

Teachers Association Scotland - Affiliated to RSCDS
AGM & WORKSHOP REPORT – 29th-30th August 2025

TAS brings together folk, mainly from Scotland, who teach Scottish Country Dancing. The majority are RSCDS qualified dance teachers. We meet twice a year, Spring & Autumn. One event is usually within the Central Belt and the other further afield to encourage others who find it difficult to travel to the Central Belt. The AGM is held at our Autumn event.

After a pleasant run through from the Clyde Coast we booked into the Crown Court Hotel in the Stirling University Campus, which gave us a short drive to our Weekend Venue, Bridge of Allen Parish Church Hall. Parking this year was a tad difficult as the Coop carpark is now a building site.

Although we had an excellent programme, the Friday Social Dance was not so well attended as previous years. Five sets. Other dances in the local area the previous night and also on the Saturday kept some folk away. It was a pity we were down to 5 sets, but, on the other hand, isn't it great that local dancers have the option of various dances to attend.

Last year we had Michael Taylor, a young accordion player from Fife, playing for the classes. This year we had Michael and his Swilcan Band playing for the Friday Dance. Excellent music. Personally, I enjoyed the percussion with the blocks, a nice touch. A very good night even with slightly lower numbers.

Saturday morning found as back in the Church Hall, coffee and chat to begin, then settle down at 1045 for the business part of our weekend – our AGM. The usual Reports on finance and activities accepted. Then the difficult part of the meeting. Who will volunteer to replace committee members retiring after their stint? Eventually Sue Porter (Oban & Lorne) eventually agreed (as no one else offered) to replace George Watt as Treasurer. Two vacant places on committee were filled by Anne Thorn (Helensburgh & District) and Jayne Riddett (Dumfries)

Business over it was time to have a look at the new book, Book 54. The first Class was led by Ian Brockbank with Neil Galloway on accordion.

Time to relax, chat and have lunch, quite often a Pick & Mix as we all bring our own and spread it on the table. A good time to mix and meet other teachers and find out what they get up to. One couple we sat beside were from Buchan. In addition to dancing they were beekeepers and had 5 hives with about 150 thousand bees – that keeps them busy over the summer.

Lunch over, it was then over to Heather Cowan to lead us into other parts of Book 54, again with Neil on accordion. In both sessions we look at the various dances from the new book. Looking at any tricky parts and then dancing the full dance, with, of course, discussion on how best to teach etc.

Our final session of the day was about Archives. Pam McNicol, an archivist with Stirling Council gave an interesting and informative talk on the Preservation of Documents. A lot of information on what to store. What to use for storage and what not to use. Where to store and where not. Repairs. Temperature. Lighting etc etc., All important info when we are storing documents etc. From a Branch point of view we also need to know WHAT to store. From my own Branch experience, I believe, we have many documents that we no longer need in our archive. Documents like RSCDS Bulletins, no longer published. When we put them in our archive, Forty, fifty years ago that was our only way to research years gone by. Now, of course we have online access to the Society Archive where we can research Branch & Society history. Perhaps something we need to look at and bring our Archive material up to date?

Unfortunately neither the sound nor the visuals were as good as they could be. Something TAS needs to improve in future.

As is normal, an excellent Weekend. Time to Dance, Time to Chat, Time to catch up with ~~old~~ long-time Friends and Time to meet Teachers from other parts of Scotland that we haven't met before.

Roy Bain