



## South East Region Teachers Association

### **Teaching technique by stealth**

**Graham Donald**

**March 2016**

Reporter: Sarah Kelsall Patel

On a bright Sunday morning we amassed at Bovingdon Hall – a group of people with many years of Scottish Dancing experience between them.

Teaching by Stealth was led by Graham Donald and the aim was to improve the technique of dancers and teachers in a non-dictatorial manner. We started with a warm up and A Milford Welcome, which gave us further opportunity to prepare for the day ahead. The importance of posture was emphasised and holding in of the core (thank goodness for Pilates), presentation of hands and foot accuracy – as these are necessary to set a good impression to be copied by class members.

We then progressed to travelling step practice, set & link and The Elusive Muse – all the time being subtly coached to tweak and improve. Strathspey travelling was then put to the test and Lyn's Labyrinth performed.

The onus was then switched to us as we were split into three groups and given a dance On the Edge of the Sand and various tasks associated with teaching and recapping the dance. It was interesting to see how a group of teachers differed so much in their ability to

acquire and assimilate the knowledge to carry out their task in a limited period of time. Feedback was provided by one of the groups on how it went.

Demonstrate rather than too many words (difficult for some) in both teaching and recapping dances – succinct with no waffling or unnecessary detail was the key.

After lunch Pas de Basque, double triangles and the dancing of White Sands and strathspey setting step. Then all round Poussette and Snow on the Roof and final group participation: assessing formations needed and finer details in phrasing, technique etc. to teach The Shetland Fiddler.

Music for the day was provided by Ian Robertson on his accordion, who informed us of his choices of tunes and their composers. His playing helped lift us further to improve our dancing and hopefully we will be able to relay our better understanding to our classes in future.

**Sarah Kelsall-Patel**