

Chairman's Report for Westland Ballroom Dance Section Annual General Meeting 2010/2011

Good evening and welcome to the 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Westland Modern Ballroom Dance Section.

May I first thank those people who make this club so successful, that is those of you who regularly attend our Wednesday evening dances, come to our themed balls and support your committee in their endeavours to make this the place to dance.

This year has seen some mixed fortunes for our club, we have enjoyed great dancing and superb company but at a cost to our club. If anything the content of our weekly dances and the themed Balls that we hold have reached new heights this year.

The negative side to this year has been an uneven attendance and rising costs of our venue and the presenters who host our evenings. This led to



record losses for our club, which were only sustainable because of our past good performance and prudent management of resources.

The main consequence of this record loss to the club was that we were forced to increase entrance charges for our members and visitors. Indications to date are that we have arrested the decline in club funds and that despite the price increases attendance has started to recover. As a committee we are mindful that we wish to offer the best possible value to our members and to keep the cost of dance well within the expectations of all our members.



In addition to our regular weekly dance we were able to feature three themed dances throughout the year.

On the 11th June our theme was 'Dancing on the Moon', hosted by Mark Helmore with Jasmin Chan and Jonas Kaslauskas providing a brilliant ten dance demonstration. Mark was a brilliant host and ran a very successful dance.



On the 30th October we ran our 'Ghost Train' dance, This dance was hosted by a



spectacular apparition who played brilliant music and eventually turned out to be Peter Tebby. Not sure which was the worst, the animated Ghosts to the rear of the stage, the Grim Reaper or Peter in his 'Ghost Train Driver' outfit!

Mark and Olga Elsbury provided us with a totally amazing ballroom demonstration. They are now the Ballroom Couple that everyone would like to emulate, fabulous dancing and such a nice couple to meet.

Our third Themed Ball this year was 'Carnival in Venice' this turned out to be one of our most ambitious themes and probably put more action on the stage than any of our previous productions. This last Ball was probably our most attended



dance and the additional numbers made this a hugely successful occasion. Aime Leak and Lawrence James provided an outstanding ten dance demonstration. They are a very young couple who have risen through the ranks of competitive dance very quickly and we hope to see more of them in the future as their careers develop. Sid and Roz Gateley completed this spectacular dance with a great selection of music and carnival atmosphere.

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Finally, of course, thank you to all of you who went to the trouble of arriving with the most wonderful array of masks.

I must thank your committee for all their hard work, in particular this has been a difficult year for our treasurer as he was constantly battling against rising costs and having to balance the books. Hopefully we are now out of the woods and first signs are that our strategy is working, income is matching (or slightly exceeding) expenditure and most encouragingly our attendance numbers are increasing.

Penny our secretary works very hard keeping our programme a year in advance to ensure that we have a regular and varied series of music hosts. We are very fortunate to currently have the services of an excellent selection of music hosts. Penny has a never ending job of making sure that what the music presenters provide is what our club wants.

In the past we have found that the people who present our music sometimes have a different view of what our club requires. This is natural as each presenter has his own ideas and is probably used to a different type of dancing. At Westland we are probably towards the vanguard of modern dance music and always welcome new ways of looking at how music should be presented and knowing what is 'in' and what is 'out'. We even find that fashion changes for the traditional music and so even the old favourites will wax and wane.

The day to day management of our club is largely due to the work put in by Pete and Penny and I don't think that we in the club should ever underestimate the work that they do.

Our current list of music hosts includes Carl Webb, Mark Helmore, Peter Tebby, David Last, Sid & Roz Gateley, Paul Eden, Gary & Tricia Fleetwood, Jon Randall, all of these deserve our heartfelt thanks as without such an outstanding array of talent to present the music our dance experience would not be as rich and varied as we are able to make it. Finally of course there is Penny and

myself who are privileged to be able to present the music every four to five weeks throughout the year, we strive to keep the music as upbeat as possible and welcome any suggestions regarding the programme.



A great recent addition to our dance calendar is the Christmas Dinner Dance, which this year was hosted by Gary & Tricia Fleetwood. This is the second time we have held the Christmas Dinner at Westland and again it was huge success. The idea that we have the best of both worlds: and excellent meal and a great dance combined with the optional nature of the meal makes this a very relaxed and accessible event. It is the committee's recommendation that we continue this as a tradition of our club.

Dance classes form an important and integral part of our club activities. Heidi and Lisa provide an excellent service to our club and the dance classes they hold are successful, enjoyable and encouraging to many new dancers. We are thankful to Heidi and Lisa for the great work that they do and the fun that they bring to learning to dance.

One area where I think we could improve is how to encourage new dancers to start coming to our regular weekly dances. We do understand that at first it can be slightly intimidating to launch onto the crowded dance floor. Some of our dancers do travel very fast (some hardly move!) but I believe that this is all part an parcel of what we do. The whole idea of dance is primarily for enjoyment and secondly for the benefits of company and a great social environment, fitness, safety, a wonderful ballroom and you can drink beer too!

So if anyone has some ideas how to encourage new dancers to become regular Wednesday night dancers then the committee would welcome all comments.



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A second issue that I wish to bring to the attention of the membership is the purchase of tickets for club events at membership concession prices.



The reason we have a concession price for members is to reward them (in a small way) for their loyalty in supporting our club throughout the year. In the past, members have purchased tickets for events (themed balls) for friends and family at the concession price. The committee has decided that in future

concession tickets can only be purchased against a club membership card on the basis of one ticket per card. Pete Open has agreed that the treasurer will accept the duty of keeping a record of tickets purchased.



Because of the difficult cash situation this year we have not made any significant purchases for the club. In particular we have an issue with the radio microphone used

for the lessons. The headset is broken (but electronically sound) and a new headset would cost in the region of £60, unfortunately there is an issue about frequencies where we were warned that our set may have to be replaced because the government has sold our frequencies. I am of the opinion that the specific frequencies we use are unaffected but some more research is required before we commit the club to this expense. If the frequencies are unaffected then I recommend that the club consider a new headset.



My final plea in this report is to our general membership to please consider joining the committee. We will not burden you with huge amounts of work, primarily we need new and alternative views on how our club should run. Fresh thinking is always welcome and just three or four new members on the committee would make all the difference.



Finally, it is with great pleasure that I am able to thank the membership who make the chairmanship of this club such a privilege and a pleasure. We have a brilliant committee, small but perfectly formed!

It is a great club full of friendly people who through time have developed into great friends. This is easily, by a wide margin, the best dance club in the South West of England. We aim to keep it that way with great music, great company, superb venue and brilliant value for money. The best tonic ever to fit the current economic woes!



Keep fit, be happy, keep dancing.

Martin Deady
Chairman
Westland Ballroom Dance Section

