

## RSCDS Teachers Newsletter – Winter 2022

### **Planning & Reflection for the Autumn Gathering Saturday Class by Alasdair Brown**

My planning started by finding out what the previous teachers had taught and also what level they felt the class was at. I was told by Fiona Mackie and Deb Lees the dances they had taught and also the level they found the class to be at, together with any problems they had encountered. With it being a new venue, I also took a quick visit to view the room to try to get an idea of the size of the dance floor.

I have made a list of the RSCDS dances that I think are worth teaching from book 1 through to book 48 (yes, I should look at the newer books and will get to it!), broadly classing them between intermediate, advanced and very advanced. Based on the feedback from Fiona and Deb, I then chose to look mainly at the more straight forward advanced dances, so that there was not too much thinking about the intricacies of more difficult formations, but allowing scope to look at some of the technique in each of the dances.

Once the dances were chosen, it was then a case of planning technique around parts of the dances. I had chosen three dances that I hoped to get through in the class but also another two in case the class were exceptionally good and did everything I was looking for at the first try.

When teaching a class, I want everyone to have fun, whether that is through the enjoyment of dancing, or for the class at my expense, and also a little for me at the class's expense. In an hour and a half one-off class I will not be able to change how somebody dances, but if they go away thinking more about phrasing, or some other aspect that over time improves their general dancing then that will be mission accomplished.

On reflection of how the class went, it was generally positive. There was a fair amount of laughter in the room, and the three types of fun mentioned above were all in evidence. People did listen and rightly corrected me when the connection between my brain and mouth didn't quite work. The dancers did work hard with the general awareness of the other dancers improving. Bill Ewan as the musician for the class was as always very easy to work with, making my role much easier even though I threw a curve ball at him regarding playing the music with as little feeling as he could. My movement around the class was quite good (my view is it is always harder to hit a moving target!) but I did not get down the sides of the class as much as I should have. Whilst I did do some demonstrations, I should have done more highlighting more what part of the technique I wanted the class to concentrate on. Overall, I think everyone had a good time, and left thinking a little bit more about some parts of formations than when they came to the class.