

serTA 20th Anniversary Weekend

22nd - 24th March 2026 – Bournemouth

The South-East Region Teachers' Association (serTA) reached its 20th anniversary this year and a celebration weekend was held at the Ocean Beach Hotel in Bournemouth. We were most fortunate to have William Williamson as our teacher, and Jim Lindsay and Ian Robertson as our musicians for the weekend, which had been organised by immediate past Chair of serTA, Jane Rose.

On the Friday afternoon, 40 members of serTA began to converge at the hotel, in readiness for the planned programme of events, starting with a welcome drink, introductions, dinner and a social dance in the evening. Four members shared the evening MC-ing, and we danced to superb music from Jim and Ian.

The Saturday morning class, entitled *Teaching for the Future*, included useful advice for teachers, delivered by William with his usual humour, together with some interesting dances which focused on various aspects of technique, in particular when teaching certain formations. We were given teaching points for Corners Pass and Turn, Set and Link, and on phrasing and covering generally (these all being useful aspects of dance to consider, even when teaching dancers in our classes who may not always be able to achieve the best footwork). William highlighted the significance and importance of the RSCDS. And, we were reminded, as teachers, to consider the needs and abilities of all those individuals in our classes. We danced: *Bottoms Up*, *The Happy Meeting*, *The Publisher*, *The Far Island*, *The Cameron Reel*, *Milngavie Maestro* and *Snowdrops in the Glen*.

On Saturday afternoon, there were four short talks (one of which was accompanied by dancing) given by members (see also reports of each in our serTA Library : www.sertascd.org/library)

Campbell's Lists: Raquel Fernandez described the Frequent Dance Lists with help from a video recorded by Campbell Tyler. These are published lists of dances, which have been created to show specific dance statistics, including which dances are done the most by type, position and by specific countries worldwide. Raquel asked that groups send in their programmes. (The lists can be found on the RSCDS International Branch website, under 'Campbell's Lists' www.rscds-ib.org)

Teaching dancers with hearing loss: Sheena Henderson highlighted the difficulties faced by those with poor hearing and gave some strategies to help cope when teaching hearing-impaired dancers. Incredibly one in three dancers over the age of 70 will have some form of hearing loss.

Nursery Rhymes: Jim explained to us how the music for Chris Ronald's book, *Formation Foundations*, had come about. Chris had asked Jim for specific Nursery Rhyme tunes and Jim explained how he had put together the music so that it could be used for dancing. He explained his ideas which turned straight forward and slightly boring nursery rhyme tunes into excellent danceable tracks. Look out for the bell in *Ding Dong Bell!*

All the dances in the book have been devised to teach a particular formation and Chris Ronald

has given teaching points as well as skills exercises alongside them. (The book and two accompanying CDs are available from the Leeds Branch shop.) Jane taught us three simple dances which we enjoyed dancing, to Jim's music: *Three Blind Mice*, *All things Nice* and *Ring O' Roses*.

Oxford – a marketing success story: Christine Jeffery described the various initiatives which her Branch has made to increase the number of new members which have been incredibly successful and a useful discussion took place about marketing and recruiting new dancers.

On Saturday evening, after dinner, we enjoyed the social dance again with wonderful music played by Jim and Ian. This evening we had recaps from four serTA committee members who helped our tired brains! At the break, we enjoyed a celebration glass of Bucks Fizz and cake made by serTA member, Caroline Catterall. The cake was cut by Jim after we had sung "Happy Birthday, serTA"! Lizzy read out a congratulatory message we had received from Gary Coull, Chair RSCDS.

On Sunday morning, William guided us expertly, and again with great humour, through a number of varied dances, giving useful advice for when teaching them in our own classes. We danced: *Dunedin Festival Dance*, *The Smiddy Jig*, *The Thursday Dram*, *Bon Voyage*, *Nineteenth of December*, *Osgood Mackenzie of Inverewe*, *Waltz Country Dance*, *MacGregors Gathering* and *Grand Central Station*.

Throughout the weekend, we had been fortunate with the warm spring weather. Apart from all the dancing, we were able to socialise and get to know fellow teachers from our region. We were particularly lucky to not only have William, immediate past Chairman of the RSCDS, with us but also the Treasurer of the Society, Lizzy Conder, the Convenors of Youth Services, Linda Williamson, and Membership Services, Jeremy Hill, as well as a member of the Management Board, Christine Jeffery. They were all happy to discuss the future of the Society and projects to encourage new members in particular.

Just after noon on Sunday, and very sadly, the Weekend came to an end. Thanks were given to all those who had contributed, and especially to our teacher and musicians. We were very grateful to Jane Rose who had, so magnificently organised the event. We had all benefited so much – it was a great opportunity to meet up with fellow members, learn a lot, have fun dancing, as well as celebrate a significant anniversary of serTA.

Peter Loveland

