European Newsletter

Volume 9, Number 1 **December 2011**

Editorial

Hello dance friends

Yes we made it again just before Christmas.
This time in October it looked like getting an earlier start on this issue. Some associations did send me their contribution at that time so I could start on it.
But then I was informed about the next European convention near Prague. I asked Tomas about this and thought that you would appreciate to get more news regarding that event and decided to wait for it.
This also includes that some other news might be a little outdated, but I hope that you can understand my reasons to wait.
So here it is, again with a lot of input from various sources. Unfortunately this time no input from our Danish dance friends.
But I am happy to have an article from the Swedish Youth club, the Buffalo's. In October I met some members of the German youth club "the Lions" at the Pader Rodeo and talked about an update from their club but it did not work out. Maybe next year?
I think it will be very nice to hear from our youth clubs how they feel about our hobby.
From the EAASDC this time a report about a visit to the Japanese convention and how they organized it.
Also new is the announcement that the Swedish 2013 convention is going to be on Åland. As a stamp collector I know where to find this Island.

Both Corry and I wish you all a merry Christmas and a great 2012 to enjoy in good health.
May the number of dancers increase.

Happy dancing,
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CSTCA

Dear friends from all over Europe and elsewhere,

Let me invite you to the first European Square Dance Convention organized in the Czech Republic! This event will take place in Kladno (close to Prague) in the Czech Republic on July 27/28/29, 2012. We plan to have four full-time halls with wooden floors, all in a walking distance from each other. They will offer a wide range of dance programs: Basic/Mainstream (hall 1), Plus/Round Dance (hall 2), A1/A2 (hall 3) and C1/C2 (hall 4).

Our Square Dance and Round Dance leaders are well-skilled and they are all looking forward to entertain you during the weekend. You can enjoy dancing with the following callers and cuers: Jeannette Stäuble (CH), Michael Braithwaite (D), Steffen Knott (D), Tomas Hedberg (S), Bjørn Andersson (DK), Søren Lindergaard (DK), Maarten Weijers (NL), Ian McConnell (GB), James Wyatt (GB), Jiří Slabý (CZ) and Tomáš "Doug" Machalík (CZ) in the Square Dance program and Sammy David (D), Martin Prüfer (D) and Pavel Hosenseidl (CZ) in the Round Dance program.

Due to the fact that the European Convention takes place in the Czech Republic in 2012, our local CSCTA Convention will not take place in that year. However, we would like to present the skills of the Czech and Slovak callers and cuers to the international crowd and let them entertain you. Two hours of the Friday program will be staffed by the local callers and cuers so you can enjoy Square Dance and Round Dance in the Czech and Slovak way with our most competent leaders: Michal Bayer, Jiří Rogalewicz, Vladimír Andris, David Dvořák, Michal Beneš, Jirka Ščobák, David Tesař and František Čermák (RD).

Moreover, we would like to make this event truly European so we also contacted callers from the countries that had not been represented among the calling and cueing staff so far. The arrangements are still not finished but we are doing our best to let you enjoy voices from other countries where Square Dance is alive. Up to now, Kaj Wikholm (FIN) has confirmed his appearance and we hope to welcome callers from other European countries as well.

More information about the event is being processed and prepared for you right now. It will be published soon at the European Convention website **http://www.ec2012.cz** so you can look for tips for accommodation, travel directions and other information there.

We are all looking forward to welcome dancers from near and far: Kladno is accessible by cars very well and it is also a convenient place to fly to, as it takes just a few minutes of driving by car from the international airport in Prague (PRG).

Last but not least: we are aware of the fact that the weather is usually quite warm in July. There is a huge aqua-center with slides and a swimming pool located directly at the venue and an open-air swimming pool can be found literally round a corner so everyone can relax as much as desired.

We all do hope that the European Convention in Kladno will be a great festival attended by many dancers and it will help establishing new friendships as well as renewing the former ones regardless of the countries of origin of the dancers. We are looking forward to welcome you and share the fun and joy with you!

On behalf of the organizing team,

Tomas Machalik
President of the CzechoSlovak Callers & Teachers Association

BAASDC

This year has been my first full year as President and I have enjoyed it very much.
I have been lucky enough to dance in Germany, Denmark and Belgium as well as most parts of the UK.
Like most other countries, we are experiencing problems in retaining dancers, but the numbers of new dancers is showing an increase, albeit a slow increase.
We still have a number of European and stateside callers coming over here giving our dancers a challenging evening and weekends dancing.
We have started to plan our 60th Birthday celebrations. We have booked a venue in Banbury (Oxfordshire) with 5 halls dancing from Mainstream through to C and including Rounds to ALL of our top callers and cuers. The date is 1st – 3rd November 2013. Make a note and put it in your diaries.
Like most Square Dance associations we have had a number of issues to deal with ranging from trying to comply with Government dictats and containing ever increasing costs. We have so far managed to succeed but I am sure that next year will through up more challenges.
I look forward to seeing you in a Square,keep smiling.

John Webb
President BAASDC

News from Swedish Buffalo Squares!

Another squaredancingsummer has passed and a lot of wonderful squaredancevents and festivals has been held. Buffalo Squares, with our red glowing shirts and squirts have been dancing with more passion and happiness than ever before. The future of american squaredancing is depending on however we get young and new people to like and care for our dance as much as you and I do!

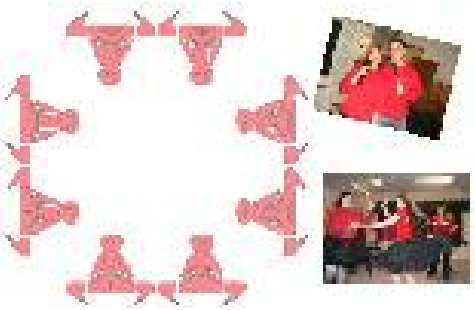
Now it's this time of the year when all courses start and you get the fun of spending time with your friends, family and loved ones while studying and learning maybe a new level or just helping others. Squaredancing has to be fun to learn, it has to be fun to show and most important; it has to be fun dancing! Make it fun. Cheer and don't let it get to your head if you make a wrong turn or smash into someone because you went the wrong way. Take it with a smile and I'm sure you'll remember it better next time. That's the correct way of learning!

Our motto in Buffalo Squares;
It isn't most important that you do it right, but that you make it with a smile!

Buffalo Squares is your youthorganisation in Sweden when it comes to Squaredancing. We have for many many years held 2 youthdances every year in different parts of Sweden. Youths from all over Sweden gather up and dance together every spring and fall.

For 2012 there is coming up a international youth danceweek at Bödabaden Squaredance Resort. Hopefully we can gather Buffalos, Lions and also youth dancers from all over Europe for a wonderful week with a lots of fun and lots of dancing.
More info about Bödabaden danceweeks in 4 aug – 10 aug 2012 you can find at: www.dansgladjen.se

Please also visit www.buffalosquares.se for more information.



Have fun and see you on the dancefloor!
Tommi Rönnholm
Buffalo Squares boardmember

NVSD

Kudelstaart, oktober 2011

Hello everybody,

With a blink of an eye, 2011 passing by rapidly. Since the last European Newsletter of December 2010, several things have happened here in the Netherlands. We lost a club in the south of the Netherlands and, mostly due to age problems, we again lost some dancers. No new clubs have arisen but… one club became member of the EAASDC. Hopefully we stay on the safe side in maintaining the number of dancers and/or clubs in 2012.

The Dutch NVSD board did not change in 2011. We have Barbara Reinhartz as Secretary (who is also the EAASDC representative for the Netherlands), Ton Smit as Treasurer, Marjo Geerlings as Dance Coordinator and Public Relations, and myself, Maarten Weijers, as President.

Also new (actually since 2010): we have a Public Relations team with members from all over our country. This should bring new ideas to a point that we can set up a program to attract more dancers to the Square- and Rounddance scene. Hopefully we can share this with the other countries, hoping that the other countries will share their ideas of Public Relations and how to attract people to the dance floor with us.

This year I have visited the IPAC dance in Barmstedt, Germany and I have met the European Association presidents or representatives. This meeting we have talked about the future of the European Convention and I'm glad that the Czech Republic will host the European Convention 2012 and probably another country will stand up to host the 2014 European Convention.
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One of the action points for me is the "re-writing" of the Guidelines to organize a European Convention. Together with Tomas "Doug" Machalik, president of the CSCTA, we will step into this project. My personal goal is to have the guidelines re-written and ready for approval at the next presidents' meeting at the European Convention 2012.

Taking all this into account we can state that we are facing a difficult future: the number of dancers is declining, the number of clubs is declining. If a new club is formed, it's most of the time because a club has split up. It's getting harder to organize big events due to higher costs. Travel expenses are getting higher. All this makes me a little concerned for the future.

Hopefully our Public Relations team can set up a "new" future for the Square- and Round dance world here in the Netherlands and maybe we can share the information with other PR teams from other countries. If this does not bring on any new dancers, we are facing a difficult future. Together we must work to keep the Square dance world alive.

The next meeting of the European associations is set for July 2011 in the Czech Republic. I hope to meet the representatives of all associations there again. Meanwhile I wish you all the best for the upcoming holidays and the New Year.

Sincerely,

Maarten Weijers
President NVSD, the Netherlands

France

The French (Square) Connection
Since the last article written on the activity in France, we have seen some highs and lows. Paris Calling has reportedly lost the new motivating factor recently, and the club founder is trying to find a square of dancers each Monday. If they don't have eight participants, they work on Round Dancing. The « Plus » nights of the Ouest Paris Swingers have been cancelled since beginning of November due to the hall managers who decided they didn't want to keep the activity.
To be more precise, the classes were provided by myself on a volonteer basis to a multi-activity association, the «Foyer Rural of Jouars-Pontchartrain ». I had been volunteering my time to promote Square Dancing through this association since 1999. Over the last few years, the students managed to convince me to stop giving « beginner » lessons and provide only introductory to Plus and « Full Plus ». Beginner lessons were given by the "Ouest Paris Swingers" on Thursday evenings. Unfortunately, none of the dancers subscribed this year actually live in the community of Pontchartrain, and I had refused to accept 3 potential inscriptions from the community because we were not giving beginner lessons.
For these reasons, the association decided to cancell the courses this year, and in the future. The decision was taken independantly of myself. The « Ouest Paris Swingers » had no part to play in the decision. I am currently working with the Ouest Paris Swingers to try to find a suitable location to continue to give introduction to Plus and Full Plus evenings.
The Ouest Paris Swingers continue to give beginner lessons on Thursday evenings and my spouse, Isabelle, is giving introduction to Plus in the first part of the evening in a nearby dance hall. She starts a half hour before the beginner lessons start and they finish a half hour before we finish, so they all come to the beginner hall to dance together before the end of the evening. This allows our dancers having 2 or 3 years of experience to learn more, and still mix well with the beginners.
The Ouest Paris Swingers also plan to have a « Christmas Dance » evening. This is just an invitation to the other local clubs to come dance with us on Thursday, 15 December, before the Christmas break. The evening is free, the participants just bring a little something to eat and share with the others.
Also on the good side, the Ouest Paris Swingers have been solicited by a Line Dance club in the north of France to give a « heavy-duty » beginner lesson. This is planned to take place Saturday and Sunday, 17 and 18 December.
This is the result of giving demonstration dances and short initiations during a major Country Music festival in Cambrai. We have been invited to participate regularly over the past 4 years. Some of the Line Dancers appreciated the demos and initiations, and decided to come to one of our Sunday public introductory dances.

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They filmed the entire 3 hours and went back home with enough information to get started. Over the last few months, they have exercised what I taught them that Sunday, but have also been studying more movements off the internet.
They currently have more than 2 squares of dancers signed up for the week-end. We are hoping to recrute a few more dancers from other northern Line Dance clubs.
To wrap up the article quickly, I would like to say that the experience of losing the « Plus » dance hall reinforces my viewpoint of the need to maintain beginner lessons, ALWAYS !
Thanks to our efforts of giving public demonstrations and especially public initiations, we are seeing an increased interest among the Line Dance community. It takes time, and perserverance.

I put together a small « guide book to public initiations » for the few new callers and teachers who have « everything to learn » . I have had it translated in French for local distribution. It is just some advice gained through a few years of experience.
Until the next time, hope to meet you in a square soon, with new dancers !

Tom Mackler
Paris

SAASDC

Hello Europe, hope you all have had a great dance year. I have to say that I'm very pleased with mine, although it has been a little bit fewer dances this year than it used to be, due to my wonderful three year old daughter that needs more and more attention. My hope for the future is that she will love dancing as much as I, but I realize that it's her and not my decision. My highlight of the dance year was visiting the IPAC in Barmstedt. What a fantastic arrangement**.** I realized that it's closer to Barmstedt from my hometown Malmö than it is to Stockholm. Europe is smaller than you think.
In Sweden are many dancers fond of the fact that Bödabaden Squaredance resort on Öland has reopened. I have spent more than 10 summers there and hope to be back for the summer of 2012. It's an opportunity to experience Swedish summer, when it is as best, and combine it with the joy of life, Squaredance**.**
Our national Convention, which is a great dance, but also annual meeting for SAASDC was held in Gothenburg.
On the annual meeting one of the topics were, that something needed to be done to turn around the downward trend of the number of Swedish squaredancers. One of the results of this meeting was that the SAASDC establish a fund, from which clubs can apply for money to support new innovative ideas that will lead to increase the number of Squaredancers. In next year European newsletter I hope that I can tell you how many great and crazy ideas that were tested thanks to money from this fund.
As you may know we had some problem to find someone to arrange the European convention in 2012, but as the last call CSKA informed that they was able to arrange it. I'm very happy for that and is looking forward to visit the wonderful city of Praha next summer.
Swedish National Convention 2012 is located right next to Stockholm international airport Arlanda, so it's very easy to visit it by air. Hope to see some of you there. I can also inform you that our Swedish national convention 2013 will be held outside Sweden for the first time ever. Our member club on the Finnish, self-governing Island of Åland will arrange the convent. Åland is the biggest Island in the archipelago between Stockholm and Helsinki.
At last I will wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in a Square.
Regards
Henrik Kjellgren
vice President SAASDC

EAASDC

The 50th All Japan Square Dance Convention in Tokyo, 2011

My report about an event, hosted by the Japan Square Dance Association (JSDA): 'The 50th All Japan Square Dance Convention' – and a big thank you to Claudia, who offered valuable support for myself and splendidly represented EAASDC as 'First Lady'.

The History:
The first convention took place in September 1961 as a joint event organized by the Japanese Square Dance Leaders and the Far East Square Dance Caller Association. The first Square Dance activities in Japan started in 1946 when Winfield P. Niblo taught Old Time Square Dancing as a folkdance in Japan.

Official reception of Guests of honour on 25.8.2011:
The reception was held in a festive environment with more than 50 guests. From the international associations participated among others:
Dana and Dona Schirmer, executive director of Callerlab
Leighton and Sandra Bloomfield, President of National Square Dancing Society of Australia
Andrea Cheng, President of Square Dance Society of Taiwan
Xiaoshan Duan, Vice Chairman of Beijing Square Dance Clubs, China
Walt und Juli Burr, GSI Europe

Further the members of the Square Dance Band 'Ghost Riders' with their partners, Board members of JSDA, district representatives of JSDA, many Japanese callers, etc. In spite of the official touch, the many speeches and the formal dress it was by no means a stiff event. This was due to the always friendly, continuously smiling and attentive manner of the guests and hosts present, which by the way is a typically Japanese trademark. It just doesn't allow for any bad mood and an outstanding buffet with many culinary delectations added further to the 'all-around-feel-good-sensation'. I took the opportunity for many conversations and found that some of the Japanese present had already been to Germany, be it through Square Dancing or through their professions. The exchange of cards is a very common practice, not only at such events, as well as the often repeated request to have a picture taken. Then the arrangement starts with two people and before the shot can be taken another ten have joint in with beaming faces.

In my speech I have thanked them for the invitation in the name of EAASDC, explained a little about our organization and its structure and expressed my regret about the natural disaster this March and its consequences. I tried to encourage the Japanese people by stating that they had to live through several catastrophes in the past and always got up again, even stronger than before; and that the people in Europe are with them in their thoughts and good wishes.
Proper for the occasion and as a small sign of our appreciation I then presented the president of JSDA, Mr. Tatsuzo Takase with the EAASDC gift: A banner made of blue velvet and embroidered in gold with the EAASDC logo on one side and 'Congratulation to the 50th All Japan Square Dance Convention' on the other.

The convention:

The facts and numbers:

- The convention started on Friday, 26th of August at 14:00 and ended on Sunday, 28th of August at 15:00. It took place in the Pamir Convention Centre of the Grand Prince Hotel and had over 2.000 participants.

- The entrance fee was about 120€ and included two joint dinners in a banquet hall of the hotel that offered space for more than 2000 people.

- The program on Friday:

  - 14:00 -17:00 Dancing in 5 halls
  - 17.00-19:00 Joint dinner
  - 19:45-21:00 Opening ceremony with numerous speeches and more guests of honour, like the representative of the Japanese ministry for education, culture, sport, science and technique, the representative of the governor of Tokyo Metropolis, the representative of the board of the National Folk Dance Federation of Japan, the representative of the American Embassy, and so on.
  - 21:00- about 22:30 Joint dancing in the main hall with live music from the SD-Band 'Ghost Riders'. This was alternating two blocks with singing calls - with what felt like 50 Japanese callers taking turns- and one block of Rounds, also with alternating cuers (without band) . *Note: The hall remained absolutely crowded until the end!*

- The program on Saturday:
  - 9:30 – 12:00 Dancing in 5 halls
  - 12:00 – 13:00 Lunch
  - 13:00 – 17:00 Dancing in 5 halls
  - 17:00 – 19.00 Joint dinner
  - 19:00 – 20:00 Entertainment Show with a professional juggling clown and his partner, a show big band and dance acrobatic done by youngsters, etc. It was a very delightful and refreshing program of performances and entertainment.
- 20:00 – 22:00 Dancing together in the main hall with live music from the SD-Band 'Ghost Riders'. Again it was two blocks of Singing Calls - this time the Japanese callers were taking turns with Dana Schirmer, Walt Burr and myself – and one block of rounds, again with alternating cuers

(without band). *Note: The hall remained absolutely crowded until the end (This time in spite of my singing call)!*

- At 22:00 started what we would call 'afterparty', and the 'Ghost Riders' were playing for a Country Night with Line Dancing or whatever you were in the mood for. Additionally Square and Round Dancing was still offered in four other halls until 23:00

- The program on Sunday:
  - 9:30 – 11:30 Dancing in 5 halls
  - 11.30 – 12:30 Farewell ceremony with address, honours, and a demonstration of traditional clothing, e.g. Kimonos, etc.
  - 13:00 – 15:00 Dancing and End of the event

- The dance program offered:
  - MS 1 (easy, standard application)
  - MS 2
  - Plus
  - A (In Japan A1 and A2 is danced as one program)
  - C 1
  - Round (all dance titles were published beforehand with date, hour and cuer)
  - Line Dance

- Dance halls:
  The halls were situated all on the same floor of the Convention Centre. There was one main hall that comfortably offered space for 1000 dancers (during the opening ceremony more than 2000 people were sitting on the floor), plus four rooms, each holding about 15 to 20 squares, for different dance programs. All dance halls had carpet floors, which we had to get used to, especially for the Rounds. Ideal were the short distances between the rooms, enabling frequent contacts between the dancers which led to friendly greetings or hallway conversations. Additionally outside each room there were one or two large tables offering free drinking water. The air conditioning worked flawlessly in spite of the great number of people, providing a comfortable climate while outside the temperature and humidity were very high. *Note: Something I have noticed not only here, but in Japan in general: While my forehead was covered in sweat, I never saw a single drop on any of the Japanese.*

- Accommodation:
  Next to the hotel complex where the convention took place there were other big hotels in close proximity that could be reached on foot through a wonderful garden complex. The prices for a double room ranged from 170€ to 380€, and about my hotel I can say that for two days I saw almost only people in Square dance outfits there. The whole hotel, including the two pools as well as the rooms were in a very well kept condition, the food was very good, the service outstanding and always friendly and helpful. There were shopping possibilities for very reasonable prices and we were lacking nothing.

Personal Impression:
The whole event was very well organized and an overwhelming experience. Dancing to the Japanese callers offered no problems, however I did not venture into the A- and C-halls, partly because we had put our focus on Round Dancing. Here we started out with small understanding problems, which are normal, when cuers are continually changing. Just as there are callers who speak a little bit unclearly from time to time (I keep hearing:"Wuffi" you are mumbling"). What we really missed, though, was the announcement of the rhythm as well as explanations from the cuer in English. But since we knew most of the dances and always had a friendly couple next to us, whom we could ask, we got through o.k. *Note: At any rate this has made it clear to me once again, that at all events where I hold a microphone and at least one person is present who speaks no German, I will translate into English.*

All dancers that we danced with and met were nothing but friendly, polite and amiable. Apparently these people cannot behave in any other way, which to me is a shining example of how it could and should be, no matter what one not pleased with at the moment. Here as well I received numerous requests to have my picture taken with somebody, which I gladly fulfilled, and again some complete strangers joined in, to

be captured beaming equally with this not so photogenic EAASDC president, whose face got more and more wrinkled with constant smiling. Moreover I was asked several times to sign my name with felt markers on blouses, skirts, dresses and shirts, - while their owners were wearing them. This was not so easy for me, since for one thing the textiles were very pretty (there was even a white brocade dress among them) and for another I felt rather embarrassed because of my own insignificance. But the requests were voiced vehemently and the recipients of my signature beamed brightly afterwards, so it became easier over time. *Note: here a signature book, similar to our friendship- and caller-books might provide welcome relieve for the textiles.*

The average age lay at 60 and above and the women held the majority, which represents the general situation in the Japanese SD-world. Of course there were also younger dancers, even children between 8 and 10 years, who had a lot of fun dancing, and also some younger callers who presented themselves as promising and convincing talents. Square Dance is danced correctly, without 'hi di ho' and other additions, except a soft, demure hand clap on the 'do si do'. Instead of clamour and cheers, e.g. on 'grand square', they are smiling pleasantly and it is nice not to be hit by a heel when you're going backwards. Very seldom I noticed a little hip bump on the 'weave the ring', but only with the own partner. And no, I was by no means bored (*guess I'm already too old!?).*

However I must admit, that we formed one all western set square, relishing all the 'mischiefs' of our 'Square Dance barbarism', much to the astonishment of our neighboring squares. During this I noticed a certain glint in the eyes of some Japanese dancer and when we met in the next square a certain imitational effect. I hope he forgot about it again and we didn't carry any 'germs' into Japan. With this wish, not to have left anything 'negative' behind in Japan, I close my report for today.

By the time this letter will be delivered the year 2011 is coming to end and on behalf of the EAASDC I wish every body a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Wolfgang "Wuffi" Daiss
President EAASDC e.V.

The European Newsletter is the official Newsletter for all participating European Associations. This Newsletter is published twice per annum if sufficient copy available and will be mailed to all representatives of the European Associations. European Newsl etter is edited by Ron van Dijk.
As the European Newsletter is computerized, it wo uld be most helpful to have articles or letters as a digital version, send by email to the editor. The editor reserves the right to exercise their discretion in editing before publication.

Calendar of Conventions & Jamborees

2012

March	09 – 11	EAASDC	Spring Jamboree	Dachau	Germany
May	18 –20	ECTA	42nd Round D Festival	Kelkheim	Germany
May	18 – 20	SAASDC	30th Convention	Märsta	Sweden
June	01 – 03	NZSRC	46th Convention	Palmerston	New Zealand
June	07 – 11	NSDSA	53rd Convention	Hobart	Tasmania
June	08 –10	DAASDC	21st Convention	Kolding	Denmark
June	27 – 30	NSDC	61st Convention	Spokane WA	USA
July	**27 -- 29**	**CSCTA**	**7th European Conv.**	**Kladno**	**Czech Rep.**
August	11—17	BAASDC	Nat.week of dance	Lytham St Annes	UK
August/Sep	31 – 02	EAASDC	Fall Round Up	Reilingen	Germany
August/Sep	31--`02	JSDA	51st Convention	Nagoya	Japan

2013

March	08 –10	EAASDC	Spring Jamboree	tba	Germany
May	24—26	ECTA	43rd Round D Festival	tba	Germany
May?		SAASDC	31st Convention	Åland	Finland
June	26 – 29	NSDC	62nd Convention	Oklahoma City	USA
August	10—16	BAASDC	Nat.week of dance	Lytham st Annes	UK
August/Sep	30 – 01	EAASDC	Fall Round Up	tba	Germany
November	01—03	BAASDC	60th Anniversary	Banbury	UK

2014

March	07 – 09	EAASDC	Spring Jamboree	tba	Germany
May	29—31	ECTA	44th Round D Festival	tba	Germany
June	25 – 28	NSDC	63rd Convention	Little Rock AR	USA
July	17 – 19	CSRDS	18th Convention	Ottawa Ont	Canada
August	09—15	BAASDC	Nat.week of dance	Lytham St Annes	UK
August	29 – 31	EAASDC	Fall Round Up	tba	Germany

2015

March	13—15	EAASDC	Spring Jamboree	Hochheim	Germany
June	25 – 27	NSDC	64th Convention	Springfield Mass	USA