

The Scottish Country Dance Teacher

TAS Newsletter July 2019

Newsletter of the Teachers' Association Scotland (TAS)

Recognised as an RSCDS Teachers' Association

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

Chairman: Jimmie Hill

Secretary: Susan Mackay

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Treasurer: Sue Porter

Committee: Janet Johnston, Anne Robertson, Jayne Riddet

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From the Chairman

This is my last report from the Chair before I demit office. It has been a real pleasure to be Chair for the past three years. The real strength of a teachers' association is the willingness of so many to contribute in different ways. Our meetings have been interesting and highly practical – always something to learn and it is fascinating to see other teachers' styles and ways of handling a group. We have a wealth of experience in TAS – so obvious at our Perth workshop with excellent sessions from all.

I feel we need to stop for a moment and think about our two main workshops. The AGM workshop in Broxburn is always well attended – just off the motorway system. Attendance at our regional workshops varies, but we do tend to attract largely the same people who come to Broxburn! We would like your views on where the Spring Workshops should be in future. Should we go around the country or is it more convenient to stick with the Central Belt, which is accessible to members from both north and south? A short questionnaire will be circulated to members. We would like your views before the AGM, if possible.

Recently, I was speaking to Jane Rose, the Chair of SERTA – the South East Region Teachers' Association. It would be good if we had more contact with SERTA in future to share ideas for workshops. She was telling me that the next candidate course in the South East of England will be run by SERTA. Is that something that TAS could think about – perhaps to encourage new tutors. We certainly have the personnel! And we are very flexible about where we could do it – an idea perhaps for the future.

The main thing I look back upon is the wake-up call we received about Scottish Schools, now that there are no Scottish residents on the Youth Services Committee. I have every confidence that we will make the new Scottish Schools Working Group effective and the book of dances for Festivals and Days of Dance is well under way.

I have been very lucky with everyone on the committee and would like to thank them all for taking part so willingly. I think we should be proud of ourselves for helping young people to go to Spring Fling and for helping teachers in training. In this issue we have reports from the young people to whom we gave grants to attend Spring Fling in Paris. I know some of us have reservations about no Spring Fling in Scotland for probably three years. This year was Paris, next year is Toronto and St Petersburg. Scotland is the only country with hundreds of thousands of young people, some with excellent country dance teaching in school, festivals and days of dance, the thriving university clubs, the ceilidh culture, reeling, dancing at weddings etc. If we can help make their school experience positive, there is more chance they will continue. To ignore the Scottish captive market does seem short-sighted to me.

To get back to dancing! As an adjudicator I have watched dozens of teams over the past few years. One thing that struck me with some force was the slow speed of our strathspeys. Compared with recordings from the 1960s and 70s, they are slower. Is this why eight times through strathspeys are less popular? The older recordings of eight times strathspeys used to be about 7 minutes 45 seconds. They are now stretching to up to a minute more. I even have one recording at 9 minutes. In a packed dance hall, there is nowhere to go and trying to modify steps to fit a slow tempo can become tedious. As a non-musician, the old recordings strike me as more traditional Scottish-sounding. Does anyone agree and if so, when did we slow down the strathspey? Did teachers insist on slowing the music down? Is a slowed down snap still a snap? As an adjudicator, the slow tempo means foot positions can be more accurate, but have we lost the spirit of the strathspey with an over-concentration on third positions? I recently found an old 18th century strathspey tune and the instruction to the musician was – 'slow when not danced'. I well remember a musician's talk at St Andrews given by David Cunningham Jr. He played a recording of a strathspey. The audience all agreed it was fast. Then he told us his father had made the recording with Jean Milligan present. At the end she had turned to him and complimented David Sr on the perfect tempo. So there's a thought to leave you with!

Looking forward to seeing you all in Broxburn.

Jimmie Hill

From the Editor

TAS Spring Fling grants were awarded to four young dancers this year. I am delighted to include their reports on the event in this issue. It is clear they all enjoyed the experience. As always, thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. In particular, a big thank you and well done must go to Rosemary Legge for her full report on our Workshop in Perth. I wonder how she managed to dance and take such detailed notes!

Autumn Workshop & AGM, 31 August 2019 - The draft programme is on p21.

TAS Subscriptions for the year June 2019 to May 2020 (£5) are now due. A copy of the renewal form can be found on page 22.

If you wish to delay paying your subscription until the meeting in September, please e-mail Sue to let her know. Don't forget to bring a completed renewal form with you. This will greatly help in reducing the queue at registration.

AGM 2018 – Please bring this Newsletter with you!

Notice of the Annual General Meeting, the Agenda and Notice of Elections

All members are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held immediately following the Workshop on Saturday, 31st August 2019, in Broxburn.

If you have any matters of other business not included in the Agenda below, please let Susan Mackay know in advance of the meeting.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday, 1 September 2018
3. Secretary's Report (printed in this newsletter)
4. Treasurer's Report (to be circulated later)
5. Adoption of Committee's recommendation to hold the TAS subscription fee at £5 for 2019-20
6. Elections:
 - Chairman - to serve for 3 years
 - Treasurer – to serve for 1 year
 - 1 Committee Member – to serve for 3 years
7. Date and place of Spring workshop in 2020
8. Update from Scottish Schools Working Group (printed on page 7)
9. Use of funds
10. Any Other Business notified in advance
11. Date and place of AGM in 2020:
 - Broxburn?
 - Saturday, 29 August?
12. Vote of Thanks

TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND – Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 1 September 2018 at 3.30pm in the Canon Hoban Hall of St John Cantius & Nicholas Parish Church, East Main Street, Broxburn.

WELCOME

The TAS Chairman, Jimmie Hill, extended a warm welcome to the 60 members in attendance.

PRESENT

Brian Anderson, Helen Bain, Roy Bain, Margaret Ballantine, Morag Barclay, Kaoru Boode, Judith Borup, Lyn Bryce, Mary Burney, Pat Clark, Peter Clark, Ross Colwell, Linda Cullen, Margaret Fairgrieve, Sheena Gillespie, Ella Greig, Margaret Harris, Martha Harris, Annabel Harrison, Jimmie Hill, Margaret Hill, Janet Johnston, Kathryn Lawson, Bill Legge, Rosemary Legge, Susan Mackay, Norma Macleod, Marjorie MacRae, Theresa MacVarish Clark, Jean Martin, Margaret McCann, Mary McFarlane, Valerie McGoldrick, Eileen Meany, Jane Meikle, Yvonne Munro, Oluf Olufsen, John Philip, Sue Porter, Margo Priestley, Rhoda Purcell, Jane Rattray, Jayne Riddet, Eve Ritchie, Alison Robertson, Anne Robertson, Susan Robertson; Peggy Rose, Lesley Ross, Margaret Ross, David Smith, Anne Smyth, Moira Stephen, Margie Stevenson, Anne Taylor, David Taylor, Anne Thorn, Lorna Valentine, George Watt, Wendy West.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from 35 members:

Emma Allsop, Fiona Allsop, Marion Bennett, Aad Boode, Muriel Bone, Wilma Brown, Atsuko Clement, Heather Cowan, Marean Daniels, Rhona Dickson, Edna Ewen, Betty Ferguson, Jim Ferguson, Neil Grant, Jenny Greene, Christine Hastie, George Hobson, Helen Hobson, Ian Kirkpatrick, Janette Kirkpatrick, Linda Lawson, Deirdre MacCuish Bark, Maureen McCrudden, Fiona McDonald, Margaret McGregor, Maggie McLeish, Sheila Nicoll, Catherine Paris, Brenda Pattison, Margaret Pritchard, Helen Rodger, Keith Stacey, Moira Stacey, Linda Williamson, William Williamson.

MINUTES OF AGM of Saturday 26th AUGUST 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th August 2017 had been published in the July Newsletter.

Matters Arising: There were no matters to discuss.

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by David Smith, seconded by George Watt and agreed.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The secretary's report was provided in the July Newsletter and intimated that TAS membership had increased to 153 members. An outline was provided of this year's activities and the use of TAS excess funds towards subsidies for Scottish 16 – 25yr olds to attend Spring Fling 2018 in Glasgow and a scholarship for the Unit 2 & 3 teaching certificate course at Summer School. Work is in progress regarding RSCDS involvement in Scottish Primary Schools and the Festival Book project.

The TAS Facebook page is kept updated by George Watt, the website is managed by Moira Stephen and Mary McFarlane has edited three very informative newsletters.

There were no further matters to discuss and the report was agreed as correct and proposed by Margaret Hill, seconded by Roy Bain.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A Statement of Accounts had been previously circulated and the Treasurer gave an overview of the accounts.

There had been an increase in members to TAS. The excess expenditure over income was £553.86. The balance at the end of the year was £2446.10.

Peter Thomson examined the accounts and was thanked for doing so.

Peter Clark proposed and Pat Clark seconded the adoption of the Treasurer's statement.

SUBSCRIPTION FEE for 2018-2019

The meeting unanimously agreed to the committee's recommendation to keep the membership fee as £5.

Proposed by George Watt, seconded by Sue Porter.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS 2018- 2019

Prior to the election of officers and a committee member, Peter Clark thanked Maureen McCrudden for her contribution to the TAS committee over the last 3 years. Peter also gave a vote of thanks to Judith Borup and Jane Meikle for carrying out the roles of Treasurer and Secretary efficiently over the last 3 years.

Chairman: Jimmie Hill has completed 2 years of 3-year term and remains in position.

Secretary: Jane Meikle has completed a 3-year term. Following discussion, Susan MacKay agreed to take on the 3-year term as TAS Secretary. Proposed by Linda Gaul and seconded by Anne Taylor.

Treasurer: Judith Borup has completed a 3-year term. Following a lot of discussion, Sue Porter agreed to take on the position of TAS Treasurer for 1 year – to be reviewed at the AGM in 2019. Proposed by Margo Priestley, seconded by Yvonne Munro.

Committee Member: Maureen McCrudden had completed her 3-year term on the committee. Jayne Riddet volunteered to become a committee member. Proposed by Anne Taylor, seconded by George Watt.

Jane, Judith and Maureen were thanked by the Chairman Jimmie Hill for their contribution over the last 3 years to the TAS committee.

Willing to continue is Mary McFarlane as Newsletter Editor and Moira Stephen managing the Website.

SPRING WORKSHOP 2019

It was agreed to have the Spring workshop in Pitlochry on Saturday 6th April 2019.

Linda Gaul volunteered to be the workshop organiser and will enquire if the Town hall is available.

Helen Bain enquired if there could be a dance organised for the Friday night before the workshop.

UPDATE OF SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP REPORT

Jimmie Hill gave an update on progress so far. A report had been sent to RSCDS Management Board, but still to be reviewed by them.

There was a lot of general discussion amongst TAS members, the main points being that not only do schools, colleges and the NHS need to be made aware of what is on offer from the RSCDS, establishments have to be interested and willing to engage with SCD learning opportunities. There is slow progress in some areas of Scotland and it will take a while to expand.

The Festival Book will be produced by TAS (who are responsible for content) and will be financed by the RSCDS. Currently, 43 dances are out with various teachers for review.

USE OF TAS FUNDS

Following a lot of discussion it was decided to offer a £100 grant each to five Scottish applicants aged 16 -25 yrs to assist with attending Spring Fling 2019 in Paris.

Also, if there are any enquiries, 50% of cost for a certificate class at either Summer School or elsewhere, awarded at the discretion of the TAS committee.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Privacy (GDPR) – following recent legislation, addresses have been removed from the TAS website. It was decided that the TAS Member Contact List no longer be issued to members. If any contact details are required, please contact the TAS Secretary.

Teaching Conference (AGM Weekend, Perth) – Friday 2nd November 2018

Sue Porter and Janet Johnston are representing TAS at the Conference but no information available at present.

TAS Facebook Page – Managed by George Watt, who reminded members to use it and to make entries. Jimmie Hill thanked George for keeping the Facebook page active.

Winter School 2019_ - Booking application will be open from Wednesday 5th September 2018.

TAS Website – Moira Stephen granted permission to apply for more data for the website, at an increased price.

DATE OF AGM 2019 and Autumn Workshop

It was agreed the next AGM would be held at Broxburn on Saturday 31st August 2019. Marjorie MacRae agreed to be the workshop organiser.

VOTE OF THANKS

Jimmie Hill thanked the Treasurer, Judith Borup, and Secretary, Jane Meikle for their work throughout the year and Mary McFarlane for editing the TAS Newsletter. Marjorie MacRae and her team of helpers were thanked for attending to the catering during the workshop. Helen Bain extended a vote of thanks to Jimmie Hill, Chairman, and Jane and Judith.

The meeting closed at 4.15pm.

TAS Secretary's Report 2018 – 2019

Membership

The current TAS membership stands at 146, slightly down from last year's 153.

Workshops

Two very enjoyable workshops were held during the year.

At the workshop prior to the AGM at Broxburn on 1st September 2018 Eric Finley and Andrew McConnell taught the 12 dances from the new RSCDS Book 52, Eric teaching 6 dances before lunch and Andrew 6 dances after lunch all accompanied by the wonderful music of Muriel Johnstone who also gave us some information regarding the tunes. The workshop was thoroughly enjoyed by the class.

The Spring workshop was held on 6th April 2019 in Perth. There were 44 participants, slightly down on the previous Spring workshop. The programme was varied and included dance sessions, discussions and a music session. Oluf Olufsen started by teaching some Neglected Dances with a lot of very interesting teaching points and also gave us information on the history and cultural connections to dances. Sue Porter led a discussion on Making a Balanced Programme. The groups put forward ideas which are published in the current newsletter. The session was very interesting and produced a lot of debate and new ideas to try. The afternoon dance session was led by Janet Johnston who taught some unusual dances from Branch books which included some less well known formations. The dances were enjoyed by all the class. Our fantastic musician for the whole day was Mo Rutherford who played wonderful music and gave us a fun filled music session with information from the musicians point of view. The final 2 afternoon sessions were led by Anne Taylor who told us about the new DAA and Roy Bain who spoke about the goal of giving every child in Scotland the opportunity to learn Scottish Country dancing.

Spring Fling Grants

As agreed at the 2018 AGM, 5 awards of £100 each were offered for young people between 16-25 years to attend Spring Fling in Paris at Easter 2019. Four dancers applied and were given a grant of £100 each. Reports on this year's Spring Fling from the 4 dancers supported by TAS are included in the current newsletter.

TAS Facebook Group

George Watt has kept the TAS Facebook page updated.

TAS Website

Moira Stephen has managed the TAS Website and kept it updated.

TAS Newsletters

Mary MacFarlane has continued to produce very informative newsletters. Thank you to all who have contributed to the TAS newsletters.

Susan Mackay
June 2019

Scottish Schools Working Group Scottish Universities Progress Report

At the Spring TAS meeting Roy Bain outlined the necessity of re-introducing Country Dancing into Scottish schools. He had received authority from RSCDS to form the Scottish Schools Working Group. Roy is in the process of seeking interest from Branches from those who may be interested in being part of this group.

Background:

In January 2017 an initial Brain Storming meeting took place, discussing the potential to have Country Dancing included in the Teacher Training Programme at Universities. Representatives from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies University of Glasgow (Dumfries), Active Schools & Community Sport Lead Officer, Education Psychologist, RSCDS/TAS members were in attendance.

Planning:

After further discussion and planning meetings it was agreed that a pilot programme of two, four-hour sessions over a two-week period would be delivered to the 3rd year Trainee Teaching Students at Glasgow University in the year 2018/19. This was fully supported by Helen Russell (then Chairman of the RSCDS).

Progress:

The pilot with the 3rd year students at Glasgow University, Dumfries Campus has now been completed, with on-going discussions to extend it to 1st& 2nd year students. Contact has been made with representatives of Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, who have expressed an interest in what has been achieved at Dumfries.

Jayne Riddet
TAS/SSWG RSCDS
10 July 2019

Spring Fling: Paris, 19th April 2019 Reports from the recipients of TAS grants

I was very much looking forward to this Spring Fling weekend in April in Paris. I had been to other editions of the Spring Fling in Bonn and Glasgow and enjoyed the enthusiastic and friendly atmosphere. And this year was no different! The weekend started with a social dance on Friday night and with meeting all the other dancers from all over the world. I enjoyed very much seeing a lot of my dancing friends again who I've not met for a long time. The band on this Friday night consisted of a large number of instruments, mainly played by members of the Paris branch. Together with a lovely selection of dances, it was a very successful "Welcome to Paris".

On Saturday morning I attended the very advanced class which was taught by Ramona Zohm (Munich) and Dave Hall (Vienna). We danced new and unusual figures and dances (including a "Typhon" and a "Japonaise" in the dance *Summer in Paris* and the figure "Rights and Lefts for 4 couples" in *The Huntsman*). Finding new figures for a very advanced class is a real challenge for the teacher because of the experience and knowledge these dancers already have. But Ramona and David managed to find and introduce new formations to their class and I had a lot of fun trying these out. I also particularly enjoyed having Luke Brady as the musician during the class, it is always a privilege to dance to live music!

After a break at lunchtime dancing continued with the afternoon classes. Dancers from all levels could choose between a Highland class, a class of American Contra Dance, Old Scottish Country dances. In parallel, Spring Fling offered a Musicians class; later that day they joined the band for some of the dances at the ball.

I chose to attend the "Old but fun Scottish dances" workshop, again taught by Ramona. The dances were mainly 24 bars long, shorter than the standard dances nowadays. I very much enjoyed this class as those old dances show the development of Scottish dances and emphasize the social aspect of dancing. Physically too the afternoon class was the right choice for me as the ball in the evening was still to come and these shorter, lighter dances provided a good transition between the morning classes and the ball. I enjoyed that dancers of all levels attended the afternoon classes together, we were also joined by some dancers from the Spring Fringe, so I met even more people than before!



Old but fun dances



Do not spill water!



Waltzing for Warm Up

On Saturday night we changed venue and went to a large sports hall for the ball. All dancers and musicians from Fling and Fringe came together for this highlight of the weekend. I had a fantastic time dancing with all of them. I particularly enjoyed that the programme included dances which appear less often on ball programmes such as *The Glasgow Highlanders* and *Noces d'Argent* (a special medley). The music and the choice of dances made this evening memorable, I enjoyed it a lot! The ball lasted until late at night and even then the party continued in the hotel.

Getting us dancers going again after such a night on Sunday morning seemed to be a little challenging. But the attendance at the Sunday morning class was good and it was definitely worth it. The classes consisted of dancing fairly well-known dances but each of them had a little twist added to it. We danced dances without giving hands to our partner at all, in reverse order to the instructions, with a missing person in the set replaced by a baguette or holding a water cup, to name just a few. The focus was on trying new and unusual things and on having fun with these variations. Which was a great success, a lovely and fun Sunday dancing treat.

Before flying home, me and some friends went on a little sightseeing tour through Paris, which was a lovely extra to this weekend.

Spring Fling is a fantastic opportunity to meet people from all over the world, to see old faces again and to meet new dancers and make new friends through dancing. The opportunity of having such a big group of young dancers and learning from teachers from all over the world in addition to great music really made this weekend very memorable for me!



Group photo of all Spring Fling and Spring Fringe dancers at the Ball

Thank you very much for your support to attend this event, I spent this fantastic weekend in the great community of Scottish Country Dancing.

Malin Altenmüller

(Photos: Mathieu Trouillet)

As year's Spring Fling was held in a city known worldwide as the city of love it was to be expected that love would be in the air at Spring Fling Paris 2019 - and I wasn't disappointed! From the dance programmes on Friday and Saturday, to the fun and friendly atmosphere that permeated the entire weekend it was clear that the love of Scottish Country Dancing is going strong.

This is the first Spring Fling that I have attended that wasn't being hosted my own city - Glasgow 2018! - I was really excited to get the most of the weekend and try fit in some sightseeing as well!

Both of the evening dances were a fantastic mix of Fling and Fringe dancers and the floors were packed on both nights. The dances that were chosen were a lovely mix of classic favourites, dances that called back to Spring Fling Glasgow and looked forward to next year's host cities as well as some new additions from Paris Branch which highlighted the theme of love in the air with their figure of love. We had very clear calling, important for an international audience, and the provided by the Paris band with the addition of the musicians from the Music Class on the Sunday night.

I truly enjoyed the classes that I attended on Saturday - the Very Advanced in the morning and the Old but Fun SCD in the afternoon, both of which were taught by Ramona Zohm and Dave Hall. The Very Advanced class featured lots of interesting and uncommon features such as the Typhon, the Japonaise and rights and left for four couples all of which helped challenge our feet and brains at the same time. The Old but Fun SCDs class was exactly that - lots of the dances were only 24 bars long which is a very rare sight in dances and classes and they were all exceptionally fun to try, although 24 bars of solid setting straight after lunch was a bit daunting. In both of these classes the teachers were engaging and picked a fantastic selection of dances that I'd never heard of before and we had brilliant music from Luke Brady and Shona McFadyen.

The highlight of the weekend for me was the Sunday Surprise. We were given the name of a common and fairly well-known dance, walked it through and then, just before we started dancing, we were given the twist. There was a challenge for each dance: one without touching hands, one with a member of the set blindfolded, one where we changed side of the set, one with water in a cup in one hand, one where all of one side of the set did not get the dance instructions. The room laughed all through these, trying to work together to work out how to get through these and there was a great camaraderie atmosphere. These were such

good fun and I would definitely like to try some of these again or use them when teaching classes in the future.

The whole weekend seemed to be filled with friends and familiar faces and it was great to catch up with other young dancers. Massive congratulations to the organising committee for Spring Fling for hosting a wonderful weekend of dancing. This was a fantastic experience and I'm looking forward to repeating this again next year in St Petersburg or Toronto... or both!!

Amy Bryson

I flew to Paris from Edinburgh Airport on Friday afternoon. The weather was very hot when I arrived. Luckily, having 2 weeks off on Easter leave from the Navy, I was able to go to Spring Fling for the second time. Having gone to Glasgow last year, I was able to meet up with international friends that I hadn't seen since then.

With my basic level of French, I was able to ask people and gain a rough idea where the hall was for Friday night's welcome dance. I had run out of time to drop my stuff off at the hotel first, so I had to carry it all to the dance. Thankfully the teacher spoke English throughout the classes, so I was able to pick up the new dances quickly. The dances ranged in difficulty, but I enjoyed them all. Unfortunately, the venue was very small and there weren't many chairs, so you had to stand for most of the night.

I saw one of my friends from last year and asked if they were staying at the hotel. Luckily, they were, so I was able to get on the same tram as them and walk together. When we got to the hotel at about 1am, I still had to collect my room key. This turned out to be more difficult than I had thought as apparently it had already been collected. One of the Spring Fling helpers was able to fix this, and I eventually managed to get to my room. I met my two roommates. One was from Sweden, the other from Switzerland. They were both very nice, but we didn't talk for long as we were all exhausted. Unfortunately, I didn't get much sleep as I wasn't used to the heat.

Luckily breakfast was good so that woke me up a bit. We took the tram to the same venue as last night for our morning lessons. I chose the advanced class; it was fun but so hot. We had several breaks just to cool down. In the afternoon, I had 'old but fun' dances where we learnt some of the very first dances that had been created. In the evening we had another dance at a different venue. This time it was at the Paris Diderot University Sports Hall. This was a much better venue as it was more spacious and could fit in a lot more people which it needed as more people from Spring Fling and Fringe turned up. The band was great, and their noise was able to fill the entire hall.

Sunday morning, I had the advanced class again. We had a great teacher who focused the lesson on technique. In the afternoon, we had a surprise class. I remembered from last year that they did different activities such as dance writing, highland and yoga. This year was very different, they decided to teach us simple dances, but they then added a twist. One of the twists was having one person in our set blindfolded. This was extremely entertaining but a good challenge. Another twist was a seven-person set and the eighth was a baguette which we had to pass around the set when we were dancing. Swapping the men and women positions proved more of a challenge than we had first thought. In the evening we had a night of ceilidh and American contra dances. There were quite a few beginners and non-dancers so the ceilidh ones were very simple. The American contra dances were good fun, but they involved a lot of spinning, so I felt very dizzy by the end of each dance. The caller kept reading out the wrong steps, so we kept having to restart the dance as we were doing the walkthrough. It was a great end to a brilliant weekend and I hope I will be able to make it to St. Petersburg next year for a whole week of dancing.

Katie Eggleston

Dancers from across the world of all ages gathered on Friday 19th April to celebrate the beginning of Spring Fling and Fringe in Paris. The festivals theme, Love, reflected in the evening ball's programme with *Chased Lovers*, *Love in the Marais* and *Dance of Love* being danced by all. Excitement was in the air as Paris Branch welcomed everyone with open arms, old friends reunited on the warm evening's dancefloor and a 12-piece band (*No word of a lie!*) provided beautiful music for all.

The Spring Fling classes kicked off on Saturday with Ramona Zohm leading the Very Advanced workshop. Ramona, followed by David Hall, taught around 70 young dancers a range of complicated dances including *Paranoid Jig*, *Summer in Paris*, and *Celtic Border*. Both teachers held the session with ease and accommodated an atmosphere of laughter and enthusiasm for all. This class was good to dance with a similar age and ability allowing for in-set variations and high energy spins; a truly fun and rare opportunity to dance really challenging figures with competent dancers!

After some baguettes and cheese in the scorching sun, Ramona again took the Old but Fun Scottish Country Dances with another very large turn-out. *Hamilton House*, *The Priest and his Books*, *Couteraller's Rant*, and *Teviot Bridge* featured in the afternoon's class. The introduction to an older style of dancing with unusual progression and a full dance of just Pas de Basque was highly enjoyed by all as new friendships were being formed over our shared love of the dance. According to tradition, we danced *Duke of Perth* with well more than enough young men to have a complete set as per the dance's division. Needless to say, we were ready for our evening meal after a very busy day of dance.

Saturday night brought together the Fling and Fringe once again for the Evening Ball. A fantastic celebration of Scottish Country Dance with fabulous music and a lively programme that had everyone smiling. Love featured strongly as *Love is in the Air* and *The Kissing Bridge* was enjoyed by all, with dancers' favourites such as *Deil Amang the Tailors* and *Glasgow Highlanders* keeping spirits high into the night. The ball was a great chance to dance with new and old friends from around the world and enjoy music and calling from very talented members of the society. St Petersburg Branch introduced the 2020 Spring Fling as we danced *Links with St Petersburg* which only added to the energy of the room. A night of celebrating dance and fun was had by all, a real testimony to the work of this year's committee paying off.

Sunday morning brought the welcome of the surprise class. A few sore heads and tired feet found their way to the hall it all began in on Friday night for a class with a twist. Each dance had a 'rule' applied after teaching, such as one member of the set being blindfolded, completing the dance with no hands given, everyone holding a cup of water and even replacing a member of set with a baguette! A great way to bring the weekend to a close, hilarity shared by all and smiles from all teachers, musicians and dancers. The fun and games concluded with an outdoor pizza party where we all exchanged our favourite moments of the weekend, had a chance to thank the organisers and contributors to the event and say goodbye to good friends.

I thoroughly enjoyed my weekend dancing in Paris. With thanks to RSCDS Youth Services and Teachers Association Scotland for their help in getting me to the event, I was able to dance with young dancers from across the world. Attending last year's event in Glasgow solidified my interest in the Fling and I would highly recommend everyone that is able to attend the next one does so. I have made new friends and caught up with familiar faces while participating in an international celebration of our hobby. A massive thank you and well done to all those who organised, played music and taught – until next time, Au revoir!

Scott Smith

TAS Spring Workshop Report

What an interesting and inspiring day we had at the TAS Workshop on 6th April. A day full of variety with dancing, discussion, information and a music quiz.

The workshop was held in St Matthew's Church hall, Tay Street, Perth. Jimmie Hill warmly welcomed the forty four participants and introduced the people leading the various sessions.

Oluf Olufsen started us off, teaching some interesting Neglected Dances which we all enjoyed, accompanied on piano by Mo Rutherford. These dances would be suitable for any average class, including beginners. Oluf gave us some teaching tips along the way which will be very useful for teaching our own classes.

We started with *Lady Home's Jig* from *MMM* with music by Niel Gow. The dance starts with six hands round and back. Instead of joining hands we danced it with our palms touching. This ensured we had our hands at shoulder height. The next formation was a Grand Chain and we tried dancing it touching backs of hands. This ensured we were moving independently rather than relying on momentum from the person we were passing. Oluf also mentioned important points such as timing, thinking ahead, eye-contact, smiling and the use of firm arms for turning corners and partner.

The second dance was the *White Cockade* from *Book 5*. Oluf spoke about the importance of remembering the Scottish historical and cultural connections to dances. In 1745, when Prince Charlie landed in Scotland, he picked a white rose to wear in his hat and thereafter his followers wore white cockades as their emblem. Robert Burns subsequently wrote a song, *The White Cockade*, set to the older traditional tune. In the dance itself Oluf brought out points such as the change of speed and the change of step from Pas de Basque to Skip Change to Slip Step.

Finally, we did the *Strathspey Miss Catherine Allan* from *RSCDS Leaflet (17)*. Apparently, this lady was an elegant dancer and this is an elegant dance with an elegant tune, *Beauty of the North* by Captain Simon Fraser. We did our best to dance elegantly and focus on timing, covering and eye-contact.

If there had been time we would also have done *The Music Will Tell You* from *Book 41*. This reel includes a Pousette, a formation which was once very common but is dropping out of many programmes. It is important that we teach the Pousette and include it in programmes so that it is not lost from Scottish Dancing.

Oluf also mentioned *Open the Door to Three* from the 1749 Castle Menzies collection (*RSCDS Book 34*). This is a 48 bar reel. Although some people think this would be too long to dance, it has the same number of bars as a two-couple dance three times through.

After the dancing we had time for a rest with a discussion led by Sue Porter. This was the important subject, *Making a Balanced Programme*. Sue started off by giving us an example of a real-life unbalanced programme which included a lot of 4 and 5 couple dances.

We split into groups to discuss questions Sue had prepared. We discussed what elements of a dance we need to consider, the order of dances at various points in the programme, and suggestions of suitable dances. It was interesting hearing the views of various teachers.

The discussion brought out several important points:

First of all, we should consider who will be attending the dance. It is important to take into account age and ability in making up the programme. If we want to encourage new dancers to come then the programme should consist of well-known dances with standard formations.

There was a plea to include a jig or reel Pousette in a programme. At one time there were many dances with a Pousette on programmes. Nowadays we are lucky if there is one and many programmes do not include it at all. It would be a great pity if this formation is lost to us. Younger dancers in particular love doing it and we should teach it in our classes so that all dancers can enjoy dancing it confidently.

We should remember that a social dance is different to a class. Programmes including a lot of difficult dances which need to be walked through more than once are boring for the band and for people who have learnt the dances before they come to the dance. There is also the possibility that the set will break down which defeats the object of a social dance.

It would be good if Branches had a Core Repertoire of dances. If a number of dances from the Core Repertoire are included on programmes then dancers would become familiar with them and be able to dance them well. The Core Repertoire could ensure that the standard, well-known formations are all danced regularly. It would then encourage beginners and less confident dancers to attend events.

Mo, our musician, made some interesting comments about programmes:

Reels tend to have a lot of notes which are difficult for musicians to play, especially for the first dance. A well-known jig with a good, easy tune is best for the musicians so that they can warm up.

Medleys can be difficult for inexperienced musicians.

Musicians spend a lot of time preparing music for dances so they need the programme well in advance.

Programme devisors need to give musicians the original tunes if they do not have them.

We should consider the temperature of the stage where musicians are playing. They are sitting while we are dancing and need the temperature to be warmer than the hall. It's very difficult to play an instrument when your fingers are cold.

By this time we were all ready for lunch which was a good time to catch up on friends and get to know some new ones.



Having been revived and refreshed we were ready to dance again. Janet Johnston taught us some unusual dances from Branch books:

Welcome to Kirkconnel from the *Ayr Golden Jubilee Book*
The Chairman's Chain from *75 years of dancing in St Andrews*
A Dance for June from *RSCDS in East Lothian*
The Countess of Elgin from *RSCDS Dunfermline 90th Anniversary*.

These dances, which included formations such as a Chain Progression and Spurtle, were more difficult than those we had done earlier. They would be suitable for a class which is looking for something a little different and more challenging than usual.



Mo Rutherford got our brains working with a fun music and dance quiz. Volunteer dancers took to the floor and Jimmie gave instructions so that the dancers could demonstrate the dance. We had to guess the dance, give the name of the original tune and identify all the other tunes Mo used along with the dances associated with them. Just so that it wasn't too easy Mo did not play the tune associated with the demonstration dance first.

The dances were:

The River Cree
Fight about the Fireside
Peggy's Strathspey.

Some people recognised all the tunes and knew all the dances they belonged to – amazing!

Anne Taylor told us about the new DAA. There have been changes to some of the formations and dances. Details are on the RSCDS website.

The RSCDS is recruiting and training new DAA Assessors. One of the aims is to make the standard the same for everyone. Many people from countries such as Canada and the USA are taking the DAA. It is intended to be something to follow the Medal Tests and lead on to the Teaching exams. The DAA is open to anyone 12 years and over. Any teacher can run the course and there will be demonstration videos available to help teachers and participants learn the dances. There will also be the possibility of assessing dancers remotely using videos of their performance.

The day ended with a challenge as Roy Bain spoke about the goal of giving every child in Scotland the opportunity to learn Scottish Country Dancing. The Scottish Schools Working Group was set up in November 2018. It is now an official working group of the RSCDS and has been allocated funding. Twelve to fourteen people are needed to form a core group with others involved within their Branches.

The goal of reaching every child in Scotland is ambitious. There are 2100 primary schools, 460 secondary schools, 80 independent schools and 100 special needs schools. Some primary schools have only 10 pupils while the largest has 840 pupils. The largest secondary school has 1700 pupils. The working group aims to achieve the goal within the next 10 years. This will involve greater involvement with the teacher training departments of the universities and CPD courses for schoolteachers. There are 10 universities in Scotland which are training school teachers. Work on teaching SCD has started in Dumfries and there are plans to expand this to other universities.

In September there will be an exhibition at the Scottish Learning Festival. The aim is to enable teachers to understand what we are doing and to engender their enthusiasm to get involved.

Sport Scotland funds 40% of Active Schools Co-ordinators. Another aim of the Working Group is to engage with them and get them involved in facilitating or teaching SCD.

The day ended with Jimmie Hill thanking everyone who made the workshop possible and asking us to let him know what we would like to do at the August AGM. The new book this year will be a compilation of popular dances and will not be available until November so we will not be learning the dances from that book.

We went home feeling that the workshop had given us plenty to think about with fresh ideas to take away and use in our own classes and groups. It was an inspiring day which renewed our friendships, commitment and enthusiasm.

Rosemary Legge

Making a Balanced Dance Programme

We have all probably at some time or other been at a dance and thought~ *not another allemande / my feet are sore with all these pas de basque formations / what a lot of time hanging around waiting to get that 4th or 5th couple yet again or are 6 dancers going to be asked to sit down/ no strong, driving strathspey tunes tonight.*

Good balanced programmes should leave dancers still on the floor at the end of the night as they say “wanting more!”. How can we achieve this?

The attendees were split into groups for discussion on the same given topics and then they reported back to the assembly. Generally, there was consensus on the more fundamental areas within a programme, however due to the background of different attendees, we had variations in other areas, which were all quite valid.

Below is a summary of the questions posed and the suggestions given. While most of the suggestions will be reinforcing what we all know, there might just be a wee something that is new or we have forgotten about.

1. In order to have a balanced programme, what elements of a dance do you need to consider when arranging dances in order on a programme, such as the number of couples required to perform the dance.

Steps

- Preferably only skip change in the first dance
- Pas de basque in first / after interval dance ~ none or very minimal 2 bars
- Slip step ~ none in first dance

No. of couples required to perform a dance

- First dance ~ 3 couples in 4 couple set
- 2 couple dances ~ only a few and spaced out appropriately
- Variety of set sizes mixed throughout the programme (i.e. 3 cpl, 4 cpl, 5 cpl fixed couple dances separated by 3 cpl in 4 cpl set, 2 cpl in 4 cpl set dances)
- Variety of set shapes (longwise, square, round room, triangular)

Formations

- Variety of formations spread throughout the programme
- Variety of complexity of formations spread throughout
- Last dance to finish with a circle. Some groups felt this was more of a ‘must have’ than others

Types of dances

- Start with more familiar dances as this helps to build confidence and relax dancers
- Intersperse more challenging dances
- Last few dances go back to the more familiar
- 40 and 48 bar dances or ‘heavier’ dances (lots of pdb) place appropriately e.g. if in quick time, place before a strathspey/ last dance before the interval
- Medley ~ only 2 groups mentioned they would use medleys

Music

- Have a good mix of jigs, reels and strathspeys
- Variety of types of tunes e.g. include hornpipes, slow airs as well as ‘regular’ tunes
- Start with a jig ~ allows band to warm up as not so many notes in tunes
- Dances with popular tunes
- Mix of 32 bars x 8 and 32 bar x 3 strathspeys

- Not too many 40 bar & 48 bar dances and not as the first dance

Other topics mentioned

- Who is the dance aimed at? Consider age, dance ability, mobility
- Include dances from a wide range of books
- Walk, or not, through unfamiliar dances especially if recently devised locally

2. What should you consider when choosing the order of dances on a programme for:

- a) Starting dance
- b) Before interval dance
- c) After interval dance
- d) Last dance
- e) Give three examples of dances for each of the above (a) – (d)

Starting dance

- Round room versus longwise
- Longwise then 3 couples in a 4 couple set
- Well known
- Not too strenuous with no pdb or minimal 2 pdb
- Tune ~ jig as not too many notes to allow band to warm up

Before the interval dance

- Reel or jig with a lively tune
- Place for a more energetic dance
- Suitable for all abilities
- 4 couple set dance only if 1st couple finishes in 4th place and band prepared to play it 5 times instead of 4 times through.

After the interval dance

- Longer the interval the gentler the dance
- Jig
- Familiar dance
- Good tune
- Little pdb
- 3 couple in 4 couple set
- Round the room

Last dance

- Good going dance and tune to keep dancers on a 'high'
- End with a circle ~ groups were split over this. Some felt it was a 'must have'.
- 3 couple in 4 couple set that can accommodate a 5th couple so no dancer has to miss the last dance.
- Familiar dance

The list of the dances suggested is at the end of the report.

3. Is there anything else that should be considered when compiling a dance programme?

- Who is the dance aimed at? ~ age, mobility, experience
- Layout / size of the hall
- Will there be any walk throughs? Depends on those attending and if a new dance.
- Introduce only a few new dances on any one programme
- Number of dances on the programme and which might be encoered and still finish the programme within the scheduled end time
- Band ~ ability, experience
- Tune of first dance

Other considerations in relation to running a dance

- Who will MC the dance?
- Who will recap the dances? One person or shared?
- Band or recorded music
- Liaison with band before and during the dance
- Programme compiled well in advance and send to the band
- Avoid clash of dates with close by dances
- Accessibility of instructions, cribs, diagrams, videos of dances



4. Core Dance list

a) Do you have a Core Dance list for your branch / region?

None of the groups had a Core Dance list. One branch published the programmes for all the dances in their area at the beginning of the dancing year.

b) List the advantages /disadvantages of using a Core List.

Advantages

- Useful for beginners
- Dancers build up a repertoire of known dances
- Progressive core for introducing formations
- Instructions easily available
- Other groups include them in their programmes thus encouraging less experienced dancers to attend dances outwith their own class dance
- Only use a few from the Core in each programme for variety

Disadvantages

- Too limiting if a small list and only these dances used
- Might be boring repeating the dances

c) What proportion of dances should be from the Core Dance list if using one?

- Depend on mix and experience of those attending the dance
- Approximately 1/4 or 1/3 of dances on a programme from the Core List
- 2 or 3 at most
- Core list could be compiled from dances enjoyed in class the previous year that are not on the 'well known popular list' to expand repertoire for less experienced dancers

List of dance suggestions *dances in italics mentioned by more than one group*

This is a list of the dances suggested by the groups. Due to personal views you may or may not agree.

Starting dances

<i>EH3 7AF</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 40</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Hooper's Jig</i>	Jig	<i>MMM</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Good Hearted Glasgow</i>	Jig	<i>Guide to SCD</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Joie de Vivre</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 39</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Liquid Assets</i>	Jig	<i>Drewry</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Pelorus Jack</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 41</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Flora's Fancy</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 49</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Newburgh Jig</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 48</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Tribute to the Borders</i>	Jig	<i>RSCDS Lft</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Granville Market</i>	Jig	<i>Graded Bk 2</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Luckenbooth Brooch</i>	Jig	<i>Bowie Dickson</i>	32 bars x 8

Last before the interval dances

<i>The Montgomeries' Rant</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 10</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Reel of the 51st Division</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 13</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Mrs MacLeod</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 6</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Anderson Rant</i>	Reel	<i>MMM</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Scott Meikle</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 46</i>	32 bars x 4
<i>Waverley</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 15</i>	48 bars x 8
<i>Mrs MacPherson of Inveran</i>	Reel	<i>Drewry</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Falls of Rogie</i>	Reel	<i>Attwood</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Black Mountain Reel</i>	Reel	<i>Haynes</i>	32 bars x 5
<i>Polharrow Burn</i>	Reel	<i>Foss</i>	32 bars x 5
<i>General Stuart's Reel</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 10</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>College Hornpipe</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 20</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Reel of the Royal Scots</i>	Reel	<i>RSCDS Lft</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Good Hearted Glasgow</i>	Jig	<i>Guide to SCD</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Pelorus Jack</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 41</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Wild Geese</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 24</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Diamond Jubilee</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 31</i>	32 bars x 4
<i>Midnight Oil</i>	Jig	<i>Drewry</i>	48 bars x 5

First after interval

<i>Maxwell's Rant</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 18</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Nice to See you</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 40</i>	32 bars round room
<i>A Highland Welcome</i>	Reel	<i>Guide to SCD</i>	32 bars round room
<i>Highland Rambler</i>	Reel	<i>Henderson</i>	40 bars x 8
<i>Catch the Wind</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 45</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Scotland's Gardens</i>	Reel	<i>Goldring</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Last of the Lairds</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 22</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Happy Meeting</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 29</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Wild Geese</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 24</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Machine Without Horses</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 12</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Light & Airy</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 4</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Ladies' Fancy</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 13</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Duke of Atholl's Reel</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 16</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Laird of Milton's Daughter</i>	Jig	<i>BK 22</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Shetland Shepherdess</i>	Jig	<i>Graded Bk 3</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Miss Hadden's Reel</i>	Jig	<i>Bk 23</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Silver Tassie</i>	S/spey	<i>RSCDS Lft</i>	32 bars x 8

Last dance

<i>Mairi's Wedding</i>	Reel	<i>Guide to SCD</i>	40 bars x 8
<i>The Deil Amang The Tailors</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 14</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Reel of the Royal Scots</i>	Reel	<i>RSCDS Lft</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Duke of Perth</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 1</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>The Montgomeries' Rant</i>	Reel	<i>Bk 10</i>	32 bars x 8
<i>Highland Rambler</i>	Reel	<i>Henderson</i>	40 bars x 8
<i>The Final Reel</i>	Reel	<i>Barbour</i>	32 bars x 8

Report compiled by Sue Porter, following TAS workshop April 2019



Teachers' Association Scotland, TAS

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

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Workshop Programme (details to be confirmed):

10.30	Coffee / Tea	* Please bring your own mug*
	Registration and payment of subscriptions	
11.00	Skills exercises from five different teachers	
11.50	Festival book dances suitable for adult classes	
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13.30	Three neglected dances Scottish devisers	
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