

Friday – Day 1

I set off for my weekend in Torquay with a mixture of excitement and some trepidation. Being a new teacher I was hoping to pick up ideas, improve my technique and meet other teachers, all beneficial when you are out there 'on your own'! Even a chance to see the sea would be good.

Feeling like a new girl at big school I went to my first class - Janet Tate's general class - to get started. Janet took us through a traditional class of warm up, work on posture, waists and leg work, onto the floor for hamstrings, abdos, hips and spine and then back up for a re-vite incorporating some previous moves into a great sequence.

Onto the next class – Chris O'Rourke, another fabulous class but quite different in style. This was quick tempo, lively and Chris had us all working really hard with her Balance and Strength themed workout. Again I picked up quite a few ideas I could take back to my own class, including some FAB music choices.

At dinner I caught up with some of the teachers I met at Lilleshall. Over a glass of two of wine we shared our experiences of the day and how we could use them in our own classes once we got back.

Saturday – Day 2

On the second day, I decided to try my hand at clubs in Jane Duff's class. She taught us a routine to a samba (mambo?). It was the first time I'd used clubs so even holding one was an art form for me! We club novices eventually mastered the technique and the finished sequence was fantastic. It gave a whole new meaning to 'swinging clubs'!

My next class was with the visiting Osteoporosis Service Manager, Sue Hayman, on what I thought would be a talk on the signs of osteoporosis and how to work with them in class. A rest, I thought. How wrong can you be! Although she started with a slide show, she quickly had us exercising with weights on ankles and wrists. That was one heck of a workout!

That afternoon the tutors held a class to help us with our own movements, as well as looking at others with a 'seeing eye'. Working with a partner (new teachers with experienced teachers), we performed a short "sequence" and had to critique each other's performance. Quite simple really, except positions that I thought I'd mastered, were obviously not with a straight enough leg or straight enough arm, or relaxed enough knee and when I thought my tummy was in and seat tucked under, they apparently weren't. I learnt a lot about my own performance from this session thanks to the very honest feedback from my partner Carolyn Kingdon. I now practice relentlessly in front of a mirror....pity the only one in the house is up on the wall!

The after dinner entertainment was a compilation of Royal Albert Hall shows from 1990, 1995 and 2000. There were nostalgic moments for many and a chance for some to see what's in store for them in April when it's their turn to perform at the Royal Albert Hall. Shouts of laughter greeted the sight of teachers seen on screen in their younger years.

Sunday – Day 3

The last day saw us all practise Margaret Peggie's 'Absolutely Everybody' and then Margaret McAllister's Tribute item. The moment Margaret M played the music there wasn't a dry eye in the house. The music is so moving, a fitting tribute indeed and one routine we shall all perform with a sense of heritage and pride at the Royal Albert Hall, I'm sure.

After one more class it was time to head back home. That evening I had time to reflect and plan for class the next day. I thought I'd use some of the new ideas from Torquay and therein lies my problem – **The Notes!**

The Notes – is it just me? As I tried in vain to recall some of the movement sequences, I thought I could always rely on the notes handed out after each class. However I hadn't banked on League Speak. It has taken me a week and much laughter to realise that 'wlk into O alt sd stp R & L 1-8, opp hd on to hp & rpt' means 'walk into a circle, alternate side step etc.....' I won't even begin to tell you what I thought it meant.

In summary Torquay was fun, relaxed, ideal for picking up tips, making new friends, I never got to see the sea but I did lose 2 lbs! I can't wait for next year!

**Kim Davies, Kingston-upon-Thames
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