



South East Region Teachers Association

Inclusive dancing Malcolm Brown 30 Sept 2018

Reporter: Hilary Maidstone

The SERTA Teachers' Workshop was held at Collingwood School, Sutton, on Sunday 30th September 2018 with Malcolm Brown, Convenor of the Education & Training Committee, and Ian and Meryl Thomson playing for us.

Malcolm gave a lively and interesting presentation on Inclusive Dancing. He told us about a visit to Novosibirsk in Russia, during which he had met some very interesting dancers. The eventual upshot of this was that he was asked to teach Scottish dancing to some wheelchair users in Samara and of course, being up for a challenge, said yes. He had to work out which formations could be danced and that it might be easier to allow 16 bars rather than eight, and reel or jig music would be easier than strathspey. Formations such as advance and retire, rights and lefts, hands across etc could be done but wheelchairs are not easy to turn in a small area so reels would be difficult. Wheelchairs also take up more room so this needs to be taken into account as well.

We watched a couple of short videos showing how this worked in practice. Some were complete beginners and some had been dancers before being confined to a wheelchair. It was both

impressive and moving to see. Each wheelchair user had an able-bodied partner, and although most propelled their wheelchairs themselves, one person had an assistant in the earlier video which showed a class learning the formations. The second video showed part of a “Legs and Wheels Ball” with everyone dressed up in their kilts and ball gowns (Malcolm bemoaned what he sees as a decrease in dressing up for dances) and Malcolm told us that this person had decided she could manage her chair herself and didn’t need an assistant. It was most encouraging and moving to see everyone enjoying themselves and joining in the dancing. Then it was our turn. Malcolm asked us to get into pairs, one person with their eyes closed and being guided round the room by the other, so we could imagine what it is like to be disabled.

We then did various formations in threes, a pair in promenade hold still with one “blind” person, so that we could try the different formations, work out the difficulties, and imagine the space used by a wheelchair. There was much hilarity and I think we all learnt a lot from this exercise – I know I did. We did four of the dances that Malcolm had devised especially for this group – Wheels & Legs, Wheels in Samara, All Inclusive, A Bundle of Eights. The instructions for these are available (on the SERTA website?) if anyone wishes to try these out.

Elizabeth Bennett gave us a short presentation with some ideas on meeting and dancing with dancers with disabilities that may not be immediately apparent. She has Parkinson’s and has particular difficulties with balance, so a quick turn might cause her problems in a dance. This means having to tell not only her partner but the other dancers in a set, so they didn’t try to grab her for a birl. We all decided that we should be more considerate of others in any set we might stand up for. I am sure that we are where someone is obviously disabled or if they tell us, but it may be that we simply have to be more aware that a dancer may not be able to twirl, for instance.

Elizabeth told us that it is essential if you have such a condition to keep moving and exercising, to keep the brain active as well as the body. She said the benefits of dancing are not just in social interaction but also in encouraging people to do more, and it was very clear from Malcolm's discussion and videos that everyone was benefiting from the dancing and the challenges.

Malcolm gave us a very quick run-through of the proposed changes to the Teaching qualification. It is proposed that the theory test will be an "open book" test and much of the training will be more real-life situations. It will be much more online-based, with examiners perhaps watching videos of classes taken by the candidates and resources such as training videos of steps and formations, teaching sessions and the Unit 2 dances. Mentors will act much more as tutors than they do at present and have to give a positive recommendation before a candidate can enter. The Syllabus and Assessment Sheets have been looked at thoroughly and changes made here too. Two dances have been added to Unit 2, Rodney's Rant and Summer Wooing, with Gates of Edinburgh and Woo'd an' Married an' A' taken out, and re-caps are irrelevant to this exam so have been removed. Currently there is no training on being an MC for a dance and providing re-caps so this will be added, as well as some guidance on planning a programme. Candidates should be able to start a new class confidently once they are qualified.

There will also be special modules such as teaching children, young people, low-impact dancing, etc. There was quite a bit of interest in these modules as they could be taken separately by qualified teachers to extend their professional development. Malcolm said, "Watch this space ..." and urged us to look at the new website. We don't know quite when this will be ready. He also said that it is proposed that the database of members will include teaching qualifications as we don't actually know how many teachers of Scottish dance there are.

After lunch Malcolm took us through five of the more difficult dances in Book 52 – City Lights, The Aviator, Forty and Counting, Ruby Wilkinson’s Farewell to Cranshaws, Farewell to Balfour Road – with excellent playing throughout from Ian and Meryl Thomson. Again, there was much hilarity and some of us decided that there are some dances here we couldn’t teach to our general classes! A very enjoyable session. A most informative, interesting and enjoyable day – and delicious cake for tea – a big thank you to Malcolm, Ian and Meryl Thomson, and all the SERTA organisers.

Hilary Maidstone

Inclusive Dances

Dance descriptions for dances devised by Malcolm Brown, included in talk and dancing at SERTA Workshop September 2018.

All Inclusive

Longwise set – “for as many as will”

Reel

Arina Volgina & Malcolm Brown

1 - 4 All advance & retire

5 - 8 All advance & retire

9 - 16 All turn Right Hand

17 - 24 All turn Left Hand

25 - 32 [4] All back to back (Passing Right Shoulder to start)

[4] All back to back (Passing Left Shoulder to start)

33 - 40 Top couple lead to the bottom (optional – and turn) – everyone else move up

Music: Duke & Duchess of Edinburgh – Glencraig

A Bundle of Eights

5 couple (or 7 couple) Set

Reel

Malcolm Brown & Arina Volgina

- 1 - 4 1s & 3s (& 5s) cross RH, cast one place (2s, 4s (6s) step upon 3&4)
- 5 - 8 1s & 3s (& 5s) 1/2 figure of eight up through the couple above
- 9 - 12 2s & 4s (& 6s) cross RH, cast one place (1s, 3s (5s) step upon 3&4)
- 13 - 16 2s & 4s (& 6s) 1/2 figure of eight up through the couple above
- 17 - 20 1st couple lead down to the bottom, (everyone else step up on 3&4)
- 21 - 24 1st couple turn RH
- 25 - 32 All circle round and back

Spring in Samara

4 couple set

**Reel
Malcolm Brown**

1 - 8 All advance, Retire, Advance, Retire

9 - 16 All turn Right Hand

17 - 24 1s & 2s and 3s & 4s, Rights & Lefts

25 - 32 1s lead to the bottom and turn RH

Music: Reel of the 51st – Colin Dewar

Alternative: Hills of Alba – Colin Dewar

Wheels and Legs

**Reel
Malcolm Brown**

- 1 - 16 1s & 2s Right Hand across, Left Hand across
- 17 - 32 1s 2s 3s Turn RH, Turn LH
- 33 - 40 1s cross, cast, (2s step up)
- 41 - 48 1s 1/2 figure of 8 up through 2s
- 49 - 64 All three couple chase round and back (circle)

Repeat from 2nd place:

Music: The Long Chase – John Renton - It is the only music I have that is 8 by 64!

Perhaps you would like it faster - it feels awfully slow to me.

(If you use Microsoft Media Player there is a speed control you can use,

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-gb/windows/change-media-player-playback-speed#1TC=windows-7>)

Wheels in Samara

4 couple set

(to Reel time music)
Malcolm Brown

- 1 - 4 All Advance and Retire
- 5 - 8 All cross over Right hand
- 9 - 12 All Advance and Retire
- 13 - 16 All cross over Right hand
- 17 - 24 1s & 2s, and 3s & 4s, Right Hands across
- 25 - 32 1s & 2s, and 3s & 4s, Left Hands across
- 33 - 40 1s cross RH, cast to the bottom, and cross over (2s, 3s, 4s move up)

Music: Queen's Bridge – Marian Anderson

Who Follows in Samara?

4 Couple Set

**Reel
Malcolm Brown**

- 1 - 4 All advance & retire
- 5 - 8 All dance back to back (or only 1s & 3s back to back)
- 9 - 16 1s lead down the middle and up (2s step in)
- 17 - 24 1s & 2s promenade (1s finish facing out)
- 25 - 32 1s cast to the bottom and turn right hand (2s 3s 4s move up)

Music: Reel for Davina – Colin Dewar