

The Scottish Country Dance Teacher

TAS Newsletter July 2015

Newsletter of the Teachers' Association Scotland (TAS)
TAS is an RSCDS affiliated group

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

Chairman: George Watt

Secretary: Peter Clark, 22 Corberry Park, Dumfries, DG2 7NG Tel: 01387 269171

Treasurer: Les Lambert, 16 Ewing St, Kilbarchan, PA10 2JA Tel: 01505 704398

Committee: Helen Bain, Ross Colwell

AGM Workshop Organiser: Marjorie MacRae

Newsletter Editor: Jimmie Hill macleodhill@mac.com

From the Chairman

Another year of our association is nearly over. We had an excellent meeting in Pitlochry and Linda Gaul and her helpers helped to make it a very friendly day indeed.

We have some big changes looming ahead with both Peter and Les standing down. We are very grateful for both their hard work and professionalism on our behalf during their joint tenures. Judy has volunteered to take on the position of Treasurer, which is marvellous of her, so hopefully someone will step forward and offer their services as our Secretary.

Personally, I think TAS is a wonderful institution. If, like me, you thoroughly enjoy our meetings, and we always seem to have worthwhile and productive gatherings, then do consider putting your name forward to help us on our way forward. I have to say I find it hard to understand why people are so reticent to step forward. If one gets something from something, surely they would like to give something back. It is not just TAS of course, it seems to be a current trend in all associations I'm involved in.

Plans are well ahead for our next meeting and we look forward to having some younger teachers taking our dance classes. Until then I hope we all enjoy a splendid summer with friends and family.

George T. Watt

Notice of Annual General Meeting and Elections

The Annual General Meeting of TAS will take place on Saturday 29th August 2015 in Broxburn. The Secretary - Peter Clark - and the Treasurer - Les Lambert - both come to the end of their terms in office. We shall, therefore, need nominations for both positions, plus one other committee member. Last year the post of Workshop Organiser was split between two members. The meeting will have to discuss whether to appoint one Workshop Organiser for the year, as before, or one per workshop, as we did this year.

TAS Pitlochry Workshop Report

With an interesting programme, taking account of members requests for topics, and a central location, the committee hoped for a good turnout to the workshop. Initial response was a bit slow, but as the date approached the applications began to arrive and on the day there were 41 attendees. Just the right number really for the size of hall. Margo and Peter had agreed to lead the first session on Observation Skills, and I was impressed with the preparation that went into the class. I was the last person into the hall, having tidied up the takings and the register, but only by a few minutes, and it was the sounds of hilarity mixed in with the lively music that ensured I didn't dwell on my book keeping. A most obliging set were showing off

their dancing skills with both the dancers and the dances having been chosen by Margo, everyone else watched attentively paper and pencil to hand. Trying to get up to speed, I have to admit that faults were not that obvious and I was starting to get worried about my own observation skills! I sat through it all with a blank sheet of paper. But then, I had missed the introduction - this was a demonstration of how it should be done. Then the dances were then repeated - 'a la vaudeville'. We couldn't write fast enough, sometimes for laughing. A couple of hilarious dress rehearsals before the team calmed down a little and repeated the dances with some carefully choreographed mistakes but the winning sheet still found over 30 faults. The exercise was great fun and educational and worth repeating at another event with perhaps fewer rehearsed faults that would make the class work harder to identify.

The morning session continued with some personal critique on each other's dancing with Peter having carefully designed the process to ensure the comments were anonymous. It was probably a pretty accurate exercise if my own report sheet was typical as I recognised the mannerisms and faults that have crept into my dancing. However, I don't think I would be far wrong if, like most of the class, I put the reasons under the heading "maturity" - where did the bounce go?

The second class, after lunch, led by Alasdair Brown introduced us to some of the 'Foss' dances taken from song tunes. A very thorough, well presented and exacting session where Alasdair took no prisoners. There was something about his approach that discouraged dancers from just easing their way through the class. The standard definitely seemed to creep up and was maintained throughout the afternoon albeit with a bit of huffing and puffing along the way. In particular, Merry Meg's Strathspey set us a bit of a challenge. Now that's one dance that demands a 'comfort break' should you come across it on a social programme. Head for the balcony. However, with a challenging dance, good music can add that little bit extra, that encourages good performance and adds that bit extra lift. We certainly got that from Muriel.

Les Lambert

Plus ça change

Many will remember discussions over 'dance' or 'lead' down the middle some years ago. *The Silver Tassie* springs to mind. Traditionally, the Society taught that leading down the middle meant right hand in right hand. Devisers began stipulating nearer hands in some dances. The current Manual states that "If dancers 'lead' down the middle, right hands are used. If dancers 'dance' down the middle, nearer hands are used." You will be amused by the following, taken from 'Country Dancing made Plain and Easy' (Price Two Shillings and Sixpence), published in 1764, where it is clear that 'leading' meant nearer hands joined!

"Leading is when two or more persons, having their faces turned one way, move forwards, and at the same time join the hands that are next to each other: for example, to lead down; the couple so doing must turn their faces towards the bottom of the dance, the man taking the woman's right hand in his left, and so moving forwards."

With nearer hands joined body angle of both dancers is easy to maintain. With right hand in right hand, posture can easily be compromised. When ladies' frocks were wider, nearer hand was also more elegant. I remember one eminent teacher at a day school arguing for right hand in right hand "because it means you are closer to your partner." An interesting rationalisation.

Another amusing section of the book deals with rights and lefts. Anyone teaching beginners will recognise that the problems are still the same:

"The most difficult figure to young beginners is that of Right and Left: to perform this, it requires two couples, being placed properly (on their own sides, Ed), each opposite their partner; then let all be sure to pass on the right side of their partner, and give the right hand in passing, all moving forward round; the first man and second woman on a circle to the right, and the first woman and second man on a circle to the left, each missing their opposite corners, will next meet woman to woman and man to man, who are to pass on the left sides of each other, and give the left hand in passing, and being careful not to turn the contrary way from your circles, nor keep the hands joined too long, as it stops each party from moving on."

It seems that at that time the figure was more like a circular chain for four dancers than the squarer figure we dance today.

Jimmie Hill

Autumn Workshop and AGM
Saturday, August 29th
Topic: Book 49 dances

**Canon Hoban Hall, St John Cantius and Nicholas Parish Church,
East Main Street, Broxburn, EH52 5RJ (A699)**

The new dances from Book 49 will be taught by a team of young teachers:

**Rachel Shankland, Amy Drysdale, Heather Cowan and Ian Brockbank
Musician: Adam Brady**

Cost £4

Programme - times approximate

- 10.30 - 11.00 Registration and collection of subs - with coffee etc**
- 11.00 - 12.45 Six dances from Book 49 with two of our young guest teachers.**
- 12.45 - 13.15 Lunch - members bring own food.**
- 13.15 - 15.00 The rest of the new dances with two different guest teachers**
- 15.00 - 16.00 AGM**

If you can, please register by e-mail. E-mail Les Lambert (leslambert08@gmail.com) by August 26th indicating that you wish to attend and will pay your membership fee and workshop (£5 + £4) fee on arrival.
or post or bring the completed application form (below).

Application form for TAS August Workshop

Please send by post by 23rd August to Les Lambert, 16 Ewing Street, Kilbarchan, PA10 2JA

Name: Branch:

Address

Post Code Tel: E-mail:

I enclose fees due : Workshop £4 Membership fee £5

Mrs Agnes Macmichael

It is with great sadness I have to report the death on 9th June 2015 of Mrs Agnes Macmichael. She was an enthusiastic member of the RSCDS and a West Lothian branch member for 40 years and served as a teacher and committee member. After her family, dancing was Agnes' main passion – that and keeping up-to-date with friends on Facebook. As well as promoting the branch, she was also involved in many committees in the surrounding area, always taking an active part. Agnes devised many dances including one for her daughter, *Fhiona Martin's Strathspey*. In recognition of all her hard work she was presented with the Branch Award in 2013. Agnes will be sadly missed and leave a large gap in the dancing scene in the Lothians .

Marjorie MacRae

TAS Secretary's Report 2015

The membership this year was 127 members. This is the second year showing a decrease from the 2013 membership of 175.

There have been two workshops. In September Janet Johnston and Sue Porter taught some of the new dances in Book 48 to the accompaniment of Pat Clark's music. In between the dancing sessions we had time for some discussions on

- What issues should the Society be addressing?
- Open forum – TAS and Other Issues
- Comment and Questions on the new RSCDS Manual
- The Dancing Development Award.

From the discussion the committee was asked to approach the RSCDS to consider the production of a compilation of dances for young dancers, specifically aimed at festivals since the present repertoire was becoming too repetitive. It was thought there was a lack of choice of Society dances with simple basic formations. The second issue left to the committee was to research members to establish a list of neglected dances from the earlier books of the Society.

The second workshop was held in Pitlochry where we had the pleasure of music from Muriel Johnston. She played for a morning session on observational skills and later in the day for dances from the recently reprinted book of *Dances to Song Tunes* by Hugh Foss. The leaders for the day were Margo Priestley, Peter Clark and Alastair Brown.

The Newsletter editor, Jimmie Hill, has produced three long interesting letters for membership during the year. We have had two workshop organisers: Linda Gaul made the arrangements for our meeting in Pitlochry and organised the refreshments; and Marjorie MacRae has taken on the task most ably here again at Broxburn for this year's AGM Workshop.

The committee recommend we keep the membership at £5 for next year. It has been suggested it might be very convenient for some members to be able to pay for three years' membership at once to save the annual chore. We need to see if members wish this to be adopted.

I wish to thank all those who have assisted TAS, in whatever capacity in the past year especially members of the committee. Thanks also to Bill Austin who has updated the website even though he is no longer a member.

In conclusion, I can say I have enjoyed my second term of office and indicate the job is not so very onerous and wish my successor a good term in office.

Peter Clark 10.06.2015

Overlooked dances that need airing

You will remember reading Oluf's article in the November Newsletter suggesting TAS might be the agency for promoting and exposing overlooked dances in the early RSCDS books. The committee thought it would be a good project to involve all members.

Less than 25% of the membership has responded. Since my recent e-mail to members, there has been a slight increase in replies. Can I remind those reading this for the first time in this newsletter, to consider joining the project so that the analysis of the results will be representative of a wider TAS membership viewpoint.

There is another response sheet attached to the newsletter. The deadline for responses is 10 August.

Minutes of last AGM

Teachers' Association Scotland, Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 30 August 2014 at 1.10pm in the Canon Hoban Hall of St John Cantius & Nicholas Parish Church, East Main Street, Broxburn.

Welcome

TAS Chairman, George Watt extended a warm welcome to the 50 members in attendance.

Present

Brian Anderson, Helen Bain, Roy Bain, Margaret Ballantine, Morag Barclay, Kaoru Boode, Judith Borup, Lyn Bryce, Pat Clark, Peter Clark, Atsuko Clement, Ross Colwell, Rhona Dickson, Margaret Fairgrieve, Betty Ferguson, Marion Firth, Christina France, David France, Linda Gaul, Jenny Greene, Ella Greig, Margaret Harris, Annabel Harrison, Jimmie Hill, George Hobson, Helen Hobson, Janet Johnston, Les Lambert, Agnes MacMichael, Marjorie MacRae, Margaret McCann, Mary McFarlane, Neil McPhail, Eileen Meany, Jane Meikle, Alice Oliphant, Oluf Olufsen, Sue Porter, Margo Priestley, Rhoda Purcell, Jane Rattray, Rachel Shankland, Susan Robertson, Margaret Ross, Irene Smith, Moira Stephen, Margie Stevenson, Anne Thorn, Lorna Valentine, George Watt.

Apologies

Apologies were received from 52 members:

Fiona Allsop, Bill Austin, Irene Bennett, Marion Bennett, Muriel Bone, Aad Boode, Wilma Brown, Jeannie Butler, Christian Catto, Margaret Cowie, Fiona Cummins, Edna Ewen, Sandra French, Alison Gordon, Frances Grant, Neil Grant, Martha Harris, Pat Harrower, Doris Hepburn, Pat Houghton, Connie Irvine, Mike Johnston, Margaret Lambourne, Bill Little, Anne Livingstone, Deirdre MacCuish Bark, Susan MacKay, Kate McArdle, Maureen McCrudden, Fiona McDonald, Margaret McGregor, Tom McKinlay, Jean Martin, Wendy Mumford, Yvonne Munro, Helen Murray, Fiona Newton, Catherine Paris, Alison Paterson, Brenda Pattison, Margaret Pritchard, Gill Reynolds, Anne Robertson, Helen Rodger, Dorothy Scott, Anne Smyth, Sybille Spaegele, Keith Stacey, Moira Stacey, Carol-Ann Stewart, John Sturrock, Anne Taylor, Elspeth Walker, Sheila West, Irene Whyte.

Minutes of 2013 AGM

The minutes had been published in the July Newsletter.

Matters Arising: Yvonne Munro was omitted from the members present in 2013 – amended. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Pat Clark, seconded by Lyn Bryce. Agreed.

Secretary's Report

The secretary's report was provided in the July Newsletter. Peter Clark indicated a minor error in the statement; the funds provided for the New Scotland Group were £210 not £300. Margie Stevenson proposed and Ross Colwell seconded the acceptance of the report. Agreed.

Treasurer's Report

A Statement of Accounts had been previously circulated. The excess expenditure over income was £270.12. Two large items, the student grant and donation to the New Scotland Group were contributory factors to the loss. The balance at the end of the year was £2324.21. Linda Gaul expressed a word of thanks to the treasurer for his good work. Jenny Greene proposed and Judith Borup seconded the adoption of the statement.

Amendment to clause III in the Constitution

A late request from Jimmie Hill and seconded by Ian Brockbank had been circulated to members six days ago. The Proposed Motion: that Clause III which reads: "Membership shall be open to all teachers of Scottish Country Dance provided they are members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) and have

paid the TAS annual subscription, which shall be determined by the committee for approval at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)" should be changed to read: "Membership shall be open to all teachers of Scottish Country Dance provided they have paid the TAS annual subscription which shall be determined by the committee for approval at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)." Jimmie Hill expressed the view that TAS ought to be able to reach out to all teachers of SCD and not just the RSCDS members. Those unable to participate in RSCDS functions such as Summer School because of issues of time or expense might well find workshops of TAS a help in their delivery of Scottish dance. They might well use more RSCDS publications and even join the Society from our introduction.

General discussion followed. The idea of a separate associate membership creating two levels of membership was not favoured. There was support for the need for TAS to reach out to unqualified teachers and leaders of dance, so that they might be involved in some training such as that provided by TAS.

The secretary indicated comments sent in from two members who were not in attendance. They supported the proposal because TAS could assist in helping more teachers outside the branches to keep in touch with SCD policy and trends. Two other members asked via e-mail that we should increase the liaison with the RSCDS. Aad Boode and Deidre Bark sent messages pointing out that the RSCDS Constitution 2011` required Teachers Association members to be members of the Society.

The secretary then pointed out that our affiliation:

- can offer help and guidance in promoting good standards of dance to non RSCDS teachers/ leaders, by using experienced and well trained teachers of the RSCDS. In the long term, this would result in benefits for SC dancing in a wider audience;
- had been offered free without a fee; this was not allowed in the RSCDS Rules;
- was not on the same terms as affiliated groups, who were allowed non-Society members to join their Scottish dance groups;
- had not been recognised by the Society in that our name had never been included in the listed affiliated groups nor mentioned on the website;
- had not resulted in any communications from Society HQ until this year, when we have been asked to support events run by the Society.

It appears there was a very limited working relationship with the RSCDS. Some found conflict between the rules for Teacher Associations and Affiliated Group status (the latter being allowed non-society membership), and possibly as the Rules stood we should decline RSCDS affiliation if we adopted the proposed change.

Eventually it was agreed to postpone the decision on the basis that it might be better to approach the RSCDS and have influence from within, rather than relinquish our affiliation and to have no influence in the Society. The secretary was left to negotiate that TAS could be an affiliated group under the same rules as affiliated dancing groups, so we could do more outreach work amongst teachers who did not belong to the Society.

Membership Fee

The meeting agreed unanimously the committee's recommendation that the membership fee would remain at £5.

The secretary suggested we might consider a small increase in fee for those who had communications by post. It was suggested for the coming year, mail members are asked if they could nominate an e-mail address to receive their communications from TAS to compensate for the rising costs of postage.

Election of Workshop Organiser 2014-2017

The chairman thanked Jenny Greene for the work she had done for all the successful workshops in the past three years.

No nominations had been received. Marjorie MacRae offered to be workshop organiser for the AGM workshop next autumn in Broxburn. Linda Gaul offered to act as workshop organiser for a spring workshop and be on committee for that one year. Janet Johnston and Agnes Macmichael moved we accepted these two volunteers quickly. Agreed

The chairman said it was good to see Neil McPhail present after his long illness and thanked him for his term on the committee. Neil offered to continue assisting with the website. Bill Austin who was standing down from committee was thanked and his offer to assist with the website was appreciated.

The meeting was delighted Jimmie Hill was willing to be newsletter editor when asked by the chairman.

Election of Committee Members

The chairman thanked Margaret Harris for her invaluable service in the kitchen and her extended period on the committee.

There were no nominations. Fortunately, volunteers came forward: Les Lambert and Jenny Greene were pleased to move Helen Bain serve for three years and Ross Colwell for two years on committee.

Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed the next AGM would be held at Broxburn, on Saturday, August 29th 2015.

Any Other Business

a) Examination of the Accounts next year

It was agreed Mr James Moffat would be asked to examine next year's accounts for us.

b) Number of workshops next year

It was agreed to have one spring workshop in Pitlochry on April 11th 2015. In 2016 there would be two spring workshops (one in the north, one in the south).

c) Topic for next workshop

Morning discussion groups suggested a session on teacher observational skills and assisting in the correction of faults, along with dancing some of the dances in the new publications.

d) Funds to be used for outreach amongst young dancers

The committee was authorised to allocate up to a total of £300 for deserving case(s) referred to TAS.

Vote of Thanks

Helen Bain moved a vote of thanks to George Peter and Les for their work in the past year.

Membership 2015-2016

Membership subscription, £5, is now due. This can be paid by cheque directly to Les Lambert using the workshop application form or at the workshop on August 29th.

If you are coming to the workshop and intend to pay your dues at the door, please bring your membership fee with the workshop fee (£5 + £4), and the completed workshop application/membership renewal form.

Please have the exact cash (£9) ready to avoid Les having to deal with change.

AGM 2015 – formal notice – bring this newsletter with you!

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 30th August 2014
3. Secretary's report (printed in this newsletter)
4. Treasurer's Report (accounts included at the end of this newsletter)
5. Adoption of committee's recommendation to hold the TAS subscription fee at £5 for 2016-2017

Consider a proposal that fees can be paid in advance: three years @ £15.

6. Election of Officers a) Secretary, b) Treasurer, c) Workshop Organiser for three year term of office
7. Election of one committee member to stand for three years.
8. Date and place of next AGM in 2014. (29th August 2016 suggested)
9. Other Business

Decisions required for these issues:

- a) Where are we to hold workshops next year? Last year it was decided to have two workshops in the Spring 2016.
- b) Topics for next year’s workshops
- c) Report of the subcommittee on “neglected dances”. Are we to hold an extra half day of dancing the “neglected dances”?
- d) Maintenance of the website (Help!)
- e) RSCDS HQ has ignored our request to amend the regulations of affiliation for Teachers Associations; and we have still not found our way on to the RSCDS Website as an affiliated group.

Statement of Accounts

TEACHERS ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2014-2015.					
INCOME	2014/15	2013/14	EXPENDITURE	2014/15	2013/14
Membership fees	635.00	690.00	Insurance	82.98	75.00
<u>Autumn Workshop:-</u>	184.00	224.00	<u>April 2014 Workshop:-</u>		
			Hall	133.42	
			<u>2014 Autumn Workshop:-</u>		
			Hall	105.00	105.00
Donations - Fees	100.00	nil	Teachers fee	50.00	50.00
Travel	60.00	nil	Teachers travel	60.00	
			Musician fee	50.00	50.00
			Musician travel	15.00	32.50
			Lunch	16.30	9.35
			Refunds	nil	nil
<u>April Workshop:-</u>	148.00	284.00	<u>2015 April Workshops:-</u>		
			Hall	155.00	78.00
			Teachers fees	60.00	120.00
			Teachers travel	39.00	26.20 (Aberdeen)
Donation.	nil	120.00			94.80 (Glasgow)
			Musicians fees + travel	60.00	128.50
			Lunch	10.00	24.40
			Membership cards	39.82	nil
			Stationary	47.47	16.37
			Postage	80.95	18.00
			Donation		210.00 (New Scotland)
Bank Interest	nil	nil	Student Grant		500.00 (Summer School)
	<u>£1127.00</u>	<u>£1338.00</u>		<u>£1004.94</u>	<u>£1608.12</u>
	Income:- £1127.00		Expenditure:- £1004.94		Surplus:- £122.06
			Bank balance 31.05.2014	£2324.21	
			Bank balance 31.05.2015	<u>£2418.92</u>	
				£94.71	
			Cash in hand	<u>£27.35</u>	
			Surplus for 2014-15	<u>£122.06</u>	
Statement prepared by	Leslie B Lambert.	Treasurer	Date.....	
Statement examined by			Date.....	

Name of member.....

Survey of RSCDS Publications – TAS members looking for “neglected dances”

Return to: The secretary; TAS, 22 Corberry Park, Dumfries, DG2 7NG E-mail: clarks@pjclark3.plus.com

Month	Books surveyed	Name up to 4 good dances that need airing
March	Books 1 -4	i) ii) iii) iv)
April	Books 5 – 8	i) ii) iii) iv)
May	Books 9 -12	i) ii) iii) iv)
June	Books 13 – 16	i) ii) iii) iv)
July	Books 17- 20	i) ii) iii) iv)
August	Miscellanies	i) ii) iii) iv)
Thank you	Comment?	