

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS' OF DANCING
119TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
17TH-19TH JUNE

SOUTHPORT THEATRE AND CONVENTION CENTRE

The BATD held its 119th Annual Conference at the Southport Theatre and Convention Centre over the weekend of 17th-19th June. Despite the weather forecast having been formidable, Southport remained dry and bright, albeit windy, and members travelled from all over the country as well as Canada and the USA.

The weekend began with an informal get together with dancing on the Friday evening. There was some lovely music provided by John Knox, a delicious hot buffet meal and good company. The Friday evening is an excellent opportunity to catch up with everyone that you might only see once a year and it sets the tone for the remainder of the weekend. This year we were treated to some delightful demonstrations from young pupils of BATD Yorkshire Region schools. The schools involved were: Irene Clark School, Cheryl Jones School, Steph Phillips School, Hazelbiz School, S.R.Z. School, Scott Stevenson School and the Ibberson School. It was a very good opportunity to showcase the talent of the local schools and all demonstrations were very well received. Thanks must go to Yorkshire Region for their excellent hospitality and for a lovely evening.

On Saturday the AGM and Annual Conference Meeting got under way. This year our President, Miss Shelagh Connolly, was not standing for re-election having served a three year term. Thanks go to Miss Connolly for all her hard work on behalf of the British and for continually travelling across 'the pond', both for various BATD meetings and to represent the BATD at a number of events. Miss Connolly will be replaced by Miss Margaret Smith who will once again be taking up the reins as President. Miss Connolly will remain a very prominent presence at BATD meetings and events, however, as she will be stepping into the shoes of Mr. David Moffat, who has retired as one of the BATD Trustees – a very hard act to follow! Mr. Moffat has been a member of the BATD for over 50 years and, having first joined the Executive Council in 1975, has been a Trustee since 1995. We will all miss his smiling face from the top table but I am sure that he will be in attendance in the body of the hall and will be making his presence known for many years to come!

The Treasurer, two Vice-Presidents and the Press Representative were all returned for a further term of office and elections were held for Executive Council positions and various committee and delegate

positions. This year there were a number of Bye-Law amendments put forward by the Executive Council that were all passed by the members, as was a proposition from London Region with regard to the voting procedure. During the Conference Meeting Life Memberships were awarded to a number of members: From London Region - John and Joan Selsby, Lesley Keatings, Amanda Gibson, Suzanne Hewitt, Karen Newson and Colin Putz, from Yorkshire Region – Janet Trew, Karen Davy and Maureen Law, from Northern Region Gillian Craggs and from Scottish West Mary Richardson.

Several presentations were made to Mr. David Moffat; from Diane Barron and Bryan Isaac, from Betty Wren, Chairman of the Scottish East and North on behalf of David Moffat's region, from David Johnston on behalf of the Ballroom Committee, from Richard McGilchrist and Roy Sharpe, fellow trustees as a token of thanks and finally by Shelagh Connolly and Katrina Allan.

Presentations were also made to: May Martin, who was retiring from the committee due to personal reasons, presented by Christine Aitken on behalf of the Highland Committee, and to Audrey Bainbridge, who was retiring, presented by Shelagh Connolly and the Western Region. Both these ladies have contributed many years of service to the BATD and we thank them both for all their hard work.

The three trustees were also presented with special medals in recognition of the work they had diligently carried out in looking after the best interest and finances of the Association.

Thanks go to the AGM Marshalls: Mr. David Warren, Mr. Stephen Williams, Mrs. June Fotheringham, Mr. Christopher, Ms Jeanette Thompson and Ms Leona Lamont, also the tellers: Mr. Ian McCleod, Ms. Carol Brown, Mrs. Pat Finnegan, Rebecca Coverdale, Rachel Conroy and Linda Black, who all did a splendid job.

The 119th Dinner Dance was held in the magnificent Floral Hall, a lovely venue with a first class floor. Opening the evening were the 2010 Scholarship Winners:

- Senior Freestyle: Megan Dawson from Marion Sweeney School teacher Marion Sweeney
- Senior Stage: Lauren Gordon from Gladwin Ballet and Stage School teacher Wyn Gladwin
- Senior Highland: Brogan Bauld from Lesley Bowman School teacher Lesley Bowman
- Senior Ballet: Jenna Calderbank from Scott-Stevenson School, teacher Christine Grace

These dance displays were very well received and made a most enjoyable start to the evening.

During the evening the President's Chain of Office was passed from Shelagh Connolly to the new President Miss Margaret Smith. The Trustee Chain of Office was handed from retiring trustee, Mr. David Moffat, to newly appointed Trustee, Miss Shelagh Connolly.

Following an excellent meal we were treated to the beautiful music of Ashley Frohlick and the Empress Orchestra from Blackpool and a chance to stretch our legs, led by Miss Shelagh Connolly and Mr. John Comrie, before the first cabaret of the evening. Those present that had not seen them before were amazed by the Exhibition Dance presented by Craig Smith and Natalie Wolfe. Their total muscle control and total awareness of each other's body is stunning. Outgoing President, Shelagh Connolly, then awarded Craig and Natalie with Honorary Memberships of the BATD.

Another highlight of the evening was the final cabaret by youngsters from Colin's Performing Arts School. Our own Colin Putz had brought along forty-three of his students from Ilford in Essex to present a selection of musical theatre numbers from shows such as Bugsy Malone and Chicago, including Razzle Dazzle, Speakeasy, My Name is Talulah, Modern Millie and some tap. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their excellent cabaret and we hope to see more of them in the future. Congratulations to them all. Colin Putz has produced many excellent students that have gone on to perform in West End productions, the latest student leaving his school having gone straight into Mama Mia. The quality of the performance was an excellent showcase for the BATD and certainly flew a flag for London Region.

Sunday was lecture day, with lectures in the Floral Hall starting early with a Slow Dance lecture from Tony Curley and Street lecture from Asheligh Barr. These were much enjoyed by both the participants and those watching. Paul and Pauline Taylor followed with basic groups in Tango and Foxtrot, which were suitable for medallist work. Both were groups that I am sure the teachers will take back and use in their classes. Last lecture in the Floral Hall was Jackie Sanderson, who presented a most interesting Classical lecture, Medallist to Competition, using a number of her young students of varying ages. This lecture gave some valuable advice on training methods which could easily be applied to Ballroom and Latin Dancing as well and was therefore of value to all the teachers present, even those not involved with Classical dance.

Highland and Stage lectures took place in the Waterfront Suites. This year the lectures were restricted to professionals only and included a

number of lectures which specifically included CPD for examiners. All lectures were instructive and informative and very worthwhile attending. Some of the subjects covered were: Child Protection, Personal Safety, Jazz Grades and European National Dances for the Ballet medal tests. There were also two Highland lectures from Nicola Gilliland and Christine Lacey and a very informative lecture from Shelagh Connolly on how to mix/edit music and the software involved. One very interesting item included was an Open Forum for teachers. This was an excellent opportunity for all teachers to meet to air their opinions, concerns, or any other items they would like to discuss. It was a pity that more teachers had not taken advantage of this great opportunity as it was a chance to meet and discuss matters with different regions of the BATD, as was the meeting on the Friday afternoon for Chairmen, Secretaries and Treasurers. It is always useful to be able to put ideas forward or to gain ideas from different areas of the country in order to develop your own region.

The Inventive Dance competitions took place in the Floral Hall on Sunday afternoon. The event was extremely well attended and this year's winners were:

- *BATD Trophy: Wainwright Foxtrot – Barry Earnshaw/Beverley Murch-Fowkes*
- *President's Trophy: Rosebud Rumba – Ian and Sue Webster*
- *Worrall Trophy: Butternut Blues – Ian and Sue Webster*
- *The Jimmy Curley Memorial Trophy for the winning dance receiving the highest number of points went to the Rosebud Rumba.*

Thanks must go to the adjudicators: Kevin Page, Jackie Sanderson, Andrew Pigg, Michael Hayton and Roy Sharpe, also to compere, Howard Cookson, scrutineer, Charlotte Comrie, and non-voting Chairman of Adjudicators David Moffat.

The end of the Inventive Dance competition marked the close of Conference for 2011. It had passed by all too quickly and just left the date for Conference 2012 to be put in our diaries: Friday 15th to Sunday 17th June at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow. See you there...

Report: Jan Williams