



South East Region Teachers Association

Keep Teenagers Dancing Marilyn Watson assisted by Keely Sept 2016 SERTA Weekend

Reporter: Ann Other
Photo: Stephen Webb

Marilyn began her presentation by highlighting the efforts she had made to encourage the RSCDS to give more financial help to young dancers in the form of grants and scholarships to help them to attend the St Andrews Summer School. We listened to some of the exchange of letters between H/Q and Marilyn on the subject.



Marilyn had prepared for her talk by writing to her ex dancers, all of whom had been in her group of young dancers called the Macauley Dancers, a group she had taught over 26 years, which is now disbanded. She used their words to tell us why they had carried on dancing through their teenage years. From their responses, Marilyn, assisted by Keely, read out 6 or 7 of the replies.

We heard from Helen, Laura, Lesley, Nicky, & Emily to name a few, all of them emphasized the fun, the friendships, the camaraderie, the challenge of learning something new, the confidence they gained, the enjoyment of all the social activities which were arranged during the year, the rewards for trying hard and the ethos of striving to do better.

The competitions were mentioned repeatedly; we heard Slough, Cardiff and the Wimbourne Festival referred to often, as were the trips that were arranged for the afternoon following the morning competition. Thorpe Park seemed to be a favourite.

They all loved their dancing, their classes with Marilyn and Margaret, the challenge of the competitions and social dancing with the good adult dancers of the Bournemouth Branch.

Keely, aged 13, one of the 2 remaining Macauley dancers, ended the talk by telling us why she loved Scottish dancing, echoing the views expressed in the letters. She followed this with a demonstration of a Ladies' Step dance, 'Blue Bonnets', accompanied by Judith and Ian Muir.

We had all been given an insight into why the girls had continued to dance throughout their teenage years and Marilyn ended with the advice that to keep teenagers dancing one must provide more than just dancing classes.