

The Scottish Country Dance Teacher

TAS Newsletter March 2014

Newsletter of the Teachers' Association Scotland (TAS)

TAS is an RSCDS affiliated group

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: Margaret Harris, Neil MacPhail, Bill Austin

Workshop Organiser: Jenny Greene

Newsletter Editor: Jimmie Hill macleodhill@mac.com

From our Chairman

At last winter is almost behind us and we can look forward to those 'lazy crazy hazy days of summer'! But before that we have our April workshops. As you know, at our AGM it was agreed we should try holding one in the North and one in the Central Belt so that is what we're doing. It has been a hectic time for Peter to organise the venues but it is all beginning to fall into place. We look forward to seeing many of you in Aberdeen and Glasgow for what are sure to be interesting and fulfilling events. One of the facets of Scottish Country Dance we will be looking at is unusual formations, so if you have any suggestions of one you would like to see taught, or teach, do let Peter know, but do put it in quickly as the musicians need to be informed well in advance. Bill Austin and Neil MacPhail have been busy putting together our web site and they are hoping to receive some feedback as to what you want put into it. TAS is your organisation, not ours, so please do get inter-active!

George Watt

Come along and support TAS!

Teacher support by members for members

TAS REGIONAL SPRING WORKSHOPS

ABERDEEN APRIL 12TH

Low impact teaching / unusual formations

Ruthrieston West Church, Broomhill Road, Aberdeen AB10 7NS

GLASGOW APRIL 26TH

Low impact teaching / unusual formations

Westerton Hall, Maxwell Avenue, Glasgow G61 1NZ

The One o'clock Canon - by the deviser

Consider a dance. It has four hands across (right and left). It has rights and lefts. It has reels of four, some crossing casting and turning. And that's all. No unusual figures. No tourn e. No set and rotate. No targe or spurtle. No complicated meanwhiles or new figures like in *Muirland Willie* or *Best Set in the Hall*. Each figure leads naturally to the next. So why does *The One O'Clock Canon* inspire such terror? Why does it receive comments from very experienced dancers such as, "I think Ian must have written this in a nightmare"?

If you look at the structure of the dance, and think of it as ends and middles, it works out as follows:

Bars Activity

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1-8 | Top couple cross right hand, cast off two place, cross right hand and cast up one place while bottom two couples dance rights and lefts |
| 9-16 | Dance right hands across at the ends, followed by left hands across in the middle |
| 17-24 | All dance reels of four on the sides |
| 25-32 | Turn right hand at the ends (2 bars), left hands across in the middle (4 bars) and dancing couples cast off. |

That doesn't look too complicated, does it? That's the essence of the dance. Apart from the first 8 bars of each half, you are doing exactly the same thing – you just do it at the top the first time, and at the bottom the second time. The first 8 bars aren't exactly tricky, either. You just need to be careful of your timing to make sure the cross doesn't get in the way of the rights and lefts. You have to be ready for the right hand turn, and it's quite nippy, but you've had the reel of four to settle yourself. In fact the hardest bit seems to be for the original first couple to remember not to start again on bar 129. So have another look at *The One O'Clock Canon*, with the thought that maybe it's not that difficult after all. It only contains simple figures, and there are only 40 distinct bars to it, you just repeat 24 bars at the opposite end of the set.

Ian Brockbank

University of Cumbria Research

During the second week of February there was some country dancing on the Borders evening local news. Members of RSCDS Duns featured in some dancing to accompany a report from the University of Cumbria.

New research reveals Scottish country dancing can delay ageing process

New research by the University of Cumbria reveals Scottish country dancing is beneficial to the health of older women and can help to delay the ageing process. The university's Active Ageing Research Group (AARG) has published its recent findings in the 'Journal of Ageing and Physical Activity'. Researchers found that this type of physical activity can delay the ageing process in locomotion-related activities in older women and can benefit their functional ability. AARG, in partnership with the University of Strathclyde, analysed data from women aged 60-80, who had taken part in Scottish country dancing for at least ten years, and their ability to perform day-to-day tasks in comparison to non-dancers of the same age group. The 26 Scottish country dancers and 34 non-dancers, who were all healthy and participated in the same amount of physical activity each week, were assessed on a variety of tasks, such as how far they could walk in six minutes, how fast they could cover six metres, or how far they could reach towards their toes while seated. While the results showed dancers and non-dancers aged 60-70 had similar functional abilities, the analysis revealed dancers aged 70-80 performed better than their non-dancer counterparts in the various tasks.

The researchers believe that the effect of the ageing process on locomotor-related activities in Scottish country dancers can potentially be delayed due to the routines which combine forwards and sideways movements with side-skipping, turning and hopping elements – all of which combat the deterioration of the nervous system. The study states: "These findings advocate the participation in Scottish country dance in combating the inevitable degenerative effects of ageing in the performance of functional ability tasks when compared with age-matched individuals participating in other forms of physical activity."

Dr Susan Dewhurst, lead researcher and Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Physiology, said: "With the ageing population being a major concern due to the impact on public services and particularly the NHS,

promoting active ageing that will result in independent and healthy living is crucial, both for the NHS and the individuals concerned. "The present study shows that Scottish country dancing can be an appealing form of exercise to achieve that, as it not only brings the social and mental well-being of group dancing but it also helps to maintain functional ability."

Age-related physical degeneration severely affects people's quality of life and puts a large amount of strain on the NHS. With the number of people aged 65 or over projected to rise to more than 16 million (nearly 50%) in the next 20 years, AARG is committed to finding ways which can lessen the effects of ageing, by identifying the most effective interventions of age-related degeneration and promoting them into future health schemes, as well as developing scientific research which can be translated into practical applications.

Anyone who is interested in AARG's work can email activeageing@cumbria.ac.uk

Peter Clark

Controlled Abandon

We asked for comments from members about the BBC TV programme *Controlled Abandon*. Thank you to those who replied. There were very few favourable comments. A few groups did see some new beginners in January. Some of the comments I received were mildly critical; some were more forthright.

I was asked to write a review of the programme for the Spring edition of *Scottish Country Dancer*. In order to do so, I managed to get hold of a copy of the programme from a friend who recorded it and have watched it several times. Rather than repeat what you will all read in the magazine, here are questions which members and non-members raised:

Why did the programme makers choose to focus on the Advanced Class at St Andrews and not the Very Advanced Class?

Why was there hardly anything about Scotland?

How were the interviewees chosen?

Why were there so many scenes of people dancing when the soundtrack was in a different tempo - people dancing a strathspey when the music was in fast time?

Why did the Society give the programme-makers access to Summer School, but not insist on some editorial control?

Having spoken to countless dancers and many non-dancers about the programme, I am left with a profound sense of sadness that something we all feel passionate about was badly mis-represented. A cousin of mine in the Outer Hebrides watched it because she knew I was involved in country dancing. She asked me, "Why was it so un-Scottish?" I have no answer for her.

Jimmie Hill

TAS AGM

What do members think TAS should do at the Society's Teachers' Association Conference at the AGM in November? Have we any ideas for a presentation, or how to interest members of the Society and other Teachers' Groups? Write in or make a suggestion at the next workshop.

Website Launch

The TAS website was launched in February at:

www.countrydanceteachersofscotland.org.uk

That's a lot of typing, but fortunately you can add it to your favourites and never need to type it again.

We now have a basic website with some information about TAS, copies of past newsletters and leaflets, information on the forthcoming workshops and some (hopefully) useful links. What happens next? Hopefully TAS members will think of things that they would like the website to do for them and let a

committee member know. Even better, some of you might like to start working on new leaflets (or pages on the website) that will help new (and not so new) teachers develop their skills. Here are some ideas to get you started, if you would like to get involved with any of these or can think of other useful things that the website could do, let us know.

- Would you like to see a discussion forum as part of the TAS web offering?
Or maybe strathspey is enough for you?
- Would you be prepared to contribute to new TAS leaflets?
- Would you be prepared to review new books and CDs?
- What are your favourite warm-up dances?
- What is the best dance (or set of dances) for teaching formation X?
- How did you develop your observation skills?

Bill Austin

Huge thanks to Bill Austin! Ideas and comments to Bill (bill.austin@rsclds-dline.org.uk). We have had e-mails of congratulation and three members who have applied for the next workshop as a result of the website.

Membership

There are 36 members who have not renewed their membership yet. If you would like to renew, please fill in the form at the end of this newsletter.

Workshop details

Aberdeen Saturday 12 April

Ruthrieston West Church, Broomhill Road, Aberdeen AB10 7NS

The workshop sessions will begin at 11.00 and end at 15.30. A lunch break will be taken at a suitable point and there will be an opportunity for discussion after Session 2.

- 10.30 Registration/coffee
11.00 **Session 1: Teaching Low Impact Classes**
Warming-up with Jenny Greene (Perth Branch)
Dancing skills with Les Lambert (Glasgow Branch)
Session 2: Dances with unusual formations introduced by members
15.30 Finish

Glasgow Saturday 26 April

Westerton Hall, Maxwell Avenue, Glasgow G61 1NZ

The workshop sessions will begin at 11.00 and end at 15.30. A lunch break will be taken at a suitable point and there will be an opportunity for discussion after Session 2.

- 10.30 Registration/coffee
11.00 **Session 1: Teaching Low Impact Classes**
Warming-up with Jenny Greene (Perth Branch)
Dancing skills with Anne Smyth (Lochaber Branch)
Session 2: Dances with unusual formations introduced by members
15.30 Finish

Spring Workshop Application

- Members £4, visitors £6 (which gives temporary membership until Aug 2014)
- Please bring you own packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be available.
- Members can book by e-mail, (clarks@pjclark3.plus.com) stating their name and which workshop they will attend. You can pay your fee on arrival. State your name, telephone number and state clearly whether you will be attending Glasgow or Aberdeen.
- Members without email, please use the application form below.
- Non-members please use the application form below and post to:
Peter Clark, 22 Corberry Park, Dumfries, DG2 7NG

TAS Spring Workshops

Please tick:

Aberdeen 12 April 2014	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glasgow 26th April 2014	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name

TAS Member yes / no Fee enclosed £4 / £6

E-mail.....

Tel.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Non-members who wish to be temporarily included on our mailing list
please also provide your postal address:

.....

Post Code.....

Completed forms with payment to be returned by 7th April 2014 please

Telephone enquiries: Peter - 01387 269171

Teachers' Association Scotland 2013-2014

Membership renewal

Name

Branch

Address

.....

Post Code

Tel

E-mail

Personal details – mark appropriate qualifications held:

RSCDS Teacher's Certificate Full / Part / None

Certificate for First Aid / Food hygiene

Fee due: Membership £5

I enclose £

Signature

Date

Send to:

**The Treasurer, Les Lambert, 16 Ewing Street, Kilbarchan, PA10 2JA
(Tel: 01505 704398)**