

STAPLERS

NEWSLETTER

www.staplers.org.uk

July 2011

Notes from the Chairman

It is very encouraging that once again we were able to do displays this summer; especially as they included members who have not danced before in our lavender and straw costumes.

The first was in the Market Square, Hitchin for the British Schools Summer Fair and went well despite an un-planned break for a downpour in the middle!

The second, in July, was part of **Letchworth Arts Festival** – ‘*Who do you think you are Letchworth?*’ This was a lovely event showcasing folk music in an excellent venue. Thank you everyone who took part in one or both of these events, those who supported us and in particular, Lorraine for organising the practices, costumes and final displays.

We were fortunate with the weather for the Maypole evening in Pirton, led this year by Chris Turner. It was good to see

folks from Pirton joining us this time.

I hope we are as lucky with the weather in August for the garden evenings. As always thank you everyone who has offered the use of your garden. Once again, we shall be collecting a £1 sub at the garden evenings; don't forget your chair and this year to beat the clock we are starting garden evenings at **7 o'clock**. Please check in advance with the hosts if the weather is uncertain.

I wish you a very happy summer and welcome you back to St John's on 5th Sept.

Ann Gibson

Notice of the AGM

Come along to the **AGM** on 26th September 2011 and support your hard-working committee.

Committee

Chairman: Ann Gibson
Secretary: Ces Mills
Treasurer: David Millman
Editor: Cedric Morgan

Committee Members:

Kim Brosan;
Leslie Elliott;
Denise Devonald;
Hazel Glass;
Lorraine Morgan

EVENTS

Colin Hume's Playford Evening • 7th March



The first thing I noticed on arriving at St John's Hall for the Staplers' Monday evening on 7th March, was the scarcity of spaces in the car park. It was immediately apparent that this was going to be a heavily subscribed event.

I do not know exactly how many dancers turned out, but the hall was pleasantly full (*not something that happens often enough these days, unfortunately*).

It was lovely to see so many familiar faces and to know that many had had quite a longish drive to get here. It was well worth their time because Colin Hume, in his own inimitable fashion, had put together a programme of delightful dances, interspersing each one with a potted history and some surprising instructions on how each should be danced. It is useful to be reminded, from time to time, how simple moves that we tend to take for granted should be danced.

He was ably assisted by *Spring Greens*, a competent and lively band who gave each dance tune a 'lift' – an invaluable quality in a band, I think.

During the interval the Staplers committee brought round some Danish pastries and laid out some 'interesting' drinks in the kitchen.

Altogether a very enjoyable evening. We need more of this kind of thing.

Sandra Welch

MONDAY NIGHT CALLERS

5 Sept	Ann Gibson	10 Oct	Bernard Higgs
12 Sept	Lorraine Morgan and Barbara Gilder	17 Oct	Barry Goodman
19 Sept	Jill Bransby	24 Oct	Adrian Besant
26 Sept	AGM @ 8.30pm. Dancing from 8.00pm & after with Bridget McRury	31 Oct	Joan Rutt
3 Oct	Nick Plum	7 Nov	Suzanne Farmer with live music from <i>The Turnabouts</i>
		14 Nov	Chris Turner

FUTURE EVENTS

Workshop: 'Dances with a Step' with Colin Hume

The 'Dancing English' were once known for their use of steps, but these days everything tends to be walked. In this workshop Colin will be looking at *steps* as well as dance figures.

Rant, polka, pas de bas, single-skip, skip-change, slip and waltz will be taking their place alongside the dance walk (which will also be given a 'wash and brush up').

The idea is not to exhaust you with a whole afternoon of rants and polkas but to remind you of the variety available in English Country Dance. The dances will be interesting, not all energetic, and Colin hopes to show you that the use of steps can add to your enjoyment of dancing.

St Ippolyts Parish Hall • 6th November – 2.00 - 5.00pm • £7

Anniversary Dance • 1st October 2011

Barrie Bullimore with Deo Volente
St Ippolyts Parish Hall, Hitchin SG4 7RA

EVENTS

Display in Hitchin at British Schools Fair • 18th June 2011

A new Rain Dance?

Four couples formed in a square formation ready to start. I announced the dance, 'Newcastle' and Derek started to play.

Then... the rain started and as they danced it got harder and harder!

Did they run for cover? – No! Bravely they completed the sequence perfectly, then they led off, rather faster than usual, perhaps.

Well done!

Perhaps we should dance Newcastle every time we have a drought.

Bridget McRury



The raindrops look huge in the photo but not here I suspect



EVENTS

Club evening to celebrate the Royal Wedding • 18th April 2011

So, the Wedding has now taken place. How did our celebrations at our Monday evening measure up to the excitement of the wedding day itself.

Well we made **Haste to the Wedding** at a more civilised hour than those staking their pitch in the Mall at 4.30am. The assembled company was finely dressed. Some in glad rags fit for the Abbey. With hats and fascinators more becoming than some official guests – perhaps the intention to dance had something to do with it. Others suitably patriotic would have mingled comfortably with the joyful crowds outside. Whilst our callers Ann, Lorraine and Cedric unknowingly sported the bunting.

We were first introduced to a stately **Prince William**. Then Graham and Ces danced elegantly enough to do justice to the stunning **Sweet Kate**. (However, there was little evidence of hand jiving at the Abbey.) Our **Archbishop** may not have had quite the same solemnity as the real deal, but the music was much appreciated at both the service and for our dancing – Thank you Derek.

We danced in honour of the official guests including many a **Real Princess** from around the world. Like us, His **Royal Highness the Prince of Wales**, the **Princess Royal** and their brother **Merry Andrew** (that's my knight-hood gone then - Ed) looked as though they were enjoying themselves.

The celebrations at Kate's home village were less formal. It is to be hoped that we did not emulate the duck racing and skipped more light of foot through **Postie's Jig** as well as **Kate's Hornpipe** and **Queen's Jig**.

Our evening ended fittingly, as did the service, with the national anthem, which for us was an introduction to **Sir Cassian Circle**. This, our final dance, was to the tune of *Marie's Wedding* – Well that is one to look forward to!

We enjoyed the bubbly but, showing some discretion, we did not see the night out for the bacon butties at the survivors' breakfast.

Many thanks to the organisers of a most enjoyable evening which set the mood for a memorable day.

Angela Gould

NB The dances we called are shown in bold.



EVENTS

Sunday Workshops • Spring 2011

We had two most enjoyable Sunday afternoon workshops held in February and March and led by Ann Gibson. There were at least 24 Staplers members, including those I am beginning to know and think of as the skilled regulars.

At these workshops, nearly everyone appeared to know the dances, gave the impression of recognising the names, and certainly seemed to remember the sequences of moves... except a few like me and David, my husband! My overall emotion was one of cheerful bewilderment and much mirth, except when the dances were really simple and repetitive, in which case I actually sometimes knew where to move next! All the partners I had were friendly guides and quick to give a helping hand or call out the next move. What I really enjoyed at the workshops was taking the dances more slowly and

walking them through more than once; when doing them with the music afterwards I was apt to get lost, but at least once I remembered – with help – what I should be doing, the familiarity with the steps made the sequences seem smoother. I began to think I could get better...

The workshops were a really encouraging occasions and entertaining experiences – there's nothing like laughter! What was also most heartening was to see how much pleasure doing the dances gives, even to those so familiar with them. That is a very good incentive to me to keep on trying! We really appreciated the time and effort that was taken to organise the afternoons and give us the opportunity to learn more and have such fun.

Fiona Ballantine

IN MEMORIAM – JEAN ELLIOTT

It was with surprise and sadness that we learned of the death of Jean Elliott in May. Jean was a founder member of the club and was still dancing regularly on Mondays into the nineties, as evidenced by photos in our Golden Anniversary *Book of Memories*.

When I joined Staplers in the early seventies I well remember Jean and Win sitting each week at the far end of

Bancroft Hall beside the piano. When they no longer came on Monday evenings they still kept in contact and came along to Brian Limbrick's Town Hall Christmas parties each year. Happily Jean was able to share in the Reunion Lunch in 2008 and as late as last November she joined us for the Sunday lunch at the Broadway.

Ann Gibson

EVENTS

Maypole Evening • 11th July 2011

We were blessed with good weather for our Maypole evening, when many Staplers members and friends gathered on Pirton Green. We were also joined by quite a few local people who were attracted by Kim's publicity, the lively music from Cloudburst and also the sound of us having such fun.



Chris Turner soon had us laughing and skipping as he taught us lots of new dances, even some that had been taken many years before, to other parts of the empire. We had to pay attention because a beep on his horn was our signal to run into the middle with the joyous shout of 'weee' (you really had to be there - Ed). Chris encouraged the audience to rapturous applause at this point too. In between dances we were

regaled by Chris's stories and anecdotes.

During one dance we skipped around in tandem, clinging tightly to our partner. Each time I passed the threesome of Sarah, Toby and Erica, I could hear Erica laughing with delight. In another dance, we were in groups of three, one person being the engine driver and dancing a hey between the 'carriages'. Then one of the 'carriages' took over as driver with the next two people along. We nearly got it!

Once or twice we had to halt proceedings to disentangle ourselves — should the blue ribbon go under the red, or between the yellow and green? Does this really look like a chrysanthemum?

At the end of a most enjoyable evening many of the dancers gathered in the Motte & Bailey for well-earned refreshments.

Lorraine Morgan



GARDEN EVENINGS

Date	Venue	Caller
Monday 1 August		Jill Bransby
Monday 8 August		Ced & Lorraine Morgan
Monday 15 August		Bernard Higgs
Monday 22 August		Bridget McRury

Letchworth Arts Festival • 3rd July

We had to dance on authentic straw for this display but first we had to all sit on the bales to listen to 'Life and Times' playing – seemed a fair excuse at the time anyway. Good event, good weather, good music, good company, good beer (Tring Brewery - Ed) and, oh yes, good dancing.

Ced the Ed

