

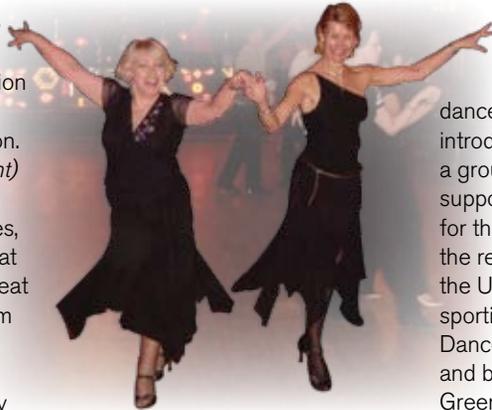


Stepping out

This month, same-sex dancers take their first competitive steps at the Rivoli while the experienced couples go for gold at the Gay Games in Cologne, reports **Marianka Swain**

It's your chance to take to the floor at the seventh annual UK Fun Competition at London's Rivoli Ballroom on October 2 (www.funcompetition.co.uk). The event (pictured right) welcomes all starter, beginner and improver same-sex couples, so if you've ever wondered what it's like to compete, this is a great opportunity. As well as ballroom and Latin, the competition includes fun styles, such as Old Time Lilac Waltz and Cindy Swing, change-partners jive and – new this year – a six-legs salsa competition, involving three people dancing together.

Everyone, including spectators, is given an entry number, so you can decide partway through if you want to join in, even dancing with someone you've just met. Many participants get a taste for competitive dancing and go on to train seriously for big competitions; others decide it isn't for them, but enjoy the experience and come back next year to cheer on other dancers. The event runs from 2pm to 6pm (doors



open 1pm), followed by Jacky's Jukebox social dancing. To enter, download a form from the website.

At the other end of the competitive scale, some of the UK's top same-sex couples travelled to Cologne to take part in the Gay Games on August 3–6. The Games, which take place every four years, began in 1982, bringing together 1,350 competitors, regardless of skill level, age or physical abilities, and they've grown into one of the world's largest amateur athletic events, with 9,500 people from 60 countries registered this year.

British dancers have been enthusiastic participants of the dancesport section since it was introduced in 1998. This year, a group of 40 dancers and supporters travelled from the UK for the event, and we'll bring you the results next month. Many of the UK's representatives were sporting stylish new UK Same Sex Dance Council (UKSSDC) t-shirts and bags, designed by Amanda Greenwood and available to all UKSSDC members (www.ukssdc.co.uk).

In addition, we'll let you know how Studio La Danza's formation team Guyz in Sync fared in the showdance section with their new Fosse-inspired routine, which features incredibly detailed synchronised movements (brilliantly choreographed by Heather Gladding and Hadass Armon) and slick *Chicago*-style costumes. The team won gold in the first-ever showdance section of an international competition at the World Outgames in Copenhagen last year.

Another skilled formation team, the Pink Dancers, choreographed by Ralf Schiller, took silver at last year's World Outgames, and are now focusing on demonstrations. You can see them performing at the Vienna Dance Contest Ball on September 25. ●

“Everyone, including spectators, is given an entry number, so you can decide partway through if you want to join in, even dancing with someone you've just met”