



RSCDS London Branch Annual Report 2023-24



RSCDS London Branch Annual General Meeting Saturday 8 June 2024 at 6.45pm

This report, prepared by the Management Committee, will be presented to the AGM on Saturday 8 June 2024. Members' comments are welcome at the meeting or any time via secretary@rscdslondon.org.uk.

2023-24 has been a season of innovation and introduction with new classes and a new venue plus new musicians, new dancers, and an extended range of teachers.

RSCDS London Branch's objectives for this season were to continue work on widening its appeal to new dancers and to support the existing Beginners/Improvers and Technique class members. We wanted to provide greater opportunities for more advanced dancers with monthly teaching sessions as well as an advanced Dancing Achievement Award course. We also hoped to access training for new MCs.

The delivery of these plans has been helped significantly by our new venue, at Maria Fidelis School, near Euston Station. We have been made very welcome, the facilities are excellent, and the convenient location has made it much easier for (most) people to get there. We are looking forward to holding our Day School and Musicians' Workshop there in October.

Regular weekly classes have continued at St Columba's and Richmond as well as at Maria Fidelis. Class numbers remain strong, supplemented by enthusiastic new dancers from Richmond and the 8 week Beginners' course at Maria Fidelis, as well as people returning to dance after a gap of some years. Six of our younger dancers travelled to Cambridge for Spring Fling and RSCDS London Branch will be very well represented at RSCDS Summer School too.

Our first new monthly class, the Tuesday Social (introduced in 2022 for dancers in their 20s and 30s), has continued to flourish. This

season we added a monthly Technique class (for intermediate and more advanced dancers), a Fast-Paced Social Dance class (for advanced and very advanced dancers) and, since January, a Children's class in partnership with St Columba's Church. It has been most encouraging to welcome so many new and returning dancers to these classes and we are grateful to the teachers, musicians and administrators who have made it possible.

The Dancing Achievement Award (DAA) course which we proposed to run did not attract enough interest to proceed but we were delighted to support the RSCDS Basic Teaching Skills course, delivered by serTA, which has provided 6 new MCs for London and the South-east. In place of the DAA, we hope to launch a 'Festival' Class in the new season with the objective of taking one or more teams of dancers to a non-competitive dance festival in Summer 2025.

Dance attendance has continued to strengthen, beginning with high numbers at the Kensington Gardens dances in August and peaking with the phenomenally well attended (and well catered) Burns event in January. The New Season dance has continued as the exception to this positive trend and so we have decided to try a fresh approach, launching our 2024-25 season with a Saturday Tea Dance at Maria Fidelis School.

We have been fortunate to have been able to underwrite new (and longstanding) activities from Branch funds and the successes described above have shown a reassuring return on investment. We will continue to invest in the development of Scottish country dancing in London. Towards this end, the management committee has reviewed the bursaries previously available from the Branch and has approved a range of funding opportunities for

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Approval of the Minutes of 10 June 2023
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Report on the Branch Activities 2023-2024
5. Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts
6. Confirmation/Appointment of Honorary President and Honorary Vice Presidents
7. Appointment of Officers and Committee of Management
8. Appointment of Account Checker
9. Appointment of Branch proxy delegates to the Society AGM
10. Motions
11. Any Other Business

Note: As the number of nominations does not exceed the number of places available, there will not be an election under item 7. Nominations for the appointments at items 6 and 9 will be taken from the floor at the meeting.

dancers, musicians and teachers to access training and extend their experience. These, as well as information regarding all classes, events and other branch matters, will be publicised via the Branch website, relaunched in June 2023, and via social media, eUpdate and *The Reel*.

In conclusion, thanks are due to all those who have contributed to the Branch's successes: in no small part due to Joanne Lawrence whose three-year term as Chair has finished, and to Mel Rowland, who is stepping down after supporting the Branch so well as committee member and Honorary Secretary since 2019.

The Branch continues to thrive due to the interest and commitment of its teachers, musicians, caterers, organisers, MCs and, of course, dancers - too many to mention by name here but all playing a valuable role in the life of RSCDS London Branch. Thank you and we look forward to dancing together in the new season and beyond.