

Why dance?... It's fun!

Dancing is great fun and we believe this is probably the most important reason to dance. You probably think of ballroom dancing as the kind of dancing that your great-grandparents were doing at the turn of the century. It can be. What's wrong with that? They enjoyed it so can you. But, as music changes, dancing itself will change - as it should. New styles and new dances come into being, but the instinct to dance and the enjoyment of it are timeless and enduring. The Quickstep is still a very popular Ballroom dance. The Gavotte may be seen at Old Time clubs up and down the country. The Latin American Jive provides the inspiration for Rock'n'Roll, and the Samba and Rumba have inspired Salsa, the discos have produced Freestyle dancing and country music has inspired Western Line Dancing. There are forms of dance that will be fun for all ages.

Health and sports

There are benefits as well as the enjoyment. Dancing can help you keep fit without the drudgery of routine exercising. It can be a gentle form of exercise or it can become -with practice! -an athletic sport requiring the same effort and commitment as competition cycling, swimming and running. For the young, dancing can improve their stance, establish self-discipline patterns and self-confidence which will be useful throughout life. For the "not so young", it provides a form of exercise within their capability. Just a few of the health benefits are that it will improve breathing, vital to good health; the use of the foot against the floor acts to "pump" the blood round the body and so improving circulation.

At one end of the scale, a Slow Waltz at a social evening will not over exert the most unfit; at the other, the muscular exertion and breathing rates of dancers performing one competition dance is the same as those of cyclists, swimmers and an Olympic 800 metre runner over a similar period of time: a finalist in a ten dance championship has to repeat this performance perhaps thirty times. As with other sports, competition dancing is really an extension of the recreational activity.

Making friends at the dance club

With the disappearance of ballrooms in most areas, the dance school or dance club has become the place where people not only learn to dance but also to enjoy socialising and meeting people in a convivial atmosphere. Dancing is good for your health certainly but, more than that, it is good for meeting and making new friends. Different dance clubs offer different facilities: most will offer weekly practice sessions and social evenings, well-equipped studios and lounges. Run by qualified teachers, the majority will offer the opportunity to take medal tests in different styles of dance.

Which style of Dance?

You can pursue an interest in dance in a great many styles: Ballroom and Latin American, Classical (Old Time) and Modern Sequence, Tap, Ballet, Rock'n'Roll, Stage, Disco, freestyle ...the list goes on but, if you don't know what each style is like, then it is time you went to a dance club and found out.

You can so easily take a closer look at dancing - and then join in. Simple methods are used to get people into the basics so that, after a few easy lessons, they can feel confident on the dance floor.

But what about the costume?

At a social dance, people wear their everyday clothes. In medallist competitions, smart casual wear with a tie is the order for men, and, ladies, a dress that allows freedom of leg movement; children's dress is carefully controlled by rules which, summed up, mean 'plain and simple'. Only the top competition dancers appear in white tie and tails or sequinned dresses.

The British Dance Council

The British Dance Council was founded in 1929 as the 'Official Board of Ballroom Dancing'. The aim of the leading dance teachers of the day was to establish a coordinating body to enable teachers to work together, to work on uniform lines, and so gain greater confidence with the public. Since its conception, the "Board" has more than achieved that aim, quickly becoming accepted as the governing body for all matters pertaining to teachers, adjudicators and professional competitors throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It was Incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in December 1951 and changed its name to "British Dance Council" in August 1996, to reflect more accurately its role and function. The aims of the BDC are:-

- 1) to foster, promote and publicise the art of all styles of Ballroom & Latin dancing-
- 2) to publicise the physical, cultural and educational benefits to be derived from ballroom dancing in all its forms.
- 3) to stimulate and encourage public interest in the art of Ballroom & Latin Dancing.
- 4) to promote uniformity of instruction in the basic steps of the standard dances, advising on the suitability of new dances, developing existing dances and standardising the tempi of all Dances.
- 5) to secure national recognition of the professional qualifications held by dance teachers.
- 6) to encourage the efficient promotion and proper conduct of championships and competitions; to avoid duplication of dates of major events.
- 7) to encourage the general public to obtain instruction only from qualified teachers.
- 8) to promote and improve the quality of ballroom dancing instruction; to raise and maintain the professional status and ethical standards of all persons engaged or seeking to be engaged in the profession of teaching ballroom dancing.
- 9) to encourage educational and other authorities to foster the art of ballroom dancing.
- 10) to encourage the composition of music, the invention of dances and the writing of scripts, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, instructional books of any kind likely to further the objects of the BDC and the members of the profession it

represents. The BDC, through its Teachers' Committee, coordinates and helps in the promotion of schemes to publicise the social styles of ballroom dancing.

Members of the British Dance Council.

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Dancing

For fun, health, sport

The British

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