

# Arranging Scottish Country Dance classes

Promoting Scottish Country Dancing is a fundamental objective of the RSCDS and Branches are on the front line when it comes to creating opportunities for people to learn and practise dancing.

They have the difficult task of trying to provide for newcomers, children, mainstream members, people who want to dance at the highest technical levels and those who are less fit. All this has to be done, of course, without breaking the bank or employing a full-time organiser.



There are no simple answers – every Branch faces a different set of challenges, and this document is to help those who may need a bit of extra guidance and support.

## MAKE THEM WELCOME

Try to ensure that all classes are welcoming and fun, whether they are for beginners or a demonstration team!

## NAME THAT CLASS

The range of classes offered by Branches clearly reflects the committee's assessment of local needs. If your Branch simply offers "classes", you might find that one or two specialised variations would fill the needs of members and attract new members. The dancers and the teacher need to know what is expected of them, so it is important that each class has a clear and concise name.

- **A Social Class** - perhaps with the more mature dancer in mind, offering a wider repertoire of dances with less emphasis on technique.
- **A Ceilidh Class** - teaching the popular Ceilidh

dances and simple country dances as preparation for special occasions.

- **A Master Class** - giving advanced dancers the chance to experience the different teaching styles offered by a variety of guest teachers.
- **A Children's Class** (possibly subsidised) – as well as basic tuition, this might aim to prepare younger dancers for a special event (Christmas Dance, Festival performance etc). Certificates of attendance can be easily prepared locally and are greatly appreciated.
- **A "Taster" Class** (possibly subsidised) – giving new dancers a chance to learn the popular dances suitable for most occasions. Help from volunteers who are experienced dancers is a great asset.
- **A General Class** - in some Branches a general class is all that is required or feasible.

For more in-depth class names and descriptions please view the current Class Selector at the end of this document. We use this guide for RSCDS events, and they help attendees to choose the right level for their dancing.

## TIME-TABLING OF CLASSES

Have some consideration for the start and finish time of classes. It may be appropriate to offer an afternoon class for those who are not in full time employment. In some areas, a later start is preferred as it allows dancers to go home after, eat and change. A later start may encourage some dancers to come straight from work/university/college/school. Many dancers have other interests and may not be able to change their "dancing night" as they progress through the skill levels.



## VENUE

Good halls with sprung floors are few and far between, but try also to consider the cost, the availability of safe parking and accessibility by public transport.

## COST OF CLASSES

The ideal situation is to have the classes priced at such a level that they just break even. However, that is not always possible and decisions on subsidies, other fundraisers, discounts for pre-payments, etc. all have to be considered.

## TEACHERS

Any decision on types of classes will be influenced by the pool of teachers available. Some enjoy taking beginners, some prefer advanced dancers and some are good with children. Try to ensure that the teacher is appropriate for the class. New teachers and those with less experience and confidence need to be encouraged to assist in class situations, so that they can be ready to take over when appropriate. Sometimes it is good for both the regular teachers and the dancers if there is a change.

## MUSICIANS

There is nothing better than dancing to live music. Try to help and encourage new musicians – they will become the Branch's greatest assets. Most teachers prefer to work with a musician or musicians and a variety of instrumentation makes for interesting listening.

## RECORDED MUSIC

Most teachers have to use recorded music, so please try to ensure that the equipment has sufficient volume. Where possible, avoid long periods of non-contact time while the teacher "sorts the music". Consider using remote controls, or having an assistant to help. Try to source your music with as much care as you would expect from a musician. RSCDS titles are available from the online shop and many digital music retailers.

## PUBLICITY

Advertise the classes in plenty of time. Try to use eye-catching materials for posters/leaflets etc. in libraries, church halls, sports centres, health centres and so forth. Local papers usually welcome some "editorial copy" and local radio stations often have "what's on?" features. If paying for newspaper advertisements try negotiating for multiple entries at "charitable" or educational rates.

## OTHER IDEAS

If your Branch has any other ideas on improving the provision and appeal of Scottish Country Dance classes, please share them!



	Starters and Restarters	Intermediate	Advanced	Very Advanced (Low Impact)	Very Advanced Technically Challenging	Teachers/ Teaching Skills	DAA	Social	Unit 2/3	Unit 5	Junior Class	13-18 Class	Tutors' Course
WEEK 1		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
WEEK 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Very Adv		✓				
WEEK 3		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Int			✓	✓	✓	
WEEK 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Adv	✓		✓			



## LIST 1

Hands round	Turns	Hands across	Leading
Cross and cast	Figure of eight	Rights and lefts	Promenade
Allemande (2 & 3 couples)	Turn corner, partner	Set to corners	Corner chain
Reels of 4	Poussette - jig and reel	Advance and retire	Back to back
Casting	Set and cast	Double triangles	Crown triangles
Grand chain	Ladies and men's chain	Reels of 3 - R & L shoulder, 6 or 8 bars	

## LIST 2

The Rondel	The Tournée	En rond	The Knot
Strathspey poussette	Set to corner, partner	Set and turn corners	Set and link
Set and rotate	The Espagnole	The Spoke	The Spurtle
The Targe			

## CLASS SELECTOR 2018

*Please choose your class carefully. By selecting the class on the application form you agree to the terms and conditions of entry to your choice of class. The schools director reserves the right to move you to a class more suited to your ability.*



### **STARTERS AND RESTARTERS**

This class will give an introduction to steps and basic formations for Scottish Country Dancing. Some of the simpler dances in the evening programme will be taught.

### **INTERMEDIATE**

This class will continue to develop steps and formations. It will focus on all aspects of technique: footwork, handing, phrasing, transitions and teamwork. Some dances from the evening programmes will be taught.

### **ADVANCED**

For this class you should be able to dance all the formation from List 1 without a recap. The class will continue to develop accurate footwork and advanced formations, handing, phrasing, transitions and teamwork. More challenging dances will be taught. Book 52 dances may be taught.

### **VERY ADVANCED (LOW IMPACT)**

This class is for those who dance at a high standard of technique and expertise but prefer a class that is less intense. It is for dancers who might not be able to sustain the high level of stamina required for the High Impact class. Most formations from List 2 should be

known and danced with precision, good handing and phrasing. Book 52 dances will be taught.

### **VERY ADVANCED TECHNICALLY CHALLENGING**

For this class dancers should be able to sustain a high standard of dancing throughout the whole week. Rhythm, foot positions and extension in steps should be of demonstration standard and dancers should be able to pick up the geography of dances quickly. All formations from List 2 should be known and danced with precision, good handing and phrasing. Book 52 dances will be taught.

### **TEACHERS/TEACHING SKILLS**

This class will benefit teachers who are certificated. It will give some practical advice on teaching all levels of classes. Book 52 will be taught and the class will work on the relevant teaching points.

### **DAA**

Dancing Achievement Award. Those applying for this course should come prepared, knowing the prescribed dances.

### **SOCIAL**

This class focuses on sociability

and the overall execution of dances without too much strenuous emphasis on footwork. It will work on phrasing, handling, covering and teamwork for dancers familiar with formations from List 1. The aim is to be personally competent and supportive of others in a social setting.

### **YOUTH SUMMER SCHOOL 13 - 18 YEAR OLDS**

This class will focus on improving the dancing of young people at Summer School. It will focus on all aspects of technique, footwork, handing, transitions and teamwork. There will be opportunities to work on linking dances into displays. Some dances from Book 52 will be taught.

### **TUTORS' COURSE**

A course for prospective Tutors will be held on Week 1. It is open to people attending week 1 Summer School and also to non-residents.