

Strictly FUN Dancing

Newsletter - Special Edition

Grafton Dance Centre-May 2011

Dear Dancers,

It has been a long time coming, but, as promised, I have finally managed to find the time to sit down and introduce you to our dance studio in Dulwich - the Grafton Dance Centre. It is almost a year since we took over as custodians of this beautiful building along with a dancing heritage as long as your arm and boy has it been a wild rodeo ride so far. The building and its facilities have, unfortunately, over many years been allowed to deteriorate and will require much time, money, effort and a wide variety of expertise to bring the halls back to their former glory. We have already embarked upon a programme of renovation much of which has been achieved with the very much appreciated assistance of skilled individuals that have been, or are still associated with SFD classes, lessons or functions. I won't embarrass anyone by publicly naming them but from design to construction, cleaning to maintenance we thank you all for time and effort you have put into assisting us with this project.



Exterior shots before upgrades started to take place.

The site consists of two halls, (one with balcony), a kitchen, three cloakroom areas and a huge garden with patio area to the rear.



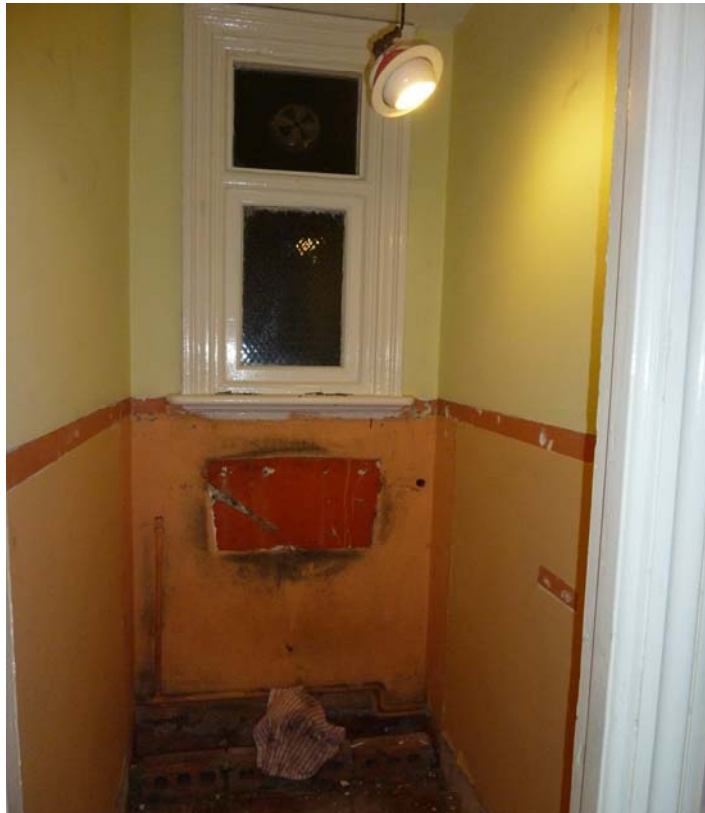
The main hall, seen here, measures approx 9x22 metres. The original colour scheme of blue, yellow and orange still prevail but are very much on the 'Things to do' list. Note: it even has its own glitter ball!

A view of the front hall from the opposite end showing the balcony area. To the left of the picture you can just see the stairs leading up to it; the balcony area is currently under renovation.



One of the main challenges to the renovation programme is the fact that the studios, apart from the Christmas period, are open seven days a week and therefore any major, or even minor, repair work has to be carried out at the 'not so busy' times of the year and around classes and private lessons. The first major project we undertook last summer was the Gentlemen's cloakroom and toilet area.

Admittedly, it was only our intention to make repairs to the sagging floor but one thing led to another and before we knew it we were up to our eyes in dust, dirt and a whole lot of organised chaos. However, six weeks later we had a new cloakroom.



Although work has been started this picture gives you some idea as to the condition of the decor when we took over.....

.....and although not complete, some idea of where we are going and the standards we want to attain!





Hall with Christmas lights 2010

Christmas 2010/2011 was the next opportunity for us to forge ahead with our master plan; the rear studio was firmly in our sites. Having had Christmas Day off we began the project on Boxing Day in the knowledge that we had until Jan 8 to complete it before things in the studios really got going again. However, even with best laid plans we still cut it so fine that, (not for the first time) as we were clearing up and taking things out of the rear entrance people were paying to come in at the front door.

The rear studio before we got stuck into it, measuring 15x9 metres.





And after
much of
this.....



.....and
some of
this.....



and a little of this
once in a while -
well it was
Christmas after
all

.....we ended up with this.



What's in the pipeline.....?

The decorating of the rear studio is only part of the job. We are still looking to install full length mirrors along one wall, (in the process of doing now) replace the sound system, install a good ventilation system, include a display area for our range of shoes, and whatever else we decide to start selling, and also improve the current lighting; and when that's all done renovate the rear entrance area and ladies cloakroom and toilet.

Make no mistake, we know there is still much to do, the list is endless and we cannot yet see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, if we keep our heads down, tackle one job at a time we are sure the desired result will be achieved.

The Dancing

As for the dancing we are attempting to develop the classes that were already in place whilst slowly, treading very carefully, adding our own flavour to things. There are children's ballet, tap and street dance classes currently being run as well as adult Flamenco. We are also introducing short courses on Argentine Tango with a view to developing them further if they are found to be successful, and if all goes to plan we have every intention of offering Children's Ballroom and Latin classes.

There has also been the consideration of offering a number of half day workshops on various dances with buffet lunches in the garden. Let's see what happens? In the mean time however please see my emails being sent regards the Summer Ball this coming June 4.

Best regards

Paul and Team