

STAPLERS

NEWSLETTER

www.staplers.org.uk

March 2012

Notes from the Chairman

Has winter finished? Is spring coming?

At the time of writing this, we have had balmy spring weather one day and bitter cold winds the next, so I don't know.

I do know, that since Christmas we have had some great Monday evenings, an eventful Saturday 'Spring' dance – inching our way home in the snow at the end, as well as a splendid Sunday workshop. This was on American contras and squares as danced in America!

We have another 'special' evening planned the Monday before Easter, so I hope you can make it to St John's then for a 'seasonal surprise'!

After Easter, whatever the weather, we have several special Monday

evenings planned. These will include – a celebration of St George's Day, our annual dance round Pirton Maypole, discovering (or recalling) the dance music of the past 60 years.

If that wasn't enough, we will be enjoying the 'normal' club nights provided by our club and guest callers.

We also hope to be able to have a dancing/barbecue evening at a local village pub.

So, another busy, dancing time ahead to enjoy. Hope to see you.

Ann Gibson

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

Christmas Dance • 3rd December 2011



A good crowd of dancers at the Christmas Dance in December

*Caller, Andrew Swaine
with (most of) Momentum*



EVENTS

Playford Evening • 5th December 2011

As we no longer hold a Playford Ball, what better than to have a special Playford evening on a Monday and give people the opportunity to dress up in their finery – be it costume or otherwise. Colin Hume came to call dances with lovely music from Spring Greens.

We were pleased to welcome members of Roundabouts and delighted too, to welcome guest dancers from as far afield as London.

Elegantly dressed and elegantly danced, a goodly number of dancers followed Colin's expert calling of a lovely selection of Playford dances as published by John Playford and Henry Playford, all to their correct tunes. Colin also gave us insight to the background of the dance and how Cecil Sharp interpreted the dances combined with Colin's own research on how he thinks Playford meant the dances to be danced.

A longways dance 'The Princess'

introduced and set the mood of the evening. To make our dancing more enjoyable, Colin also gave us a little tuition on how to dance – when to step and when to walk, so the moves flowed from one to another.

Colin continued, with his precise calling, to lead us through dances varying in pace, tempo and formation, longways duple and triple, 2 and 3 couple dances – among which were dances that have been in our repertoire such as Grimstock, with a variation of three versions of a hey, a square - Chelsea Reach, Hole in the Wall and Hey boys, Up We Go.

A touch of light heartedness concluded the evening with a dance called 'The Cuckoo', which included a repeat of a half turn and raising up on the balls of the feet in time with the 'cuckoo! cuckoo!'

Ces Mills

Here are some good tips from a book called 'Don'ts for Dancers' published in 1925 ...You have been warned.

On Dress: Don't wear stockings or socks of which the feet have been badly darned. A rough, clumsy darn may cause you as much foot discomfort as a badly finished shoe.

Don't buy your stockings in a hurry. If you have decided on the fashionable flesh-coloured kind, take care you don't select too vivid a pink. This is most unbecoming to your ankles.

Gentlemen: Don't raise up your partner's arm above the level of her shoulders. This forces her into an uncomfortable and ungraceful position.

EVENTS

Christmas Party • 9th December 2011

By the time you read this, the party may have faded from your memory. That would be a shame as such a truly enjoyable occasion should be remembered. Ced and Lorraine put together a splendid seasonal programme of favourite dances and entertainment.

We owe thanks to Joan, Barbara, Ann and Bridget as well as Ced and Lorraine for calling the dances. I am also full of admiration for the talents of Derek and Chris, who played for us, Lorraine and Jenny who sang for us and Graham, who gave us one of his inimitable monologues.

We must also thank Bernard for his team game which brought out the reck-

less competitiveness of some of our members.

Sarah provided us with a quiz where we had to identify members from their childhood photos. I found this totally impossible, but would like to thank Sarah for her research, producing a most interesting quiz.

So our Staplers' party was, as ever, a highlight of the festive season. Thanks are due to everybody concerned, not least to all our members for bringing their own contributions of delicious food and drink.

Sue Else



Sarah giving the answers to the quiz – Ron is clearly pleased with the result



Derek puzzling over one of the quiz photos which happens to be a very young Ced, the pre-Ed

EVENTS

Spring Dance • 4th February 2012

A spring dance? More like Dancing on Ice!

Heavy snow and freezing temperatures were predicted and right on cue, the snow started to fall just as the committee gathered at the hall to set up for the evening. Soon there were over 40 people ready to dance – fewer than usual but enough to make a very enjoyable evening.

We soon became engrossed in dancing to the calling of Colin Hume and the playing of Mollie Koenigsberger and Vic Smith.

Colin called an excellent mix of dances including one of his own, inappropriately called '*Spring Blossom*'. In the event, a Tony Parkes dance called *The Snowy Day* was rather more suited to the evening.

There was an excellent atmosphere with caller, band and dancers all getting involved in some pantomime style heckling along the lines of 'Oh yes we did' and 'Oh no you didn't'. [You really had to be there - Ced the Ed]

The musicians, Mollie on violin and Vic on accordion were new to Staplers but produced a marvellous rich sound that had me dancing around in the kitchen whilst they were still warming up.

The interval gave us time for a rest, a chat and some refreshments – plenty of



Mollie and Vic at the Spring Dance

food to go round this time including two wonderful Victoria sponges which were as light as a feather.

After more enjoyable dancing, the last dance was called and we had to put layers of clothing back on. Dancing shoes were changed for stout outdoor shoes and we all braved the cold to clear the several inches of snow off our cars and face the drive home. The roads were difficult with snow having settled and compacted and I know some people had very long and slow journeys home.

So it was quite an evening! One that will no doubt be remembered because of the weather but also because it was an excellent evening of dancing.

Denise Devonald

EVENTS

Workshop: *American with Style* • 4th March 2012

Dancers come from far and wide when Colin Hume is calling – and our Sunday afternoon workshop was no exception. It was well attended by a friendly crowd of competent dancers, who had all come with enthusiasm to learn something new.

The music for the afternoon was provided by Mollie Koenigsberger on violin and Alison Ellacott on accordion and from the introduction onwards it was clear that we were set for a musical treat.

Colin announced his intention to teach us the '*modern urban contra*' style, and started by demonstrating a different hold for turns, the American ladies' chain, and the 'right' way to swing your partner.

To much laughter, he then explained the 'umph' and lunge of the American balance, which is quite different from the 'tum-te-tum' of the English set.

Then it was our turn and we were soon whirling away to a fast contra and trying out this new way of executing familiar moves.

Once we'd mastered these basics it was time to concentrate on how to add spins to your dos-si-dos, your wave and your hey and the importance of giving weight on the various turns.

More laughter ensued when Colin attempted to demonstrate how to spin out of an allemande left and on to swing your partner. I think some of the men got it!

The dances soon came thick and fast, interspersed with more tips and interesting anecdotes about the *Urban Contra* style - squares are out and you choose your next partner even before the previous dance has ended.

Alison impressed everyone by demonstrating 180 beats to the minute – we were finding the dances fast when slowed down to only 140!

Fortunately, there was also plenty of time during the dances to relax and enjoy the music, which really was extremely good.

All in all a popular and successful workshop.

Kim Brosan

LETTERS

April 23rd - St George's Day

The Irish celebrate St Patrick's Day (for the 'Paddys' I've seen in Cheltenham on March 17th it's a very liquid celebration). The Scots celebrate St Andrew's Day and Burns Night (Haggis forever!). The Welsh have their daffodils (or leeks) for St David's Day.

What do the English celebrate? Guy Fawkes Night and a few have May Day! Well, April 23rd is a Monday this year and we are an English Country Dance Club (even if some members could wear leeks or thistles) so let's have an evening of simple English dances; some are energetic but all have good English tunes.

There is no English National Costume but I'm sure you could all wear a red rose for St George.

Bridget McRury.

P.S. I may have an Irish and Scottish name but I am English and proud of it.

[Ced the Ed: As a result of this letter we are going to celebrate St George's Day. If you have a look on the Monday Night Callers section for 23rd April you will see that Bridget has her wish - in fact she's calling.]

MONDAY NIGHT CALLERS

2 April	Pre-Easter Surprise! Ced, Lorraine & Ann	11 June	Maypole Evening with Chris Turner and music from Cloudburst Pirton Village Green 7.30pm start
9 April	<i>Bank holiday – no club</i>	18 June	Joan Rutt
16 April	Terry Elvins	25 June	Rachel Bending
23 April	St George's Day Celebration Bridget McRury	2 July	Ann Gibson presenting A Diamond Jubilee celebration with music from the archives
30 April	Nick Plum	9 July	BBQ Evening Red Lion, Preston, 7.30pm start
7 May	<i>Bank holiday – no club</i>	16 July	Bob Lilley
14 May	Lorraine Morgan with <i>Barbara Burton</i>	23 July	Ced Morgan
21 May	Bernard Higgs		
28 May	Jill Bransby		
4 June	<i>Bank holiday – no club</i>		

FUTURE EVENTS

Anniversary Dance • 6th October, 7.30 - 11.00
Mark Elvins with Stick Shift

Christmas Dance • 1st December, 7.30 - 11.00
Ron Coxall with Stradivarious

•• All at: St Ippolyts Parish Hall, Hitchin SG4 7RA ••