

4th Biennial Teachers Conference

4th November 2016 in Perth

Report on Conference

Sue Porter, Convenor of E&T, welcomed 74 attendees to the 4th Biennial Teachers' Associations Conference in Perth. Teachers had come from both west and east coasts of USA, Europe, New Zealand as well as the UK. There was a wide range of experience to draw upon, from those non certificated teachers, who fill in at classes occasionally, to several who perhaps don't like to always admit to how long they have been teaching! This contributed to a good mix to stimulate discussions.

DISCUSSION ~ JOINT PROJECTS WITH RSCDS AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS

Irene Paterson, Chairman of Teachers Association Canada (TAC) outlined the successful joint project between RSCDS and TAC to review the teaching notes for the Miscellany books. A group consisting of four experienced teachers, two members from each of TAC and RSCDS, was set up to look at the notes previously published by TAC & RSCDS. Their conclusions and also an additional facility of pronunciations of dance names will appear on the RSCDS Website in due course.

Attendees were then split into 6 groups to discuss suggestions for future joint projects between RSCDS and the Teacher Associations. A variety of topics arose, with several groups suggesting the same topics. Topics from the discussions are outlined in Appendix A.

FORMATIONS INDEX

A presentation was given by Anselm Lingnau, Convenor of Membership Services, on the forthcoming, updated Formation Index. As well as giving the basic information as per the current Index, on which formations are in a particular dance or which dances contain a particular formation, there will be a facility to cross reference formations which will be very useful to teachers when making lesson plans or compiling dance programmes.

LOW IMPACT DANCING

After lunch Anne Smyth lead a practical dancing session, accompanied on keyboard by Angela Young. Anne's objective for the class was to recognise the physical limitations of the average dancer now attending SCD classes and to compensate for them without losing the individuality of the dance. Anne covered the technique of the five basic SCD steps and various formations and how they may be adapted for low impact dancing in the dances Shadow Book 50, Sands of Morar Book 45 and Trip to the Netherlands Book 32. Further details of her session are in Appendix B.

YOUTH COMMITTEE WORK

Anne McArthur, Convenor of Youth Services enthusiastically gave an insight into the areas that her committee covered. Members of her committee oversee the organisation of events such as Youth workshops, the annual Spring Fling, with its expanding number of attendees each year and the Global Youth Week. Anne promotes the Accreditation Scheme for schools undertaking Scottish country dancing as part of the curriculum. There are 3 levels of participation. This scheme is available to all schools worldwide.

DISCUSSION ~ CONTINUING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

a) Post gaining RSCDS Teaching Certificate

b) Teaching without RSCDS Teaching Certificate

After coffee, the attendees were split into 6 groups which were of a different composition to the morning groups. Once more several groups suggested the same issues. Their suggestions are outlined in Appendix C

The conference finished with Sue thanking all those who had contributed to the success of the day by giving a presentation, facilitating or notetaking for a group and Moira Thomson, RSCDS Events Officer for the administration side of the conference.

Sue Porter,
Outgoing Convenor of Education & Training
November 2016

∞ ∞ ∞

APPENDIX A

DISCUSSION ~ JOINT PROJECTS WITH RSCDS AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS

Filming of RSCDS published dances.

- a) Ask TAs and branches to help but there would need to be guidelines in place re format and standards for videoing
- b) Not all dance videos currently on You Tube (not RSCDS site) are correct. TAs could check and add a descriptor
 - ~highlight if dance has been modified e.g. for demonstration/ festival
 - ~ RSCDS approval as to correctness

Note: already underway is a project to transfer existing suitable videos so they can be uploaded onto the RSCDS You Tube site. These are for Books 32 – 48

Filming of formations and teaching of formations

- a) Agree on format for videoing formations and also to video the teaching of formations

Filming other topics

- a) Ceilidh dances
- b) Warm ups
- c) Popular local dances not published by RSCDS
- d) For the archives a video record of dances by key devisors such as Drewry and Goldring

Information on

- a) Teaching older / less agile dancers
- b) A central hub/ total resource where everything is together

Question and Answers committee

- a) committee to review any query in relation to SCD

Members of the committee are chosen globally to bring their skills to the committee

Note: There is currently a Technical Advice Panel, who answer queries on SC dancing. Apart from the E&T convenor, who chairs the panel, the others are chosen for their teaching and background knowledge expertise.

Teacher Associations

- a) consider encouraging the setting up of TAs in new areas outlining the benefits to teachers
- b) reach out to unaffiliated groups
- c) TAs support branches in guidance for teachers
- d) ensure branches make their teachers aware of benefits in attending workshops
- e) should share their information with each other

RSCDS Website

- a) interactive teachers' section on the website

Electronic communication

- a) virtual learning environments ~ MOOCs with on line forums for
 - ~ teacher training
 - ~ on line classes for new formations
 - ~ unusual dances
 - ~ classes for groups that are remote from qualified teachers/ new dances for group
- b) live webinars (skype, video conference calls) expanding from You Tube videos to allow more interaction with HQ/ other qualified teachers and building on what universities are using for distance learning.
- c) expansion of online tools for remote teachers
- d) online forum with teaching points on formations with RSCDS & TAs approving content

Manual

- a) Manual online in html script with interactive videos? RSCDS & TAs approving videos that could be linked into the manual.
- b) join up TAC & Manual Notes
- c) Leaflets book teaching notes
- d) helpful phonetic spelling

Compilation of existing RSCDS books

- a) from book 31 onwards. Members from TAs being involved.

Printing of RSCDS books overseas

- a) RSCDS specifies format & style but the work is contracted out to TAs, large branches or groups of branches
- b) consider e-publications of books
- c) worldwide printing & distribution contract to reduce shipping costs or allowing associations to print proofs locally

Use of Teacher Associations

- a) need to determine what constitutes a teachers association. Is it just a self-help group?
- b) group in Japan translates items into Japanese
- c) TAs seem to have come into existence due to need for support & CPD that RSCDS was not providing when they were set up. This is not necessarily the case today.
- d) helpful to have a list of teachers & means of organising support groups regionally. May all be called *Teacher Associations* but could be structured in different ways. 'Two way street' with information & experience shared by all.
- e) use TAs to feedback information to local branches
- f) TAS & RSCDS - collaboration on a book specifically aimed at dances for festivals for children with RSCDS approving all dances in the book

Music

- a) building on the project for Miscellanies by adding music to the dances that do not have their own original tune. Completing the project of issuing CDs to support the Miscellanies.

- b) online music resource for branches and individual teachers who do not have the benefit of musicians playing for classes. Also manuscripts for musicians. Collections of any good reels / jigs / strathspey / waltzes for warm ups & cool downs that could be used for classes.
- c) more publicity about the music available on the RSCDS (media) for breaking down the teaching of dances in books 48-50

∞ ∞ ∞

APPENDIX B

AGM TAS LOW IMPACT WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Objective of the class was to recognise the physical limitations of the average dancer now attending SCD classes, and to compensate for them without losing the uniqueness and individuality of the dance.

The workshop lasted 1½ hours and covered the technique of the basic steps ie; slip step, skip change and setting in quick time then Strathspey travel and setting.

Something I always remember is some of the dancers have more knowledge than me and I can learn from them!!

Step Practice

Skip Change. First, using any good jig time music to demonstrate the principle of the step.

- In 2s, facing each other, Women dance round partner with 8 skip change of step, then, men repeat. Emphasise the need to encourage dancers to maintain their first into third position and straight leg, keeping the shape but reducing or leaving out the energetic hop at the start where the stress on the ankles is greatest.
- To help dancers with LONG STEPS required in the dance, ask them to narrow the distance between them, slightly, and dance round each other in 4 steps, 1st passing partner by R. shoulder and pulling back R. shoulder on return to place, then passing Left shoulder and pulling back Left shoulder on return to place.
 - Turn partner LH 1¼ to finish facing men's side OR compensate with a ¾ turn as it is hard for 1st man - He has a tight turn and change of body angle

Slip Step. Make up 3 couple sets, circle round and back. Concentrate on rhythm, dancing in time to the music and the timing of the step. Encourage reach into 2nd position and close in 1st position but eliminate the lift. Try to eliminate scraping the feet along the floor. The secret is not to travel round too far, be realistic.

Formations – I worked on bars 9-24 thinking about “teamwork” and “long & short steps”

DANCE 1 - Shadow (J) Bk. 50 was chosen as it is a Jig out of book 50 and only 2 Pas de basque, so a good starter dance. It was also used to illustrate Teamwork, helpfulness & HOW to compensate for difficulties.

Strathspey Step Practice

Again concentrated on the timing of the step, and keeping that first/third shape with a straight leg. Probably biggest problem on the dance floor is the pull though with bent knee, then hop! However, I try and recognise that whilst low impact dancers cannot spring as they used to, it's also becoming a problem in bending the knee into the step and keeping balance. I try to encourage a slow pull through, if possible! Style and posture can hide a lot of other faults, so, I concentrated on Upper Body.

- In 2s, we looked at curving to partner's place, setting (transition) & crossing back to own side Right hand, and setting – 2 bar phrases

Formation – I worked on The Tourbillion – length of steps, phrasing and the helpfulness of turning partners with 2 hands. I demonstrated how to simply limit the effect of all that setting and turning BH without losing the character of the dance.

DANCE 2 - Sands of Morar (S) Bk. 45. Was chosen because I live in Lochaber, where the Sands of Morar are situated. It is a dance where partners can help each other to work on Phrasing, and it CAN be achieved. Being economical with one's dancing in order to try and get to the right place on time. Lots of emphasis placed on dancers being aware of each other and dancing for their partner.

Step Practice

Pas de Basque. • A little demo to show how we would normally approach the step technique, then developing this to maintain the foot position and individuality of the step without the bounce and stress on the ankles. • In 2s back to back facing 1st corners – set to imaginary 1st corner, then move to the right with 3rd Pas de basque to face 4th corner and Pas de basque left

Formation – I worked on the Allemande pointing out it can be done in Promenade hold if some dancers have difficulty with lifting their arms

DANCE 3 - Trip to the Netherlands (R) Bk 32 – This dance was chosen as there is moving Pas de basque but easy because it is moving to the right on the right foot. Also, there is a lot of importance of giving of hands & how do we compensate for those with shoulder/arm problems

EXTRA Hints - When I'm taking a low impact class, I try to put a lot of emphasis on posture and style (Head up shoulders back etc.) Encourage dancers to glide across the floor with minimum lurching or shoulder movement. This usually works and can compensate for any loss of step technique or inability to dance with great urge or flow.

After an exercise look at how to soften a step or movement to limit stress. Put it into a dance but sometimes, only dance once through for each couple. Lot of emphasis on posture and

Subtle step practice as required in the dance as they get tired, and they are generally very experienced. We have to be aware of problems & places you might have to step in e.g. CPCP for someone who gets dizzy.

Anne Smyth November 2016

∞ ∞ ∞

APPENDIX C

DISCUSSION ~ CONTINUING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS CONCERNING THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

- 1) Following scenarios should be considered in reviewing the training of teachers
 - Those who have no interest in going through the certificate process
 - Those who may be interested, but have not yet embarked on the exam course
 - Those who have failed at some point when taking their certificate
- 2) More information available on what is involved with undertaking Units 1 – 3 before dancers sign up for the course.
- 3) Teacher Associations and other local teacher groups should actively promote or invite interest in running Teaching Certificate courses locally.
- 4) Be careful of being too prescriptive as different local groups have different requirements.
- 5) Look at alternative paths to qualification for people, who are not physically able to demonstrate but are good teachers. However this needs to be achieved in a way that does not see the Teaching Certificate being devalued.
- 6) Value in recognising a part qualification eg. Basic Teaching Skills Certificate (not just record of attendance at a course). This could be encouragement to progress to Teaching Certificate courses.
- 7) Discussion about what should be available to all regarding teaching and what should be available to those, who have passed the Teaching Certificate.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT CLASSES

Perhaps consider the following

- Variation on weekly beginners' classes such as run short / weekend courses across groups / clubs in an area to help boost beginner numbers so they can progress into intermediate classes or social dancing.
- Timing of classes ~ daytime may attract different clientele

TEACHING WITHOUT GAINING RSCDS TEACHING CERTIFICATE

General comments

- Teacher workshops should be open to all those teaching classes with or without Teaching Certificate. Those that currently do this find it successful.
- Refresher courses for non- certificated & certificated teachers run by Tutor of Teacher Certificate courses.

- Advertise workshops in Scottish Dancer magazine same as dance workshops & contact local groups
- Involve the Teacher Associations in delivery of courses /workshops
- Qualified branch teachers should be encouraged to take responsibility for networking with other local dance group leaders & branches organise workshops for non-certificated teachers
- Encourage experienced qualified teachers to act as mentors for inexperienced teachers.

Workshops topics covering

- MC ing dances
- Programme devising
- Running walkthroughs for dances
- Help with music
- Basic teaching skills ~ standards, syllabus, emphasis of course
 - ~ for when regular teacher is away / retires
 - ~ Stage 1 when passing Units 1 & 3.

Basic Teaching Skills

- Encourage more groups to run Basic Teaching skills courses
- Courses need to be publicised better on website, Facebook, Scottish Dancer magazine
- Expand course & enhance to appeal to both dancers thinking about becoming teachers and dancers (non-certificated) already teaching local groups
- Some non-certificated teachers of above a certain age, might never be able to gain the physical dexterity to pass Unit 2. This means that BTS needs to be flexible to include practise skills these experienced & knowledgeable dance leaders need and can attain.

Dancing Achievement Award (DAA)

- In some situations gaining this award can have benefits eg. in Spain a dancers gaining the DAA was allowed by their group to teach/ MC

Supporting materials

- 'Jigs & Reels' and 'Dance Trad' packs
 - ~ support school teachers who wish to use these resources
 - ~ forum for collecting feedback on using these materials & how teachers are adapting the material to suit the classes that they are teaching
 - ~ encourage use of these packs with non-school & adult classes where suitable
- Develop equivalent pack for adults to those above.
- Resources for social dancing groups either low impact or who do not have much interest in the technique aspect of SCD. E.g. 'Be Active Live Longer' & University of 3rd Age' groups
- On passing Teaching Certificate a pack including what resources available for teaching schools, who to contact for advice etc.
- E- learning packages to assist non certificated teachers

RSCDS Website

- A slimmed down version of the teachers' area for non-certificated teachers

∞ ∞ ∞

POST GAINING RSCDS TEACHING CERTIFICATE

CONTINUING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT (CTD)

GENERAL COMMENTS

E & T COMMITTEE

- should be more involved in running workshops and mentoring skills courses
- ask teachers what they want in way of CTD
- encourage CTD and teachers to be self-critical
- areas with spread-out branches need to have courses over a weekend for travelling
- could notify branches of members passing various Units as some dances take exams away from home. Confidentiality issues?
- 1 year after gaining Unit 3 or Unit 5 , E&T contact candidate to find out if they have been able to teach, & what opportunities they have had to expand their teaching skills
- A list of qualified teachers in the area would be helpful if available to local clubs looking for guest teachers or wishing to invite someone to teach more regularly.

SUMMER SCHOOL

- afternoon CTD sessions for both Summer School attendees and allow non attendees to book a CTD class separately to summer school.
- Record the CTD sessions for webinars or live stream the CTD
- Offered at Summer / Winter schools outwith just ST Andrews
- Qualified teachers class should include participation by the attendees and not merely a class to teach the new book dances nor be the same format as a typical workshop for 'ordinary' dancers.

BRANCHES

- Ensure dancers during their teacher training period have opportunities to teach classes under guidance of a mentor
- Encourage the sharing of classes by teachers especially pairing new & experienced teachers
- Keep contact with new teachers to see how teaching is progressing.
- Offer teaching skills courses
- Help maintain standards

MENTORS

- Mentoring guidelines / forum for finding suitable mentors
- Example lesson plans available

- Resources for Unit 4
- Encourage mentoring beyond Unit 5
- Links of newly qualified teachers to find opportunities to teach

CTD TOPICS

- Music including expansion on what is in Manual
- How to work with musicians & recorded music in class including choosing music
- Warmups/cool downs
- More on physiology side/ how to teach about the body/ protecting yourself/ warming up/ cooling down muscles/ strengthening exercises. Lots of knowledge in the Highland dance world that could be transferred to SCD.
- Sharing of teaching plans
- Technique by stealth
- How to structure different types of classes including allowing for physical limitations
- More on recognising what your class needs and then making them want it
- Refresher courses for teachers
- Advanced figures that are currently not included in Unit 5 syllabus but are in the Manual
- Ceilidh dances
- MCing, recapping & working with a band
- Voice production
- How to market the RSCDS and become an ambassador for the RSCDS.
- Day course on different steps for SCD e.g. highland

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Interactive Q & A forum on RSCDS website to support all teachers worldwide
- Quarterly interactive webinars
- Regional workshops
- Teachers area on website – get login when you pass Teaching Certificate
- Email updates to teachers' discussion boards
- Advertise teachers' classes and workshops
- Email and other forms of alerts if the Manual has been updated
- Use of SKYPE
- Teaching Certificate units offered virtually