celebrating Celtic cultures and traditions!

- **Live Music**, featuring Danny O'Flaherty, Ed Miller, & Trouz Bras
- **Currach Races**. Watch teams compete in traditional Irish rowing boats.
- **Parade of Celtic Nations**. Begins at noon at the Custom House Pier!
- **Crafts & Food**. Scottish & Irish vendors, Celtic music, jewelry, & art. Fish & chips, ginger beer, crabcakes, kettle corn, & more!
- **Cultural Activities/Workshops**. Breton, Welsh, Irish, & Scottish Demonstrations; Fiddlemaking, Irish Step Dancing, Language Workshops; Scottish & Breton Dancing.

**Performers:**

*Celtic Melody* - Danny O'Flaherty - Dan Ringrose - Ed Miller - Jodee James - *The Mystic Scottish Country Dancers*

*Spirited Soles Irish Dance Academy* - Trouz Bras

*Scottish Food Booth* - hosted by the New Haven Branch of RSCDS

*Scottish Cultural Tent* - hosted by the Mystic Class.

*Dance Class & Demonstrations* led by Joyce Chase.

Parking will be available in the municipal parking lots.

To volunteer at the RSCDS New Haven Branch Food Booth or the Scottish Cultural Tent hosted by the Mystic Class, contact **Ev Munro** at [Bonnieladdie63@aol.com](mailto:Bonnieladdie63@aol.com)

**Renewal Time**

You will find the application to renew your RSCDS New Haven Branch membership in this issue. Class

teachers will also have copies available and will be urged to sign up new dancers. You will notice the annual fee has been raised. This is due to the lower value of the dollar versus British pounds and the fact that the Edinburgh RSCDS has raised the amount of dues we send them for each member.

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RSCDS New Haven Branch Officers:

President	Ken Way (860) 653-5258
Vice President	Catriona MacAuslan (203) 421-4060
Secretary	Barbra Link (860) 345-8925
Treasurer	Richard Ives (203) 393-3713
Branch Class	Leslie Kearney (203) 281-6591
Teacher Comm.	Barbara Austen (203) 630-9749
Intergroup	Don Wills (860) 536-1981
At Large	Mary Byrnie (860) 635-4056
	Bob Byrnie (860) 635-4056
	Catherine Mahoney (203) 879-6000
	Ev Munro (860) 442-7283
	Nina Stein (203) 757-2539
Membership	Ed Davis (203) 264-087
Newsletter	Lucile Blanchard (860) 347-0278
	<a href="mailto:lblanchard@wesleyan.edu">lblanchard@wesleyan.edu</a>

**Editor's Note**

Deadline for the next newsletter is **November 15** for publication by the end of the month. I will welcome all of your stories or reports, and particularly all calendar listings. My home address is 1061 Millbrook Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

The internet address for the New Haven Branch web site is: [www.rscdsnewhaven.org](http://www.rscdsnewhaven.org)

Note to Readers: If you would rather receive Reel Time by e-mail, please send an e-mail message to me so that I will have your preferred address.

# ***APPLICATION for RSCDS NEW HAVEN BRANCH MEMBERSHIP***

for the period  
**September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2009**

Become a member of the New Haven Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) and support Scottish Country Dancing in Scotland and Connecticut. As a member of the RSCDS you will enjoy these **benefits:**

From the RSCDS in Scotland:

“Scottish Country Dancer”, the RSCDS magazine. The magazine includes new dances as well as news of Scottish dance and dancers around the world.

From the New Haven Branch:

- Four issues of *Reel Time*, the Branch newsletter, mailed to you.
- A New Haven Branch Button with your name.
- A membership directory \* (listing members who join before November 1<sup>st</sup>)
- All Branch Mailings
- New members receive a \$10.00 discount toward their first New Haven Ball

In addition to the materials you receive, your dues help underwrite events such as the Ball; support teachers by funding workshops and scholarships; and assist in defraying the cost of equipment, tape, and CD purchases. Your dues also assist the RSCDS in Scotland, which publishes dances and music, produces tapes and CDs, trains and certifies teachers, maintains a web site, and maintains a world wide directory of Scottish Dance groups.

The RSCDS needs your support.

Cut here, complete, and send

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APPLICATION		9/1/2008 – 8/31/2009
<input type="checkbox"/> Title	a. _____ (Ms., Mr., Dr., etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> b. _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Name (s)	a. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> b. _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Address	_____	
City	_____	State ___ Zip _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Home Phone	(____) _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work Phone	a. (____) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> b. (____) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> E-mail	a. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> b. _____

The information above will be published in the Branch Directory.  
 If you do not want an item published, put an X in the box adjacent to that item.  
 If you would prefer receiving **Reel Time via email**, please check here .....   
 Class you regularly attend (your “home” class) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name for Button (If different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

**Select a membership category**

- Annual ..... \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- Life Member..... \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- RSCDS membership through another Branch..... \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_
- Junior (under 16 years old)\*\*..... \$2.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**  
 Ed Davis  
 17 Library Road  
 Southbury, CT 06488

Amount Enclosed ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay by check, payable to: **RSCDS New Haven Branch**

\* The Directory is normally delivered through your home class. For first class **mailing** check here  and **add \$50.**  
 \*\* Junior membership is with the New Haven Branch only and does not include RSCDS publications.